Deal Pentecostal Church Bible Studies 2025

Scripture is the wisdom of God by which I can order my daily life.

Father, may we clearly know Your will and achieve the height and depth of spiritual wisdom and understanding. May our lives be a credit to You, Lord; and what's more, may we continue to delight You by doing every good work and growing in the true knowledge that comes from being close to You. Strengthen us with Your infinite power, according to Your glorious might, so that we will have everything we need to hold on and endure hardship patiently and joyfully. Thank You, Father, as You have made us eligible to receive our portion of the inheritance given to all those set apart by the light. You have rescued us from dark powers and brought us safely into the kingdom of Your Son, whom You love and in whom we are redeemed and forgiven of our sins through His blood.

[*Colossians 1:9-14 The Voice]*

God is Spirit and He reveals Himself to spirit and He can reveal Himself to our spirit through the Word. For instance, we hear someone read the Word of God. The thing that is read is weighed and measured by our intellect but in some way which is inexplicable to reason, it affects our spirit. It answers a need. Listening to the Word God changes our spirit. E.W.Kenyon

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Introduction

The Bible is unlike any other book because the very words were breathed (inspired) by God. *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.*[2Tim.3:16] The words in the Bible still contain God's breath (His life) and they are our spiritual food: *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.*[Jn.6:63] *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.'*[Matt.4:4] And so it is important for us to study the Bible. *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 not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*[2Tim.2:14-15] However, we should be careful to only take out of the Bible what is there and not add anything to the Bible: *Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.*[Deut.4:2] *I am warning everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book. If you add anything to them, God will add to you the plagues told about in this book. If you take any words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from you your share in the tree of life. He will also take away your place in the Holy City. This book tells about these things.*[Rev.22:18-19]

Exegesis and **Eisegesis.** Exegesis is the process of getting "*out*" ('*ex*') of the text what is truly there in the first place. The opposite of **exegesis** is **eisegesis** which is the process of putting "*into*" ('*eis*') 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 extracting the meaning of a verse.

The second principle is consistency: Never interpret a text in a way that contradicts the overall message of Scripture.

Don't be afraid of using other reference 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.*[2Tim.4:13] But be careful not to 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!**

Teleology—the universe viewed as the realisation of God and His eternal purpose—how God has designed the way we should live

God's purpose for our life (God's mission for us)

To see God's view of the world

To live within God's moral boundaries for us

To be God's stewards

Pour out all your worries and stress upon him and leave them there, for he always tenderly cares for you.[TPT] *God loves you, and he is looking after you, so tell him about everything that makes you sad, or angry, or worried, and trust him to look after you properly.*[PEV] 1Pet.5:7

The heart of God opens itself to us in God's Word.

I do not treasure God's promise in my understanding but in my heart. It is not to be analysed by my intellect, but to be pondered in my heart. Therefore, it is never sufficient simply to have read God's Word. It must penetrate deep within us, dwell in us, like the Holy of Holies in the Sanctuary, so that we do not sin in thought, word, or deed. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

Scripture can be more than the rule of faith—it can also be the source of meaning which inspires all our willing, planning, acting and serving in the world. Scripture's history, personalities, stories, prophets, precepts, wisdom and challenges can all become a source of inspiration when we apply them to our life's circumstances. In order for this to occur, we need to make time to reflect on our life's circumstances as well as Scripture, and then bring the two into careful dialogue.

We must prayerfully and carefully read the Scriptures—not just for information but to let God's Word mold our conscious and subconscious thoughts so that we begin to think like God.

It is easy to turn time with Scripture into a game of "*Twenty Questions*": how to have a happy relationship, learn financial faithfulness, or whatever. A sharp line can be drawn between utilitarian approaches that treat the Bible as a how-to manual or a database for addressing my questions, and the formation of Scripture-shaped minds that understand God and God's creation through Scripture-shaped lenses. **The latter requires patient, deliberate reading—reading, as it were, for no good reason but for the sake of having our dispositions and reflexes shaped by Scripture**.

Lk.9:44

Let these words sink into your ears NRSV
Let these words sink into your ears: ESV
Mark these words diligently: Geneva
Take these words to heart, NET
Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: NIV
Listen to me and remember what I say. NLTse
Treasure and ponder each of these next words: TM

The Spiritual Benefit of Studying Scripture

I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation.Ps.119:99

The study of God-breathed Scripture is the main way of discovering how to live. In Scripture, we find teaching on how to be good, and the examples of how blessed men actually lived. These examples are given in writing, like living and breathing images of a godly life, that we may follow their good works. Thus, in whatever way each individual feels he is lacking, he may commit himself to this imitation, finding the right treatment for his malady as from some medicine chest. Whoever wishes to make himself complete in all the branches of moral excellence, he should keep his eyes trained on the lives of God's holy people in Scripture, as if they were living and moving icons, and thus absorb their virtue into himself by imitation. ***Basil of Caesarea (330-79)***

We forgive people since we have been forgiven, and because the penalty of their actions against us have been fully paid for in Jesus Christ. Far be it from us, to expect an additional punishment on them, above the one already inflicted upon them, in Christ as their substitute. May it never be that we declare Christ's suffering insufficient grounds for us to fully forgive them, and in so doing, condemn ourselves in that act of ungrateful unbelief. It is out of our honour and appreciation of Jesus Christ, and what he did for us, that we release people from the obligation to repay us, understanding that the penalty of their violation against us has been discharged by Christ himself. To doubt that is to doubt that we ourselves have been paid for. *Mike Petzer - Complete Redemption*

31/12/2025

Psalm 14

Video: Solomon's Temple Explained

Questions

What does being an Ambassador for Christ mean?
What does the NT teach about tithing?
Why is sound doctrine important?
What is the difference between character and charisma?
What does it mean to be spiritual?

Comments

What does being an Ambassador for Christ mean?

Ambassador is literally "old man" (πρεσβεύω — presbeus) from which we get presbytery and elder.

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 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. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2Cor 5:16-21

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

Ambassador for Christ means that we have wisdom, decorum, life experience as citizens of heaven and can speak into peoples' lives. We represent Jesus Christ and so we should be living lives that reflect that status.

What does the NT teach about tithing?

Not a lot! There is a lot about giving but little about tithing.

OT tithing:

" 'A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD. Whoever would redeem any of their tithe must add a fifth of the value to it. Every tithe of the herd and flock—every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod—will be holy to the LORD. No one may pick out the good from the bad or make any substitution. If anyone does make a substitution, both the animal and its substitute become holy and cannot be redeemed.' " These are the commands the LORD gave Moses at Mount Sinai for the Israelites. Lev 27:30-34

The Old Covenant tithing was for the Old Covenant because although the 10 % belonged to God, it was given to the Old Covenant priests who have no place in the New Covenant

This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, the name Melchizedek means "king of righteousness"; then also, "king of Salem" means "king of peace." Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.

Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people—that is, from their fellow Israelites—even though they also are descended from Abraham. This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. And without doubt the lesser is blessed by the greater. In the one case, the tenth is collected by people who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living. One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.

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. For it is declared: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." 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 7:1-19

Jesus said that the Jews should tithe but place more importance on kingdom values

"Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone. Lk 11:42

Giving under the New Covenant is proportionate (i.e. a percentage) and voluntary (i.e. each person should decide for themselves what they give (not under compulsion).

Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me. 1Cor 16:1-4

We should give cheerfully, willingly and generously

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]

But we should first of all give ourselves to God:

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 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. 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. To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Phil 4:14-2

Why is sound doctrine important?

Sound doctrine (good theology) is the truth about God We should ensure that we believe and speak the truth—and especially about what we believe and say about God. That is why the Apostles' and Nicene Creed were formulated

We need to agree with what God says about Himself and about us (i.e. say the same as God says; keep in harmony with Him).

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. [Eph.4:15]

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." Jn 14:6-7

We can only truly worship God in truth

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

Sound doctrine makes stress-free Christianity because we are believing the same as God believes—and He is always right! Although we don't need to be theologians, we should be able to rightly understand the Word of God:

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth. But avoid irreverent, empty speech, for this will produce an even greater measure of godlessness. 2Tim.2:15-16

Sound doctrine will keep us balanced, sensible and sensitive as well as helping us enjoy life as we walk in harmony with the Holy Spirit.

You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. Titus.2:1-2

Unsound doctrine is a lie and a deception and will drain your energy chasing after the wind or spirit (9x in Ecclesiastes)

Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun. Eccl 2:11

False religion (including false doctrine) keeps people away from God by making barriers between God and man—barriers such as having to have an intermediary such as a priest, or ritual; by imposing unnecessary restrictions of food, dress or behaviour

Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets, 'I will not impose any other burden on you, except to hold on to what you have until I come.' Rev 2:24-25

For you recall, brothers and sisters,13 our toil and drudgery: By working night and day so as not to impose a burden on any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and so is God, as to how holy and righteous and blameless our conduct was toward you who believe. As you know, we treated each one of you as a father treats his own children, exhorting and encouraging you and insisting that you live in a way worthy of God who calls you to his own kingdom and his glory. 1Thess 2:9-12

But true religion unites people with God.

But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit. 1Cor. 6:17

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. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. Rom 8:9-11

What is the difference between character and charisma?

Character is our personality;

I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge— God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1Cor. 1:4-9

Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings? 1Cor.3:1-4

Charisma is our gifting.

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Col 1:9-14

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. 1Cor. 12:4-11

Each person is responsible for their character (soul), about becoming mature but our gifting is a gift! Character is how we use our gifting

This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. 1Cor 4:1-2

But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." Matt 12:36-37

For the word of God is alive 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. Heb 4:12-13

Character is developed through difficulties

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. Jas 1:2-4

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. This inheritance is 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. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 1Pet 1:3-9

What does it mean to be spiritual?

Spiritual means to be grown-up; adult; mature functioning in the Body, measuring up to Christ's standard

Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults. In the Law it is written: "With other tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord." 1Co 14:20-21

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. Ep 4:11-16

To be Spiritual means to be able to stand on your own faith

The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is only Remaliah's son. If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.' " Isa 7:9

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Eph 6:10-17

To be spiritual is to be like God and to be in tune with God,

On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea." Rev 1:10-11

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. Rev 4:1-2

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. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Ga 5:22-26

17/12/2025

Psalm 13

Questions

Why is joy integral to the Christian message?

What did the Angels mean when they said "peace on earth"?

What does "Glory to God" mean?

Is it ever too late to get right with God?

Does God ever change His mind?

Is it important for our hymns to be doctrinally accurate? What about carols?

Questions

Why is joy integral to the Christian message?

Joy is part of the character of the Holy Spirit and Jesus

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

But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a sceptre of justice will be the sceptre of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." Heb.1:8-9

At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. Lk.10:21

Joy is the essence of the Kingdom of God

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

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. Ps.16:11

Joy is the mark of a Christian

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. Rom 15:13

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. Matt.13:44

The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him. Ps.28:7

So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. Jn.16:22-24

What did the Angels mean when they said "peace on earth"?

"*Peace on earth*" means peace with God—which is primarily a spiritual peace, but affects our whole person of spirit, soul and body. We don't see any political peace hear on earth and many people don't have any mental or even physical peace right now but God's offer of spiritual peace is as real and relevant today as it was when the Angels told the Shepherds.

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 boast in the hope of the glory of God. Rom.5:1-2

Peace on earth means peace with God is now not just when we die—on earth as it is in heaven

'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Matt 6:9-10

And when we have peace in our spirit, our mind and body will align with our spirit.

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. 3Jn 2

What does "Glory to God" mean?

Glory to God means giving God honour and respect. The angels and saints in heaven are doing this now:

Also in front of 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 its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." Whenever the living creatures give glory, honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: "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 4:6-11

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. Rom. 4:18-25

Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with 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 the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith— to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen. Ro 16:25-27

Is it ever too late to get right with God?

Yes and no!

Whilst we have breath we can still call on the Name of the Lord

Moses writes this about the righteousness that is by the law: "The person who does these things will live by them." But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down) "or 'Who will descend into the deep?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: 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." 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." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world." Rom 10:5-18

But we do not know when we will breath our last.

It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgmentHeb.9:27

You have made my life no longer than the width of my hand. My entire lifetime is just a moment to you; at best, each of us is but a breath." We are merely moving shadows, and all our busy rushing ends in nothing. We heap up wealth, not knowing who will spend it. Ps.39:5-6

There is no example or even hint that those who have died can repent—unless they are restored to life.

The time came when the beggar died. The angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, the rich man was suffering terribly. He looked up and saw Abraham far away. Lazarus was by his side. So the rich man called out, 'Father Abraham! Have pity on me! Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water. Then he can cool my tongue with it. I am in terrible pain in this fire.' But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember what happened in your lifetime. You received your good things. Lazarus received bad things. Now he is comforted here, and you are in terrible pain. Besides, a wide space has been placed between us and you. So those who want to go from here to you can't go. And no one can cross over from there to us.' The rich man answered, 'Then I beg you, father. Send Lazarus to my family. I have five brothers. Let Lazarus warn them. Then they will not come to this place of terrible suffering.' Abraham replied, 'They have the teachings of Moses and the Prophets. Let your brothers listen to them.' 'No, father Abraham,' he said. 'But if someone from the dead goes to them, they will turn away from their sins.' Abraham said to him, 'They do not listen to Moses and the Prophets. So they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' Lk.16:22-31

Does God ever change His mind?

Yes and no!

God is constant and does not change His mind—

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

He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a human being, that he should change his mind." 1Sam 15:29

"I the LORD do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. Mal 3:6

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. Jas 1:16-17

The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." Ps.110:4

but God does respond to repentance and prayer and reverts to His original intention

"When they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you become angry with them and give them over to the enemy, who takes them captive to a land far away or near; and if they have a change of heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captivity and say, 'We have sinned, we have done wrong and acted wickedly'; and if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their captivity where they were taken, and pray toward the land you gave their ancestors, toward the city you have chosen and toward the temple I have built for your Name; then from heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their pleas, and uphold their cause. And forgive your people, who have sinned against you. 2Chron 6:36-39

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

Is it important for our hymns to be doctrinally accurate? What about carols?

Yes and no!

Songs are important method of teaching.

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, 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. Eph. 5:18-20

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. Col 3:16-17

We can only worship God in spiritual truth

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

We usually revert to our songs for inspiration when we need support and if we normally sing something spiritually inaccurate, we will rely on a false hope, spend our time and effort on "useless rituals that lead to death" or even become deceived which is why the hymns that we sing are chosen to reinforce the plain, simple Gospel truths which are the foundation of our faith. Hymns like: *It is well with my soul. We have an Anchor that keeps the soul steadfast sure while the billows blow. Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine, O what a foretaste of glory divine.*

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. Heb 6:1-3

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 blesses those people who depend only on him. They belong to the kingdom of heaven! Matt.5:3CEV

Don't suppose I came to do away with the Law and the Prophets. I did not come to do away with them, but to give them their full meaning. Heaven and earth may disappear. But I promise you not even a period or comma will ever disappear from the Law. Everything written in it must happen. Matt 5:17-18 CEV

10/12/2025

Psalm 12

Video:

Questions

Why was Mary highly favoured and blessed among women? (Lk.1:28)
What does it mean to "*rejoice in God my Saviour*"?
How does God impart His life to us?
What was the significance of Jesus breathing on His Disciples? (*Jn.20:21-22*)
What is the main ministry of the Holy Spirit?
Why is God's Word described as "*alive and active*"?(*Heb.4:12*)

Comments

Why was Mary highly favoured and blessed among women? (Lk.1:28)

Mary was highly favoured and blessed among women because she was chosen to be the mother of God's Son. The 2nd Person of the Trinity (the Word of God) is eternal and so has always existed—but He had no human body until the Word became flesh (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. Jn.1:1-2

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. Jn.1:14

God is invisible, and so when anyone sees God it is Jesus the Word of God—even before He was born of Mary

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Col 1:15-20

When God was seen in the OT, we call it a "*Theophany*" or a "*Christophany*"—such as with Moses,

As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the LORD spoke with Moses. Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped, each at the entrance to his tent. The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent. Ex 33:9-11

When the Second Person of the Trinity became man (John 1:14), He laid aside His glory but not His divinity. This is called the *kenosis* ("the emptying"):

but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.[NASB] *Phil.2:7*

Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being.[NIV]

Thus, even in Christ's Incarnation He could exercise Divine prerogatives (such as control over nature, reading the thoughts of others, multiplying food) and receive Divine honour such as worship and prayerful petitions.

As **Christ pre-Incarnate**, He was not only omniscient and omnipotent, but also omnipresent. As **Christ Incarnate** He obviously retained the former two traits but His human body was not omnipresent (although arguably Christ, the Logos mysteriously maintained this during His incarnation). Christ's humanity meant that Christ experienced human limitations while maintaining His divinity. He could thirst, hunger, and tire (John 19:28; Matt. 4:2; John 4:6).

When Mary conceived Jesus, humanity was added to His pre-existent nature and Jesus became God's Son.

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, 2Tim.2:8
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. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"? And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire." But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a sceptre of justice will be the sceptre of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." Heb.1:1-9
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
Although Mary is the mother of God's Son, she is not the Mother of God.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that "*Mary is truly 'Mother of God' since she is the mother of the eternal Son of God made man, who is God himself.*"
The Assumption of Mary dogma states that Mary was assumed into heaven with body and soul. states: *The Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things.*
Some of these ideas come from Mary's intercession (request?) at the Wedding in Cana:
On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Jn.2:1-5
One of the components of the Catholic veneration of Mary is the focus on her participation in the processes of salvation and redemption. John's Gospel records her presence at the beginning and end of Jesus' public life. Particularly significant is Mary's presence at the Cross, when she received from her dying Son the charge to be mother to the beloved disciple. Catholics interpret that through the disciple, Christ is giving care of Mary to all Christians. The Acts of the Apostles expressly numbers the Mother of Jesus among the women of the first community awaiting Pentecost.
Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. Jn.19:25-27
The Immaculate Conception is the doctrine that the Virgin Mary was free of original sin from the moment of her conception and is one of the four Marian dogmas of the Catholic Church. The Council of Trent, held in C16th affirmed Mary's freedom from personal sin but the dogma of Immaculate Conception asserting Mary's freedom from original sin came in 1854.
Of course, Mary was truly blessed but we are equally blessed if we do God's will:
He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to his disciples, he 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." Matt 12:48-50

What does it mean to "*rejoice in God my Saviour*"?

Just what it says—rejoice in God our Saviour
Rejoice means to be happy and enthusiastic. Rejoicing is also a command from God:

But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who love your salvation say continually, "Great is the LORD!"[Ps.40:16]

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.[Phil.4:4-5]

Regardless of our circumstances or feelings, we are to remember what God has done for us and praise Him:

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.[Ps.103:1-5]

How does God impart His life to us?

By the Holy Spirit

Spirit, breath and wind are same word in Greek and Hebrew

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD. Ps.150:6

The human spirit is the lamp of the LORD that sheds light on one's inmost being.Prov.20:27

not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. [not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come.]2Thess.2:2

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendour of his coming.2Thess. 2:8

because God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 2Thess 2:13

What was the significance of Jesus breathing on His Disciples? (*Jn.20:21-22*)

To show that they now had God's breath and life within them.

Many believe that this was the Disciple's conversion under the New Covenant and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was their baptism in the Holy Spirit

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.Acts.1:8-4

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues* and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all.Acts.19:1-7*

The Holy Spirit has always been active in the world and people. The Holy Spirit was involved in Creation

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. Gen1:1-2

The Holy Spirit was imparted into Adam when God breathed into him

Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Gen. 2:7

The Holy Spirit is now within us

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.Jn.14:17

What is the main ministry of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit convinces/convicts of sin, righteousness and judgement—He convinces us of the sin of unbelief, the fact that we are now righteous in God's sight and that the devil has been judged and now stands condemned:

But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.[Jn.16:7-13]

By convincing us of the sin of unbelief, the Holy Spirit gives us faith to believe that Jesus is God's Son: *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.*[Jn.20:30-31]

The *My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour.*[Lk.1:46-47]

Why is God's Word described as "*alive and active*"?(*Heb.4:12*)

Because God's Word has intrinsic power and life:

For no word from God will ever fail. [Lk.1:37]

A literal rendering of the text is: *no word from God is void of power.*

God's Word accomplishes what He wants:

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.[Is.55:9-12]

But even though God's Word will accomplish what He wants, we still need to obey God's Word and put it into practice:

He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."[Lk.11:28]

God's Word is spiritual, living and life giving:

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them."

[The Spirit can make life. Sheer muscle and willpower don't make anything happen. Every word I've spoken to you is a Spirit-word, and so it is life-making. But some of you are resisting, refusing to have any part in this." (Jesus knew from the start that some weren't going to risk themselves with him. He knew also who would betray him.) He went on to say, "This is why I told you earlier that no one is capable of coming to me on his own. You get to me only as a gift from the Father."][Jn.6:63-65]

But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Jn.6:68

Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or laboured in vain. Phil.2:16-18

When Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel, he said to them, "Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you—they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."Deut.32:45-47

Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word. Fulfill your promise to your servant, so that you may be feared… This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life.Ps.119:37-38;50

03/12/2025

Psalm 11

Video: Herod's Temple - his Crowning Glory

Questions

Why was the OT Temple so important?
Why was incense burnt in the Temple worship?
What should Church be like?
How can we facilitate the outflowing of the Holy Spirit in our lives?
How can we facilitate the outflowing of the Holy Spirit in our Church?
How much credence should we give to prophecies?
What does "*the LORD make His face shine on you"* mean?

Comments

Why was the OT Temple so important?

The Old Covenant liturgies, rituals and premises were types and shadows of the true worship through Jesus Christ under the New Covenant. Each of the rituals illustrate what we have in Jesus Christ and were written down in Scripture so we can better understand our relationship with God

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.2:16-17

Now the main 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 a mere human being. Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already priests who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.Heb.8:1-6

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. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. 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! 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.Heb.9:11-15*

Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. Rev.11:19

"Return, faithless people," declares the LORD, "for I am your husband. I will choose you—one from a town and two from a clan—and bring you to Zion. Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding. In those days, when your numbers have increased greatly in the land," declares the LORD, "people will no longer say, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, nor will another one be made. At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the LORD, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honour the name of the LORD. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts. Jer.3:14-17

After this I looked, and I saw in heaven the temple—that is, the tabernacle of the covenant law—and it was opened. Out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean, shining linen and wore golden sashes around their chests. Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled

with the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.Rev.15:5f

But now, God's Temple is people—saints not stones

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.1Cor.3:16

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.Eph.2:19-22

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.Rev.21:22-23

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.1Pet.2:4-5

Why was incense burnt in the Temple worship?

Incense represented the prayers ascending to God

May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.[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.*[Rev.5:8] *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.*[Rev.8:3-4]

"Make an altar of acacia wood for burning incense. It is to be square, a cubit long and a cubit wide, and two cubits high—its horns of one piece with it. Overlay the top and all the sides and the horns with pure gold, and make a gold moulding around it. Make two gold rings for the altar below the moulding—two on each of the opposite sides—to hold the poles used to carry it. Make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. Put the altar in front of the curtain that shields the ark of the covenant law—before the atonement cover that is over the tablets of the covenant law—where I will meet with you. Aaron must burn fragrant incense on the altar every morning when he tends the lamps. He must burn incense again when he lights the lamps at twilight so incense will burn regularly before the LORD for the generations to come. Do not offer on this altar any other incense or any burnt offering or grain offering, and do not pour a drink offering on it. Once a year Aaron shall make atonement on its horns. This annual atonement must be made with the blood of the atoning sin offering for the generations to come. It is most holy to the LORD."Ex.30:1-10

What should Church be like?

Because Church is the Body of Christ and made up of Believers, Church should mirror Jesus, who is the exact image of the invisible God

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.Jn.1:17

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation… And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. Col.1:15;18

For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.Eph.5:23-24

United

In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval.1Cor.11:17-19

A place of edification and encouragement

But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified… So it is with you. Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church.1Cor.14:3-5;12

A place where God's wisdom is displayed

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,Eph.3:10

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

A place where God's glory is displayed

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.Eph.3:20-21

How can we facilitate the outflowing of the Holy Spirit in our lives?

Don't put any obstacles in the way

Keep in step with the Spirit

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.Gal.5:25-26

Be in the Spirit

On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, Rev.1:10

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 ruby. A rainbow that shone like 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.Rev.4:1-4

Cultivate the fruit of the Spirit

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 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.Gal.5:16-23*

How can we facilitate the outflowing of the Holy Spirit in our Church?

As above —what we do as individuals we will also do corporately

Maintain unity

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. 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.4:1-6

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.15:5

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.In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:Phil.2:1-5

Draw near to God

Therefore, brothers and sisters, 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, 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. 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, 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.Heb.10:19-25

Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favour 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.Jas.4:5-8

God is nearer than our hands and our feet because He is in our heart and mouth—so we need to speak with passion and conviction

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.Rom.10:10

How much credence should we give to prophecies?

The Church is built on the apostles and prophets

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.Eph.2:19-22

In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to people 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.Eph.3:4-6

We should discern carefully any prophecies

Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said.1Cor.14:29

We should not despise prophecies

Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil.1Thess.5:19-22

But prophecy will build up—edification, exhortation and encouragement

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

True prophecy is always Jesus focused (i.e. honouring Jesus and in line with Jesus' character

Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus.Rev.19:10

Worship only God. For the essence of prophecy is to give a clear witness for Jesus.

Worship God! What Jesus taught is the very heart of prophecy.

The witness of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

What does "*the LORD make His face shine on you*" mean?

God smiles on us— He love us and is for us not against us,

the LORD make his face shine on you.Nu.6:25

Make your face shine on your servant and teach me your decrees.Ps.119:135

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.Jer.29:11

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her

sins. A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert 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 people will see it together. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."Is.40:1-5

26/11/2025

Psalm 10:12-18

FFBosworth

Questions

What are God's rules for running our spiritual race?
How are we qualified to receive our heavenly prize?
Can we be disqualified from our heavenly prize?
Why is the world opposed to God and His Kingdom?
How can we ensure that we are not influenced by this world's values?
What is the primary work that God wants us to do?

Comments

What are God's rules for running our spiritual race?

The 10 Commandments are the ground rules (with the New Covenant definition of "Sabbath")

And God spoke all these words: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 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; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour. You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."Ex.20:1-7

And these can be summarised as 2 commands

"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. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."Matt.22:36-40

Or possibly just 1 command:

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing right.

But our neighbour is Jesus:

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" He answered, " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' "'You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?"… "Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." Lk.10:25-29;36-37

How are we qualified to receive our heavenly prize?

It is God who qualifies us

Giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.Col.1:12-14

However, we still need to live up to the revelation we have

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained. Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!Phil.1:12-2:1

And we live by faith—this means living in harmony and unity with God as we trust Him in our daily lives

For we live by faith, not by sight. 2Cor.5:7

For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!Gal.2:19-21

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. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For, "In just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay." And, "But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back." But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.Heb.10:32-39

Can we be disqualified from our heavenly prize?

According to Paul—Yes

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test Christ, 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 culmination of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. 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 endure it. Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say.1Cor.9:24-10:14

Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. They have 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 elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely 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.Col.2:18-23

However, wrong living and wrong thinking (and both can be defined as unbelief) will rob us from victory now and will also rob us of something in the here-after

"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!'… 'So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. 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.25:22-30

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.1Cor.3:10-15

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. 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.5:1-5

And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love. I say this because 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 we 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 them into your house or welcome them. Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work.2Jn.6-11

Why is the world opposed to God and His Kingdom?

They are spiritually dead, under the deception and control of the evil one

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.5:19-20

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.2Cor.4:3-6

How can we ensure that we are not influenced by this world's values?

Keep our minds renewed and washed with the water of the Word of God

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

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 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

What is the primary work that God wants us to do?

The primary work God wants from us is to believe in Jesus

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.6:28-29

Jesus told them, "I have food to eat that you don't know about." The disciples asked each other, "Did someone bring him something to eat?" Jesus told them, "My food is to do what the one who sent me wants me to do and to finish the work he has given me. "Don't you say, 'In four more months the harvest will be here'? I'm telling you to look and see that the fields are ready to be harvested. The person who harvests the crop is already getting paid. He is gathering grain for eternal life. So the person who plants the grain and the person who harvests it are happy together. In this respect the saying is true: 'One person plants, and another person harvests.' I have sent you to harvest a crop you have not worked for. Other people have done the hard work, and you have followed them in their work."Jn.4:32-38

Faith is the only way to please God:

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. By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith. By faith Abraham…Heb.11:6-8

And then we must live as Jesus lived

Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." Lk.10:36-37

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.Jn.13:15-17

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.1Pet.2:21

"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."Matt.11:28-29

This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.1Jn.2:6

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:Phil.2:5

"For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"Gal.2:19-21

19/11/2025

Psalm 10:1-12

Video: Annie Davies

Questions

Does the spiritual climate of our community affect our spiritual life?
What do you understand by an "empowered life"?
What do you understand by an "ennobled life"?
What do you understand by a "submitted life"?
What do you understand by a "spiritual life"?

Comments

Does the spiritual climate of our community affect our spiritual life?

Yes and No!

No! The immorality of Corinth did not hider Paul's ministry!

The darker the night the brighter the light shines! Where evil is rife, God's grace is even more effective:

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.Rom.5:20-21

There is a teaching about spiritual warfare that names spirits (demons) and apportions them territories (*territorial spirits*) to control—like countries and cities. It is based on Daniel's vision and Paul's description of spiritual warfare:

Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come." While he was saying this to me, I bowed with my face toward the ground and was speechless. Then one who looked like a man touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and began to speak. I said to the one standing before me, "I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I feel very weak. How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe." Again the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength. "Do not be afraid, you who are highly esteemed," he said. "Peace! Be strong now; be strong." When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Speak, my lord, since you have given me strength." So he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince. And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him.)Dan.10:12-11:1*

By the humility and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am "timid" when face to face with you, but "bold" toward you when away! I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.2Cor.10:1-6

One of the fundamental rules of exegesis is that you never make a doctrine from 1 Bible verse (or passage)—and anyway these 2 Scriptures are unconnected. There is nowhere in the NT that even hints of a particular demon having control of a geographical area—that is pantheism. The Bible is clear that the whole world belongs to God

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters. Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god. They will receive

blessing from the LORD and vindication from God their Savior.Ps.24:1-5
When Jesus died on the Cross, He defeated the devil and all his angels
God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.Col.2:13-15
The one 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
This means that the devil has no authority over the Believer.
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. Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.1Jn.5:18-21
The devil attacks the strongholds of our mind, not the strongholds of our town or country—which is why we need to renew our minds
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 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
The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.2Cor.10
The devil can deceive us, the devil can oppress us, the devil can attack us—but the devil cannot harm us when we stay in fellowship with God
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
The devil has no legitimate authority over us Believers because we belong to God. God declares that we are righteous by faith and it is by our faith (our belief that Jesus is the Christ) that we are overcomers!
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. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.Rom.3:22-26
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
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
Even before Calvary it only took 3 Scriptures to make the devil flee, so now he has been defeated, we have no need to pay any attention to him
But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might. Micah 3:8
We resist the devil by drawing near to God, not by engaging in any conflict with him:
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.Jas.4:7-8

In the very same way, on the strength of their dreams these ungodly people pollute their own bodies, reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings. But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" 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. Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion. Jude 8-11*

Yes! It seems that apathy is a bigger hindrance to evangelism than evil. It is easier to evangelise in places where people are open to the spiritual world—such as pagan religions and even Islam—than in our country where there is a resistance to Jesus Christ. Some areas clearly have a mindset that seems to dominate the community, but there is no Biblical example or even hint that this a specific demon that is controlling them. Actually the devil is called the "god of this age" because he dominates all non-Christians:

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.2Cor.4:3-4

"Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!" 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. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. The crowd spoke up, "We have heard from the Law that the Messiah will remain forever, so how can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of Man'?"Jn.12:27-34

We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.1Jn.5:19

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.Eph.2:1-2

It only takes a small percentage of the population to change the community—either for good of bad.

What do you understand by an "empowered life"?

An empowered life is to live in God's Kingdom in fellowship with God—i.e. in unison and unity with God

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.Gal.5:25

Christians are followers of Christ, the Anointed One and so their lives are empowered by the Holy Spirit

But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, Micah 3:8

He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."Acts.1:7-8

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 human wisdom, but on God's power.1Cor.2:4-5

When we became a Christian, God not only changed us but He made His home with us. Christ is not just **<u>with</u>** us, but He is actually **<u>within</u>** us:

the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.[Col.1:27]

Christ means "*anointed one*" and the "*anointed one*" within us is the Holy Spirit:

And <u>Christ lives within you</u>, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, <u>lives in you</u>. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same <u>Spirit living within you</u>.[Rom.8:10-11]

God gives the Spirit without limit,[Jn.3:34]

This means that a Believer cannot become spiritually empty—

Jesus told them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never become hungry, and whoever believes in me will never become thirsty.[Jn.6:35]

Feelings are not truth. Truth is reality(the facts) as God sees it not what we feel about it. And so if we feel empty, we need to confess the truth and say what God says about us not what we feel. David began to think it was not worth serving God but said that if he vocalised those feelings it would be a betrayal of the truth:

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.Ps.73:1-18

Although we cannot have **more of God coming in to us**, we do need **more of God coming out of us**! And we need to keep reminding ourselves of who we really are or else we will start believing that we need more of God or more power, or more anointing, or more forgiveness, or more cleaning.

John G. Lake: *If you are born again, you are a son of God. And for you to tear yourself out of your sonship, your relationship and the righteousness of God and put yourself over in the reality of death and tell God you are dirty, unclean, that His blood has not cleansed you, and His life has not been delivered to you—it is a monstrous thing. It is alright to sing that as an unregenerate, but it is not the experience of the sons and daughters of God.*

What do you understand by an "ennobled life"?

To live an ennobled life is to live in God's Kingdom

Don't you know that evil people will not receive God's kingdom? Don't be fooled. Those who commit sexual sins will not receive the kingdom. Neither will those who worship statues of gods or commit adultery. Neither will men who are prostitutes or who commit homosexual acts. Neither will thieves or those who always want more and more. Neither will those who are often drunk or tell lies or cheat. People who live like that will not receive God's kingdom. Some of you used to do those things. But your sins were washed away. You were made holy. You were made right with God. All of that was done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.[1Cor.6:9-11]

God has set a high standard for His subjects, but we are more than just citizens of heaven—we are also His family. This means we have an obligation to maintain the honour of God's Name by keeping to His standards. If we really understand what God has done for us, we will want to live holy, pure, clean and respectable lives that honour Him. Our spiritual past, together with its guilt, has been erased and removed—it's gone:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here![2Cor.5:17]

Living in the dirt is the devil's domain!

You will crawl on the ground. You will eat dust all of the days of your life.[Gen.4:14]

We are better than that—and instead of living in the gutter, we should be enjoying heaven now:

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.[Col.3:1-2]

God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.[Eph.2:6]

We are sons of God and we should live like sons and heirs

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.8:16-17

If we live like mere humans we will die like mere humans

Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are "gods" '? If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be set aside— what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world?Jn.10:34-36

"I said, 'You are "gods"; you are all sons of the Most High.' But you will die like mere mortals; you will fall like every other ruler."Ps.82:6-7

Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings?1Cor.3:1-4

John G. Lake: *There should be a development of God and His nature in you, through the agency of the Holy Spirit. This process of re-making and re-moulding should change your nature and life and dissolve difficulties out of your soul.*

What do you understand by a "submitted life"?

To live a submitted life is to live in God's Kingdom:

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.1Cor.15:24-25

This world will continue in its opposition to God until Jesus has destroyed all opposition but by definition, Christians are followers of Christ not opposers of Him.

When we became a Christian we confessed Jesus as Lord:

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.Rom.10:9-10

To confess that Jesus is Lord means that we willingly submit to His authority. But it also means that we have access to God's Kingdom—and God is pleased to give us the Kingdom:

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.Lk.12:32

To submit to Jesus is to yield to Him by saying: "*Yes Lord*". This means that grumbling and complaining should be eradicated from our vocabulary.

And don't grumble as some of them did, and then were destroyed by the angel of death. These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age. If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.1Cor.10:10-13

It is the willing and obedient who live in the blessings of God's Kingdom:

If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword.Is.1:19-20

David's prayer of contrition was under the Old Covenant but under the New Covenant it is the experience of every Christian at conversion.

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you.Ps.51:10-13

John G Lake: *It is a sad thing when you hear Christians with a groan. The secret of Christianity is the secret of Christ possessing the heart of a person, a person being yielded to Him so that His victory, His consciousness and His*

power possesses your spirit and mind.

What do you understand by a "spiritual life"?

To live a spiritual life is to live in God's Kingdom:

I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.[1Cor.15:50]

God's Kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, but we are more than a just a spirit who lives in a body—we are a trinity of spirit, soul and body:

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.[1Thess.5:23-24]

the order of spirit, soul and body is important. Until our spiritual life dominates our soul life, we are not spiritual (no matter how religious we may seem) and we remain infants in our faith and spiritually immature. A spiritually immature person doesn't understand about righteousness, that is, they don't know who they are in Christ.

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.[Heb.5:13-6:1]

The Greek word for "*infant*" is literally "*a non-speaker*" so spiritually immature people don't talk about who they are in Christ! And so a spiritually mature person is someone whose re-born spirit dominates their personality and mind (soul) by making their soul (their mind and personality) praise God by saying good things about Him.

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.43:5]

John G. Lake: *It is not the words you say that is going to bless them. They need something greater—they need the thing in your soul. When they receive it, then their soul will open and there will be a divine response. Give it to them—it is the love of God.*

12/11/2025

Psalm 9:11-20

Video: WW1 Military Chaplains 1.16:45

Questions

Should we remember those who died in wars and conflicts?

Should Christians fight in political wars?

Can a Christian be a pacifist?

What does the Bible say about remembering the past?

What does it mean that God "*remembers our sins no more*"?

In what ways does God remember us?

Comments

Should we remember those who died in wars and conflicts?

Yes. Everything has a price and our democracy and freedom has been bought with the lives of millions of people who died defending our way of life. If we forget or ignore them, we disrespect their sacrifice and don't deserve our liberty.

However, we should not harbour unforgiveness towards those who wronged us but as far as it is possible, we should live in peace.

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. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.Rom.12:17-21

We should be careful to root out any bitterness:

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

We should pray for those in authority—including our political leaders:

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 Savior, 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. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.1Tim.2:1-6

Should Christians fight in political wars?

War is terrible but sometimes the lesser of 2 evils! Today we can easily become de-sensitised about suffering and the horrors of war when we only see it on film because the actors don't really die but re-appear in another film! But the reality of war is people die horrible deaths and they never return!

However, a country's main responsibility is to protect its citizens, and if we believe that, then we cannot absolve our responsibility by refusing to protect our community—whatever the cost. God is unchanging and the God of war in the OT is the same God of the NT. There is a difference between fighting for personal grievances and defending ourself and others from danger or abuse.

Jesus said that if His Kingdom was a political Kingdom, His disciples would fight:

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place." "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. 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."Jn.18:36-37

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. "Put your sword back in its place,"

Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"Matt.26:50-54

Can a Christian be a pacifist?

We have to define pacifist.

There is a difference between murder and killing (taking another person's life). Murder is premeditated and intentional whereas killing someone else can be accidental, or even in defence of self or others. The command of God is

You shall not murder.Ex.20:13

But those who do murder, can expect to forfeit their own life:

Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. The fear and dread of you will fall on all the beasts of the earth, and on all the birds in the sky, on every creature that moves along the ground, and on all the fish in the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each human being, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of another human being. Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind.Gen.9:1-7

Jesus was not a pacifist:

"Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven. "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn" 'a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.' "Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.Matt.10:32-39

He said to them, "But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one. It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors'; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfilment." The disciples said, "See, Lord, here are two swords." "That's enough!" he replied.Lk.22:36-38*

People who enforce law and order on behalf of the government are called "God's servants":

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. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honor.Rom.13:1-7

What does the Bible say about remembering the past?

We should learn from the past

The words "God accepted Abraham's faith" were written not only for Abraham. <u>They were written also for us</u>. We believe in the God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. So God will accept our faith and make us right with himself. Jesus was handed over to die for our sins. He was raised to life in order to make us right with God.[Rom.4:23-25]

<u>Everything written long ago was written to teach us so that we would have confidence through the endurance and encouragement which the Scriptures give us.</u> May God, who gives you this endurance and encouragement, allow you to

live in harmony with each other by following the example of Christ Jesus. Then, having the same goal, you will praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.[Rom.15:4-6]

Our faith is rooted in the past—the historical events leading up to Jesus' conception, birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension—and we should especially remember these facts

So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.[2Pet.1:12-15]

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 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.1Cor.15:1-8

What does it mean that God "*remembers our sins no more*"?

God doesn't "*forget*" our sins in a lapse of memory, only to remember them again sometime in the future! No! God consciously and deliberately "*remembers them no more*" because they are no more—they are gone.

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.[Ps.103:11-12]

I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.[Is.43:25] *"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."*[Is.1:18]

These statements were prophesies written under the Old Covenant, but they are fulfilled in the New Covenant—the covenant that Jesus implemented and the covenant that God remembers.

God has rescued us from the power of darkness and has brought us into the kingdom of his Son, whom he loves. His Son paid the price to free us, which means that our sins are forgiven.[Col.1:13-14]

All the prophets testify that people who believe in the one named Jesus receive forgiveness for their sins through him.[Acts.10:43] *I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.*[Mk.2:10]

For I will forgive their wickedness and I will remember their sins no more.[Heb.8:12]

Jesus said that repentance and forgiveness (remission) of sins will be preached in His name to all nations.

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem [And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his Name among 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

Forgiveness means release, liberty or freedom—we have been set free from our sins!

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "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." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."Lk.4:16-21

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

He has sent me to ·tell the captives they are free [proclaim liberty/release for the captives/prisoners]and to tell the blind that they can see again. God sent me to free those who have been treated unfairly

I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.1Jn.2:12

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.Col.1:13-14

We are to confess Jesus

If you declare [confess] with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.Rom.10:9

Confess (homologeo (ὁμολογέω) **means "*to speak the same thing.*"** We are to say the same as God says—including what God says about our sin

If you are born again, you are a child of God. Never tear yourself out of that relationship and the righteousness of God by saying that you are dirty or unclean—Jesus' blood has cleansed you and His life has been delivered to you! It is alright to sing that as an unregenerate but it is not the experience of the sons and daughters of God. *John G Lake*

Praise is always positive—it is saying good words (benediction) and glory words (doxology) about God. We are to forget the past (including our past sins):

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. The wild animals honour me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.Is.43:18-21

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. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. 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 Savior Jesus Christ.2Pet.1:5-11

In what ways does God remember us?

He remembered us in our low estate, His love endures forever. [Give thanks to the One who remembered us when things were going badly for us. His faithful love continues forever.][Ps.136:23]

"Remember these things, Jacob, for you, Israel, are my servant. I have made you, you are my servant; Israel, I will not forget you. I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you."Is.44:21-22

We are important to God and our names are engraved on Jesus' hands—this was fulfilled literally when Jesus was nailed to the cross.

Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;[Is.49:15-16]

God will never forget us or forsake us!

Remember these things, O Jacob, for you are my servant, O Israel. I have made you, you are my servant; O Israel, I will not forget you. I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you.[Is.44:21-22]

God keeps a record of what we say

Then those who feared the LORD spoke with each other, and the LORD listened to what they said. In his presence, a scroll of remembrance was written to record the names of those who feared him and always thought about the honour of his name.[Mal.3:16]

05/11/2025

Psalm 9:1-10

Video: Mike Petzer 2025 70

Questions

How do we know that we are saved and our sins are forgiven?
Are feelings and emotions important to our faith?
Why can we trust the Bible to be God's Word?
What is the purpose of Scripture?
Does it matter what translations we read?
How does God speak through His Word?
How important is prophesy?

Comments

How do we know that we are saved and our sins are forgiven?

Because of Jesus' resurrection

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 if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead… 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. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.1Cor.15:1-3;14-15;17-22

We are saved by grace through faith

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

This means that we cannot save ourselves but that God saves us—but we are only saved when we believe in Jesus Christ (that is, when we place our trust in Him).

He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive 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.Jn.1:11-12

But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down) "or 'Who will descend into the deep?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: 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." 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.10:6-13*

The Holy Spirit gives us a witness so that we have a confirmation of our salvation

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 [The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God; God's Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are]. 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

Faith give assurance:

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

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.Heb.11:1-2

Therefore, brothers and sisters, 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, 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.Heb.10:19-22

that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.Col.4:12

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.1Jn.4:16-18

Are feelings and emotions important to our faith?

Yes because we are a trinity of spirit, soul and body

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.1Thess.5:23-24

We are to be like Jesus and He had emotions

Jesus, tired as he was from the journey,Jn.4:6

But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a sceptre of justice will be the sceptre of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."Heb.1:8-9

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 opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.Heb.12:1-3

Our faith comes with emotions

So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.Jn.16:22-24

Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.Lk.2:10-11

Why can we trust the Bible to be God's Word?

Internal evidence

The Bible itself has confidence in the Scriptures

Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you. Deut.4:2

See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it. Deut.12:33

Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar. Prov.30:6

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. (Rev.22:19

Jesus had full confidence in Scripture

Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "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."Jn.7:38-39

If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be set aside— what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world?Jn.10:35-36

The apostles had full confidence in Scripture

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.Jn.2:22

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

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.2Pet.1:20-21

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.2Pet.3:15-17

External evidence

The Bible is still changing lives, it is the most published book, archaeology is still confirming the historical accuracy of Scriptures.

What is the purpose of Scripture?

To reveal God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how 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.1Tim.3:14-17

Consult God's instruction and the testimony of warning. If anyone does not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.Is.8:20

Does it matter what translations we read?

Yes and No! It would be foolish to study and base our knowledge of God on a translation by a known heretical organisation (but God can even use that when there is nothing else). Faith comes from God's Word not from a particular translation. And there is no original Scripture available to us today—every Scripture in any language is a translation of a copy, of a copy. There are not even any original Hebrew or Greek original manuscripts left. The main Greek manuscripts (Textus Receptus) was translated by Erasmus from mostly Jerome's Latin Vulgate Bible. Martin Luther dismissed Erasmus as "*the vilest miscreant that ever disgraced the earth*" and also opposed his humanism:

Erasmus is very pitiful with his prefaces, though he tries to smooth them over; he appears to see no difference between Jesus Christ our Savior, and the wise pagan legislator Solon. He sneers at St. Paul and St. John; and ventures to say, that the Epistle to the Romans, whatever it might have been at a former period, is not applicable to the present state of things.

We can "hear" with our eyes because hearing is about receiving in our heart not just hearing with our ears

The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables? "He replied, "Because 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 they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:" 'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' 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.Matt.13:10-17

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.Rev.2:7

these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so 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, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. 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.2:10-14*

Every Word of God has life

For no word from God will ever fail." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.Lk.1:37-38 [For nothing is impossible with God. But the literal Greek is "No word of God is void of power]

God's Word has spiritual life

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe."Jn.6:63

This means we have to believe God's Word when we hear it

*"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"*But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?"* Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world." Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, "I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding."Rom.10:13-19*

Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.' " And yet his works have been finished since the creation of the world. For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "On the seventh day God rested from all his works." And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest." 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.Heb.4:1-11*

How does God speak through His Word?

The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of Scripture, breathing God's Spirit/life into the words

and so God speaks though the Holy Spirit into our spirit. However, Scripture can be distorted:

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. [Some of his comments are hard to understand, and those who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters to mean something quite different, just as they do with other parts of Scripture. And this will result in their destruction.NLT]2Pet.3:15-16

How important is prophesy?

In the OT God spoke through the Prophets and Seers. In the NT God speaks through His Son

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. 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

We should not despise prophesy

Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil.1Thes.5:19-22

But most prophesy today is merely emotional fervour with little or no substance.

True prophesy is about Jesus

Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus. [Worship God! What Jesus taught is the very heart of prophecy."NIrV Worship only God. For the essence of prophecy is to give a clear witness for Jesus.NLT Worship God, because the ·message [witness; testimony] ·about [or from] Jesus ·is the spirit that gives all prophecy [or is the essence of true prophecy; or is Spirit-inspired prophecy; is the spirit/Spirit of prophecy]."EXB]Rev.19:10

God does not expect us to go to a "prophet" for direction or help—He expects us to go to the Word of God.

Consult God's instruction and the testimony of warning. If anyone does not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. Is.8:20

When God speaks to us, He speaks directly to us first and then He may confirm it through another person or He may get someone to sow a seed into our minds and then He will confirm it—but always through 2 or 3 witnesses

'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'[Dt 19:15]Matt.18:16

I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. Jn.14:29

"All this I have told you so that you will not fall away… I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them… "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.16:1;4;33

We should listen to what people say but we are under no obligation to do what they say—even if they say (or believe) that God told them!

The king said to the man of God, "Come home with me for a meal, and I will give you a gift." But the man of God answered the king, "Even if you were to give me half your possessions, I would not go with you, nor would I eat bread or drink water here. For I was commanded by the word of the LORD: 'You must not eat bread or drink water or return by the way you came.' " So he took another road and did not return by the way he had come to Bethel. Now there was a certain old prophet living in Bethel, whose sons came and told him all that the man of God had done there that day. They also told their father what he had said to the king. Their father asked them, "Which way did he go?" And his sons showed him which road the man of God from Judah had taken. So he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." And when they had saddled the donkey for him, he mounted it 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 ancestors.' "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 left lying on the road, with both the donkey and the lion standing beside it. Some people who passed by saw the body lying there, with the lion standing beside the body, and they went and reported it in the city where the old prophet lived. When the prophet who had brought him back from his journey heard of it, he said, "It is the man of God who defied the word of the LORD. The LORD has given him over to the lion, which has mauled him and killed him, as the word of the LORD had warned him."1Kg.13:7-26

God is the best of everything including the best Teacher and if we are in fellowship with Him, His Word and His people, we can be confident that God will clearly explain what He wants us to know.

Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." Jn.10:1-5

"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. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.Jn.10:14-16

God is for us not against us.

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD,Jer.29:11-14

And if we don't hear Him clearly or we are unsure, God will speak again to us—re Samuel

A third time the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.' " So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel! "Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." And the LORD said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle.1Sam.3:8-11

29/10/2025

Psalm 8

Video: Mike Petzer 2025 65

Questions

What does it mean to *rightly divide the word of truth.*[2Tim.2:15]?
How can we understand the Bible correctly?
How can we stay spiritually healthy?
In what way does spiritual health affect mental and physical health?
What is God's Kingdom like?
How is God's Kingdom different from the kingdoms of the world?

Comments

What does it mean to *rightly divide the word of truth.*[2Tim.2:15]?

The whole Bible is inspired by God and the whole Bible is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness

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

But some parts are more relevant to our faith than others, some parts are more suitable for public reading than others, some parts are harder to understand than others.

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.2Pet.3:15-16

The Bible is a whole collection of literary genre, including history, prose, poetry, prophecy, promises etc. The Old Testament anticipates the coming Messiah, the New Testament explains who the Messiah is.

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.Jn.5:39-40

"I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: 'He who shared my bread has turned against me.'Jn.13:18

And the coming of the Messiah is the great divide—we have even used it to divide the calendar BC – AD. Before Moses came people had to rely on their conscience to reach out to God but when Moses was given the Old Covenant, people had to reach out to God through the rituals of that Covenant—but they were still only saved through faith:

But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved. Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see… By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead. By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 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. By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith. By faith Abraham,.. All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth... By faith Moses,.. By faith the walls of Jericho fell.. By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient. And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched

the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground. 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.Heb.10:39-11:40

But after Jesus returned to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the Old Covenant became obsolete because we have a much better New Covenant.

But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises. For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. But God found fault with the people and said: "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.Heb.8:6-13

For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us." All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.Acts.6:4-15

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.Acts.21:20-21

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.(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' ") Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.Jn.1:14-18*

The distinction between Old and New Covenants is crucial to "*rightly dividing the word of truth*" and if we don't understand these differences between Old and New Covenants, we will become confused as to how God wants us to worship Him, how to pray and even how to live our lives.

Since Pentecost, God does not send His Holy Spirit from heaven to earth because the Holy Spirit is already here—and God does not take the Holy Spirit away from us either. David did ask God to create a new spirit within him, and not to take the Holy Spirit from him—but he was under the Old Covenant, not the New.

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.Ps.51:9-10

God doesn't keep re-creating a new spirit within us after conversion and He will never leave us.

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because 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 mere mortals do to me?"Heb.13:5-6

God's doesn't give us more of the Holy Spirit than He gave us at conversion.

When the seventh month came and the Israelites had settled in their towns, all the people came together as one in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the teacher of the Law to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded for Israel. So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law… Ezra the teacher of the Law stood on a high wooden platform built for the occasion… Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. Ezra praised the LORD, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. The Levites… instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read. Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is holy to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law. Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." The Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be still, for this is a holy day. Do not grieve." Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them.
Neh.8:1-12

How can we understand the Bible correctly?

As above—understand the difference between Old and New Covenants; between promises and premises; between past, present and future.

As we read the Bible, we need to understand it with our mind but we also need to receive the Word of God in our spirit and so we need the Holy Spirit's revelation

Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the portico of the temple, its buildings, its storerooms, its upper parts, its inner rooms and the place of atonement. He gave him the plans of all that the Spirit had put in his mind for the courts of the temple of the LORD and all the surrounding rooms, for the treasuries of the temple of God and for the treasuries for the dedicated things. He gave him instructions for the divisions of the priests and Levites, and for all the work of serving in the temple of the LORD, as well as for all the articles to be used in its service.1Chron.28:11-13

I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. I approached one of those standing there and asked him the meaning of all this.Dan.7:15-16

Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; 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.Rom.8:5-8

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding. Otherwise when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer, say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying? You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified.1Cor.14:14-17

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.Phil.2:1-2

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

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, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.Eph.1:17-19

However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived"—the things God has prepared for those who love him—these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so 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, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.* 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. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?"*But we have the mind of Christ.1Cor.2:9-16*

How can we stay spiritually healthy?

Food, exercise and rest

The Word of God is our spiritual food:

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

Our spiritual exercises can be likened to breathing —that is praying in the spirit:

But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love.Jude20

Our spiritual rest is not striving to impress God but trusting in Him (accepting what God has done for us in Jesus and then living in those benefits).

Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said.Heb.4:1-3

Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)… Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.Jn.4:6-8;31-34

In what way does spiritual health affect mental and physical health?

We are a trinity of spirit, soul and body and each part influences and is influenced by the other parts of us. However, our spirit is the most important part of us and if we let our soul or body dominate us, we will be unbalanced and most likely to become unstable and out of harmony with God (you could call it sin!),

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.3Jn.2

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to 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.Prov.3:5-8

My son, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to one's whole body. Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips.Prov.4:20-24

What is God's Kingdom like?

Initially and ultimately God's Kingdom will be like Eden and Paradise

Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."Lk.23:43

I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell.2Cor.12:1-4

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.Rev.2:7

But right now it is God's domain over people's hearts and minds

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. "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God."Lk.9:23-27

Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."Lk.17:20-21

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.Rom.14:16-17

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.1Cor.4:20

How is God's Kingdom different from the kingdoms of the world?

God's Kingdom is a submission to God and a promotion of His values. The world's kingdoms are about accumulation of worldly wealth (money and assets) and domination of others.

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

Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? Jas.2:5

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?Mk.8:35-37

A dispute also 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. 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 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.Lk.22:24-30

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, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all." He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child 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."Mk.9:33-39

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. 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.Eph.2:1-5

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. 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.Phil.2:3-7

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever."Rev.11:15

22/10/2025

Psalm 7:9-17

Video: Mike Petzer 2025 60

Questions

Why is everyone uniquely individual?
What is meant by "*original sin*"?
What were the main characteristics of David's Tent (*1Chron.16*)?
What is the relevance of David's Tent today?
What is spiritual maturity?
How can we mature spiritually?

Comments

Why is everyone uniquely individual?

We are more than just chemicals because we are alive and have a soul (personality)—but so do animals. Humans are made in God's image and we have an eternal spirit which elevates us above the reast of Creation.

What do workers gain from their toil? I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God. I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people will fear him.[Eccl.3:9-14]

Even if we had a similar body to someone else (which we don't!) our personality and spiritual life makes us each a unique individual. When we breath our last breath, our mortal life has ended but we still exist as a unique person—who will have to give an account to God for our own life:

But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.1Pet.4:5

Some religions teach that after death we are absorbed into a great mass of existence with no personality (and no accountability either).

Jesus confirmed that Abraham Isaac and Jacob are still real living people

I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. Matt.8:11

But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."Matt.22:31-32

Moses and Elijah were clearly recognised by the 3 Disciples *About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendour, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure,* which he was about to bring to fulfilment at Jerusalem. Lk.9:28-31*

Other religions teach that we are annihilated when we die, but our spirit cannot disintegrate into nothing because it is spirit which is eternal and returns to our Maker:

Remember [your Creator]—before the silver cord is severed, and the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, and the wheel broken at the well, and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.[Eccl12:6-7]

This means that we are responsible for our behaviour and are accountable to God who made us—we each will have to give an account for our life, our behaviour and even our words And we each have to give an account for the life we have lived:

For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written:" 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God.' "So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.Rom.4:11-12

Although Solomon recognised that God would judge us all—both the righteous and the wicked—he didn't have the advantage of living after Jesus' resurrection or the advantage of the completed Scriptures and so he wasn't sure about what happens after death:

I said to myself, "God will bring into judgment both the righteous and the wicked, for there will be a time for every activity, a time to judge every deed." I also said to myself, "As for humans, God tests them so that they may see that they are like the animals. Surely the fate of human beings is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; humans have no advantage over animals. Everything is meaningless. All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return. Who knows if the human spirit rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth?" So I saw that there is nothing better for a person than to enjoy their work, because that is their lot. For who can bring them to see what will happen after them?Eccl.3:17-20

But we have the advantage of God's completed revelation to mankind—Jesus Christ

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. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.Heb.1:1-4

And Jesus said that we will have to give an account for every idle word spoken

"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 the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."Matt.12:33-37

What is meant by "*original sin*"?

Original sin (Latin: *peccatum originale*) in Christian theology refers to the condition of sinfulness that all humans share, which is inherited from Adam and Eve due to the Fall, involving the loss of original righteousness and the distortion of the Image of 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 from it you will certainly die."Gen.2:16-17

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.Ps.51:5

We are sinners, not because we have done wrong, but because Adam' sinned and we are his descendants.

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—To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where 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 is a pattern of the one to come. Rom.5:12–14

We are also righteous, not because we have done good but because Jesus is righteous and we are Jesus' "descendants" by being born again.

For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ! Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.Rom.5:17-19

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.2Cor.5:21

Doctrine in the Church of England. (1938 report)

Man is by nature capable of communion with God, and only through such communion can he become what he was created to be. "Original sin" stands for the fact that from a time apparently prior to any responsible act of choice man is lacking in this communion, and if left to his own resources and to the influence of his natural environment cannot attain to his destiny as a child of God.

The Methodist Church upholds Article VII in the Articles of Religion in the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church:

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.

Methodist theology teaches that a believer is made free from original sin when they are entirely sanctified.

We believe that entire sanctification is that act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotement to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect. It is wrought by the baptism with or infilling of the Holy Spirit, and comprehends in one experience the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering the believer for life and service. Entire sanctification is provided by the blood of Jesus, is wrought instantaneously by grace through faith, preceded by entire consecration; and to this work and state of grace the Holy Spirit bears witness.

What were the main characteristics of David's Tent (*1Chron.16*)?

When King David brought the Ark to Jerusalem, the Tent of Moses (the Tabernacle) was still at Gibeon:

Solomon and the whole assembly went to the high place at Gibeon, for God's tent of meeting was there, which Moses the LORD's servant had made in the wilderness. Now David had brought up the ark of God from Kiriath Jearim to the place he had prepared for it, because he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem. But the bronze altar that Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made was in Gibeon in front of the tabernacle of the LORD; so Solomon and the assembly inquired of him there.[2Chron.1:3-4]

And so David made tent for the Ark and established it as a place of continual praise and worship.

They brought the ark of God and set it inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and they presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before God. After David had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD. Then he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each Israelite man and woman… David left Asaph and his associates before the ark of the covenant of the LORD to minister there regularly, according to each day's requirements… With them were Heman and Jeduthun and the rest of those chosen and designated by name to give thanks to the LORD, "for his love endures forever."[1Chron.16:1-43]

What is the relevance of David's Tent today?

The restoration of David's Tent implies that we are to continually praise and worship—that our whole life is to be a living sacrifice of 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]

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 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]

What is spiritual maturity?

Spiritual maturity, like mental maturity, is the ability to remain stable and balanced in good times and difficult times—like having an anchor

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 set before 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 our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.Heb.6:18-20

Maturity comes through experience and learning from mistakes

We have a lot to explain about this. But since you have become too lazy to pay attention, explaining it to you is hard. By now you should be teachers. Instead, you still need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word. You need milk, not solid food. All those who live on milk lack the experience to talk about what is right. They are still babies. However, solid food is for mature people, whose minds are trained by practice to know the difference between good and evil. Heb.5:11-14

Maturity makes us stable

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. Eph.4:11-16

How can we mature spiritually?

Maturity doesn't happen from one big epic church service or even from a spectacular divine intervention—we **grow into maturity** by **faithfully fellowshipping with God through His Word and by faithfully fellowshipping with other Believers** (normally at our regular church services). We learn the Word, not from **one** Bible Study or from **one** sermon, but from **years** of study and **years** of sermons. The prophet Isaiah reminds us that the Word grows in us, *line after line, a little here, a little there.* Is.28:10

Remember, worship is work, in other words, worship (serving God) is a lifestyle not an activity.

We may never receive recognition from people for making the right choices, **but we will receive recognition from God for making the right choices**:

Those who had respect for the LORD talked with one another. They cheered each other up. And the LORD heard them. A list of people and what they did was written on a scroll in front of him. It included the names of those who respected the LORD and honoured him. "They will belong to me," says the LORD who rules over all. "They will be my special treasure. I will spare them just as a loving father spares his son who serves him. Then once again you will see the difference between godly people and sinful people. And you will see the difference between those who serve me and those who do not. Mal.3:16-18

15/10/2025

Psalm 7.1-8

Video: Mike Petzer 2025 55

Questions

Read the account of Hezekiah's miraculous healing (Isaiah 38-39; 2Kings 20; 2Chronicles 32) and Manasseh's evil reign (2Kings 21; 2Chronicles 33:1-9) and then Manasseh's conversion (2Chronicles 33:10-20)

How could such evil *(Manasseh's reign)* **come out of such a miracle** *(Hezeakiah's healing)***?**

What is "conversion"?

Can anyone be converted?

Can people be saved *(i.e. go to heaven)* **without being converted?**

How does God get people's attention?

Can anyone resist God's call on their life?

What difference does being a Christian make?

Comments

How could such evil *(Manasseh's reign)* come out of such a miracle *(Hezeakiah's healing)*?

The world is still under the influence of the devil

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

Faith and Christianity are not hereditary and we all make our own choices. Many people in the Bible had encounters with God (and with Jesus) but still turned their back on Him—c.f. Israel coming out of Egypt, the 5000 and 7000 who were fed miraculously; the 9 lepers who didn't return to give thanks for their healing.

*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. As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion."*Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed.Heb.3:12-4:2*

One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. 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.17:15-19

What is "conversion"?

Conversion means "*turn about*" or **"*change*".**

Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children ["Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children] you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. "Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.Matt.18:2-5

When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent

blood."Matt.27:3-4

Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children.Lk.23:28

"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." [But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.KJV] Lk.22:31-32

"So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds.Acts.26:19-20

Convert is also translated "*Firstfruits*":

You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the Lord's people. [I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints. KJV]1Cor.16:15

Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia. [Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ. KJV] Rom.16:5

For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them." Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.Jn.12:39-41

Can anyone be converted?

Yes and no!

Puritan Prayer from Sunday

Blessings: *You are the great Three-in-One, the Author of all the blessings that I enjoy and of all that I hope for. You have taught me that the experience of present evils, the remembrances of former sins, nor the remonstrances of friends, cannot, nor will not, affect a sinner's thought—unless You vouchsafe to reveal Your grace.*

No one can come to God unless He draws them

"Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me.Jn.6:43-45

But God is calling and He is willing

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "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. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts.2:37-41

"What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.Matt.18:12-14

Can people be saved *(i.e. go to heaven)* **without being converted?**

No

We are separated from God as a direct result of Adam's sin and of our own sinful nature and so we must change the direction of our life from walking away from God to walking to God—and with Him.

When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. Rom.5:12

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.Rom.5:19

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.* Col.2:13-14

Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" 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.3:3-8*

Repentance is essential to the New Birth (conversion). However, repentance is not necessarily extreme remorse but simply to change your mind (about God, about our sin and about our status with God). Repentance=*metanoeō*—to change one's mind or purpose.

From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed him.Matt.4:17-20

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

In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.Lk.15:10

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.Lk.13:2-5

He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins… Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham… And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them.Lk.3:3;8;18

At conversion God writes His law on our heart and gives the desire to obey Him:

But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises. For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. But God found fault with the people and said: "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.Heb.8:6-13

How does God get people's attention?

It appears in Scripture that God generally uses three broad approaches to lead people to repentance. Firstly, God uses *kindness* to lead people to repentance. *Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?*[Rom.2:4]

Secondly, it appears that God uses *miracles* to bring people to repentance. Christ expresses His disappointment that many of the cities in which He performed miracles did not repent: *Then Jesus began to denounce the cities where he had done most of his miracles, because they hadn't turned from their sins and turned to God.*[Matt.11:20]

Thirdly, God uses *tragedy* to bring people to repentance.

"But now, Job, listen to my words; pay attention to everything I say. I am about to open my mouth; my words are on the tip of my tongue. My words come from an upright heart; my lips sincerely speak what I know. The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life. Answer me then, if you can; stand up and argue your case before me. I am the same as you in God's sight; I too am a piece of clay. No fear of me should alarm you, nor should my hand be heavy on you. But you have said in my hearing—I heard the very words—'I am pure, I have done no wrong; I am clean and free from sin. Yet God has found fault with me; he considers me his enemy. He fastens my feet in shackles; he keeps close watch on all my paths.' But I tell you, in this you are not right, for God is greater than any mortal. Why do you complain to him that he responds to no one's words? For God does speak—now one way, now another—though no one perceives it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn them from wrongdoing and keep them from pride, to preserve them from the pit, their lives from perishing by the sword. "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. They draw near to the pit, and their life to the messengers of death. Yet if there is an angel at their side, a messenger, one out of a thousand, sent to tell them how to be upright, and he is gracious to that person and says to God, 'Spare them from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom for them—let their flesh be renewed like a child's; let them be restored as in the days of their youth'—then that person can pray to God and find favour with him, they will see God's face and shout for joy; he will restore them to full well-being. And they will go to others and say, 'I have sinned, I have perverted what is right, but I did not get what I deserved. God has delivered me from going down to the pit, and I shall live to enjoy the light of life.' God does all these things to a person—twice, even three times—to turn them back from the pit, that the light of life may shine on them. Pay attention, Job, and listen to me; be silent, and I will speak.Job.33:1-31

Can anyone resist God's call on their life?

Yes and No! God's grace is irresistible and yet people still resist God—c.f. Israel in the Wilderness. We have to choose life over death, light over darkness

This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.Deut.30:19-20

Calvin concluded that the Scriptures presented mankind without Christ as being totally depraved. "Totally depraved" does not mean that a person is not capable of doing any good, Calvin said that God had gifted the world with two kinds of grace: *prevenient grace* (or, "general" grace) which enables even the unregenerate to be "civil". But this God-given grace is only sufficient to enable mankind to be civil (which he may choose not to be), but it is not able to regenerate a person for their salvation. The grace that regenerates a sinner to fellowship with God is known as *saving grace*. Without this saving grace a person cannot be saved or made right with God. Because it is "grace" (a free and undeserved) it cannot be "activated", "decided", or "qualified for".

Calvin concluded from Scripture that no-one could experience God's saving grace unless they were elected (chosen) by God to do so.

Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.Eph.1:4

But before they were born, before they had done anything good or bad, she received a message from God. (This message proves that God chooses according to his own plan, Rom.9:11

Since God's calling and election for salvation is by grace, it cannot be presented to man conditionally (otherwise man would have to meet the conditions and this would in affect be "earning" it). Therefore, God's election to salvation is unconditional.

Calvinism's **TULIP** is an acronym for-

T otal depravity of mankind

U nconditional election
L imited atonement
I rresistible grace
P erseverance of the saints

What difference does being a Christian make?

We belong to God

For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. 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.14:7-9

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. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.Gal.5:24-26

We have eternal life— starting from conversion

Although a wicked person who commits a hundred crimes may live a long time, I know that it will go better with those who fear God, who are reverent before him. Yet because the wicked do not fear God, it will not go well with them, and their days will not lengthen like a shadow.Eccl.8:12-13

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. For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," and, "A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. 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.2:4-10

08/10/2025

Psalm 6

Video: Mike Petzer 2025 50

Questions

Why is it important to be righteous?
What is prayer?
Does God always hear our prayers?
What should we do when we don't get the answer to our prayers?
What is the New Covenant?
Why is the New Covenant so important?
Why do so many people prefer the rituals of the Old Covenant?

Comments

Why is it important to be righteous?

Righteous means "*right with God*" and until we are right with God, we remain estranged, alienated and separated from Him. Only those who are right with God can live with God, which means that the unrighteous will be eternally separated from Him.

In both the OT and NT, righteousness is the state commanded by God and standing the test of His judgment (2Co 3:9; 6:14; Ep 4:24). It is conformity to all that He commands or appoints. Since God Himself is the standard of the believers, the righteousness of God means the righteousness which belongs to God or to oneself from God, or God-like righteousness (Mt 6:33; Jas 1:20). Thus righteousness, in general, is God's uprightness or standard, without reference to any particular form of its embodiment, to which man is expected to conform.

No-one has the ability to get themselves right with God

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. As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."… Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.Rom.3:9-12;20

and so the only way to be right with God is for Him to make us right—it is the Gospel

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 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. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.Rom.3:21-26*

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."Rom.1:16-17

Jesus is our Righteousness and He imparts and imputes us with His righteousness

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

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.2Cor.5:21

What is prayer?

Prayer is communicating with God

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!

There are many sorts of prayer

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.[1Tim.2:1-6]

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. 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…[Matt.6:5-9]

In prayer, there is a connection between what God does and what you do. You can't get forgiveness from God, for instance, without also forgiving others. If you refuse to do your part, you cut yourself off from God's part.[Matt.6:14-15]

But only the prayer of the righteous is acceptable

If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer. Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me![Ps.66:18-20]

Does God always hear our prayers?

God always hears our prayer because He is God and Omniscient but God only pays attention to the prayers of the righteous.

The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.[Prov.15:29]

The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him.[Prov.15:8]

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

Before we call God says that He will answer—however, God doesn't always answer our prayers in the way we hope

People of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you. Is.30:19

Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.Is.65:24

Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.[Matt.6:8]

God can't answer our prayers if we haven't prayed them—but God does answer prayers when we ask according to His will! *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]

Our prayers can be hindered by disunity

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

What should we do when we don't get the answer to our prayers?

Because we know that God has heard us when we pray, we should trust God with the answer

Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."Jn.11:41-42

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 and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep 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.

[Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God. Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if we don't feel guilty, we can come to God with bold confidence. And we will receive from him whatever we ask because we obey him and do the things that please him. And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us.]1Jn.3:21-23

What is the New Covenant?

The New Covenant is the agreement/contract between God and His Son Jesus for the forgiveness of sins.

Old Covenant	**New Covenant**
Conflict, struggle and unrest	Reconciliation, rest and peace: *Col.1:19-20; Eph.2:14-18*
Bondage and slavery	Freedom: *2Cor.3:17; Gal.4:21-5:1*
Law weak and useless	Better and permenant: *Heb.7:18-22*
Law of sin and death	Law of Spirit and Life: *Rom.8:2; 2Cor.3:6*
10 Commandments summarized as 2	1 Commandment—Royal law of love: *Jn.13:34-35; Gal.5:14; 1Cor.13:13*
Was an illustration, a type, a shadow	Is the substance and reality: *Col.2:14-17; Heb.10:1*
Was inferior and faulty	The New Covenant is permenant *Heb.8:6-7*
Was temporary until the New had come	The New Covenant has replaced the Old Covenant (which is now obsolete): *Heb.8:13; 10:9.*
Made people conscious of sin	Conscience is cleansed: *1Tim.1:5/19; Acts 23:1; Heb.9:14; 10:22; 13:18*
God's law written on stone	God's law written in our hearts: *Heb.8:10;10:16; 1Jn.5:10*
People's Responsibility. *If you fully obey… Deut.28*	God's Responsibility: *Heb.8:8-10; Eph.3:10*
People failed to be righteous *Ps.14:1-3;53:1-3*	Jesus is our Righteousness: *1Cor.1:30; 2Cor.5:21; Rom.3:21-22*
People provided animals for sacrifices	God provides His Son as the Sacrifice: *Jn.1:29; 1Cor.5:7; 1Jn.2:2*
People strived for victory	God gives the victory: *1Cor.15:57; 2Cor.2:14*

People separated from God by Veil	Nothing separating man from God: *Rom.8:39; Eph.2:7*
Priest was a man who was a descendant of Aaron	Priest is Jesus: *Heb.6:20; 8:1;.10:19-22*
Priest's ministry was limited by death	Jesus' ministry is unlimited by His Resurrection: *Heb.7:26f*
Confessed sin to approach God	Confess Jesus to approach God: *Rom.10:8-10; Heb.4:16;10:19-22*
Sacrifices were continually repeated	Christ died once for all: *1Pet.3:18; Heb.7:27; 9:26; 10:12*
Sin temporarily covered over *(atoned)*	Sin forgiven and taken away permanently: *Jn.1:29; Lk.24:45-49; Rom.11:27; 1Jn.3:5*
God dwelt in a place	God dwells in people: *Eph.2:22; 1Jn.4:12*
Worship was at Jerusalem	Worship is in spirit at the New Jerusalem: *Heb.12:22-24; Jn.4:23; Phil.3:3; Gal.4:24-26*
People were servants	We are sons and friends (albeit still servants): *2Cor.6:18; Rom.1:1; Jn.15:12-15; Gal.3:26; 4:6-7*

Why is the New Covenant so important?

The New Covenant is so important because it is God's strategy for salvation.

The Old Covenant hinted at the New Covenant with its rituals and regulations but they were only ever meant to be temporary until the New Covenant was in place.

The Old Covenant didn't work, didn't forgive sins, didn't clear the conscience

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… Heb.9:9-11

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! 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.Heb.9:14-15

The New Covenant does work, it forgives sins and clears the conscience

Therefore, brothers and sisters, 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, 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. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.Heb.10:19-23

Why do so many people prefer the rituals of the Old Covenant?

Jesus made this comment about people preferring the Old to the New

And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for they say, 'The old is better.'Lk.5:37-39

People find it hard to do nothing and want to try to "*pay their way*" by contributing at least something towards their keep. But whatever we do is contaminated

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.Is,64:6

The Gospel is free but costly

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life. Rev.22:17

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.Lk.14:26-27

If we could do something to save ourselves then Jesus wouldn't have needed to die for us. It is "only Jesus"

God our Savior, 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. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.1Tim.2:4-6

01/10/2025

Psalm 5

Questions

Why is sound doctrine important?
Why is the Church *"sore oppressed, by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed"*?
What does it mean to "*contend for the faith*" (Jude 3)?
How can we disagree without being disagreeable?
How can we "*correctly handle the word of truth" (2Tim.2:15)?*

Comments

Why is sound doctrine important?

Deception at best, will keep us distracted, but at worst will disqualify us from God's kingdom

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. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. They have 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 elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely 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.Col.16-23

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.1Cor.9:24-10:5

Because salvation is by grace through faith, what we believe is important.

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

Christianity is a heart religion not a performance religion and even though someone may fulfill all the rituals of an act of worship, if their heart is right, their so called "worship" is abhorrent to God

The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught.Is.29:13

*So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?" He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:" 'These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.'*You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions." And he continued, "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!Mk.7:5-8*

Sincerity and zealousness is not enough—the Jews were sincere in their religion but they were sincerely wrong because they did not believe in Jesus

Then Paul said: "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as the high

priest and all the Council can themselves testify. I even obtained letters from them to their associates in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.Acts.22:3-5

For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.Gal.1:13-14

Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may have zeal for them. It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always, not just when I am with you. My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!Gal.4:17-20

Every generation faces new expressions of old heresies but we should never compromise on the doctrines contained in the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed—they are non-negotiable.

I urge you to keep in your hands the Creed drawn up by the fathers at the Council of Nicaea. Champion it fervently, with confidence in the Lord. Set an example to your brothers and sisters everywhere. Show them that the conflict in which we are engaged is one of defending Truth against heresy, and that the adversary has various tricks. Athenaeus

Athenaeus C4th Bishop of Alexandria, is famous for his lifelong and costly defence of the Deity of Christ against "Arianism" which reduced Christ to nothing more than the first and greatest of God's creations. To this denial of Christ, the opposition was led for forty-five long and bitter years by Athanasius, both doctrinally and by virtue of his gifted qualities of leadership. For this, he was sent into exile by hostile Emperors no fewer than five times. Athanasius spent seventeen years away from his beloved Alexandria, hiding sometimes from search-parties of imperial troops, for years at a stretch, in the trackless wastes of the Egyptian desert.

Athanasius was being pursued down a river by imperial soldiers. Arriving at a bend in the river, he turned his boat round and rowed back towards his pursuers, As the two boats passed, the soldiers demanded (it was getting dark by this point), "Have you seen Athanasius?" He replied, "*You're quite close to him now*!" Then he calmly rowed on and escaped, as the soldiers disappeared eagerly downstream in the opposite direction.

The Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
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.
Suffered under Pontius Pilate, He 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 the 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!

We can disagree about other doctrines but should not let them become divisive, however, we should stand firm on moral issues. And as with all matters, we should ensure that we are actually interpreting the Word of God correctly and not seeing issues through our tradition or culture—exegesis not eisegesis!

There are other aspects of our faith that are important but will not disqualify us from the Kingdom of Heaven—such as the mode of Jesus return, the evidence of Holy Spirit baptism, the exact definition of spiritual gifts and ministries

Why is the Church *"sore oppressed, by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed"*?

Because there are deceivers within the organisation of the Church

Wolves in sheep's clothing

"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. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?Matt.7:15-16

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.Acts.20:28-31

The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.Ezek.34:1-6

There are also deceived people within the organisation of the Church

Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.1Jn.2:18-19

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. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 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.1Jn.4:1-3

And there are also immature believers, naïve believers, ignorant believers within the organisation of the Church

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.2Pet/3:15-16

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

This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.Gal.2:4-5

Even Peter and Barnabus were led astray:

When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?Gal.2;11-14

What does it mean to "*contend for the faith*" (Jude 3)?

Contend means fight

Our battle is not against the devil (who has be defeated) but against the devil's deception and we fight that deception by proclaiming the truth. Our warfare is not with natural weapons but the

spiritual weapons of the Word of God and our battlefield is our mind and the minds of other believers—which is why we should know the truth

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.2Cor.10:3-5

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

How can we disagree without being disagreeable?

Know who we are in Christ Jesus

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!2Cor.5:17

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.Rom.6:11

to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:1Cor.1:2

I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge— God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you.1Cor.1:4-6

He that is in us is greater than he that is 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.4:4

The fruit of the Spirit is gentleness and love not aggression and hate

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.Gal.5:19-23

If God is for us who can be against us?

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. And those God has planned for, he has also appointed to be saved. Those he has appointed, he has made right with himself. To those he has made right with himself, he has given his glory. What should we say then? Since God is on our side, who can be against us? God did not spare his own Son. He gave him up for us all. Then won't he also freely give us everything else? Who can bring any charge against God's chosen ones? God makes us right with himself. Who can sentence us to death? Christ Jesus is at the right hand of God and is also praying for us. He died. More than that, he was raised to life. Who can separate us from Christ's love? Can trouble or hard times or harm or hunger? Can nakedness or danger or war? It is written, "Because of you, we face death all day long. We are considered as sheep to be killed." No! In all these things we will do even more than win! We owe it all to Christ, who has loved us. I am absolutely sure that not even death or life can separate us from God's love. Not even angels or demons, the present or the future, or any powers can do that. Not even the highest places or the lowest, or anything else in all creation can do that. Nothing at all can ever separate us from God's love because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done.Rom.8:28-32

How can we "*correctly handle the word of truth*" *(2Tim.2:15)?*

Stay in fellowship with the Author. God inspired the Scriptures through the Holy Spirit and so we must keep in step with the Spirit of God by maintaining harmony and unity with the Holy Spirit and with the Word of God—and as far as it possible, with God's people.

God is Spirit and He reveals Himself to spirit and He can reveal Himself to our spirit through the Word. For instance, we hear someone read the Word of God. The thing that is read is weighed and measured by our intellect but in some way which is inexplicable to reason, it affects our spirit. It answers a need. Listening to the Word of God changes our spirit. E.W.Kenyon

The Spiritual Benefit of Studying Scripture

I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation.Ps.119:99

The study of God-breathed Scripture is the main way of discovering how to live. In Scripture, we find teaching on how to be good, and the examples of how blessed men actually lived. These examples are given in writing, like living and breathing images of a godly life, that we may follow their good works. Thus, in whatever way each individual feels he is lacking, he may commit himself to this imitation, finding the right treatment for his malady as from some medicine chest. Whoever wishes to make himself complete in all the branches of moral excellence, he should keep his eyes trained on the lives of God's holy people in Scripture, as if they were living and moving icons, and thus absorb their virtue into himself by imitation. ***Basil of Caesarea (330-79)***

22/09/2025

Psalm 4

Video: Mike Petzer 2025 50

Questions

Why is God's Word so important to the Christian?
How can we embed God's Word into our life?
How important is Church to Christianity?
What should Church be like?
Why is there so much opposition to God's kingdom?
Is there anything that we can do to make Church more Biblical?

Comments

Why is God's Word so important to the Christian?

God's Word is Jesus

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind… 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.1:1-4;14

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.Rev.19:11-13

The Bible is the written Word of God

He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:" 'These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.' You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions." And he continued, "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! For Moses said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.' But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that."Mk.7:6-13*

And so the Bible is as important as Jesus Himself

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.Ps.138:2

And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God.Rev.20:4

The Bible is all about Jesus

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me John 5:39

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he (Jesus) explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. Luke 24:27

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God John 1:1

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

He (Jesus) is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. Rev.19:13

The Word of God is true

As for God, his way is perfect: The LORD's word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him.Ps.18:30

*The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh contain this message. I am weary, O God; I am weary and worn out, O God.*I am too stupid to be human, and I lack common sense. I have not mastered human wisdom, nor do I know the Holy One. Who but God goes up to heaven and comes back down? Who holds the wind in his fists? Who wraps up the oceans in his cloak? Who has created the whole wide world? What is his name–and his son's name? Tell me if you know! Every word of God proves true. He is a shield to all who come to him for protection. Do not add to his words, or he may rebuke you and expose you as a liar.Prov.30:1-6*

The Word of God is a lamp for our life

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.Ps.119:105

The Word of God is creative

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.Ps.33:6

The Word of God is our life and health

the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 2Tim 3:15

He sent out his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave.Pss.107:20

When Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel, he said to them, "Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you—they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."Deut.32:45-47

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

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life.Jn.6:63

For the word of God is alive 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.Heb.4:12-13

How can we embed God's Word into our life?

Keep it in our heart and our conversation

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."Josh.1:8-9

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

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.Jn.15:1-8

Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever."Jn.5:53-58

How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Praise

be to you, LORD; teach me your decrees. With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth. I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches. I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.Ps.119:9-16

How important is Church to Christianity?

Church is inseparable from Christianity because it is the coming together of Believers in the Name of Jesus. Christians are Church!

Church definition

The word **Church** is from the Greek **ἐκκλησία** (Ekklesia) 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:

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, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on 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, as those sent from God.. 2Cor.2:17

- ***Purpose:*** Our meetings are deliberate, we intend to take action after hearing the facts:

Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined 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.

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.

What should Church be like?

What we have come to think of as Church is nothing like the Church that the Bible refers to! The structure of meetings is not overly important (other than they should be flexible enough to accommodate the leading of the Holy Spirit)

There are some essentials to Church if it is to be a Christian Church

The basic beliefs of Orthodox Christianity must be upheld—these agreed doctrines were collated quite early on in Church history and are formulated in the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed.

Apostles' Creed

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

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.
Church is more than Christians meeting together—Church is Christians meeting together in the Name of Jesus for the purpose of deliberating—preaching, hearing, sharing God's Word.
In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 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 people 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. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.2Tim.4:1-5
Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.1Tim.4:13
The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For Scripture says, "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages."1Tim.5:17-18*
I plead with you, brothers and sisters, become like me, for I became like you. You did me no wrong. As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you,Gal.4:12-13
Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing."Act.15:36
Thus when we meet as Church, we should always read the Word of God, pray and praise (say good and glory words about God and to God).
Church should be a place of unity
In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk. Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter!1Cor.11:17-22
But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.1Cor.12:24-27
Church should be a time of encouraging one another in the faith and supporting one another according to our ability and resources
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.1Cor.14:26
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.Acts.2:42-47

There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the Lord's people. For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action… 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. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!2Cor.9:1-14

Church should be where God's Wisdom is displayed

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.Eph.3:10-11

Why is there so much opposition to God's kingdom?

People without the Holy Spirit cannot understand spiritual matters

*What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so 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, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. 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. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?"*But we have the mind of Christ.1Cor.2:12-16*

The whole world is in the grip of the devils deception and so they distort the Word of God

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.5:19-20

So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world. But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.Gal.4:3-5

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. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 2Cor.3:14-17

Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.2Cor.4:1-6

Is there anything that we can do to make Church more Biblical?

17/09/2025

Psalm 3

Video: Mike Petzer 2025 45

Questions

What does it mean to be blessed?
What is the greatest blessing?
What does it mean to do "*all in the name of the Lord Jesus" [Col.3:17]?*
Why do we no longer have to live in fear of death?
What is God's purpose for us (what does God want us to do)?
How can know that we are living in God's will?

Comments

What does it mean to be blessed?

Blessed means: happy, possessing the favour of God and indicates the state of the believer in Christ
μακαρίζω **makarízō**

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matt.5:3-12

εὐλογέω **Eulogeo** good words. Normally applied to God

He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John." Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God.Lk.1:63-63

But God also applies *eulogeo* to us!

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.Matt.25:34

Hebrew has more than 37 different words and derivatives for praise. To understand the meanings of some words used to describe praise will help us to know how to praise. In OT praise is always active & demonstrative.

Hallal: 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 and usually means the singing of Hallals. 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). Ps.9:1 Ps.52:9

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

Barak: used 289 times in OT. To kneel, bless, salute, praise (and even curse). To praise God (barak) is to enthrone Him as Lord—to kneel before Him;

Come, let us bow down in worship [Shachah—bow down], let us kneel [barak] 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

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.Ps.103:1-5

When God no longer has pre-eminence in our lives we praise (barak) someone or something else and this is called a curse. See Job 1:5.

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 God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.Job.1:5

At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.Job.1:20-22

What is the greatest blessing?

The greatest blessing is to know that our sins are forgiven.

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."Rom.4:6-8

And all other blessings flow from having our sins forgiven,

Then Jesus told him this story: "A man loaned money to two people–500 pieces of silver to one and 50 pieces to the other. But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, cancelling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more after that?" Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he cancelled the larger debt." "That's right," Jesus said. Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your home, you didn't offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You didn't greet me with a kiss, but from the time I first came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint my head, but she has anointed my feet with rare perfume. I tell you, her sins–and they are many–have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love." Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven." The men at the table said among themselves, "Who is this man, that he goes around forgiving sins?" And Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."Lk.7:31-40

Whilst every Christians is blessed with more blessings than they can handle, the highest level of Christianity is to be a blessing:

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 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.[2Pet.1:3-4]

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] *And when God blesses us, no one can curse us: Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest.*[Pro.26:2]

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'[Acts.20:35]

I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.[Gen.12:2]

"When God blesses, the devil messes" — this might look like a slick soundbite and certainly the devil will try to mess but his hands are tied and whatever he attempts, ultimately fails.

Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest.[Pro.26:2]

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. Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.1Jn.5:18-21

Not even Balaam could curse the Israelites, even though they were full of unbelief:

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? I have received a command to bless; he has blessed, and I cannot change it… There is no divination against Jacob, no evil omens against Israel.Nu.23:19-23

However, if we do not honour God (and His Name), our blessings become a curse (i.e. the good recedes away and leaves us without God's support):

"And now, you priests, this warning is for you. If you do not listen, and if you do not resolve to honour my name," says the LORD Almighty, "I will send a curse on you, and I will curse your blessings [barak]. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not resolved to honour me."Mal.2:1-2

This curse is not a deposit of evil bestowed on us but rather the good receding away much like the waters receded after the flood (much like "*barak*" can be a blessing or curse, depending on your heart):

Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth.Gen.8:11

This word "receded" [*qalal*] is also translated cursed, make it lighter, insignificant, lightly esteemed, despised, superficial,

The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless [barak] you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing [barak]. I will bless [barak] those who bless [barak] you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."Gen.12:1-3

—it is the forfeiting of the grace that could be ours:

Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs. But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the LORD.Jon.2:8-9

What does it mean to "*do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" [Col.3:17]?*

We have dedicated our life to God in response to His love bestowed upon us and so we have no sacred secular divide—we belong to God and confess that Jesus is Lord.

On that day HOLY TO THE LORD will be carved on the bells of the horses. The cooking pots in the LORD's temple will be just like the sacred bowls in front of the altar for burnt offerings. Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be set apart to the LORD. All those who come to offer sacrifices will get some of the pots and cook in them. At that time there won't be any Canaanites in the LORD's temple. He is the LORD who rules over all.Zech.14:20-21

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

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.Rom.6:22-23

Why do we no longer have to live in fear of death?

Jesus has conquered death

He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 2Tim.1:9-10

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. 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

But there is a place where someone has testified: "What is mankind that you are mindful of them, a son of man that you care for him? You made them a little lower than the angels; you crowned them with glory and honorand put everything under their feet." In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them.* Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them. 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.Heb.2:6-9*

Only a sinless person could die and not be restricted by the consequences of sin

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of 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.[Heb.2:14-15]

And so when Jesus died, he died as Victor not victim. Jesus was never influenced by satan or held captive by him. Although Jesus was forsaken by God, it was only for a moment not for 3 days and was restored to fellowship with His Father before He died

Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.Lk.23:46

Jesus went to the grave victorious and He rose victorious. Although Jesus went into the grave, He was never a captive to the devil and He never went to the place of torment. The CofE 39 Articles is misleading:

3. Of the going down of Christ into Hell

As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also is it to be believed that He went down into Hell.

Jesus went to the place of the departed—Sheol (Hades)

I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.Ps.16:8-11 NKJV

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. KJV

because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. NIV 1984

because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay. NIV

Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay.Acts.2:31 NIV

Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. NIV 1984*

He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. KJV

He knowing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul should not be left in the grave, neither his flesh should see corruption. Geneva

"he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. NKJV

"The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'Lk.16:22-26

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits— to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.1Pet.3:18-20

We have been emancipated from slavery to sin and its consequences

I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin.Jn.8:34

Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteousness… But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.Rom.6:18-23

Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.Rev.20:6

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death.1Jn.3:14

What is God's purpose for us (what does God want us to do)?

My food, is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour.Jn.4:34-38

The work God has prepared for us to do, is to obey Him, believe on Jesus and to be His witness—which is true worship:

And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands.2Jn.6 Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent."Jn.6:29

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem. You will be my witnesses in all Judea and Samaria. And you will be my witnesses from one end of the earth to the other.Acts.1:8

How can know that we are living in God's will?

We can check what the Bible says

Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.Acts.17:11-12

Look to God's instructions and teachings! People who contradict his word are completely in the dark. They will go from one place to another, weary and hungry. And because they are hungry, they will rage and curse their king and their God. They will look up to heaven and down at the earth, but wherever they look, there will be trouble and anguish and dark despair. They will be thrown out into the darkness.Is.8:20-22

We can check our own faith

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?2Cor.13:5

Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. 1Cor.11:28

Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD.Lam.3:40

Good conscience

I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, [I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit]Rom.9:1

Holy Spirit witnesses with our spirit

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.8:16

For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. The Holy Spirit also testifies [witnesses] to us about this. First he says: "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put

my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.Heb.10:14-18

Note, good health, good wealth, long life are not signs of living in God's will. Good spiritual health, good spiritual wealth and eternal life are the result of Jesus' death and resurrection and they are our inheritance—and of course they will change our attitude to life

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.' " First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them"—though they were offered in accordance with the law. Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.Heb.10:5-10

I have come to do what you want. Your law is in my heart. I have told the whole community of those who worship you that what you do is right.Ps.40:7-9

10/09/2025

Psalm 2

Video: Mike Petzer 2025 40

Questions

What is the difference between talking to God and praying to God?
How does the Bible describe the prayer of a Believer?
How does the Bible describe the prayer of an unbeliever?
Why was Cain's face downcast?
What does the Bible say we should do if we feel downcast?
In what way is prayer a "partnership"?
Why was incense used in Old Covenant worship?

Comments

What is the difference between talking to God and praying to God?

Anyone can talk to God but it takes a person in covenant relationship with God to pray— someone who has been credited as righteous by God

But God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, "You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman… Now return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live.[Gen.20:3-7]

It was Job's prayer that God accepted:

My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly. You have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has." So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite did what the LORD told them; and the LORD accepted Job's prayer.[Job.42:8-9]

How does the Bible describe the prayer of a Believer?

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

A righteous person is someone who believes God:

What does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."[Rom.4:3]

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."Rom.1:16-17

Belief in God is made possible through Jesus and the Gospel is all about what Jesus has done

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

"For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"Gal.2:19-21

And God is attentive to the prayers of the righteous:

Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.[1Pet.3:10-12]

We should always be in communication with God

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.[1Thess.5:16-18]

Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing.[1Tim.2:8]

However, to pray effectively we need to keep the faith and stay away from sin:

If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer. Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me![Ps.66:18-20]

When we pray we are often unsure how to pray or what to pray for, but the Holy Spirit is there to help us.

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.[Rom.8:26-27]

Effective prayers aren't extended prayers:

When you pray, do not be like those who only pretend to be holy. They love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners. They want to be seen by others. What I'm about to tell you is true. They have received their complete reward. When you pray, go into your room. Close the door and pray to your Father, who can't be seen. He will reward you. Your Father sees what is done secretly. When you pray, do not keep talking on and on the way ungodly people do. They think they will be heard because they talk a lot. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need even before you ask him. This is how you should pray. "Our Father in heaven…"[Matt.6:5-9]

How does the Bible describe the prayer of an unbeliever?

The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.[Prov.15:29]

The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him.[Prov.15:8]

The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable—how much more so when brought with evil intent!Prov.21:27

Unless the LORD Almighty had left us some survivors, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah. Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah! "The multitude of your sacrifices—what are they to me?" says the LORD."I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—I cannot bear your worthless assemblies. Your New Moon feasts and your appointed festivals I hate with all my being. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands in prayer, I hide my eyes from you; even when you offer many prayers, I am not listening. Your hands are full of blood! Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong. Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow. "Come now, let us settle the matter," 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 good things of the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.Is.1:9-20

Why was Cain's face downcast?

God had rejected his offering because of his unbelief— which showed on his face.

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 [dejected, disappointed]? 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.4:4-5]

Abel believed God (*by faith*) but Cain was living in unbelief:

By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.[Heb.11:4]

How different from the blessing of God which also shows on our face: *"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace."*[Nu.6:24-26]

What does the Bible say we should do if we feel downcast?

Put our trust in God and praise Him

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar. Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and

breakers have swept over me. By day the LORD directs his love, at night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life.Ps.42:5-8

I have spoken to you with great frankness; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds. For when we came into Macedonia, we had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn—conflicts on the outside, fears within. 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.2Cor.7:4-7

Anxiety and fear are banished when we have total confidence in God as our Heavenly Father:

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*

In what way is prayer a "partnership"?

Praying is a partnership in the Gospel:

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.1:3-5*

I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your love for all his holy people and your faith in the Lord Jesus. 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.4-6*

The word "*partnership*" is also translated as *communion*, *fellowship* and *participation*, which implies assurance, confidence, joy and thanksgiving—which is how we should with one another and for one another:

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. *Col.1:9-12*

We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. *1Thess.1:2*

We should also pray for those beyond our circle of friends and associates with the same assurance, confidence, joy and thanksgiving:

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*

Why was incense used in Old Covenant worship?

The burning of incense in the Old Covenant was a visual reminder that our prayers ascended to God, that He was pleased them and that He remembers our prayers. Our prayers are not just words uttered as a religious activity but they are a memorial offering before God:

Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. *Acts.10:4*

God also remembers our conversation with each other

Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honoured his name.Mal.3:16

Prayer under the Old Covenant was a priestly ministry offered with incense to symbolise the ascent of the prayers to God

May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice. *Ps.141:2*

Under the New Covenant, prayer is also a priestly ministry, but instead of priests being an hereditary elite group of Jews, now **every Believer is a priest**:

And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God.[1Pet.2:5]

And prayer is a joy! *And will fill them with joy in my house of prayer.*[Is.56:7]

John saw that there was a supernatural connection of priestly prayers with heaven:

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.[Rev.5:8]

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 the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand.[Rev.8:3-4]

03/09/2025

Psalm 1

Video: Mike Petzer 2025 35

Questions

What is peace?
How can we be at peace in times of trouble?
What is the difference between faith and fear?
Is fear a sin?
What should we do when we feel afraid?
What does it mean to "*build your house on the rock*"?

Comments

What is peace?

Peace is much more than the cessation of war! Although the armistice of 11 November 1918 ended the actual fighting of WW1 it was the Peace Treaty of Versailles signed on 28 June 1919 that ended the war!

The **Three Hundred and Thirty Five Years' War** was a state of war between the Netherlands and the Isles of Scilly . It is said to have been extended by the lack of a peace treaty for 335 years without a single shot being fired, which would make it one of the world's longest wars, and a bloodless war. During the English Civil War, the Netherlands aligned with the Parliamentarians and when the Royalists were defeated on the mainland, the Isles of Scilly was still held by them. Netherlands wanted reparation for their Navy losses from the Royalists and when they refused, Netherlands declared a State of War with the Isles of Scilly.

In June 1651, soon after the declaration of war, the Parliamentarian forces under Admiral Robert Blake forced the Royalist fleet to surrender. The Dutch fleet, no longer under threat, left without firing a shot—but the Dutch did not officially declare peace!

Peace was declared on 17 April 1986, 335 years after the supposed declaration of war. The Dutch ambassador joked that it must have been horrifying to the Scillonians "to know we could have attacked at any moment."

The Hebrew word for peace is "**Shalom**" and means completeness, soundness, welfare and was (is) a standard greeting. The Letters in the NT begin with the greeting of '*peace*,' and many also end with "*peace*".

In theological terms, peace means "t**he harmonized relationships between God and man, accomplished through the gospel**".

You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. Acts.10:36

He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. Eph.2:17

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.Col.1:19-20

How can we be at peace in times of trouble?

God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) **is our peace**

So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD Is Peace.Judg.6:24

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through.1Thess.5:23

The God of peace be with you all. Amen.Rom.15:33

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.9:5-6

This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, the name Melchizedek means "king

of righteousness"; then also, "king of Salem" means "king of peace." Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.Heb.7:1-3

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,Rom.14:17

Jesus always brought peace to troubled Believers

While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds?Lk.24:36-38

Jesus said that we can have peace in Him

"Do you now believe?" Jesus replied. "A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your 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

Peace comes through 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

Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD,I will be joyful in God my Saviour. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights.Hab.3:17-19

God keeps us in peace when our minds are focused on God's Word and we are steadfast in our faith:

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.Is.26:3

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

The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.Rom.8:6

Peace is the result of righteousness (being counted right with God and by God)

The fruit of that righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence forever. My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest. Though hail flattens the forest and the city is levelled completely, how blessed you will be, sowing your seed by every stream, and letting your cattle and donkeys range free.Is.32:17-20

Peace is part of the Holy Spirit's fruit

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

We are to seek peace (and be peace makers

"Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."1Pet.3:10-12

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.Jas.3:13-18

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

What is the difference between faith and fear?

Faith speaks, fear shakes!

is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself.2Cor.4:13-14

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid [afraid— given us a spirit of fear], but gives us power, love and self-discipline.2Tim.1:7

Is fear a sin?

No! But if we live in fear, (*i.e.* under the dominion of fear) we are not trusting God—and that is a sin! Just as being tempted is not a sin, but yielding to temptation is sin, so being afraid is not sin, but living under the dominion of fear and letting fear control you is sin.

For sin shall not have dominion over you shall no longer be your master], for you are not under law but under grace.Rom.6:14

So then, banish anxiety from your heart.Eccl.11:10

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because 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 mere mortals do to me?"Heb.13:5-6

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

What should we do when we feel afraid?

Put our trust in God and affirm our trust by praising God

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

My adversaries pursue me all day long; in their pride many are attacking me. When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise—in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?Ps.56:2-4

While he was saying this to me, I bowed with my face toward the ground and was speechless. Then one who looked like a man touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and began to speak. I said to the one standing before me, "I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I feel very weak. How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe." Again the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength. "Do not be afraid, you who are highly esteemed," he said. "Peace! Be strong now; be strong." When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Speak, my lord, since you have given me strength."Dan.10:15-19

What does it mean to "*build your house on the rock*"?

Jesus is the "Rock" and many historical events in the OT were types/shadows/allegories Jesus as the "rock".

"Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall. With bitterness archers attacked him; they shot at him with hostility. But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber, because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, because of your father's God, who helps you, because of the Almighty, who blesses you with blessings of the skies above, blessings of the deep springs below, blessings of the breast and womb. Your father's blessings are greater than the blessings of the ancient mountains, than the bounty of the age-old hills. Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers.Gen.49:22-26

[c.f. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. They would not be like their ancestors—a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him. The men of Ephraim, though armed with bows, turned back on the day of battle; they did not keep God's covenant and refused to live by his law. They forgot what he had done, the wonders he had shown them.Ps.78:7-11]

The LORD answered Moses, "Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel.Ex.17:5-6

So Moses took the staff from the LORD's presence, just as he commanded him. He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their

livestock drank. But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honour me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them." These were the waters of Meribah, where the Israelites quarrelled with the LORD and where he was proved holy among them.Nu.20:9-13

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.Rom.10:1-5

*I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he. [For I proclaim the name of the LORD: Ascribe greatness to our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.]Deut.32:*3-4

27/08/2025

Psalm 150

Video: Mike Petzer 2025 30

Questions

What is "*holiness*"?
What did God mean when He said "*Be holy because I am holy*"?
How can we live up to God's standard?
Why is religion such a powerful influence?
What do you think are the "*useless rituals that lead to death*" *(Heb.6:1;9:14)*?
Are religious rituals and liturgies right or wrong?
Why is the Covenant that Jesus introduced called "*new*"?

Comments

What is "*holiness*"?

The word "*holy*" means "*different*" in the sense of "***not common***" or "***very, very, special***". When referring to God, the word ***holy*** carries a sense of beauty, magnificence, awesome. "***Holy***" seems to be the most precious word used to describe God. It is the only word emphasized three times to describe God

Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.Is.6:3

The Hebrews used this literary device to emphasize. If a word was used twice, such as "*Truly, truly...*", what was about to be said was very true. If a word was used three times it was **absolute and ultimate**. God is described not as being "*holy, holy*" but as "*holy, holy, holy*".

And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" Rev.4:8

But, unlike God whose intrinsic nature is holy, we who have come to realise our need for God, are holy by virtue of our redemption through Jesus Christ. In this sense we have a new legal standing before God.

What did God mean when He said "*Be holy because I am holy*"?

God is holy and what is directly associated with Him is also *holy*. To be a Christian is to be made holy—and God calls His redeemed people ***holy***. Without being made holy, a person cannot see God let alone enter Heaven after this life

*Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.*Heb.12:14

Although we are holy, we still need to live holy lives (*i.e.* lives that reflect the beauty, magnificence, and awesomeness of God). We should be "*different*" in the sense of "*not common*" and "*very, very, special*" because we now belong to God who is "*not common*" and "*very, very, special*".

Paul addresses his letters to those who are called God's holy people

To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people:Rom.1:7

To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people [saints by calling], together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.1Cor.1:2-3

To be called to holiness and to refuse to comply is called wickedness (which God takes a rather dim view of). For some believers, holiness is about mere rule-keeping or looking good, which takes is great effort! This effort sometimes leads to distinctions being made in their lives that takes them so far from the everyday reality of the people around them that they become irrelevant.

There are other Christians who react to this form of legalism and regard holiness as something entirely derived from God and so there is nothing to be overly concerned about. For this group their concept of holiness is one that says they have been made holy by God and there is nothing they can add to that so why not relax and enjoy the freedoms and liberties that God's grace has afforded them, such as, excessive drinking, smoking, casual church commitment, loose language, lurid entertainment,

etc. and are no longer different, distinct, mysterious, other-worldly. That is: **they are no longer living as if they are holy.**

Just as God wanted the Old Jerusalem in the world as a beacon of difference—a light to the world—**so He has called the New Jerusalem (the New Covenant Church) down from Heaven to be in the world but not like the world.** By living like Daniel lived in Babylon, we can be holy and relevant.

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.[2Cor.7:1]

In the New Covenant there is not sacred/secular divide because we are holy and everything we have is holy (*i.e.* it belongs to God).

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.Zech.14:20-21

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.1Pet.2:9

[Purify the altar by making atonement for it, and anoint it to consecrate it. For seven days make atonement for the altar and consecrate it. Then the altar will be most holy, and whatever touches it will be holy.Ex.29:36-37]

"Woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gold of the temple is bound by that oath.' You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? You also say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gift on the altar is bound by that oath.' You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? Therefore, anyone who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And anyone who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. And anyone who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it.Matt.23:16-22

How can we live up to God's standard?

We can't live up to God's standard! Sin is missing the mark, failing to reach God's standard of perfection and glory

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

Jesus was, is and always will be holy,

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.Lk.1:35

Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."Acts.4:30

Yet He became sin for us

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.2Cor.5:31*

Although we can't live up to God's standard we have an obligation to live pure, holy wholesome lives so we represent God honourably

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. 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. Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him. Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.1Jn.3:2-7

Why is religion such a powerful influence?

Man was made in God's image

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the*

ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.Gen.1:26-27

And we can never find rest until we are restored to fellowship with God. Augustine states "*You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."*

This inherited spiritual emptiness is in everyone and it is natural to seek to fill it. But until our spiritual eyes are opened, we can never manage to fill that emptiness. And yet God is not far from any of us—He is only a prayer away

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.'Acts.17:27-28

For Moses writes that the law's way of making a person right with God requires obedience to all of its commands. But faith's way of getting right with God says, "Don't say in your heart, 'Who will go up to heaven?' (to bring Christ down to earth). And don't say, 'Who will go down to the place of the dead?' (to bring Christ back to life again)." In fact, it says," The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart."And that message is the very message about faith that we preach: Rom.10:5-8

Jesus came to seek and save the lost,

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.Lk.19:10

But we can only be saved on His terms!

They said to him, "John's disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking." Jesus answered, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast." He told them this parable: "No one tears a piece out of a new garment to patch an old one. Otherwise, they will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for they say, 'The old is better.'Lk.5:33-39

What do you think are the *"useless rituals that lead to death" (Heb.6:1;9:14)***?**

Any ritual that ignores or opposes God's revealed way of worship

not laying again the foundation of repentance from useless rituals [acts that lead to death].[Heb.6:1]

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 [useless rituals], so that we may serve the living God! 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.[Heb.9:13-15]

Many religious rituals have an element of truth but if they don't see life from God's perspective, they are just a religious activity that is void of life. Some popular songs/hymns reinforce doubt and unbelief instead of faith because they deny the finished work of Jesus Christ.

For instance:

Change my heart, O God, Make it ever true; Change my heart, O God, May I be like you.
You are the Potter, I am the clay; Mold me and make me, This is what I pray.

Welcome Holy Spirit, we are in Your Presence; Fill us with Your power; O live inside of me

Come Holy Spirit, I need You, Come sweet Spirit, I pray
Come in Your strength and Your power, Come in Your own gentle way
Come as a rest to the weary, Come as a balm to the sore
Come, Lord, as strength to my weakness, Fill me with joy evermore
Come Holy Spirit, I need You, Come sweet Spirit, I pray

Come in Your strength and Your power, Come in Your own gentle way

Reign in me, Sovereign Lord, reign in me. Captivate my heart, let Your Kingdom come; Establish there Your throne, let Your will be done.

But Jesus has completed His work of redemption and given us everything we need for life and godliness

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. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.Eph.1:3-4

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 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.2Pet.1:3-4

If you are born again, you are a son of God. And for you to tear yourself out of your sonship, your relationship and the righteousness of God and put yourself over in the reality of death and tell God you are dirty, unclean, that His blood has not cleansed you, and His life has not been delivered to you it is a monstrous thing. It is alright to sing that as an unregenerate but it is not the experience of the sons and daughters of God. *John G Lake.*

To oppose what Jesus has accomplished by His death, resurrection and ascension is to oppose God Himself. We need to sing songs that affirm the truth (information as God sees it). We can only worship God is spirit and in truth

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

Are religious rituals and liturgies right or wrong?

Neither! God is looking for fruit not leaves! Fig leaves never worked and they are cursed (*i.e.* they have shrivelled up and can no longer produce fruit):

The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it.Mk.11:12-14

Sabbath days are no longer a calendar day but a rest from working to earn spiritual credit from God

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.2:16-17

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you. I plead with you, brothers and sisters, become like me, for I became like you.Gal.4:8-12

The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning. 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.Heb.9:8-10

"Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.

*For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.' "*And yet his works have been finished since the creation of the world. For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "On the seventh day God rested from all his works." And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest." 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.Heb.3:15-4:11*

One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?" He answered, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions." Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."Mk.2:23-28

Why is the Covenant that Jesus introduced called "new"?

Because it **is** "new"—which then makes the old obsolete

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. Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary…. 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. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. 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! 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.Heb.8:10-9:15*

The New Covenant actually forgives sins instead of atoning for (covering) them

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."Matt.26:26-29

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.Heb.9:15

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 Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the 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.24:44-49

The priesthood, sacrifice for sins, uncertainty about salvation, forgiveness of sins eternal life were part of the Old Covenant — but we have the New Covenant

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.Heb.5:11-6:3*

20/08/2025

Psalm 149

Video: Mike Petzer 2025 25

Questions

What is the purpose of Church?
What is Church growth?
What is a realistic "growth forecast" for our Church?
How can we implement that forecast?
What is the "first love" that the Ephesian Church lost?
How would you describe your first encounter with Jesus?

Comments

What is the purpose of Church?

but the Church is not a business producing "*Christians*" like widgets on a conveyer-belt. Church is primarily a spiritual organisation whose purpose is to spread the news about God's kingdom and then enable people to live as good citizens in that kingdom (this is called "Christian maturity").

He also gave apostles, prophets, missionaries, as well as pastors and teachers as gifts to his church. Their ***purpose*** *is to* ***prepare God's people to serve and to build up the body of Christ****. This is to continue until all of us are united in our faith and in our knowledge about God's Son, until we become mature, until we measure up to Christ, who is the standard.*[Eph.4:11-13]

Church is the fellowship of Believers

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 favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.Acts 2:42-47

Church is where God displays His wisdom (Jesus)

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

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.1Cor.1:30

Church is where God displays His glory

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.Eph.3:20-21

What is Church growth?

Church growth is numerical, when more people are saved,

And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.Acts.2:47

So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.Acts.6:7

They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus. Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe.Acts.20:23-24

Church growth also spiritual, when people mature in their faith (i.e. they are more confident in their relationship with God).

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.1Pet.2:1-3

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.Eph.4:14-16

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.1Cor.16:13-14

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.Gal.5:1

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.Phil.1:27-28

What is a realistic "growth forecast" for our Church?

To see more people attending our church congregation

To see everyone standing firm in the faith

Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 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.Eph.6:13-15

So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.2Thess.2:15

that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.Col.4:12

Stand firm, and you will win life [By your patience possess your souls].Lk.21:19

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. Phil.1:27-28

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!Phil.4:1

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.1Cor.16:13-14

If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.Is.7:9

How can we implement that forecast?

Being a good witness

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.[1Pet.2:13-17]

We expect Christians to take their responsibilities and privileges seriously

- by taking an active part in the work and worship of the Church according to their ability and circumstances
- by relating into the Church's system of Pastoral care
- by prayerfully contribute to the unity, encouragement and fellowship of the Church
- by showing a Scriptural regard for those in positions of leadership

- by supporting the Church through regular attendance at services of worship, regular prayer and considered giving

We also expect Christians to live by the accepted rules of Christian conduct—which includes being a loyal citizen of our Country: *We render loyalty to Her Majesty's Government as far as conscience and morality permit;* and also a commitment to Christian marriage: *We uphold the Biblical standard of monogamous, heterosexual marriage between a biological man and biological woman as the only acceptable union*.

Staying in fellowship with God, His Word and His people

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. 2Cor.13:14

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. 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 yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by 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.1:3-7

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

My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body. Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil. Prov.4:20-27

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.10:24-25

Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honoured his name. "They will be mine," says the LORD Almighty, "in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not. Mal.3:16-18

Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1Cor.1:7-9

They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. 1Thess.1:9-10

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you. Tit.2:11-15

But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying 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. Jude 21-22

What is the "first love" that the Ephesian Church lost?

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.Rev.2:4-5

The "first love" is love for God with <u>all</u> our heart, soul and mind

"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.'Matt.22:36-37

Love is a commitment not just emotion. Sometimes we feel good and happy and sometimes we don't but love is a commitment to serve God regardless of how we feel—we choose to honour God.

*At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart.*The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.Job.1:2-22*

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. 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. 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.4:19-5:5

How would you describe your first encounter with Jesus?

13/08/2025

Psalm 148

Video: Mike Petzer 2025 20

Questions

Why do we need to be born again before we can see the kingdom of God?
What do you think is the most basic sin?
What is the role (ministry) of the Holy Spirit?
Why can true Believers be deceived?
How can we ensure that we are not deceived?
How should we respond if we think that the Holy Spirit is prompting us?

Comments

Why do we need to be born again before we can see the kingdom of God?

Jesus said so

Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.Jn.3:3

God is Spirit and we are born with a spirit that is dead to God (out of fellowship with God)

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 God gave the man a command. He said, "You can eat the fruit of any tree that is in the garden. But you must not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you do, you can be sure that you will die."Gen.2:16-17

The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "'You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."Gen.3:2-5

You were living in your sins and lawless ways. But in fact you were dead. You used to live as sinners when you followed the ways of this world. You served the one who rules over the spiritual forces of evil. He is the spirit who is now at work in those who don't obey God. At one time we all lived among them. We tried to satisfy what our sinful nature wanted to do. We followed its longings and thoughts. God was angry with us and everyone else because of the kind of people we were. But God loves us deeply. He is full of mercy. So he gave us new life because of what Christ has done. He gave us life even when we were dead in sin. God's grace has saved you. God raised us up with Christ. He has seated us with him in his heavenly kingdom because we belong to Christ Jesus.Eph.2:1-6

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.Col.2:13-14

To participate in God's kingdom we need to be alive to God

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.Rom.6:11-12

What do you think is the most basic sin?

All have sinned because they inherit Adam's sinful nature

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—To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where 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 is a pattern of the one to come.Rom.5:12-14

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

Unbelief—that is, **un-faith**

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

When he comes, he'll expose the error of the godless world's view of sin, righteousness, and judgment: He'll show them that their refusal to believe in me is their basic sin;

For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.Gal.5:5-6

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. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.Jn.3:18-19

Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have 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.1Jn.5:10-11

Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin." He said this because they were saying, "He has an impure spirit."Mk.3:28-30

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. We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin [make a practice of sinning]; 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.5:16-20

What is the role (ministry) of the Holy Spirit?

To convince of sin, righteousness and judgement

When he comes, he'll expose the error of the godless world's view of sin, righteousness, and judgment: He'll show them that their refusal to believe in me is their basic sin; that righteousness comes from above, where I am with the Father, out of their sight and control; that judgment takes place as the ruler of this godless world is brought to trial and convicted. I still have many things to tell you, but you can't handle them now. But when the Friend comes, the Spirit of the Truth, he will take you by the hand and guide you into all the truth there is. He won't draw attention to himself, but will make sense out of what is about to happen and, indeed, out of all that I have done and said. He will honour me; he will take from me and deliver it to you.Jn.16:8-14

To comfort

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you… But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. [I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you…. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.] Jn.14:18;25

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.2Cor.1:3-7

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.Is.61:1-3

To convert

Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. [Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.] Matt.18:3

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.1Cor12:3

Why can true Believers be deceived?

When they take their eyes off Jesus and His finished work and try to achieve spirituality by their own effort

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard? So also Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."Gal.3:1-6

Even though the Holy Spirit guides us into all truth, we only know in part

"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all 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.Jn.16:12-13

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. 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.1Cor.13:8-12

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.Jn.14:26

Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long.Ps.25:5

People who don't know the Bible (are not Bible literate) and God's power (presence) will never understand spiritual truth

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

Jude lists some common errors

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a ***license for immorality*** *and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord at one time delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. In the very same way,* ***on the strength of their dreams*** *these ungodly people* ***pollute their own bodies, reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings.*** *But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses,*

*did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" 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. Woe to them! They have taken the way of **Cain**; they have rushed for profit into **Balaam's** error; they have been destroyed in **Korah's** rebellion. These people are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever. Jude 3-13*

Pervert grace into license for immorality (Jezebel)

"To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first. Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds. Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets, 'I will not impose any other burden on you, except to hold on to what you have until I come. 'To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations— that one 'will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery'—just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give that one the morning star. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.Rev.2:18-29*

Because they **rely on dreams instead of doctrine**,

Ask the LORD for rain in the springtime; it is the LORD who sends the thunderstorms. He gives showers of rain to all people, and plants of the field to everyone. The idols speak deceitfully, diviners see visions that lie; they tell dreams that are false, they give comfort in vain. Therefore the people wander like sheep oppressed for lack of a shepherd.Zech.10:1-2

Cain's error (religion without righteousness),

By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.Heb.11:4

Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous.1Jn.3:12

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. 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." Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.Gen.4:2-8*

Balaam's error (love of money),

"To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives. Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality. Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, 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 the one who receives it. Rev.2:12-17

But these people blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like animals they too will perish. They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, revelling in their pleasures while they feast with you. With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed—an accursed brood! They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Bezer, who loved the wages of wickedness. But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey—an animal without speech—who spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.1Pet.2:12-16

The elders of Moab and Midian left, taking with them the fee for divination. When they came to Balaam, they told him what Balak had said. "Spend the night here," Balaam said to them, "and I will report back to you with the answer the LORD gives me." So the Moabite officials stayed with him.Nu.22:7-8

Then Balak's anger burned against Balaam. He struck his hands together and said to him, "I summoned you to curse my enemies, but you have blessed them these three times. Now leave at once and go home! I said I would reward you handsomely, but the LORD has kept you from being rewarded." Balaam answered Balak, "Did I not tell the messengers you sent me, 'Even if Balak gave me all the silver and gold in his palace, I could not do anything of my own accord, good or bad, to go beyond the command of the LORD—and I must say only what the LORD says'? Now I am going back to my people, but come, let me warn you of what this people will do to your people in days to come."Nu.24:10-14

They fought against Midian, as the LORD commanded Moses, and killed every man. Among their victims were Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and Reba—the five kings of Midian. They also killed Balaam son of Beor with the sword.Nu.31:7-8

Korah's error (insolence, despising the Lord and shewing contempt for Him) Korah was a great-grandson of Levi and so was part of the Tabernacle/Temple staff who assisted Aaron in the priestly duties. It was only Aaron's descendants who could be priests and offer sacrifices. Moses and Aaron were cousins of Korah.

Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain Reubenites—Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth—became insolent and rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council. They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the LORD's assembly?" When Moses heard this, he fell facedown. Then he said to Korah and all his followers: "In the morning the LORD will show who belongs to him and who is holy, and he will have that person come near him. The man he chooses he will cause to come near him. You, Korah, and all your followers are to do this: Take censers and tomorrow put burning coals and incense in them before the LORD. The man the LORD chooses will be the one who is holy. You Levites have gone too far!"Nu.16:1-7

But if the LORD brings about something totally new, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them, with everything that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the realm of the dead, then you will know that these men have treated the LORD with contempt." As soon as he finished saying all this, the ground under them split apart and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households, and all those associated with Korah, together with their possessions. They went down alive into the realm of the dead, with everything they owned; the earth closed over them, and they perished and were gone from the community. At their cries, all the Israelites around them fled, shouting, "The earth is going to swallow us too!" And fire came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men who were offering the incense.30-35

So Eleazar the priest collected the bronze censers brought by those who had been burned to death, and he had them hammered out to overlay the altar, as the LORD directed him through Moses. This was to remind the Israelites that no one except a descendant of Aaron should come to burn incense before the LORD, or he would become like Korah and his followers.39-40

How can we ensure that we are not deceived?

Stay in fellowship with God, His Word and His people

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.2Cor.13:14

God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.1Cor.1:9

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.Acts.2:42

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. 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.3:1-7

How should we respond if we think that the Holy Spirit is prompting us?

Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and follow His leading

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

because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 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. Rom.8:14-16

God nudges us

The disciples came up and asked, "Why do you tell stories?" He replied, "You've been given insight into God's kingdom. You know how it works. Not everybody has this gift, this insight; it hasn't been given to them. Whenever someone has a ready heart for this, the insights and understandings flow freely. But if there is no readiness, any trace of receptivity soon disappears. That's why I tell stories: to create readiness, to nudge the people toward receptive insight. In their present state they can stare till doomsday and not see it, listen till they're blue in the face and not get it. I don't want Isaiah's forecast repeated all over again: Your ears are open but you don't hear a thing.Your eyes are awake but you don't see a thing.Matt.13:10-13

But we should always check that there is no conflict with the basic teachings of the New Covenant

kingdom, I give you this charge: 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. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.2Tim.42-5

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. For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain.Tit.1:7-11

You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.Tit.2:1

We should always act in a gracious way

Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone. [Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone. Everything you say should be kind and well thought out so that you know how to answer everyone.]Col.4:5-6*

06/08/2025

Psalm 147

Video: Mike Petzer 2025

Questions

What is "heaven"?
Who is in God's heaven?
Why did Jesus use natural stories (parables) to explain spiritual matters?
Can we understand heavenly matters?
Can there be heaven on earth?

Comments

What is "heaven"?

There are 3 heavens mentioned in the Bible—the sky, outer space and the eternal dwelling place of God

Heaven can mean the earth's atmosphere—the sky:

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven.[Is.55:10]
But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land.[Lk.4:25]
Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.Lk.21:33

Heaven can mean outer space:

And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so.[Gen.1:14-15]
I think about the heavens. I think about what your fingers have created. I think about the moon and stars that you have set in place.[Ps.8:3]

These first 2 heavens were created by God

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth didn't have any shape. And it was empty.[Gen.1:1-2]
So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed.[Gen.2:1]
and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. Gen.14:19

But heaven is also the uncreated dwelling place of God:

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."[Matt.3:16-17]

This is called the 3rd Heaven or Paradise and is where God dwells and rules in holiness with His angels:

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 ruby. A rainbow that shone like 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. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.[Rev.4:1-6]
"However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says:" 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things?'Acts.7:48-50

Who is in God's heaven?

God is in heaven

God looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.Ps.53:2

Why do the nations say, "Where is their God?" Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.Ps.115:2-3
Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honour at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.Col.3:1-2
Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.1Pet.1:10-12

Jesus came down from heaven and returned to heaven

After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God.Mk.16:19
At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven."Jn.6:41
Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever." He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before!Jn.6:57-62

Angels are in heaven (although they are also ministering on earth)

As I looked thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.Dan.7:9-10
An angel from heaven appeared to Jesus and gave him strength.Lk.22:34
Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven also appeared. They were praising God. They said, "May glory be given to God in the highest heaven! And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!" The angels left and went into heaven.Lk.2:13-15
Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?Heb.1:14

The Believers who have died are in heaven

No, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering. You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect. You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel.Heb.12:22-24
The one who is victorious 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. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.Rev.3:12-13

But the devil is not in heaven (anymore):

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 Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.Rev.12:10

Although we don't know much about the devil, we know enough to not fear his power or his person because our names are recorded in heaven:

Jesus replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to walk all over snakes and scorpions. You will be able to destroy all the power of the enemy. Nothing will harm you. But do not be glad when the evil spirits obey you. Instead, be glad that your names are written in heaven."Lk.10:18-20

How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit.[Is.14:12-15]

Why did Jesus use natural stories (parables) to explain spiritual matters?

Jesus used stories about everyday events to teach people about God's kingdom and to help us understand about spiritual truths:

The disciples came up and asked, "Why do you tell stories?" He replied, "You've been given insight into God's kingdom. You know how it works. Not everybody has this gift, this insight; it hasn't been given to them. Whenever someone has a ready heart for this, the insights and understandings flow freely. But if there is no readiness, any trace of receptivity soon disappears. That's why I tell stories: to create readiness, to nudge the people toward receptive insight.[Matt.13:10-13]

Jesus also used this illustration: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough." Jesus always used stories and illustrations like these when speaking to the crowds. In fact, he never spoke to them without using such parables.[Matt.13:33-34]

"You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him."Jn.3:10-15

Can we understand heavenly matters?

Only with the Holy Spirit's help

What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so 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, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. 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. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.1Cor.1:12-16

Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.Ps.119:18

'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. 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.'Acts.26:16-18

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, 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, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ 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 name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.Eph.1:15-21

Can there be heaven on earth?

Yes and No!

Heaven is where God is and God is here on earth so heaven is on earth.

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

But often earth is more like hell than heaven because it is still under the devil's control

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

But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.2Thess.3:3

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.Eph.6:16

My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.Jn.17:15

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.Matt.6:13

This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. 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.5:2-5

"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.12:10-11

Nevertheless, we should continue to pray for God's kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth as is it is heaven.

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah ,and he will reign for ever and ever." And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.Rev,11:15-17

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*

30/07/2025

Psalm 146

Video: 11.26

Questions

What does "*full of faith and of the Holy Spirit*" mean?
How can we become "*full of faith and of the Holy Spirit*"?
Can we become mature without difficulties?
Why is the Bible called the Word of God?
Why can we trust the Bible?
Why do we need the Holy Spirit to understand the Bible?

Comments

What does "*full of faith and of the Holy Spirit*" **mean?**

"*full of faith and of the Holy Spirit*" means just that—full of faith and the Holy Spirit!

Faith is more than just believing the facts about God or even about Christianity—faith is that personal trust in God, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Full of faith is abounding in trust; it is aligning our thoughts and attitudes with God's thoughts and attitudes by immersing ourselves in God's Word. It is allowing God's personality to express itself through our personality. It is correcting our attitude and acts when they differ from God's personality.

Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.Acts.6:8-10

Jesus taught that we don't need lots of faith, just living faith

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you.Lk.17:5-6

Every Believer has the Holy Spirit but we should be <u>filled</u> with the Holy Spirit—which means over-flowing

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And <u>you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit</u>. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."Acts.2:38-39

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.1Cor.12:3

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "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.Jn.7:37-38

How can we become "*full of faith and of the Holy Spirit*"**?**

We can't have more of God than we already have. Either we have God within us or we don't—and God cannot be divided or diluted.

For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him in our dealing with you.Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?2Cor.13:4-5

Pray

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them.Acts.4:31-34

Immerse ourself in God's Word.

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

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.2Tim.2:15

Faith comes by hearing God's Word

But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."Rom.10:16-18

We need to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.Rev.2:7

We shouldn't listen to spurious "prophecies" that propagate superstition and fuel conspiracies

But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.2Pet.2:1-3

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.Matt.7:15-16

Faith—that simple trust in God—results in a quiet contentment and assurance

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

This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.Is.30:15

The fruit of that righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence forever. My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest. Though hail flattens the forest and the city is levelled completely, how blessed you will be, sowing your seed by every stream, and letting your cattle and donkeys range free.Is.32:17-20

Can we become mature without difficulties?

No!

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.Jas.1:2-4

In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.1Pet.1:6-7

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

Why is the Bible called the Word of God?

Jesus is the Word of God because it is Jesus who communicates with us

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. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.Heb.1:1-3

The Bible is Word of God because it is God's method of speaking to us—either directly through the very words of Scripture or by the Holy Spirit to our spirit (usually through our physical ears but also through our mind) and always in harmony with the Scriptures as revealed in the New Covenant

Why can we trust the Bible?

The Bible not only contains God's Word, it is God's Word

But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, some of them went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up.Acts.17:13

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.Eph.6:17

Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.2Cor.4:2-6

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. 1Thess.2:13

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.4:4

The Word of God cannot be broken

and Scripture is always true [cannot be broken/annulled/set aside]. Jn.10:35

The Word of God is trustworthy

Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God." Rev.19:9

Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."Rev.21:5

The angel said to me, "You can trust these words. They are true. The Lord is the God of the spirits of the prophets. He sent his angel to show those who serve him the things that must soon take place." "Look! I am coming soon! Blessed are those who obey the words of the prophecy in this book." Rev.22:6-7

The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy. They are established for ever and ever, enacted in faithfulness and uprightness. Ps.111:7-8*

All your commands are trustworthy;Ps.119:86

The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does.Ps.119:138

The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does.Ps.145:13

Why do we need the Holy Spirit to understand the Bible?

The Bible is a spiritual book containing spiritual truths that can only be understood with our spirit—and it is the Holy Spirit who teaches us spiritual matters

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 Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the 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.24:44-49

The Spirit understands all things. He understands even the deep things of God. Who can know the thoughts of another person? Only a person's own spirit can know them. In the same way, only the Spirit of God knows God's thoughts. We have not received the spirit of the world. We have received the Spirit who is from God. The Spirit helps us understand what God has freely given us. That is what we speak about. We don't use words taught to us by people. We use words taught to us by the Holy Spirit. We use the words of the Spirit to teach the truths of the Spirit. Some

people don't have the Holy Spirit. They don't accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. Things like that are foolish to them. They can't understand them. In fact, such things can't be understood without the Spirit's help. Everyone who has the Spirit can judge all things. But no one can judge those who have the Spirit. It is written, "Who can ever know what is in the Lord's mind? Can anyone ever teach him?" But we have the mind of Christ.1Cor.2:10-16

23/07/2025

(Yan Hadley)

Questions

What is a "witness"?

In what way are we a "witness" to Jesus?

Why are Christians persecuted?

Why does God allow Christians to be persecuted?

Should we be loyal subjects to an ungodly government?

How can we decide what laws should break?

16/07/2025

Psalm 145

Video: this-changed-everything-mp4-digital-download 1.47? Act 2 Radicals

Questions.

What do all Believers have in common?
What is inherited at conversion and what is developed by our choices?
What is the difference between unity and uniformity?
Can we have Christian unity?
Should there be divisions in the Church?
How can we reach unity in the faith?
How do we mature in our faith?

Comments

What do all Believers have in common?

Faith—Believers believe (just as runners run, swimmers swim and walkers walk)!!!
All Believers have at least 5 things in common: the same **Sire** (Father); **Saviour**; **Spirit**; **Scriptures**; **Stop** (destination—heaven)!

Father: When we were born-again, God became our heavenly Father and we became the children of God:

But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn–not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.[Jn.1:12-13]

Saviour: Jesus became our Saviour.

He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.[2Tim1.1:9-10]

Spirit: The Holy Spirit came to reside within us, so we are anointed (authorised and empowered) by God:

But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you.[1Jn.2:27]
Through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, carefully guard the precious truth that has been entrusted to you.[2Tim.1:14 –]

Scriptures: The Scriptures were given to us to teach us about God:

you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.[2Tim.3:15]

Destination: And we will join God in heaven after we die!

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. This inheritance is 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]

What is inherited at conversion and what is developed by our choices?

Our spirit is born-again at conversion and has God's spiritual DNA so we have God's character imprinted within us

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of <u>imperishable</u>, through the living and enduring word of God [having been born again, not of corruptible seed but <u>incorruptible</u>, through the word of God which lives and abides forever] 1Pet.1:23 [Imperishable=immortal, incorruptible]

This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. <u>I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts</u>. 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 <u>they will all know me,</u> from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." Heb.8:10-12

But our soul is still carnal and needs saving:

for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 1Pet.1:9

God's Word distinguishes between spirit and soul

For the word of God is alive 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

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. Rom.6:24

Our personality is developed by our choices

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 1Pet.1:8-9

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. 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.1:2-7

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 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, 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. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. 2Pet.1:3-9

What is the difference between unity and uniformity?

Unity is about fellowship—sharing harmoniously;

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Rom.12:15-16

uniformity is about being identical

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. 1Cor.12:12-31

Donald Gee wrote:

When so much has been said about unity it is difficult not to be trite. Some people's idea of unity is uniformity. They want us to lose our God-given varieties of temperament and viewpoint in a dead level of stagnant agreement about almost everything, forgetting that strength is in diversity among the members of the body. The unity that is possible lies in mutual respect among those who differ in almost everything except the essentials that unite us in Christ… Finally, we must never forget that unity is a personal matter… My ultimate unity is with my brother, irrespective of whether we belong to the same, or different, outward communions. We do not come together to "make" unity, for it already exists by the grace of God. It only needs to be cherished. Its test is mutual acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Its energy is in the one baptism in the Holy Spirit that He bestows. Its aim is that "the world may believe." Its supreme secret is participation in what our Lord called "the glory."

Can we have Christian unity?

God is One

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Deut.6:4

We are joined to God

But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. 1Cor.16:6

And so we have unity of the Spirit

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

We are to make every effort to maintain that unity, not make it—we are either one with God (and have unity) or we are not one with God (and don't have unity because we are separated from God and still in our sins)

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.15:5-6

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 one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Col.3:12-14

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 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—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Jn.17:20-23

Should there be divisions in the Church?

Yes and No!

If some are wrong, there must be divisions to show who is right

In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. 1Cor.11:18-19

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." Therefore, "Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." And, "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." 2Cor.6:14-18

I urge you, brothers and sisters, 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 rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. Rom.16:17-19

We should not be divisive

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. 1Cor.11:9-10

But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. 1Cor.12:24-26

The LORD's justice will dwell in the desert, his righteousness live in the fertile field. The fruit of that righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence forever. My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest. Though hail flattens the forest and the city is levelled completely, how blessed you will be, sowing your seed by every stream, and letting your cattle and donkeys range free. Is.32:16-20

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. [Legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way; There is no law that says these things are wrong; No law can oppose such things; There is no law against behaving in any of these ways; And there is no law to stop anybody doing any of those good things; Never set the law above these qualities, for they are meant to be limitless; You won't find any law opposed to fruit like this].Gal.5:22-23

How can we reach unity in the faith?

Be an active part of a local Church, grow in our knowledge of God and become mature Christians

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. Eph.4:3-15

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. Col.1:27-28

How do we mature in our faith?

Maturity is being able to standing firm in our faith

stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. Col.4:12

If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all. Is.7:9

I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. Phil.1:27

Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 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. Eph.6:13-18

We mature through problems and difficulties

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. Jas.1:2-4

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained. Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. Phil.3:7-17

The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop. Lk.8:14-15

Through the meat of the Word of God

Meat of God's Word is when we study the Word for ourselves and put it into practice—milk is when we are spoon-fed—we are only hearers.

*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. Heb.5:11-6:3*

Through sharing our faith (witnessing and also talking with others what we believe

I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. Phile.6

09/07/2025

Psalm 144

Video: this-changed-everything-mp4-digital-download 1.50? Act 2 Radicals

Questions

What is the currency of God's Kingdom?
What is the most valuable asset that we have?
How do we obtain this asset?
How do we evaluate its worth?
How can we give this asset to others?
Why are some people healed instantly through prayer and others are not healed?

Comments

What is the currency of God's Kingdom?

God's Kingdom uses faith its currency, not money!

Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare.[Is.55:1-3]

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children.[Rev.21:6-7]

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

The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. Gal.5:6

God's Kingdom is spiritual, and so we should emphasise our spiritual assets more than our monetary assets:

Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.[Jn.6:27]

Our spiritual life and sustenance comes from God's Word:

Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.[Matt.4:4]

We should immerse ourself in God's Word by hearing it and putting it into practice:

Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.[Lk.11:28]

Submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way prosperity will come to you. Accept instruction from his mouth and lay up his words in your heart.[Job.22:21-22]

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.[Rom.10:17]

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

God gives bread to eat and also seed to sow. He created us for fellowship—to be partakers and participators in His kingdom and expects us to share what we have with Him and with His family:

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.[2Cor.9:10-11]

We can only give what we have! Other than our sin and fallen nature, everything else that we have, was given to us from God:

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.[Deut.8:17-18]

For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. Col.1:16

"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

For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. 1Cor.11:12
For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen.[Rom.11:36]

Perhaps the only exception to this is our gratitude! We are personally responsible for showing our appreciation—God will not make us thankful!

When one of them saw that he was healed, he turned back and praised God in a loud voice. He quickly bowed at Jesus' feet and thanked him. (The man was a Samaritan.) Jesus asked, "Weren't ten men made clean? Where are the other nine? Only this foreigner came back to praise God." Jesus told the man, "Get up, and go home! Your faith has made you well."[Lk.17:15-19]

I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. Ps.145:1-3

What is the most valuable asset that we have?

The most valuable asset we have is Jesus Christ

How is your beloved better than others, most beautiful of women? How is your beloved better than others, that you charge us so? My lover is radiant and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand. His head is purest gold; his hair is wavy and black as a raven. His eyes are like doves by the water streams, washed in milk, mounted like jewels. SofS.5:9-12

My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skilful writer. You are the most excellent of men and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever. Ps.45:1-2

For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," 1Pet.2:6-7

For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silas and Timothy—was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. 2Cor.1:19-20

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?[2Cor.13:5]

And they will call him 'Emmanuel'—which means, 'God with us'.[Matt.1:23]

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.[Col.1:27]

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

Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honour. Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her; those who hold her fast will be blessed. Prov.3:13-18

How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take 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. Ps.36:7-9

Although we have Jesus Christ, we actually have the whole trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. Jn.14:23-24

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. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of

him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. Rom.8:9-11

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies. 1Cor.6:19-20

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and 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. Jn.14:16-17

How do we obtain this asset?

New birth

Yet to all who did receive 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. Jn.1:12-13

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.1Pet.1:23

Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." Jn.3:3

By Faith

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Col.2:6-7

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. Gal.3:14

*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. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, * through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. Rom.3:22-25*

Peter replied, "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. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off— for all whom the Lord our God will call." Acvts.2:38-39

How do we evaluate its worth?

We can evaluate Jesus' worth to us by our worship. The word "*worship*" actually comes from "*worth-ship*"!

Although worship may involve singing songs, worship is not singing but obedience and homage

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." …After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.Matt.2:1-2;9-12

*On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He 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 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.22:4-18*

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

Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit [worship God in the Spirit, who worship in the Spirit of God,] who

boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— though I myself have reasons for such confidence. Phil.3:1-4

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." Heb.12:28-29

Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: " 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,' who was, and is, and is to come." Whenever the living creatures give glory, honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: "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.4:8-11

How can we give this asset to others?

Sharing our faith

I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints. Phile.4-7

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: 1Cor.11:23

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 1Cor.15:1-3

Moses passed on God's living words (but the [people rejected him!)

*"This is that Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will send you a prophet like me from your own people.' * He was in the assembly in the desert, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; and he received living words to pass on to us. "But our fathers refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. Acts.7:37-39*

Bearing spiritual fruit

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. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Gal.5:22-26

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 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, 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. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. 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 Savior Jesus Christ. 2Pet.1:3-11

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain

in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. Acts.15:1-8

Being good ambassadors

*So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 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: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 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. God made him who had no sin to be sin * for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2Cor.5:16-21*

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

Ambassador has same root as Elder

So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. Acts.15:2

'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

Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity. 1Tim.5:1-2

The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: "Amen, Hallelujah!"Rev.19:4

Being a witness

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts.1:8

Why are some people healed instantly through prayer and others are not healed?

Prayer is not a formula for receiving what we want in life but is our communication with God. Prayer is fellowship, which is partnership and participation—God speaks to us through His Word and we speak to God in harmony with His Word

Some prayers are wrong prayers; some prayers are right prayers but God's timing is different from ours; some prayers are hindered and some prayers delayed. But our relationship with God is not dependant on prayer but on promise

There are some promises in a letter, written a long, long time ago
They're not getting older they're getting better because He still wants us to know…
He didn't bring us this far to leave us He didn't teach us to swim to let us drown.
He didn't build His home in us to move away He didn't lift us up to let us down.
Never use the word "defeat"; claim His promises, every one of them,
Every spoken word He'll keep because we're everything to Him.

Faith is trusting God. Our faith is in God, not what God does—and so we will never be disappointed when we trust God because He is totally reliable, trustworthy and consistent.

For this reason, Paul tells us that those who look only on Scripture's outward body have "*a veil upon their heart" (2Cor.3:13-15*). They aren't able to see the glory of the spiritual law, because they're hindered by the veil drawn over the Lawgiver's face. This's why Paul says, "*the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2Cor.3:6*). He is showing that a superficial reading of Scripture, if it isn't taken in harmony with the genuine meaning, often produces something contrary to the life found in the Spirit...

Thus it was by the power of the Spirit that those holy men under divine influence were inspired. All Scripture is therefore said to be "*breathed out by God,*" because the teaching flows from the Divine Breath. If the bodily veil of the words is taken away, what lies open to view is Lord and Life and Spirit, in harmony with the teaching of the great Paul, and the words of the Gospel too. For Paul says that whoever turns from the letter to the Spirit no longer experiences the slavery that kills, but the Lord who is the Life-giving Spirit.

02/07/2025

Psalm 143

Video: this-changed-everything-mp4-digital-download 1.45? Act 2 Radicals

Questions

What was the significance of the Jewish festival of Passover?
What was the significance of the Jewish festival of Pentecost?
What happened on the day of Pentecost? (Acts 2)
What is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?
What are the "*last days*" that Peter spoke about on the day of Pentecost?

Comments

What was the significance of the Jewish festival of Passover?

Passover celebrated the Exodus of Israel from Egypt. This was their emancipation from slavery and their formation into a holy nation that belonged to God.

On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.[Ex.12:12-13]

Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites." Ex.19:3-6

However, God's people are Abraham's spiritual descendants, not Abraham's physical descendants:

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. For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," and, "A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. 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.2:4-10

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… 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. Gal.3:6-14

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. Rom.2:28-29

Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth.Is.51:1-2

Passover was also the beginning of the grain harvest—which is why it was also called the Day of Firstfruits (or "first of the harvest")

The LORD's Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month… When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. He is to wave the sheaf before the LORD so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath.[Lev.23:5-11]

Jesus death was also the beginning of the spiritual harvest in the New Covenant

"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.28:18-20

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 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. 1Cor.15:20-23

What was the significance of the Jewish festival of Pentecost?

Pentecost celebrated the giving of the Mosaic Law

On the first day of the third month after the Israelites left Egypt—on that very day—they came to the Desert of Sinai. After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain. Ex.19:1-2

They said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself. Then we'll listen. But don't let God speak to us. If he does, we'll die." Moses said to the people, "Don't be afraid. God has come to put you to the test. He wants you to have respect for him. That will keep you from sinning." Ex.20:19-20

But whilst God was giving His laws to Moses and writing them down on a stone tablet, the people rebelled against God by making a golden calf which they then worshipped—and this resulted in God punishing them leaving 3000 people dead.

The Levites did as Moses commanded. About 3,000 of the people died that day… The next day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a terrible sin. But now I will go up to the LORD. Maybe if I pray to him, he will forgive your sin." Ex.32:28-30

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 *The power to do what we do comes from God. He has given us the power to serve under a new covenant. The covenant is not based on the written Law of Moses. It comes from the Holy Spirit.* ***The written Law kills, but the Spirit gives life.*** *The Law was written in letters on stone. Even though it was a way of serving God, it led to death… Since all of that is true, won't the work of the Holy Spirit be even more glorious? The Law that sentences people to death is glorious. How much more glorious is the work of the Spirit! His work makes people right with God. The glory of the old covenant is nothing compared with the far greater glory of the new. The glory of the old is fading away. How much greater is the glory of the new! It will last forever.* 2Cor.3:5-11

In keeping with the type, and to illustrate that ***the written Law kills, but the Spirit gives life***, the same number of people that died on the first Day of Pentecost when Moses received the Law, were saved when Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost when God gave the Holy Spirit.

With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts.2:40-41

We don't come to a physical mountain but the heavenly Mountain of Zion

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 to death." The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear." 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. Heb.12:18-24

Pentecost was also the start of the main harvest—which is why it was also called **Firstfruits**

"Three times a year you are to celebrate a festival to me.

"Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread; for seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Aviv, for in that month you came out of Egypt.

"No one is to appear before me empty-handed.

"Celebrate the Festival of Harvest with the firstfruits of the crops you sow in your field.
"Celebrate the Festival of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in your crops from the field. Ex.23:14-16

'From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD. From wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour, baked with yeast, as a wave offering of firstfruits to the LORD. Present with this bread seven male lambs, each a year old and without defect, one young bull and two rams. They will be a burnt offering to the LORD, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings—a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. Then sacrifice one male goat for a sin offering and two lambs, each a year old, for a fellowship offering. The priest is to wave the two lambs before the LORD as a wave offering, together with the bread of the firstfruits. They are a sacred offering to the LORD for the priest. On that same day you are to proclaim a sacred assembly and do no regular work. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. " 'When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I am the LORD your God.' " Lev.23:15-22

The Holy Spirit is given as the firstfruits — a "token" of the full redemption

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. Rom.8:22-25

What happened on the day of Pentecost? (Acts 2)

On the day of Pentecost, God poured out His Spirit on men and women in fulfilment of many prophecies including Joel.

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people 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. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' Acts.2:14-21

At Pentecost, the New Covenant replaced the Old Covenant

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]
The power to do what we do comes from God. He has given us the power to serve under a new covenant. The covenant is not based on the written Law of Moses. It comes from the Holy Spirit. ***The written Law kills, but the Spirit gives life.*** *The Law was written in letters on stone. Even though it was a way of serving God, it led to death… Since all of that is true, won't the work of the Holy Spirit be even more glorious? The Law that sentences people to death is glorious. How much more glorious is the work of the Spirit! His work makes people right with God. The glory of the old covenant is nothing compared with the far greater glory of the new. The glory of the old is fading away. How much greater is the glory of the new! It will last forever.*[2Cor.3:5-11]

The main harvest of souls began and the Church began

With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.[Acts.2:40-41]

What is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Baptism means immerse, wash, saturate and was transliterated by the translator rather than translated. In the Greek language the word is not religious but in our English language "*baptism*" now has a religious meaning. The word *baptizo* (βαπτί ζω), "*to baptize*" was used among the Greeks to signify the dyeing of a garment, or the drawing of water by dipping a vessel into another, etc.

But the Pharisee was surprised when he noticed that Jesus did not first wash before the meal. Lk.11:38

I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! Lk.12:29-50

So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' Lk.16:24

Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. Jn.13:26

Holy Spirit baptism is similar to Believers' baptism but instead of being immersed in water we are immersed with the Holy Spirit.

"I baptize you in water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire. Matt.3:11

Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' Acts.11:16

Holy Spirit baptism is distinct from conversion

Conversion is the Holy Spirit coming into a person

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. 1Cor.12:3

Holy Spirit baptism is the Holy Spirit coming out of a person

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "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. Jn.7:37-39

Holy Spirit baptism may happen at the same time as conversion, after conversion, or even before a public confession of faith.

Peter replied, "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. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts.2:38-41

But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw. When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Acts.8:12-17

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his

*hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues * and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all. Acts.19:1-7*

Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

*While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues * and praising God.*

Then Peter said, "Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days. Acts.10:34-48

What are the "*last days*" that Peter spoke about on the day of Pentecost?

The "last days" that Peter spoke about we the last days of the Old Covenant

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people 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. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' Acts.2:14-21

Joel explains that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit would occur <u>after</u> God's judgement on Israel

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand—a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was in ancient times nor ever will be in ages to come…. Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand—a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was in ancient times nor ever will be in ages to come…. Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the LORD your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed. ***<u>And afterward,</u>*** *I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.* Joel 2:1-2; 11-15;27-32

However, there is coming a "last day" — a final day that will conclude this world's order and usher in a new order

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 splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. Rev.21:22-22:5

25/06/2025

Psalm 142

Video: this-changed-everything-mp4-digital-download 1.40? Act 2 Radicals

Questions

Why should we study the Bible?
Should Christians practice meditation?
How should we respond to the word "*Selah*" in the Psalms?
Why did Jesus commend Mary for doing nothing? *(Lk.10:39-42)*
How can we give ourself a spiritual check-up*? (2Cor.13:5)*
What should we be doing as we wait for Jesus to return?

Comments

Why should we study the Bible?

For salvation

Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1Tim.4:15-16
Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. Rom.10:17

To be approved by God

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. [Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, dividing the word of truth aright.]2Tim.2:15

Because the Bible is true

Scripture ·is always true [cannot be broken/annulled/set aside/discredited]Jn.10:35
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. Jn.2:22
Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2Pet.1:20-21

The Bible is all about Jesus

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. Jn.5:39-40
He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.Lk.24:25-27
Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Jn.1:45

The Bible is God's record of how He sees life—it records His world-view—and it is the only definitive and reliable source of information about God and His plan of salvation

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how 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 man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2Tim.3:14-17
Someone may say to you, "Let's ask the mediums and those who consult the spirits of the dead. With their whisperings and mutterings, they will tell us what to do." But shouldn't people ask God for guidance? Should the living seek guidance from the dead? Look to God's instructions and teachings! People who contradict his word are completely in the dark. They will go from one place to another, weary and hungry. And because they are hungry, they will rage and curse their king and their God. They will look up to heaven and down at the earth, but wherever they look, there will be trouble and anguish and dark despair. They will be thrown out into the darkness. Is.8:19-22

The Bible is our spiritual food

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

The Bible is God's Word and will keep us from error/sin/deception

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

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

For the word of God is alive 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

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, "All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever." And this is the word that was preached to you. Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. 1Pet.1:23-2:3

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do. Jas.1:22-25

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.4:9]

Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.[Lk.11:28]

Should Christians practice meditation?

Ps.1

Yes! But by filling our mind not emptying our minds—and filling our minds with God's Word

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it.Josh.1:8

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. But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from wilful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression. May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer. Ps.19:7-14

I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands, and I would not be comforted. I remembered you, God, and I groaned; I meditated, and my spirit grew faint. You kept my eyes from closing; I was too troubled to speak. I thought about the former days, the years of long ago; I remembered my songs in the night. My heart meditated and my spirit asked: "Will the Lord reject forever? Will he never show his favour again? Has his unfailing love vanished forever? Has his promise failed for all time? Has God forgotten to be merciful? Has he in anger withheld his compassion?" Then I thought, "To this I will appeal: the years when the Most High stretched out his right hand. 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. Ps.77:1-14

How should we respond to the word "Selah" in the Psalms?

Re-read what we had just read and ponder it (meditate on it). Savour the song; reflect on what you have read; ponder the paragraph. A good way to ponder is to paraphrase it—use a thesaurus

Meditation give revelation

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

Why did Jesus commend Mary for doing nothing? (Lk.10:39-42)

Mary wasn't "*doing nothing*" as Martha imagined but she was fellowshipping with Jesus—fellowship (Koinonia) is translated partnership, participation, sharing

*And do not forget to do good and to **share** (Koinonia) with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Heb.12:16*

*In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your **partnership** (Koinonia) 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.1:4-6*

*For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a **contribution** (Koinonia) for the poor among the Lord's people in Jerusalem. Rom.15:26*

*I pray that your **partnership** (Koinonia) with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ. Phil.6*

*Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a **participation** (Koinonia) in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a **participation** (Koinonia) 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*

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to **fellowship**, (Koinonia) to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts.2:42*

Worship is a spirit (spiritual) and is evidenced in obedience.

"Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, 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 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.4:21-24

Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— though I myself have reasons for such confidence. Phil.3:1-4

Martha could have been worshipping as she prepared the food but she had the wrong attitude

*Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to **tend** and keep it. Gen.2:15*

*During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, **worship** the LORD as you have requested. Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me." Ex.12:31-32*

***Serve** the LORD with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling. Ps.2:11*

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 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

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

How can we give ourself a spiritual check-up? (2Cor.13:5)

Re-evaluate the basics of our faith. Do I believe the Apostles' Creed?

I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
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.
Under Pontius Pilate, He 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 the 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!

If the answer is "yes", then we should ask ourself: "**so what, what difference does it make?**"
Re-affirm our faith *i.e.* personalise our beliefs by saying, "Yes, God is my Heavenly Father; Yes, Jesus is my God, my Lord, my Saviour—He died for me, saved me, justified me, resides within me, intercedes for me and will return for me; Yes, the Holy Spirit is my Comforter, Guide and Empowerer.
The mystery of God that was hidden for generations is now revealed and it is Christ is in us and He is the hope of glory"
*I serve the church. God appointed me to bring all of his word to you. That word contains the mystery that has been hidden for many ages. But now it has been made known to God's people. God has chosen to make known to them the glorious riches of that mystery. He has made it known among those who aren't Jews. A**nd here is what it is. Christ is in you. He is your hope of glory.** We preach about him. With all the wisdom we have, we warn and teach everyone. When we bring them to God, we want them to be perfect as people who belong to Christ. That's what I'm working for. I work hard with all of Christ's strength. His strength works powerfully in me.Col.1:25-29*
Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with 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 the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith— to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen. Rom.16:25-27
*For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— 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 people 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. Eph.3:1-7*
The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, 'they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!' Mk.4:11-12

What should we be doing as we wait for Jesus to return?

Be dressed and ready for service!

the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.[Lk.12:40]
But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar. Fire will destroy everything in them. God will judge the earth and everything in it. So everything will be destroyed. And what kind of people should you be? You should lead holy and godly lives. Live like that as you look forward to the day of God. It will make the day come more quickly. On that day fire will destroy the heavens. Its heat will melt everything in them. But we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth. Godliness will make its home there. All of this is in keeping with God's promise. Dear friends, I know you are looking forward to that. So try your best to be found pure and without blame. Be at peace with God.[2Pet.3:10-14]

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

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*."

18/06/2025

Psalm 141

Video: this-changed-everything-mp4-digital-download 1.25? Act 2 Radicals

Questions

Can we really expect a miracle from God?
Does God answer every prayer we pray?
Why is it important to know what God says about the future?
Why is a new-birth essential be a citizen of heaven?
What will happen at the final resurrection?
Does anyone have a 2nd chance?

Comments

Can we really expect a miracle from God?

We must first define "miracle". One of the Greek words translated "*miracle*" is "*deed*" or "*things*" and used 158 times but only translated miracle twice

Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. Jn.3:20
So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. "Everything they do is done for people to see: Matt.23:3-5
Jesus said to them, "I did one miracle, and you are all amazed.Jn.7:21
Jesus said. "For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us. Mk.9:30-31

The word more commonly associated with "*miracle*" is "*dunamis*" (from where we get "*dynamite*") and this is usually translated "*signs*" or "*power*"

"Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. Acts.2:22
But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts.1:8
When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform some miracle.Lk.23:7-8
Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. Acts. 4:16
This was the second sign Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee. Jn.4:54

God is a God who performs miracles

You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples. Ps.77:14

And so we can expect God to change people's lives supernaturally when they hear the Gospel

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 they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it. Mk.16:15-20
At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders. The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. Acts.14:1-5

Does God answer every prayer we pray?

No! But God hears and sees everything

She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me." Gen.16:13

You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely. Ps.139:1-4

Although God hears every prayer, He is not obliged to answer every prayer—but if we are in fellowship (unity) with God and ask according to His Will, He not only hears our prayer but will answer our prayer too!

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

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 and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep 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. The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.1Jn.3:19-24

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. 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.5:13-15

We can also hinder or even annul our prayers by unbelief, wrong motive and wrong attitude

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.1:6-7

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

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. Jas.4:1-3

Fortunately God usually answers our prayers according to His wisdom and grace, not according to our desires.

However there are examples in Scripture when God answered prayer but instead of being a blessing, the answer became a "curse"!

Israel asking for meat!

The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, "If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!" Nu.11:4-6

*Now a wind went out from the LORD and drove quail in from the sea. It scattered them up to two cubits deep all around the camp, as far as a day's walk in any direction. All that day and night and all the next day the people went out and gathered quail. No one gathered less than ten homers. * Then they spread them out all around the camp. But while the meat was still between their teeth and before it could be consumed, the anger of the LORD burned against the people, and he struck them with a severe plague. Therefore the place was named Kibroth Hattaavah, * because there they buried the people who had craved other food. Nu.11:31-34*

Hezekiah asking for healing

In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. He prayed to the LORD, who answered him and gave him a miraculous sign. But Hezekiah's heart was proud and he did not respond to the kindness shown him; therefore the LORD's wrath was on him and on Judah and Jerusalem. Then Hezekiah repented of the pride of his heart, as did the people of Jerusalem; therefore the LORD's wrath did not come on them during the days of Hezekiah.

Hezekiah had very great wealth and honour, and he made treasuries for his silver and gold and for his precious stones, spices, shields and all kinds of valuables. He also made buildings to store the harvest of grain, new wine and olive oil; and he made stalls for various kinds of cattle, and pens for the flocks. He built villages and acquired great numbers of flocks and herds, for God had given him very great riches. 2Chron.32:24-30
In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, "This is what the LORD says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover."
Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, "Remember, LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.
Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah: "Go and tell Hezekiah, 'This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city. Is.36:1-6
The other events of Hezekiah's reign and his acts of devotion are written in the vision of the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. Hezekiah rested with his ancestors and was buried on the hill where the tombs of David's descendants are. All Judah and the people of Jerusalem honored him when he died. And Manasseh his son succeeded him as king.
Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had demolished; he also erected altars to the Baals and made Asherah poles. He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshiped them. He built altars in the temple of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "My Name will remain in Jerusalem forever." In both courts of the temple of the LORD, he built altars to all the starry hosts. He sacrificed his children in the fire in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, practiced divination and witchcraft, sought omens, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, arousing his anger. 2Chron.32:32-33:6
Then the LORD said to me: "Even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before me, my heart would not go out to this people. Send them away from my presence! Let them go! And if they ask you, 'Where shall we go?' tell them, 'This is what the LORD says:
" 'Those destined for death, to death; those for the sword, to the sword; those for starvation, to starvation; those for captivity, to captivity.' "I will send four kinds of destroyers against them," declares the LORD, "the sword to kill and the dogs to drag away and the birds and the wild animals to devour and destroy. I will make them abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth because of what Manasseh son of Hezekiah king of Judah did in Jerusalem. Jer.15:1-4
But Manasseh led Judah and the people of Jerusalem astray, so that they did more evil than the nations the LORD had destroyed before the Israelites. The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention. So the LORD brought against them the army commanders of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh prisoner, put a hook in his nose, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon. In his distress he sought the favor of the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his ancestors. And when he prayed to him, the LORD was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea; so he brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD is God. Afterward he rebuilt the outer wall of the City of David, west of the Gihon spring in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate and encircling the hill of Ophel; he also made it much higher. He stationed military commanders in all the fortified cities in Judah. He got rid of the foreign gods and removed the image from the temple of the LORD, as well as all the altars he had built on the temple hill and in Jerusalem; and he threw them out of the city. Then he restored the altar of the LORD and sacrificed fellowship offerings and thank offerings on it, and told Judah to serve the LORD, the God of Israel. The people, however, continued to sacrifice at the high places, but only to the LORD their God. The other events of Manasseh's reign, including his prayer to his God and the words the seers spoke to him in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, are written in the annals of the kings of Israel. His prayer and how God was moved by his entreaty, as well as all his sins and unfaithfulness, and the sites where he built high places and set up Asherah poles and idols before he humbled himself—all these are written in the records of the seers. Manasseh rested with his ancestors and was buried in his palace. And Amon his son succeeded him as king.2Chron.33:9-20

Deal Pentecostal Church Bible Studies 2025

Is it important to know what God says about the future?

It is more important that we know God than about what the future holds

Because He lives I can face tomorrow. Because He lives all my fear is gone.
And now I know that He holds the future,
And life is worth the living now I know He lives.

God holds the key of all unknown, And I am glad;
If other hands should hold the key, Or if He trusted it to me, I might be sad, I might be sad.

What if tomorrow's cares were here Without its rest!
I'd rather He unlocked the day; And, as the hours swing open, say, "My will is best, My will is best."

The very dimness of my sight Makes me secure;
For, groping in my misty way, I feel His hand; I hear Him say, "My help is sure, My help is sure."

I cannot read His future plans; But this I know;
I have the smiling of His face, And all the refuge of His grace, While here below, while here below.

Enough! this covers all my wants, And so I rest!
For what I cannot, He can see, And in His care I saved shall be, Forever blest, forever blest.

However, when we are prepared for what is going to happen it is easier to stay in faith (keep trusting God) without losing hope.

That can be the blessing of prophesy—Jesus said 5 times, *I have told you these things so that…*
I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. Jn.14:29
I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. Jn.15:11
"All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. Jn.16:1
I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them. Jn.16:4
"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

Nevertheless, our trust is in God and if we stay firm in our faith we not worry about what isn't going to happen

If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.' Is.7:9
So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. 2Thess.2:15
Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm. 2Cor.1:24
Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, Eph.6:13-14

And neither will we be deceived

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
*In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how 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.3:12-17*

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

Why is a new-birth essential be a citizen of heaven?

Because we are born spiritually dead, the only way to become a citizen of heaven is to become alive.

Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again. "Jn.3:3

"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. Jn.5:24-27

What will happen at the final resurrection?

At the final resurrection everyone will give an account to God for the life they have lived

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. For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit. !Pet.4:4-6

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. Heb.4:13

So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. Rom.14:12

For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.[Matt.12:34-37]

When Jesus returns that final resurrection will be instant, visible, audible and of course, final. The clearest description of that final resurrection is found in 1Thessalonians where Paul relays what Jesus told him would happen

Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 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. 1Thess.4:13-18

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left… "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

"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. … "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life. " Matt.25:31-46

Does anyone have a 2nd chance?

Universalism is a common deception because people refuse to think over the matter in a logical manner!

(See this extract from the *Gentlemen Detective* series)

Still, this is a placed filled with lives cut too short," the caretaker shrugged. "See over there? We have a funeral this afternoon, and I was supervising the gravedigging. Young lady, only in her twenties, lost to the consumption."

"How dreadful," Bainbridge mumbled without really paying attention.

"Never mind, though, we all go to a better place, don't we?"

"I don't know, do we?" he said gloomily.

"Of course!" the caretaker chuckled. "We all get our second chance, I reckon."

Yes, we all have a 2nd, 3rd 4th and many more chances—until we die!

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. Matt.18:21-22

After we take our final breath, there are no more chances and we will have to live with the consequences of our choices.

"The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.' "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.' " 'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' " Lk.16:22-31

But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. Heb.9:26-28

There is no purgatory or limbo and there is no one can cross over between heaven and hell—they couldn't before Jesus died and they can't after Jesus died

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits— to those who were disobedient long ago when 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 clear 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.3:18-22

11/06/2025

Psalm 140

Video: this-changed-everything-mp4-digital-download 1.17

Questions

Should Christians consider any days or objects as holy?
Why is the Cross important for Christians?
Which Old Covenant rituals or festivals portrayed Jesus' crucifixion?
How was Jesus' crucifixion different from the others who were crucified?
Even though Jesus died for the sins of the world, why isn't everyone saved?
What will we be judged for on the Day of Judgement?

Comments

Should Christians consider any days or objects as holy?

In the Old Covenant the holy places and objects were to remind people that God is holy and only holy people can approach Him. These conditions were recorded in Scripture to ensure that people knew that they were expected by God and enforced by God's servants (the priests and prophets). Any contravention of these laws made the person "unclean" and they had to go into quarantine for a period of time, after which they had to offer a sacrifice to make atonement.

" 'If anyone becomes aware that they are guilty—if they unwittingly touch anything ceremonially unclean (whether the carcass of an unclean animal, wild or domestic, or of any unclean creature that moves along the ground) and they are unaware that they have become unclean, but then they come to realize their guilt; or if they touch human uncleanness (anything that would make them unclean) even though they are unaware of it, but then they learn of it and realize their guilt; or if anyone thoughtlessly takes an oath to do anything, whether good or evil (in any matter one might carelessly swear about) even though they are unaware of it, but then they learn of it and realize their guilt— when anyone becomes aware that they are guilty in any of these matters, they must confess in what way they have sinned. As a penalty for the sin they have committed, they must bring to the LORD a female lamb or goat from the flock as a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for them for their sin. Lev.5:2-6

In the New Covenant people are holy not objects or places. God dwells in our hearts which makes us holy

In the New Covenant, the only exception to people being called holy is the Holy Scriptures

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God— the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom.1:1-4

and how 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

So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. Rom.7:12

Matthew refers to Jerusalem as the "holy city" but this was before the New Covenant was introduced (however, because of the context, he may mean the heavenly Jerusalem)

Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. Matt.4:5

The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. Matt.27:52-53

John refers to the "Holy City" but means Believers

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. Rev.21:2

And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll. Rev.22:19

In the Old Covenant, anything that touched the Altar became holy:

"Do for Aaron and his sons everything I have commanded you, taking seven days to ordain them. Sacrifice a bull each day as a sin offering to make atonement. Purify the altar by making atonement for it, and anoint it to consecrate it. For seven days make atonement for the altar and consecrate it. Then the altar will be most holy, and whatever touches it will be holy. Ex.29:35-37

"Woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gold of the temple is bound by that oath.' You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? You also say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gift on the altar is bound by that oath.' You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? Therefore, anyone who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And anyone who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. And anyone who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it. Matt.13:16-22

Actually we should swear by anything but merely say what we mean*: Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfil to the Lord the vows you have made.' But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.Matt.5:33-37*

The only reason any object or place can be considered holy is if a Christian is present.

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. 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.2:13-17

In the New Covenant there is no sacred/secular divide

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 [Or merchant] in the house of the LORD Almighty. Zech.14:24-25

We are now God's Temple—the place where God meets man

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.1Cor.3:16-17

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. Eph.2:19-22

We have holy hearts, holy bodies, holy minds, holy lives because God is with us.

To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Rom.1:7

Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings. Rom.16:16

All the brothers and sisters here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. 1Cor.16:20

For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit. 1Thess.4:7-8

Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness." In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master

and prepared to do any good work. Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. 2Tim.2:19-23

The Holy City of Jerusalem in the New Covenant is not a physical town in the Middle East but the Church

"Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. Rev.21:9-10

Why is the Cross important for Christians?

The Cross is important because it is where Jesus paid the price for our sins.

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.[Col.1:19]

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. 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.2:13-17]

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.[Gal.3:13-14]

"For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!" You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard? So also Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Gal.2:19-3:6

Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. 1Cor.1:22-25

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 opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Heb.12:1-3

But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed." 1Pet.2:20-24

Which Old Covenant rituals or festivals portrayed Jesus' crucifixion?

Perhaps the most well-known type of Jesus' death on the cross was the 1st Passover when, in order to avoid the judgement that was coming on the Egyptians, the Israelites killed an adult male lamb and painted its blood on the doorposts:

This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb… The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast… Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover. On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.[Ex.12:1-13]

This dramatic action prefigured the death of Jesus as the Lamb of God which saves us from God's judgement on sin when we personally place ourselves under God's protection.

Another OT reference to the Cross is seen in the instruction that anyone who was hung on a tree was cursed. This prefigured Jesus becoming a curse for us in order for us to receive His blessings:

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.[Gal.3:13-14]

How was Jesus' crucifixion different from the others who were crucified?

Jesus endured the shame and pain for our sakes not for His own sins

There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." Lk.23:38-43

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Is.53

Even though Jesus died for the sins of the world, why isn't everyone saved?

That means that although God has done everything He can to save us, we still need to receive this Gospel—the facts are the ingredients but it is faith that makes it work for us.

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 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.[1Cor.15:1-5]

We see this with the Israelites who left Egypt in a literal cloud of signs and wonders—but they didn't mix the facts with faith:

We belong to Christ if we hold firmly to the faith we had at first. But we must hold to it until the end. It has just been said, "Listen to his voice today. If you hear it, don't be stubborn. You were stubborn when you opposed me." Who were those who heard and refused to obey? Weren't they all the people Moses led out of Egypt? Who was God angry with for 40 years? Wasn't it with those who sinned? They died in the desert. What people did God promise with an oath that they would never enjoy the rest he planned for them? Wasn't it those who didn't obey? So we see that they weren't able to enter. That's because they didn't believe. God's promise of enjoying his rest still stands. So be careful that none of you fails to receive it. The good news was preached to our people long ago. It has also been preached to us. The message they heard didn't have any value for them. They didn't combine it with faith. Now we who have believed enjoy that rest.[Heb.3:14-4:3]

Scripture says, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How can they call on him unless they believe in him? How can they believe in him unless they hear about him? How can they hear about him unless someone preaches to them? And how can anyone preach without being sent? It is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" But not all the people of Israel accepted the good news. Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" So faith comes from hearing the message. And the message that is heard is the word of Christ. But I ask, "Didn't the people of Israel hear?" Of course they did. It is written, "Their voice has gone out into the whole earth. Their words have gone out from one end of the world to the other."[Rom.10:13-18]

What will we be judged for on the Day of Judgement?

On Judgement Day, our names are checked against the Book of Life.

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]

The one who is victorious 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 that name before my Father and his angels. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.[Rev.3:5-6]

But even though our sins are forgiven, we will still have to give an account for the way we have spoken and lived

For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: " 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God.' " So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.[Rom.14:10-12]

For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.[Matt.12:34-37]

As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free. Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favourites. Eph.6:6-9

Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honoured his name.[Mal.3:16]

That means we should be careful how we live because there are consequences for bad living and unbelief:

Be merciful to those who doubt; save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.[Jude.22-23]

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.[1Cor.3:10-15]

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. !Jn.4:16-18

04/06/2025

Psalm 139:13-24

Video: Letter to the Hebrews, Introduction Part 1 - Authorship

Questions

God is Spirit and invisible so how can we know what He is like?
What is truth?
What is the difference between information and knowledge?
Who is Jesus?
Why did Jesus come?
How did Jesus bring salvation?

Comments

God is Spirit and invisible so how can we know what He is like?

We can know what God is like by looking at Jesus:

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? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. Jn.14:9-11

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.[Col.1:15-20]

We can know what God is like by looking at Creation

God shows his anger from heaven. It is against all the godless and evil things people do. They are so evil that they say no to the truth. The truth about God is plain to them. God has made it plain. Ever since the world was created it has been possible to see the qualities of God that are not seen. I'm talking about his eternal power and about the fact that he is God. Those things can be seen in what he has made. So people have no excuse for what they do.[Rom.1:18-20]

But everything we know about God is confirmed by Scripture

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

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. Lk.24:27

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. Jn.5:39-40

Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. Act.17:11-12

What is truth?

Truth is how God views things

Let God be true, and every human being a liar. Rom.3:4

Truth is personified in Jesus

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.[Jn.14:6] *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. (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' ") Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*[Jn.1:14-17]

What is the difference between information and knowledge?

Information is the facts but knowledge is what we know about that information. We receive information through our mind and interpret those facts through our personality. That is why people react differently to information. For example we interpret news, politics, world events etc. through our world-view. This is especially seen in our country with the way people relate to animals. We need to see life as God sees life because it is only God's evaluation that is true only God's opinion that matters

Not at all! Let God be true, and every human being a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge."Rom.3:4

The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. Jn.3:31-34

Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God." Rev.19:9

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." Rev.21:5

The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place." Rev.22:6

Who is Jesus?

The Son of God

The high priest said to him, "I command you under oath by the living God. Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." "Yes. It is just as you say," Jesus replied. Matt.26:63-64

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. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. Heb.1:1-4

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Col.1:15-20

The Word of God

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Jn.1:1-5

The Christ

"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "You are blessed, Simon son of Jonah, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. Matt.16:16-17

Son of Mary

They all came together regularly to pray. The women joined them too. So did Jesus' mother Mary and his brothers.Acts.1:14

Descended from David

Jesus said to them, "Why do people say that the Christ is the Son of David? David himself says in the Book of Psalms, "'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your control."' (Ps 110:1) David calls him 'Lord.' So how can he be David's son?"Lk.20:41-44

"Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." Matt.1:20-2:2

But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." Lk.1:30-33

Why did Jesus come?

To seek and save the lost

Jesus said to him, "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 the lost."Lk.19:9-10

To become a human so He could die in our place. As the Word of God, Jesus could not die as He had no physical body. Only a sinless person could die and not be held captive to death—which is why Jesus had to become sin for us

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2Cor.5:21

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Is.53

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. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, Rom.3:23-25

For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human 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. Heb.2:17

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.2:1-2

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1Jn.4:10

How did Jesus bring salvation?

By dying on the cross in our place—we call this vicarious atonement

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. Is.53:4-5

He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. 1Pet.2:24-25

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Col.2:13-15

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. Eph.2:15-16

We are now justified—just as if I'd never sinned

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Rom.5:9-10

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.6:11

28/05/2025

Psalm 139:1-12

Video: A Thought Experiment That Demonstrates the Reliability of the New Testament

Questions

Why did God create the world together with all its flora and fauna?
What responsibility does mankind have for the earth and environment?
What does the Bible say about the food we can eat?
How important is it to look after our physical life?
How can we look after our spiritual life?

Comments

Why did God create the world together with all its flora and fauna?

For mankind to rule, have dominion over and to take care of it

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 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 and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so. Gen.1:26-30

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

Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. Gen.2:19-20

To display His glory

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. Ps.19:2-4

And the heavens proclaim his righteousness, for he is a God of justice. Ps.50:6

To praise God

Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for at his command they were created, and he established them for ever and ever— he issued a decree that will never pass away. Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, Ps.148:4-10

To display God's invisible qualities

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. Rom.1:20

What responsibility does mankind have for the earth and environment?

God has given mankind the responsibility to look after the earth—to use it not abuse it. But the earth is for our benefit. However, when people are deceived into worshiping the creation instead of the Creator, they denigrate God and deny the truth.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error. Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. Rom.1:21-32

Has a nation ever changed its gods? (Yet they are not gods at all.) But my people have exchanged their glorious God for worthless idols. Be appalled at this, you heavens, and shudder with great horror," declares the LORD. Jer.2:11-12

What does the Bible say about the food we can eat?

Under the Old Covenant the Jews were only permitted to eat certain animals—and then only if they were killed in a certain way. There was a distinction between "clean" and "unclean" food and this was to remind people that God is holy/pure and only holy/pure people may come near to God.

You are the children of the LORD your God. Do not cut yourselves or shave the front of your heads for the dead, for you are a people holy to the LORD your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the LORD has chosen you to be his treasured possession.

*Do not eat any detestable thing. These are the animals you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope and the mountain sheep. * You may eat any animal that has a divided hoof and that chews the cud. However, of those that chew the cud or that have a divided hoof you may not eat the camel, the rabbit or the hyrax. Although they chew the cud, they do not have a divided hoof; they are ceremonially unclean for you. The pig is also unclean; although it has a divided hoof, it does not chew the cud. You are not to eat their meat or touch their carcasses.*

Of all the creatures living in the water, you may eat any that has fins and scales. But anything that does not have fins and scales you may not eat; for you it is unclean.

You may eat any clean bird. But these you may not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the black vulture, the red kite, the black kite, any kind of falcon, any kind of raven, the horned owl, the screech owl, the gull, any kind of hawk, the little owl, the great owl, the white owl, the desert owl, the osprey, the cormorant, the stork, any kind of heron, the hoopoe and the bat.

All flying insects are unclean to you; do not eat them. But any winged creature that is clean you may eat.

Do not eat anything you find already dead. You may give it to the foreigner residing in any of your towns, and they may eat it, or you may sell it to any other foreigner. But you are a people holy to the LORD your God.

Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk. Deut.14:1-21 (also Lev.11)

Because Jesus has dealt with sin, the way to God is open and the distinction between clean and unclean food of the Old Covenant is no longer applicable.

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

Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. "All of you listen," he said, "and try to understand. It's not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart. " Then Jesus went into a house to get away from the crowd, and his disciples asked him what he meant by the parable he had just used. "Don't you understand either?" he asked. "Can't you see that the food you put into your body cannot defile you? Food doesn't go into your heart, but only passes through the stomach and then goes into the sewer." (By saying this, he declared that

every kind of food is acceptable in God's eyes.) And then he added, "It is what comes from inside that defiles you. For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you."Mk.7:14-23

Today, under the New Covenant we can eat any food we want to if we accept it with pray and thanksgiving

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. If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. 1Tim.4:1-6

Food is physical not spiritual and all food is holy We are neither more or less spiritual if we eat meat:

So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: 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. But not everyone possesses this knowledge. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat sacrificial food they think of it as having been sacrificed to a god, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.1Cor.8:4-8

"I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. No one should seek their 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."1Cor.10:23-26

Our physical diet is a personal preference not a spiritual thermometer!

You say, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both."1Cor.6:13

Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely 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.Col.2:20-23

Although the Jerusalem Council made some stipulations, Paul overruled these.

You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.
Farewell. Acts.15:29

How important is it to look after our physical life?

Physical health is important but not to the detriment of our spiritual health. Our physical life is short compared to eternity and there is more to life than just the physical—food, drink, clothes and possessions

"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 than food, and the body more 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? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life ? "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers 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—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 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.6:25-34

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." Lk.12:15

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 Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe. Command and teach these things. 1Tim.4:7-11

These are the things you are to teach and insist on. If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 1Tim.6:3-10

How can we look after our spiritual life?

Fellowship with God, His Word and His people

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. 2Cor.13:14

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. 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 yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by 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.1:3-7

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

*My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body. Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level * paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil. Prov.4:20-27*

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.10:24-25

Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honoured his name. "They will be mine," says the LORD Almighty, "in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not. Mal.3:16-18

21/05/2025

Psalm 138

Video:

Questions

Why do many people find Christianity hard?
Why is it important to "*rightly divide the Word of God*"?
How can we keep our faith simple?
Why did God tell the Israelites to never go back to Egypt?
Why should we be careful what we listen to?

Comments

Why do many people find Christianity hard?

Because it is impossible to keep all of God's commands. Christianity is a heart religion of worship not a head religion of keeping rules.

You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell… "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart… "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfil to the Lord the vows you have made.' But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.Matt.5:21-37

Until our spirit is re-born, we cannot see the kingdom of God.

Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" 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.3:3-8

Not even Christians are capable of living sinless lives but Christians do live sin-forgiven lives.

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

What we often call "sins" are actually manifestations of unbelief—which is the real sin.

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. Jas.1:13-15

See the one who is pregnant with wickedness, who conceives destructive plans, and gives birth to harmful lies – he digs a pit and then falls into the hole he has made. Ps.7:14-15

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. Eph.2:3

Unbelief keeps us from pleasing God and prevents us walking in harmony/unity with Him

For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 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. Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away. Gen.5:22

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God.Gen.6:9
"As for you, if you walk before me faithfully as David your father did, and do all I command, and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father when I said, 'You shall never fail to have a successor to rule over Israel.' 2Chron.7:17
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. Rom.15:13
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. Gal.5:22-25

Christian maturity enables to stand firm in our faith

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love. 1Cor.16:13-14
So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. 2Thess.2:15

Christian maturity enables us to believe God when we don't feel worthy

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
"Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"Is.6:5-8

Christian maturity is being like Christ

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. Eph.4:11-16

Maturity is the result of faith that has been tested.

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. Jas.1:2-4

Why is it important to "*rightly divide the Word of God*"?

God created mankind to serve Him and gave us the Scriptures to teach us who He is and what He wants. When we believe something contrary to the truth (which is anything that opposes God and His values) we are deceived

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. 1Jn.1:8-10

Deception is accepting what is wrong to be right.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' " "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" …The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." Gen.3:1-4;13

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight. Is.5:20-21

"You have said, 'It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty? But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it.' Mal.3:15

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. Heb.3:12-14

For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are disrupting whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. One of Crete's own prophets has said it: "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." This saying is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the merely human commands of those who reject the truth. 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. Tit.1:10-16

Don't do anything unclean. And do not always want more and more. Things like that are not what God's holy people should do. There must not be any unclean speech or foolish talk or dirty jokes. All of them are out of place. Instead, you should give thanks. Here is what you can be sure of. Those who give themselves over to sexual sins are lost. So are people whose lives are not pure. The same is true of those who always want more and more. People who do those things might as well worship statues of gods. No one who does them will receive a share in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Don't let anyone fool you with words that don't mean anything. Because of things like that, God is angry with those who don't obey. So don't go along with people like that. [Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.] At one time you were in the dark. But now you are in the light because of what the Lord has done. Live like children of the light. The light produces what is completely good, right and true. Find out what pleases the Lord. Eph.5:3-10

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 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. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. 2Tim.2:2-14

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. If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister [servant] of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.1Tim.4:4-6

How can we keep our faith simple?

Take Jesus at His Word

"Unless you people see signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe." The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies." "Go," Jesus replied, "your son will live." <u>The man took Jesus at his word</u> and departed. While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, "Yesterday, at one in the afternoon, the fever left him." Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he and his whole household believed. Jn.4:48-53

Don't read into the Bible more than is there.

The Bible is called the Word of God because it is God's Word to us. The Bible is God's record of Jesus, the Word of God, and how He established salvation for mankind—it is not a prediction of

political events. God communicated with people through His Spirit and His Word in various ways until He called Abraham to faith and made a covenant with him. A "*covenant*" is an agreement between two parties—either individuals or an individual and group, or a monarch and their subjects. The *'Abrahamic Covenant'* was established by Yahweh (*YHWH,* that is, God) with Abram and involved a covenantal exchange of their names. Thus, Abram's name became Abr'*ah*'am, and God became known as the God of Abraham. Abraham's wife Sarai became known as Sar'*ah*

The Lord was then known as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God then changed Jacob's name (*deceiver*) to Israel (struggles with God) and established his family as a nation called Israel to be a holy nation and a kingdom of priests

Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites." Ex.19:5-6

But when Jesus came, He made that covenant redundant by establishing a New Covenant

But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises. For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. But God found fault with the people and said:

"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." [Jer.31:31-34]

By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear. Heb.8:6-13

God no longer deals with people as nations but with people as individuals. There is no "Christian" nation except the Church

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.2:9-10

No one can be an ethnic "Christian" or an hereditary "Christian". To be a Christian each individual has to call on the name of the Lord for themselves and have a personal faith in Jesus Christ

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? 2Cor.13:5

When people try to read hidden secrets or secret codes into the Bible, they have missed the whole point of Scripture. Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin, Trump, Starmer are not prophesied in Scripture (but the Babylonian, Greek and Roman emperors were—Isaiah prophesied about Cyrus by name over 100 years before he was born—Isaiah 740 - 686 BC. Cyrus: 600 – 530 BC)

"This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armour, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: Is.45:1

*This is what the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfil my good promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity. * I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile." Jer.29:10-14*

So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian. Dan.6:28

In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfil the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and also to put it in writing: 2Chron.36:22

Daniel and John both prophesied precise details about future kings/emperors up the end of the Old Covenant when Titus destroyed Jerusalem. Now God deals with individuals and the only kingdom that matters to God is His Kingdom—which John preached the preparation and Jesus established

Why did God tell the Israelites to never go back to Egypt?

Egypt represents the world, and slavery

That is why God told the Israelites not to go back to Egypt—and even though they didn't physically return, in their hearts they went back to Egypt and lived in slavery to sin:

When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, "If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of Egypt ready for battle. Ex.13:17-18

The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, "You are not to go back that way again."Deut.17:16

But our ancestors refused to obey Moses. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt.Acts.7:39

The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, "If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!" The manna was like coriander seed and looked like resin. The people went around gathering it, and then ground it in a hand mill or crushed it in a mortar. They cooked it in a pot or made it into loaves. And it tasted like something made with olive oil. When the dew settled on the camp at night, the manna also came down. Nu.11:4-9

Why should we be careful what we listen to?

Sin starts with a thought

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. Jas.1:13-15

Our thoughts determine our behaviour and if we think about our old way of life (which is called the "*flesh*" or "*carnal thinking*") we will easily slip into that way of life—we will go back to Egypt in our hearts:

What you learned was the truth about Jesus. You were taught not to live the way you used to. You must get rid of your old way of life. That's because it is polluted by longing for things that lead you down the wrong path. You were taught to be made new in your thinking. You were taught to start living a new life. It is created to be truly good and holy, just as God is. So each of you must get rid of your lying. Speak the truth to your neighbour. We are all parts of one body. Scripture says, "When you are angry, do not sin." Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry. Don't give the devil a chance. Those who have been stealing must never steal again. Instead, they must work. They must do something useful with their own hands. Then they will have something to give to people in need. Don't let any evil talk come out of your mouths. Say only what will help to build others up and meet their needs. Then what you say will help those who listen. Do not make God's Holy Spirit sad. He marked you with a seal for the day when God will set you completely free.Eph.4:21-30

14/05/2025

Psalm 137

Video: MY FAREWELL SERMON

Questions

In what way is Christianity hard?
In what way is Christianity easy?
What is the Gospel?
How is the Gospel settled?
How is the Gospel spiritual?

Comments

In what way is Christianity hard?

No one can live up to God's standards

There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.[Rom.3:10-12]

Paul and John acknowledged that perfection was not possible—even for Christians

I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.[Phil.3:12-14]

If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts… I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins–and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.[1Jn.1:8-2:2]

God's blessings are for those who completely keep His laws

If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God: You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. Deut.28:1-3

In what way is Christianity easy?

Salvation is a free gift

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom.6:23

So the promise is received by faith. It is given as a free gift. And we are all certain to receive it, whether or not we live according to the law of Moses, if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe. Rom.4:16

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. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. Eph.1:5-8

Still, everyone died–from the time of Adam to the time of Moses–even those who did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. Now Adam is a symbol, a representation of Christ, who was yet to come. But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ. And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. Rom.5:14-17

And we have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us. 1Cor.2:12

And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!" And then he said to me, "Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true." And he also said, "It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega– the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children. Rev.21:5-7

God's Word is closer than our hands and our feet because it (He) is in our heart and our mouth:

For Moses writes that the law's way of making a person right with God requires obedience to all of its commands. But faith's way of getting right with God says, "Don't say in your heart, 'Who will go up to heaven?' (to bring Christ down to earth). And don't say, 'Who will go down to the place of the dead?' (to bring Christ back to life again)." In fact, it says, 'The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart.' And that message is the very message about faith that we preach. Rom.10:5-8

What is the Gospel?

The word "*Gospel*" (εὐαγγέλιον) literally means "*good message*"
(*eu*=good and *aggelion*=angel or messenger)

The Gospel is primarily a gospel of peace

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Eph.6:14-17

We have peace with God through the Cross

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

The Gospel is the good news/message about salvation and righteousness—and it come with God's power!

*For I am not ashamed of the **gospel**, because it is the **power of God** that brings **salvation** to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the **righteousness** of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."* Rom.1:16-17

Because the Gospel is a good message we should present it as good news in a happy, blessed, joyful manner.

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.28:18-20

Even John's preaching was an exhortation

And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them. Lk.3:18

The Christian baptism is a baptism into Jesus in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, not a baptism into Moses (to keep the Law) or even John's baptism of repentance

Peter replied, "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. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts.2:38-41

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. 1Cor.10:1-5

The word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all people will see God's salvation.' " John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." Lk.3:2-9

So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all. Acts.19:3-7

And the Kingdom of God is 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. Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Rom.14:17-19

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. Jude 24-25

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. Ps.16:17 & Acts.2:28

For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. 1Thess.3:8-10

How is the Gospel settled?

Jesus' mission was completed at Calvary

The "*finished work of Jesus*" is much more than a doctrinal statement because if we really believe it, we will live in the benefits of what Jesus has done instead of trying to get God's attention or gain favour with Him. Good theology makes Christianity enjoyable but poor theology makes Christianity hard work! Too many Christians spend their time and energy trying to do what Jesus has already done for us. They are not "*rightly dividing*" the Word of God and they are living in a sort of "*christianised*" form of Old Covenant religion by observing "*holy*" days, eating "*holy*" food (or not eating—fasting), visiting "*holy*" places (or pilgrimages), wanting a priest to mediate with God on their behalf—and their hymns, songs and prayers reflect their deception.

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.[2Tim.2:15]

How is the Gospel spiritual?

God is Spirit

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 gospel deals with the spiritual dimension first but then affects our soul and our body

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

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

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. [1Thess.5:23-24]

For the word of God is alive 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. [Heb.4;12-13]

The early Pentecostal movement arose from the Holiness movement, and like its parent, shared John Wesley's views on sanctification: that it was an instantaneous experience of "*entire sanctification*" or "*Christian perfection*" and that it was a separate experience from conversion. Early Pentecostals called it a "*second blessing*" and regarded it as a necessary preparation for a third experience, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (that is, the new Pentecostal experience).

In 1910, William H. Durham, pastor of the North Avenue Mission in Chicago, began making waves throughout Pentecostal circles when he denounced these views. "*I began to write against the doctrine that it takes two works of grace to save and cleanse a man*," he later wrote. "I *denied and still deny that God does not deal with the nature of sin at conversion. I deny that a man who is converted or born again is outwardly washed and cleansed but that his heart is left unclean with enmity against God in it*."

This wouldn't be salvation, he argued, because salvation *"means that all the old man, or old nature, which was sinful and depraved and which was the very thing in us that was condemned, is crucified with Christ*." He dubbed his position the "*finished work at Calvary*" because he believed the work of Christ on the cross was sufficient for both salvation and sanctification. Finished-work Pentecostals slowly also came to stress a gradual process of sanctification, not an instantaneous one, in which the sanctifying work of Christ was "*appropriated*" over one's life.

Now, just a word concerning Bro. Seymour, who is the leader of the movement under God: He is the meekest man I have ever met. He walks and talks with God. His power is in his weakness. He seems to maintain a helpless dependence on God and is as simple-hearted as a little child, and at the same time is so filled with God that you feel the love and power every time you get near him. WD in The Apostolic Faith in the February-March, 1907

Durham returned to the Azusa Mission in 1911 (where he had received the gift of tongues in 1906). William Seymour was on a preaching tour, and Durham was invited to preach. His finished-work teaching generated conflict but sparked a fresh revival. Wrote one observer, "*The fire began to fall at old Azusa as at the beginning*." But when Seymour heard what was going on, he promptly returned and padlocked the church door to prevent the Chicago preacher from speaking further in his pulpit. Undaunted, Durham moved to a rival mission and continued proclaiming his message.

From his home in Kansas, Charles Parham (by then dropping rapidly out of the Pentecostal spotlight) declared, "*If this man's doctrine is true, let my life go out to prove it, but if our teaching on a definite*

*grace of sanctification is true, let his life pay the forfei*t." When Durham passed away unexpectedly later that year, Parham claimed vindication and remarked to his followers "*how signally God has answered.*"
Despite such ardent denunciation, Durham's interpretation emerged as the preferred theological position for roughly half of all Pentecostals by 1915. Most of the denominations formed as Holiness bodies prior to the Pentecostal outpouring remained staunch supporters of the second-blessing doctrine, while newer organizations, including the Assemblies of God, either left the matter open to individuals or adopted the finished-work view. It is today the view of most American Pentecostals.

07/05/2025

Psalm 136

Video: Substitutionary Atonement_ He Got What We Deserved 2.08

Questions

Why is it important to know what the Bible teaches?
Is all of the Bible meant to be interpreted literally?
How can we know what is a literal prophesy, what is a promise and what is a premise?
Is there a difference between the Word of God and the Bible?
How do we get faith?
How do we get spiritual understanding?

Questions

Why is it important to know what the Bible teaches?

So we are not deceived

*In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how 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.3:12-17*

I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. 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 Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. 2Cor.11:2-4

So that we have God's approval

We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. 1Thess.2:2-4

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. 2Tim.2:15

So that we can live a fulfilled and satisfying life. (Maturity enables us to live a better and less stressful life)

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,Heb.5:13-6:1

If the axe is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed, but skill will bring success. Eccl.10:10

He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me. Col.1:28

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. Eph.4:11-16

So that we can obey God. If we don't know what God wants from us or what His standards are, we will not be able to obey Him

For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"1Pet.4:17-18

Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek. Heb.5:8-10

So that we can help others

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. 2Cor.1:3-4

Is all of the Bible meant to be interpreted literally?

Some of the Bible is parable (allegorical); some of the Bible is history (and yet allegorical); some of the Bible is promises' some of the Bible is premises; some of the Bible is prophesy.

Literal vs. Lateral

In the Law of Moses, homosexual activity was punishable by death (Lev. 18:22-23) and (20:13). So if we take the Bible literally, must we advocate the execution of homosexuals? Or should we promote execution for disobedient children and Sabbath-breakers, both capital crimes under the Law?

When Moses wrote the Law, he expected the Jewish people to take those regulations literally i.e. "*in their usual or most basic sense without metaphor or allegory, free from exaggeration or distortion*".

But just because a biblical command is intended to be understood *literally*, does not mean it is intended to be applied *laterally*, that is, universally across the board to all peoples at all times in all places.

Consider this situation. Jesus told Peter to cast his net in deep water (Luke 5:4). That's exactly what Peter did because he took Jesus' command literally, in its ordinary sense. He had no reason to think otherwise. However, because Jesus' command to Peter was *literal* does not mean the same command applies *laterally* to everyone else. We're not obliged to cast nets into deep water just because Peter was.

Here's another way of looking at it. No matter what state you live in, the California legal codes are to be read literally, but don't have lateral application to all states. They only apply to those in California.

In the same way, the words of the Mosaic Law, like those of all laws, are to be taken at face value by anyone who reads them. Yet only those under its jurisdiction are obliged to obey its precepts.

The Jews in the theocracy were expected to obey the legal code God gave them, including the prohibition of and punishment for homosexuality. It was not the legal code God gave to Gentiles, however. Therefore, even if the words of the Mosaic Law are to be taken literally by those under the jurisdiction of that code, this does not mean that in our current circumstances we are governed by the details of the provisions of that Law.

Though Moses gave legal statutes for Jews under the theocracy, that Law in some cases still reflects moral universals that have application for those outside the nation of Israel. Yes, we can glean wisdom and moral guidance from the Law of Moses for our own legal codes, but there are limits. Working out those details is a different discussion, however. [1]

The question here is not whether we *take* the Mosaic Law literally, but whether we are now *under* that legal code. We are not. That law was meant for Jews living under a theocracy defined by their unique

[1] For the record, I think the immorality of homosexuality is one of those universals since, among other reasons, it's identified in the New Testament as wrong irrespective of the Mosaic Law (e.g., Rom. 1:27).

covenant with God. Simply because a directive appears in the Mosaic Law does not, *by that fact alone*, make it obligatory for those living outside of Israel's commonwealth.
If I'm asked if I take the Bible literally, I would say I think that's the wrong question. I'd say instead that I take the Bible in its ordinary sense, that is, I try to take the things recorded there with the precision I think the writer intended.

How can we know what is a literal prophesy, what is a promise and what is a premise?

See the context.
The basic rule of all communication is: Meaning flows from the top down, from the larger units to the smaller units. The key to the meaning of any verse comes from the paragraph, not just from the individual words.
Here's how it works. First, get the big picture. Look at the broader context of the book. What type of writing is it—history, poetry, proverb, letter? Different genres have different rules for reading them.
Next, stand back from the verse and look for breaks in the passage that identify major units of thought. Then ask yourself, "*What in this paragraph or group of paragraphs gives any clue to the meaning of the verse in question*? *In general, what idea is being developed*? ***What is the flow of thought***?"
With the larger context now in view, you can narrow your focus and speculate on the meaning of the verse itself. When you come up with something that seems right, sum it up in your own words. Finally—and this step is critical— see if your paraphrase—your summary—makes sense when inserted in place of the verse in the passage.
I call this "*the paraphrase principle*." Replace the text in question with your paraphrase and see if the passage still makes sense in light of the larger context. Is it intelligible when inserted back into the paragraph? Does it dovetail naturally with the bigger picture? If it doesn't, you know you're on the wrong track.
This technique will immediately weed out interpretations that are obviously erroneous. It's not a fool-proof *positive* test for accuracy since some faulty interpretations could still be coherent in the context. However, it is a reliable *negative* test, quickly eliminating alternatives that don't fit the flow of thought.
If you will begin to do these two things—read the context carefully and apply the paraphrase principle—you will radically improve the accuracy of your interpretations. Remember, meaning always flows from the larger units to the smaller units. Without the bigger picture, you'll likely be lost.
Don't forget the rule: Never read a Bible verse. Always read a paragraph at least if you want to be confident you're getting the right meaning of the verse.
Do I take the Bible literally? I try to take it at its plain meaning unless I have some good reason to do otherwise. This is the basic rule we apply to everything we read: novels, newspapers, periodicals, and poems. I don't see why the Bible should be any different.

Is there a difference between the Word of God and the Bible?

Yes, Jesus is the Word of God, the Bible is the written testimony of Jesus.
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. Jn.5:37-40
Until we mix what we hear of God (the Scripture) with faith it is ineffective. Faith and action work together.
As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? And to whom did God swear that

they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. Heb.3:15-4:1

How do we get faith?

Faith comes from hearing the Word of God

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. Rom.10:14-17

We need our spiritual ears opened

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. Rev.2:7

He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, " 'they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!' Mk.4:11-12

"The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet: " 'Go to this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving." For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!" Acts.28:25-28

Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" Mk.8:17-18

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.' Acts.26:18

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, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. Eph.1:17-19

How do we get spiritual wisdom?

Wisdom is the application of knowledge — we need to apply God's Word *i.e.* do what it says

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash. Matt.7:24-27

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do. Jas.1:22-25

Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. Matt.13:17

He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it." Lk.11:28

Now then, my children, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways. Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not disregard it. Blessed are those who listen to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. For those who find

me find life and receive favour from the LORD. But those who fail to find me harm themselves; all who hate me love death. Prov.8:32-36

30/04/2025

Psalm 135

Video: Let's Test The Bible, Here's what happens

Questions

Why do you think that the exact number of fish caught (153) is recorded?
Why did Jesus single Peter out from the other Disciples?
Can you find any Biblical evidence that Peter was leader of the early Church?
What does it mean to "*follow*" Jesus?
What does it mean to "*feed my sheep*"?
How do we feed Jesus' sheep?

Comments

Why do you think that the exact number of fish caught (153) is recorded?

Because God is interested in details
To give the story credibility—a specific number shows that it was an eye-witness account
Numbers in the Bible are sometimes significant—but not always!
1 =absolute, "one God". Also light and creation (Gen.1) plus new creation—*c.f.* resurrection of Jesus and our day of worship
2 =unity, "two witnesses"
3 =ultimate, "holy, holy, holy"
4 =earth, "four corners/winds of the earth"
5 =grace
6 =sin/man
7 =complete, ending
10 =human government "ten kings"
12 =redemption
13 =evil
42 months = the period between 64AD and 66AD when Nero embarked on the most violent campaign against Christians martyring multitudes.
666 = six hundred and sixty six, not six, six, six. It is the numerical value of "Caesar Nero"
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)
There is therefore a logical divide in Revelation after Revelation 19 where a thousand year gap is described. We understand one thousand years to mean a long time. This means that the first 19 chapters had an imminent application to the original audience in early 64 AD (when Revelation was probably written) and the events described from Revelation 20 and following pertain to events to take place after "a long time".

Why did Jesus single Peter out from the other Disciples?

Peter, James and John were Jesus' closest Disciples.
After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. Matt.17:1
Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe." He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. Mk.5:36-38
It was Peter who had the most strongly declared his support for Jesus—even though all Jesus' Disciples deserted Him when He was arrested
Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not." "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times." But Peter insisted emphatically, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the others said the same.Mk.14:29-31

"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me." Lk.22:31-34

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) Jn.18:10

And it was Peter who had made the loudest denial

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him. "You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus," she said. But he denied it. "I don't know or understand what you're talking about," he said, and went out into the entryway. 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." Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows twice a month you will disown me three times." And he broke down and wept. Mk.14:66-72

Peter and John did not completely desert Jesus but followed at a distance

Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in. Jn.18:15-16

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. Jn.19:25-27

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. Jn.20:1-6

Can you find any Biblical evidence that Peter was leader of the early Church?

Paul wrote his letter to the Church at Rome some time before he visited them and he makes no mention of Peter in this letter. Therefore we can assume that Peter did not found the Church and neither was he the presbyter there. However, there is good reason to believe that Peter did write his letters from Rome a year or two before he was killed there.

A.D.52	**Galatians** from Corinth
A.D.57/58	**Romans** from Corinth
A.D.61	Paul arrives at Rome
A.D.61-63	Paul's imprisonment at Rome
A.D.62	**Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon** from Rome
A.D.63	**Philippians** from Rome
A.D.63-65	Paul's release & further ministry
A.D.64	**1 & 2 Peter** from Rome
A.D.65	Peter's death in Rome
A.D.65	Paul's 2nd imprisonment at Rome
A.D.65	**2 Timothy** from Rome
A.D.65	Paul's death at Rome

The Roman Catholic church believes that Jesus said that He would build the Church on Peter and that he was the 1st Bishop of Rome

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."
"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. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.Matt.16:13-17

Roman Catholics have appealed to this passage to defend the idea that Peter was the first pope ["*pope*" means "*father*" . The key question concerns Peter's relationship to "this rock." In Greek, "Peter" is *Petros* ("stone"), which is related to *petra* ("rock"). The other NT name of Peter, Cephas (cf. John 1:42 ; 1 Cor 1:12), is the Aramaic equivalent: *kepha'* means "rock," and translates in Greek as *Kēphas* . "This rock" has been variously interpreted as referring to (1) Peter himself; (2) Peter's confession; or (3) Christ and his teachings. For several reasons, the first option is the strongest. Jesus' entire pronouncement is directed toward Peter, and the connecting word "and" (Gk. *kai*) most naturally identifies the rock with Peter himself. But even if "this rock" refers to Peter, the question remains as to what that means. Protestants generally have thought that it refers to Peter *in his role of confessing Jesus as the Messiah* , and that the other disciples would share in that role as they made a similar confession (see Eph 2:20 , where the church is built on all the apostles; cf. Rev 21:14). Jesus' statement did not mean that Peter would have greater authority than the other apostles (indeed, Paul corrects him publicly in Gal 2:11-14), nor did it mean that he would be infallible in his teaching (Jesus rebukes him in Matt 16:23), nor did it imply anything about a special office for Peter or successors to such an office. Certainly in the first half of Acts Peter appears as the spokesman and leader of the Jerusalem church, but he is still "sent" by other apostles to Samaria (Acts 8:14), and he has to give an account of his actions to the Jerusalem church (Acts 11:1-18). Peter is presented as having only one voice at the Jerusalem council, and James has the decisive final word (Acts 15:7-21). And, though Peter certainly has a central role in the establishment of the church, he disappears from the Acts narrative after Acts 16 . "Church" (Gk. *ekklēsia*) is used only here and in Matt 18:17 in the Gospels. Jesus points ahead to the time when his disciples, his family of faith (12:48-50), will be called "my church." Jesus will build his church, and though it is founded on the apostles and the prophets, "Christ Jesus himself [is] the cornerstone" (Eph 2:20).

The word *pope* derives from Ancient Greek πάππας *(páppas)* 'father'. In the early centuries of Christianity, this title was applied, especially in the East, to all bishops and other senior clergy, and later became reserved in the West to the bishop of Rome during the reign of Pope Leo I (440–461), a reservation made official only in the 11th century. The earliest record of the use of the title of 'pope' was in regard to the by-then-deceased patriarch of Alexandria, Heraclas (232–248). The earliest recorded use of the title "pope" in English dates to the mid-10th century, when it was used in reference to the 7th century Roman pope Vitalian in an Old English translation of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*.

Irenaeus of Lyons, (c. 130 – c. 202 AD), *Against Heresies III, Chapter 3.2*

The blessed apostles [Peter and Paul], then, having founded and built up the Church [in Rome], committed into the hands of Linus the office of the episcopate. Of this Linus, Paul makes mention in the Epistles to Timothy. To him succeeded Anacletus; and after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement was allotted the bishopric. ... To this Clement there succeeded Eviristus. Alexander followed Evaristus; then, sixth from the apostles, Sixtus was appointed; after him, Telephorus, who was gloriously martyred; then Hyginus; after him, Pius; then after him, Anicetus. Soter having

succeeded Anicetus, Eleutherius does now, in the twelfth place from the apostles, hold the inheritance of the episcopate.

*Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus. Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens, **Linus**, Claudia and all the brothers and sisters. The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all. 2Tim.4:19-22*

What does it mean to "*follow*" Jesus?

To follow Jesus means to be His subjects, servants and disciples

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. Lk.9:23-26

"Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.Matt.10:37-42

Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me. Jn.12:23-26

"Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them. Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the 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. Jn.10:1-7;27

Peter said to him, "We have left all we had to follow you!" "Truly I tell you," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life." Lk.18:28-30

As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." He said to another man, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." Lk.9:57-62

What does it mean to "*feed my sheep*"?

Pastor means Shepherd "Feed my sheep" means to care, provide and protect Jesus' followers as a shepherd would his flock.

Jesus is the Chief Shepherd (Pastor)

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. "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. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. Jn.10:11-16

Now 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. Heb.13:21

For "you were like sheep going astray," but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. 1Pet.2:25

'For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice. " 'As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats. Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet? " 'Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away, I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another. I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the LORD have spoken. " 'I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of savage beasts so that they may live in the wilderness and sleep in the forests in safety. I will make them and the places surrounding my hill a blessing. I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing. Ezek.34:11-36

See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young. Is.40:10-11

We are all under-shepherds who have delegated responsibility for God's flock—however, some have greater responsibility than others, according to God's calling and gifting.

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. 1Pet.5:1-5

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Matt.9:36-38

How do we feed Jesus' sheep?

We feed Jesus' sheep by doing all we can to help them become mature Christians.

We will feed and care for others practically as we are able, but we will especially feed and care for others spiritually by praying for them and encouraging them to trust God and grow into mature Believers.

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. Eph.4:11-16

A mature Christian is able to trust God in difficult times because they have learnt to trust Him in the good times.

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. Heb.5:13-6:3

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. Jas.1:2-4

Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete [mature] in all the will of God. Col.4:12

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. 1Cor.2:6-7

The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop. Lk.8:14-15

A mature Christian will also help others to trust God—"*what I have received from the Lord, I pass on to you*"!!.

23/04/2025

Psalm 134

Video:

How Do You Love Your Enemy When Your Enemy Hasn't Repented

Questions

What Jesus was like before His resurrection (*i.e.* in His mortal body).
What Jesus is like after His resurrection (*i.e.* in His immortal body
Why is Jesus' resurrection important?
How do you imagine the final resurrection will be like?
How can we prepare for that final resurrection?

Comments

What Jesus was like before His resurrection (*i.e.* in His mortal body).

Jesus was like any other person. He was a baby, grew into a man, had emotions and normal bodily needs of food, drink and sleep

And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him… Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. Lk.2:40;51-52

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek. Heb.5:7-10

As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. Lk.19:31-42

Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" Jn.11:35-36

You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." Heb.1:9

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. Heb.12:2

After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. Matt.4:2

The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Mk.11:12

Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." Jn.19:28

Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. Jn.4;6

Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent. He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. Mk.4:5

"Say to Daughter Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.' " The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. Matt.21:5-7

"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." Matt.11:28-30

What Jesus is like after His resurrection (*i.e.* in His immortal body).

After His resurrection Jesus was no longer restricted by physical limitations. He could eat but did not need to. He could appear and disappear. He was recognisable and yet sometime hid His identity.

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my

hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jn.20:26-28
While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."
When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence. Lk.24:36-43
When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God. Lk.24:50-53
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. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." Acts.1:9-11

After His ascension, Jesus was glorified which gave Him a further distinction

On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea." I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. 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.1:10-18
Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. Acts.9:1-9

Why is Jesus' resurrection important?

Without Jesus' resurrection, we would still be in our sins and if we say Jesus was raised from the dead, we call God a liar because God has raised Him 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, 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. 1Cor.15:3-8*
But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 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. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 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. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.
But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 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. 1Cor.15:12-24

What do you imagine the final resurrection will be like?

We should not confuse the Lord's *coming* with the Lord's *return*! The expression "second coming" does not appear in the Bible!

For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Matt.24:27

The expression "as lightning flashes from the east to the west" is a very deliberate order of direction. In essence it refers to God redemptively intervening into the affairs of man. This expression occurs nowhere else in Scripture. "*Lightning*" is often associated with the *presence of God* (note Exodus 20:18; Daniel 10:6). Thus it appears that Christ is saying that He will manifest His presence and intervene redemptively into our world.

Sun, Moon & Stars

Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Matthew 24:29

The expression *sun, moon, and stars* is a metaphor for *Israel*. This expression is first used in Genesis 37:9 where he describes *Israel* as the *sun, moon, and stars*.

Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me." Gen.37:9

Isaiah uses exactly the same expression about Israel to give reason why God was about to use Babylon to judge them.

For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine. Is.13:10

When the Bible says that the sun does not give forth its light, the stars fall from sky, and moon does not give forth its light, it is saying that **Israel has abandoned God**. In this verse in Matthew 24, Christ is saying that Israel is about to be judged because they have abandoned God.

Sign Of The Son Of Man

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. Matt.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. Dan.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 *1 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. Ps.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!"Jer.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.Ez.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.Matt.16:28

Although the phrase "*second coming of Christ*" does not occur in the Bible, Jesus was adamant that He would return to judge all the living and the dead (thus the need for the Resurrection) at the end of time.

Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Jn.5:25-27

He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him; the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. Jn.12:48

And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. Acts 10:42

I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2Tim.4:1

The return of Jesus at the final resurrection will be quick, visible, loud and final

For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 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. 1Thess.4:14-18

How can we prepare for that final resurrection?

God wants faithful servants

"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!' Matt.25:21

And God expects faithfulness

This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove 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.] 1Cor.4:1-2

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. 1Pet.4:10

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. [For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word

as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.]Tit.1:7-9

We need to stay faithful and in fellowship with God, His Word and His people.

Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1Cor.1:7-9

They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. 1Thess.1:9-10

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you. Tit.2:11-15

But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying 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. Jude 21-22

16/04/2025

Psalm 133

*Video: Do Faith and Logic Contradict_*

Questions

What is Jesus like?
How important is it that our praise and prayers harmonise with the New Covenant?
What does it mean to be righteous?
Why does it matter if we doubt what God has done for us?
How can we build our faith?
Why is it important that God's Word dwells in us?

Comments

What is Jesus like?

Jesus is like the Father

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." 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? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Jn.14:6-10

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. Heb.1:3

Then Jesus cried out, "Whoever believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me. Jn.12:44-45

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 2Cor.4:4

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. Col1:15

Jesus is full of Grace and Truth

The Word became a human being. He made his home with us. We have seen his glory. It is the glory of the one and only Son. He came from the Father. And he was full of grace and truth.[Jn.1:14]

Jesus is humble (meek) and gentle

By the humility and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am "timid" when face to face with you, but "bold" toward you when away! 2Cor.10:1

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.11:21

Jesus is now glorified

*On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "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. Jn.7:37-39*

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. Jn.17:1-5

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you

believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God. 1Pet.1:18-21

*I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, * dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. 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.1:12-18*

How important is it that our praise and prayers harmonise with the New Covenant?

It is essential

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

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

Faith comes from hearing the Word of God and if we are going to live by faith we need to speak according to God's Word.

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. Rom.10:17

God's will is in our spirit. God's will and God's Word are the same

"What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, Sovereign LORD. For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant. 2Sam.7:20-21

Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, my God.'Heb.10:7

At conversion God puts His Spirit and His Word/Will into our spirit

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 1Pet.1:23

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. Heb.8:10

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do. Jas.1:19-25

The Church (all Believers) are "*married*" to Jesus

"Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear."(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people.)Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God." Rev.19:6-9

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… "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. Rev.21:2-3;9-10

Husbands, love your wives, just as 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

At marriage the two become united (one flesh). At conversion (spiritual marriage), we our spirit becomes united with God's Spirit

But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit. 1Cor.6:17

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate [partakers] in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 2Pet.1:3-4

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. [You were taught with reference to your former way of life to lay aside the old man who is being corrupted in accordance with deceitful desires, to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and to put on the new man who has been created in God's image – in righteousness and holiness that comes from truth.] Eph.4:22-24

Our will (where we make decisions, choices) is in our soul—which is why we need to make our soul obedient to God's Spirit that joined to our righteous spirit. And so our communication with God must be spiritual (spirit to Spirit) and true (factually accurate)

What does it mean to be righteous?

To be righteous means that we are right with God;

"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. 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." Rom.4:3-8

We have the same character (nature) as Jesus—this happens at conversion where we are born-again or born from above

Yet to all who did receive 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. Jn.1:12

Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again. " "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" 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.3:3-8

However, our mind must be must be saved and renewed—this is called maturity or growing up in the faith (learning how to live as children of God)

Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you [save your soul].Jas.1:21

Do not conform 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.12:2

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Eph.4:22-24

But you were taught to be made new in ·your hearts [the spirit/attitude of your minds], to ·become [put on; clothe yourself with] the new ·self [person; or Man; become like Christ]. That new person is created ·to be like God [or in God's image; according to God]—truly good and holy [or in the righteousness and holiness that comes from truth]. Expanded Bible

Why does it matter if we doubt what God has done for us?

Double minded people have no assurance and no certainty

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

Double minded people make an outward show but are not fully persuaded in their heart

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. Jas.4:7-8

Double minded people give up easily and revert back to their old way of thinking

My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end. I hate double-minded people, but I love your law. You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word. Ps.119:12-14

How can we build our faith?

Pray in the Spirit

But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying 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. Jude.20-21

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives 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 elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. Col.2:6-8

Have difficulties

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. Jas.1:2-4

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. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. 2Pet.1:5-9

Be fully persuaded in our hearts.

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 and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep 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. [1]*1Jn.3:18-23*

A more literal translation of vs 19 is: *And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure [lit. persuade] our hearts before Him.*

When we can persuade our heart about what God says about us we will speak and act like the citizen of heaven that we really are. God knows everything and even if we feel guilty, He is greater than our feelings; if our conscience condemns us, we will be reassured because He is greater than our conscience. We need to persuade our heart that we are right before God, but righteousness is not just about being right with God—righteousness is the very life of God within us because Jesus is our Righteousness

Why is it important that God's Word dwells in us?

God's Word in our heart stops us sinning

How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Praise be to you, LORD; teach me your decrees. With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth. Ps.119:9-13

God's Word in our heart saves us

Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you [lit. save your soul]. Jas.1:21

Our heart is the combination of spirit and soul. Our spirit is saved when it is born again and so a Believer's spirit is already holy. Our soul is our psyche—it is our will, emotions and intellect, the place of decision, where we make our choices. We need to make our soul submissive to our spirit

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you Ps.42:5-6

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. Ps.103:1-5

09/04/2025

Psalm 132

*Video: What Will Heaven Be Like_*

Questions

What does "Messiah" (Christ) mean?
In what way is Jonah a sign that Jesus is the Messiah
Should Christian seek a "sign" from God?
Why does God save bad people?
Why do some people respond to the Gospel and others don't?

Comments

What does "Messiah" (Christ) mean?

Messiah or Christ means "Anointed One" and in the OT refers to God's servant

If the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, he must bring to the LORD a young bull without defect as a sin offering for the sin he has committed. Lev.4:3

And what happens to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will be a sign to you—they will both die on the same day. I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his priestly house, and they will minister before my anointed one always. 1Sam.2:34-35

For the sake of your servant David, do not reject your anointed one. The LORD swore an oath to David, a sure oath he will not revoke: "One of your own descendants I will place on your throne. If your sons keep my covenant and the statutes I teach them, then their sons will sit on your throne for ever and ever." For the LORD has chosen Zion, he has desired it for his dwelling, saying, "This is my resting place for ever and ever; here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it. Ps.132:9-14

This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armour, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: Is.41:5

Although the theme of God's promised Redeemer (Messiah) is throughout the OT only a few direct uses of the word the Messiah (Anointed One) applies to Jesus

Why do the nations conspire 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, Ps.2:1-2

Know and understand this: 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.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. Dan.9:25

In the NT all 500 uses of the word "Christ" apply to Jesus

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Jn.1:40-42

But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. Matt.23:8-12

In what way is Jonah a sign that Jesus is the Messiah

Jonah was dead for 3 days and nights and returned to life

Then some scribes and Pharisees said, "Teacher, we want you to show us a miraculous sign." He responded, "The people of an evil and unfaithful era look for a miraculous sign. But the only sign they will get is the sign of the prophet Jonah. Just as Jonah was in the belly of a huge fish for three days and three nights, so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. Matt.12:38-40

Jonah also came from Nazareth, evangelised, fell asleep in a storm and caused the storm to end.

Should Christians seek a "sign" from God?

Faith doesn't need a sign because it is the evidence of what we can't see

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. [Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.]Heb.11:1-2

Jesus said it was "wicked and adulterous" people who seek a sign. The Jews were God's Covenant people and should have welcomed Jesus with open arms and an open heart. However, there were many signs that Jesus was the Christ

If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.' " Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, "Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test." Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. He will be eating curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, for 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. The LORD will bring on you and on your people and on the house of your father a time unlike any since Ephraim broke away from Judah—he will bring the king of Assyria." Is.7:9-17

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Lk.2:11-12

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. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' "Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. Acts.2:17-22

Paul says that the Jews look for a sign but Jesus is the sign

For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1Cor.1:21-24

Gideon asked for a sign but even when God gave the sign, he did not trust it!

Gideon replied, "If now I have found favour in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you." And the LORD said, "I will wait until you return." Gideon went inside, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak. The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And Gideon did so. Then the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread with the tip of the staff that was in his hand. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared. When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, "Alas, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!" 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 The LORD Is Peace… Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised— look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said." And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water. Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece, but this time make the fleece dry and let the ground be covered with dew." That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew. Jdg.6:17-24;36-40

The Church was birthed in signs and wonders

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.4:29-30

The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people. Acts.5:12

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. But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders. The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. Acts.14:1-4

The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them… Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done— by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. Rom.15:12;7-19

But tongues are a sign for unbelievers not for Believers

Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults. In the Law it is written: "With other tongues and through the lips of foreigners, I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord." Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is not for unbelievers but for believers. So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and inquirers or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying, they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment by all, as the secrets of their hearts are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!" 1Cor.14:20-25

Not all signs and wonders are form God

The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness. 1Thes.2:9-12

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Perform a miracle,' then say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh,' and it will become a snake." So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the LORD commanded. Aaron threw his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake. Pharaoh then summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the Egyptian magicians also did the same things by their secret arts: Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. Yet Pharaoh's heart became hard and he would not listen to them, just as the LORD had said. Ex.7:8-13

Why does God save bad people?

Because there are no good people! We are all "bad" *i.e.* none of us is righteous—we have all sinned

For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

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.3:9-12;22-24

Jesus said to him, "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 the lost." Lk.19:9-10

Why should I fear when evil days come, when wicked deceivers surround me—those who trust in their wealth and boast of their great riches? 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— so that they should live on forever and not see decay. Ps.49:5-9

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Is.53:5-6

Why do some people respond to the Gospel and others don't?

So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders. The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. Act.14:3-4

They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus. Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. Act.28:23-24

We have a mind and a choice—we are responsible for our response to God. Although God has done His part, we still need to respond to the Gospel and receive God's forgiveness.

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. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: 'They hated me without reason.' Jn.15:20-25

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Rom.1:18-21

Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains. Jn.9:35-41

The doctrines of Calvinism include irresistible grace—the five points of Calvinism are found in the acronym **TULIP**

Total depravity of mankind
Unconditional election
Limited atonement
Irresistible grace
Perseverance of the saints

While these statements are all true, that is God's concern. Our concern is to respond to God's grace—and everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord (in faith) will be saved.

Many are called but few are chosen

"Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 'Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' "So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. "But when the

king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. "So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' "For many are called, but few are chosen." Matt.22:8-14

"I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. —
Jn.13:18

However, we can be both called and chosen

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

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life. Rev.22:17

This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Deut.30:19-20

02/04/2025

Psalm 132

Video: Why Some Christians Are More Influenced by Culture than by Christ—And What to Do About It

Questions

What sort of prayers are there?
Why should we ask God for daily bread?
Is God's forgiveness conditional or unconditional?
What is temptation?
How does God deliver us from the evil one?
Is there anything that God cannot do?
What can we do to bring heaven to earth?

Comments

What sort of prayers are there?

There are many types of prayer, such as praise, petition and intercession; there is public prayer where people pray together, either collectively or individually, one at a time or all together; there is personal prayer where there is no one but the person and God.

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.6:6]

When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit…[Acts.4:24-25]

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 Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.[1Tim.2:1-4]

But whenever we pray, we must have faith in God and we must pray with thanksgiving.

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

"Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. 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.11:22-25

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.Heb.6:1-3

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, 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.[Phil.4:4-7]

Why should we ask God for daily bread?

To acknowledge that we are dependent upon God for our life

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD himself, is the Rock eternal… LORD, you establish peace for us; all that we have accomplished you have done for us.[Is.26:3-12]

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. Deut.8:18

Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves. Ps.127:1-2

When we ask God to provide we should always thank Him too—as Jesus did and Paul

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them.[Lk.9:16]

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.[Lk.24:30]

After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat.[Acts.27:35]

But our daily bread is more than the physical food we eat—we should ask God for our spiritual food:

After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"[Matt.4:2-4]

Our spiritual food is God's Word and God's Work:

I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.[Job.23:12]

Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.[Jn.4:31-35]

And the most important work God wants us to do is to believe in Jesus:

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For 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.6:26-29]

Is God's forgiveness conditional or unconditional?

Forgiveness is unconditional (because it is by grace);

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, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 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. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Eph.2:4-9

Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.Rom.4:16

Restoration is conditional on repentance. which involves at least a determination to change

"If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. 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." The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you.Lk.17:3-6

True repentance which will always include these 5 A's:

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.

Forgiveness is a clean slate; restoration is keeping the slate clean.
Forgiveness is mending what was broken; Restoration is making it work again.

What is temptation?

Temptation and testing is the same word in Greek, and depending on the motive means to try or prove (in a good sense) or tempt, *i.e.* solicit to sin (in a bad sense)

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load. Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor. Gal.6:1-6

Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. Lk.8:13

Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." Lk.22:29-32

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.Jas.1:2-4

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. 1Pet.4:12-13

"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. The one who is victorious 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. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Rev.3:7-13

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. 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 endure it. 1Cor.10:11-13

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 1Tim.6:6-10

How does God deliver us from the evil one?

When Jesus died on the cross, He defeated the devil and destroyed his work (his dominance and power over Believers)

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in [Jesus], and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. 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— if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. Col.1:19-23

Christ forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.Col.2:13-15

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. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. Jn.12:30-33

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

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. Heb.2:14-15

Jesus has given us authority over the devil (*i.e.* the ability and power to resist his temptations)

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.10:18-20

"Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire," says the LORD Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves. Then you will trample on the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I act," says the LORD Almighty. Mal.4:1-3

But if we fall (yield to temptation) **we have an Advocate** who picks us up and gets us going again.

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

Is there anything that God cannot do?

"Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you… Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: "I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me? Jer.32:17-27

But God cannot sin. There are many other things that God will not do, such as deny Himself, go against His Word,

People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. 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 set before 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 our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. Heb.6:16-20

Then he spoke his message: "Arise, Balak, and listen; hear me, son of Zippor. 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? I have received a command to bless; he has blessed, and I cannot change it. "No misfortune is seen in Jacob, no misery observed in Israel. The LORD their God is with them; the shout of the King is among them. Nu.23:18-21

Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself. 2Tim.2:11-13

What can we do to bring heaven to earth?

Live in the atmosphere of heaven

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.Heb.3:1

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

For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. Phil.3:18-21

John learnt to be "*in the Spirit*"

On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said:… Rev.1:10

At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. Rev.4:2

the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. 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. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me. Col.1:26-29

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

26/03/2025

Psalm 131

Video: Mike Petzer 2023 – 75

Questions

What is prayer?
To whom should we address our prayers?
Does it matter how we pray?
Does God always hear our prayers?
What sort of Kingdom is God's Kingdom?
What are the responsibilities of belonging to God's Kingdom?

Comments

What is prayer?

Prayer is communicating with God

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!

James Montgomery (author of "Angels from the realms of glory"):

When we pray, we can rely on Jesus Christ, who is always praying for us and with us. Christ's praying on our behalf is what makes our prayers true prayer. Prayer is not fundamentally about us pouring out our words, our hearts, or our emotions to God… When we pray "*in Jesus' name*," we acknowledge that our prayers depend on Jesus Christ, which gives us freedom. When we're not tangibly aware of God's presence in prayer, it's okay. We are always connected by the Spirit to Jesus' ongoing ministry of prayer, whether we feel it or not. When prayer doesn't deliver the sense of intimacy we are expecting, we can find joy in knowing that our union with Christ is secure. *Kristen Deede Johnson,* "*Our Theology of Prayer Matters More than Our Feelings.*"

When we pray, we must hold fast and believe that God has heard our prayer. It was for this reason that the ancients defined prayer as an *Ascensus mentis ad Deum*, "a climbing up of the heart unto God." *Martin Luther*

When we pray, we are expressing our dependence on God (c.f. many of the Psalms). *Andrew Corbett*

A friend of mine defines prayer as "a *declaration of dependence*." Prayer is powerful, but if our prayers are aimless, meaningless and mingled with doubt, they will be of little hope to us. *Billy Graham*

Prayer is never simply a matter of talking to God. It is trusting Him with our concerns. There are times when we might be anxious about children, family, and friends and there is much that we might worry about—their spiritual well-being, schooling, health, friendships, living arrangements, work. Needless to say, anxious thoughts are seldom productive and frequently only serve to intensify our level of worry. In seeking to transform anxiety into prayer, it is not simply a matter of talking to God instead of talking to ourselves, for that may simply result in talking anxiously to God. Rather we are challenged to recognize the limitations of our worrying and the possibilities of what prayer can do. Prayer isn't a "*spare wheel*" you pull out when in trouble, it's a "*steering wheel*" that directs the right path throughout your life. When we lose hope and think it's the end, God smiles and says, "*It's just a bend, not the end*".

To whom should we address our prayers?

Jesus always addressed His prayers to God—and addressed God as His Father

At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. Matt.11:25-26

Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." Matt.26:39

Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." Jn.11:41

"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. "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them." Jn.17:24-25

Because God is a Trinity of 3 Persons, we can address our prayers to Father, Son or Holy Spirit but Jesus is our Teacher and Model and we do well to follow His instruction and example.

"This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, Matt.6:9

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. Eph.1:16-17

The early Church prayed to God the Father

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 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. Eph.3:14-17

When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord, 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? …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

But there are also examples in the NT of Believers praying to Jesus:

While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep. Acts.7:59-60

*"When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance and saw the Lord speaking to me. 'Quick!' he said. 'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because the people here will not accept your testimony about me.' " 'Lord,' I replied, 'these people know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. And when the blood of your martyr * Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.'*

"Then the Lord said to me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.' Acts.22:17-21

The Holy Spirit intercedes for us and so we can speak to Him in our prayers too.

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. Rom.8:26-27

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. Eph.6:18

Does it matter how we pray?

Yes! Unbelievers have no assurance that God will hear their prayers but neither does a double-minded person have any confidence that God hears their prayer

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

Nevertheless, God will always hear an unbeliever's prayer of repentance

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

We must pray "*believing*"—that is having faith/trust/confidence in God.

Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." Matt.21:21-22

"Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. 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.11:22-27

This is not "name it and claim it" but having a confidence in God to do as He has said. The problem with most people is they don't know what God has said—the only think they know but they haven't really studied the Scriptures in the context of the New Covenant to find out what God has actually said.

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

Prayer only works if God answers it!

Does God always hear our prayers?

God always hears our prayers but we must be "righteous" (*i.e.* a Believer) if our prayers are to be effective

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

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

The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him… The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous. Prov.15:8;29

If anyone turns a deaf ear to my instruction, even their prayers are detestable. Prov.28:9

What sort of Kingdom is God's Kingdom?

God's Kingdom is a spiritual Kingdom

Jesus answered, "My kingdom doesn't belong to this world. If my kingdom belonged to this world, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. My kingdom doesn't have its origin on earth." Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus replied, "You're correct in saying that I'm a king. I have been born and have come into the world for this reason: to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to me." Jn.18:33-37

God's Kingdom is the reign of Jesus in people's hearts.

The Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God would come. He answered them, "People can't observe the coming of the kingdom of God. They can't say, 'Here it is!' or 'There it is!' You see, the kingdom of God is within you."[Lk.17:20-21]

Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart.[Matt.13:18-19] T

What are the responsibilities of belonging to God's Kingdom?

The values of God's Kingdom are the same as the values of God—that is, His character:

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.[Gal.5:19-23]

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.[1Cor.4:20]

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.[Rom.14:17]

And so to live as honourable citizens of God's Kingdom we must behave like God

For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.[Phil.4:18-21]

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 aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's 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.[Eph.2:17-20]

We should always think, talk, and act as a Believer

19/03/2025

Psalm 130

Video: Mike Petzer 2023 – 70

Questions

How do we inherit eternal life?
What does it mean to love God?
What does it mean to love our neighbour?
What was significant about the places in the story of the Good Samaritan?
How does the Good Samaritan help the robbed man?
How does Jesus help us?

Comments

How do we inherit eternal life?

We inherit eternal life through a personal faith/trust in Jesus Christ. This is a gift and we cannot earn it—it has to be received

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom.6:22-23

For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. Jn.3:16

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become God's children, to those who believe in his name: John 1:12

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Col.2:6-7

Eternal life comes from knowing God and Jesus Christ

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. Jn.17:1-3

Eternal life could come from keeping God's Law—if it was kept completely

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" He answered, " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' " "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." Lk.10:25-28

If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God: … However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: Deut.28:1-15

The Law was good but was temporary

Then what was the purpose of the law? It was added because of human sin. And it was supposed to control us until the promised Seed had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a go-between. A go-between does not take sides. God didn't use a go-between when he made his promise to Abraham. But the same God was at work in both the law and the promise. So is the law opposed to God's promises? Certainly not! What if a law had been given that could give life? Then people could become right with God by obeying the law. But Scripture announces that the whole world is a prisoner because of sin. It does so in order that what was promised might be given to those who believe. The promise comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Before faith in Christ came, we were held prisoners by the law. We were locked up until faith was made known. So the law was put in charge until Christ came. He came so that we might be made right with God by believing in Christ. But now faith in Christ has come. So we are no longer under the control of the law. Gal.3:19-25

The Law only brought condemnation *Those who belong to Christ Jesus are no longer under God's sentence. I am now controlled by the law of the Holy Spirit. That law gives me life because of what Christ Jesus has done. It has set me free from the law of sin that brings death. The written law was made weak by our sinful nature. But God did what the written law could not do. He made his Son to be like those who have a sinful nature. He sent him to be an offering for sin. In that way, he judged sin in his Son's human body. Now we can do everything the law requires. Our sinful nature no longer controls the way we live. The Holy Spirit now controls the way we live. Rom.8:1-4*

Eternal life cannot come from keeping the Law because no one can keep it completely

Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments." "Which ones?" he inquired. Jesus replied, " 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honour your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbour as yourself.' " "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?" Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." Matt.19:16-21

For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin. But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 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. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. Rom.3:6-15

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Rom.8:1-4

What does it mean to love God?

To love means to honour, cherish, obey, reverence, respect. Although love involves our emotions, it is much more than that. Love involves our whole person—spirit, soul and body.

"Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' Mk.12:29-30

But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you. 1Sam.12:24

But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul. Deut.4:29

And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good? Deut.10:12-13

But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: to love the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to keep his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul." Josh.22:5

What does it mean to love our neighbour?

Treat others as yourself

Do to others as you would have them do to you. Lk.6:31

Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong? If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing right. But if you show favouritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment. Jas.2:5-13

You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour. You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour. Ex.20:13-17

What was significant about the places in the story of the Good Samaritan?

Jerusalem—the city of God and the place where God would accept true worship

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Ps.46:4-5

"I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain." I will proclaim the LORD's decree: He said to me, "You are my son; today I have become your father. Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. Ps.2:6-8

How lovely is your dwelling place, LORD Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young— a place near your altar, LORD Almighty, my King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools. They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion. Ps.84:1-7

But you are to seek the place the LORD your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go; there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, what you have vowed to give and your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. There, in the presence of the LORD your God, you and your families shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because the LORD your God has blessed you. Deut.12:5-7

Then the angel of the LORD ordered Gad to tell David to go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. So David went up in obedience to the word that Gad had spoken in the name of the LORD. … Then David said, "The house of the LORD God is to be here, and also the altar of burnt offering for Israel." So David gave orders to assemble the foreigners residing in Israel, and from among them he appointed stonecutters to prepare dressed stone for building the house of God. 1Chron.21:18-22:2

Jerusalem was founded on Mt Moriah

Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you." Gen.22:2

Then Solomon began to build the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David. It was on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, the place provided by David. 2Chron.3:1

There 2 Jerusalems—the physical Jerusalem where our Lord was crucified and the spiritual Jerusalem where God resides and accepts true worship.

The physical Jerusalem is used figuratively in the NT to represent Judaism and apostasy.

Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. Their bodies will lie in the public square of the great city—which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt—where also their Lord was crucified. Rev.11:7-8

Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise. These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written: "Be glad, barren woman, you who never bore a child; shout for joy and cry aloud, you who were never in labour; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband." Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. But what does Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman. Gal.4:21-31

The Spiritual Jerusalem used figuratively in the NT to represent the Bride of Christ which is made up of all Believers (Old and New Covenants)

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. Heb.12:22-25

One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb…. One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Rev.21:9-27

Jericho—a place of curse

At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: "Cursed before the LORD is the one who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho: "At the cost of his firstborn son he will lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest he will set up its gates." So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land. Josh.6:26-27

East and West

Bible symbolism, people always faced west to meet with God (and went east away from God)

Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; Gen.2:8

So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. Gen.3:23-24

Abraham pitched his tent between Bethel and Ai:

From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.[Gen.12:8]

Bethel means House of God

When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of

heaven." Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. He called that place Bethel, though the city used to be called Luz. Gen.28:16-19

Ai became a desolate place and represents the world

So Joshua burned Ai and made it a permanent heap of ruins, a desolate place to this day. Josh.8:28

The Tabernacle was pitched with the entrance on the east (so people faced west when the met God).

Moses and Aaron and his sons were to camp to the east of the tabernacle, toward the sunrise, in front of the tent of meeting. They were responsible for the care of the sanctuary on behalf of the Israelites. Nu.3:38

The Temple was built with the entrance on the east. The glory of God left the Temple through the east Gate and returned from the east: *Then the glory of the LORD departed from over the threshold of the temple and stopped above the cherubim. While I watched, the cherubim spread their wings and rose from the ground, and as they went, the wheels went with them. They stopped at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD's house, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them.*[Ezek.10:18-19] *Then the man brought me to the gate facing east, and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with his glory.*[Ezek.43:1-2]

Inn—a place of safety, where people are cared for, the Church. The Greek word comes from the same root as "joyful assembly":

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. Heb.12:22

How does the Good Samaritan help the robbed man?

He binds up wounds, took him to a place of safety, paid for him and said he would return for him

How does Jesus help us?

In the same way!

Jesus pours in the oil and the wine (oil signifies the healing and anointing of the Holy Spirit).

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Lk.4:18-21

Jesus takes us to a place of safety—the Church.

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.3:15-16

Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church. 1Cor.14:12

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. Eph.4:11-16

Jesus paid our debt.

Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. Matt.6:11

Jesus will return

*"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God *; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Jn.14:1-4*

12/03/2025

Psalm 128

Video: Mike Petzer 2023 – 65

Questions

What are the core values of God's Kingdom?
What does God consider as successful?
How can we live as successful Christians?
How is the New Covenant better than the Old Covenant?
What does "righteousness" mean?
How do Christians become righteous?

Comments

What are the core values of God's Kingdom?

Fruit of the Spirit

But the spiritual nature produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There are no laws against things like that. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their corrupt nature along with its passions and desires. If we live by our spiritual nature, then our lives need to conform to our spiritual nature. We can't allow ourselves to act arrogantly and to provoke or envy each other. Gal.5:22-26

Faith Hope and Love

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy.[1Cor.13:13-14:1]

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.4:8-11]

Faithfulness

Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.[1Cor.4:2]

Holiness

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."[1Pet.1:15]

Service and servanthood:

Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."[Mk.10:42-45]

Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. 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 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.[Lk.22:25-30]

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.[Jn.13:15-17]

Humility, gentleness and grace

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light." Matt.11:28-30

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. 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 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.2:1-11

What does God consider as successful?

Being Faithful—Full of Faith, *i.e.* believing in Jesus

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.6:28-29

Being Faithful—reliability and trustworthiness

Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. 1Cor.4:2

"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!' Matt.25:23

How can we live as successful Christians?

By Faith

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

Faith assures us of things we expect and convinces us of the existence of things we cannot see. God accepted our ancestors because of their faith. Faith convinces us that God created the world through his word. This means what can be seen was made by something that could not be seen. By faith… Heb.11:1-4

The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. Gal.5:6

If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all. Is.7:9

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love. 1Cor.16:13-14

Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm. 2Cor.1:24

How is the New Covenant better than the Old Covenant?

New Covenant has better promises and better premises:

Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant. Heb.7:22

The Old Covenant didn't work but the New Covenant does work!

But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises. For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. But God found fault with the people and said: "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. Heb.8:6-13

What does "righteousness" mean?

Right with God. There is no barrier between us and God—no sin, guilt or shame

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— if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. Col.1:22-23

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. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.Eph.1:3-5

Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. All glory to him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Amen. Jude 24-25

God has exchanged our sin for His righteousness

The Great Exchange

Sin: *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us* [2Cor.5:21]

Righteousness: *so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* [2Cor.5:21]

Punishment: *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.* [Is.53:5]

Forgiveness: *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.* [Eph.1:7]

Rejection: *About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* [Matt.27:46]

Acceptance: *to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves (to the praise of the glory of his grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved* [NKJV]*).* [Eph.1:6]

Shame: *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.* [Heb.12:2]

Glory: *In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.* [Heb.2:10]

Death: *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* [Rom.5:8]

Life: *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* [Rom.6:23]

Poverty: *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor* [2Cor.8:9]

Riches: *so that you through his poverty might become rich.* [2Cor.8:9]

Sickness: *He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.* [Matt.8:17]

Health: *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.* [1Pet.2:24]

Curse: *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 tree".* [Gal.3:13]

Blessing: *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.* [Gal.3:14]

Believing God

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. What does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." … Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all... The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification… 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 boast in the hope of the glory of God. Rom.4:1-5:2

When we place our trust in God, He credits us with Jesus righteousness

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2Cor.5:21

For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." Rom.1:17

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. 1Cor.1:30

I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. Phil.3:8-9

05/03/2025

Psalm 127

Video: Mike Petzer 2023 – 60

Questions

What is a Christian?
What does it mean to follow Christ?
Why did the early Believers struggle to accept non-Jews into the Church?
Why should we listen to Jesus?
How does Jesus speak to us?
What is Jesus saying to us?

Comments

What is a Christian?

A Christian is a follower of Christ. (I following Christ — Christ-I-an)
A Christian is under Christ's authority—they confess that Jesus is Lord
A Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit
A Christian a member of God's Family—God is their Father, Jesus is their Elder Brother, the Holy Spirit is their Counsellor
A Christian has been born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God
A Christian has been united with God in spirit
A Christian has been forgiven of all their sin
A Christian has been credited with Jesus' righteousness and has been made righteous
A Christian is a citizen of heaven
A Christian belongs to God's Kingdom
A Christian has died to their old life and been made alive with Christ
A Christian has eternal life
A Christian is an Ambassador for Christ
A Christian has the mind of Christ

However, we should be sure that we are who we say we are by regularly taking a spiritual health check:

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. 2Cor.13:5-6
Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. 1Cor.11:28
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. What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. 2Tim.1:12-14

What does it mean to follow Christ?

To follow Christ means to forsake your own life (desires, priorities)

Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.[Matt.10:38-39]
In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples. Lk.14:33
But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. Phil.3:7-9

To follow Christ means putting God's Kingdom first

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.6:33-34

Why did the early Believers struggle to accept non-Jews into the Church?

They were Jews who had more than a 1000 years of religious tradition behind them (which is why Jesus said that they must be born again before they could see the Kingdom of God)

With the Temple and all its rituals and paraphernalia still in place, it was very difficult for them to shake off their past, their religious thinking.

Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah. Acts.5:42

When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: "I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defence. You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city. And they cannot prove to you the charges they are now making against me. However, I admit that I worship the God of our ancestors as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, and 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.

"After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings. I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance. But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me. Or these who are here should state what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin— unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: 'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.' " Acts.24:10-21

Even in Revelation, John was told to measure the Temple

I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, with its worshipers. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. Rev.11:1-2

It was easier for Paul to shake off the rituals of Judaism than the Disciples because he had only met Jesus in His resurrected and glorified state—the Disciples grew up with Jesus and were used to Him as a devout Jew under Judaism.

Stephen grasped the New Covenant

Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God." So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. They produced false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us." All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel. Acts.6:11-16

Peter understood in part but then went back to his old ways!

While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?" Acts.10:27

When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs? "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. Gal.2:11-16

Why should we listen to Jesus?

God said that we should listen to Jesus

A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." Lk.9:35

Jesus is God's Son whom He loves

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." Matt.3:16-17

Jesus is always true (right, correct) and is the embodiment of wisdom

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. Jn.14:6

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.1:14

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. 1Cor.1:30

How does Jesus speak to us?

Jesus speaks to us by the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures.

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

The Holy Spirit speaks into our heart—our spirit or soul—

Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me. Ps.42:7

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

However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived" — the things God has prepared for those who love him— these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so 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, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. 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. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. 1Cor.2:9-16

but the Holy Spirit always in harmony with the Word of God.

As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.Acts.17:10-12

"When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father —the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning. Jn.15:26-27

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

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."Jn.16:13-15

That is why we must know what the Bible really says and not get distracted with superstition, myths, old wives' tales, or any other form of deception.

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith. 1Tim.1:3-4

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.

If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. 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 Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe. 1Tim.4:1-10

Unfortunately, some Christians are too easily deceived (mostly because they are not Bible literate) and get extremely emotional and passionate about anything that is not in the clear Bible teaching of God's Kingdom—and they are proven wrong time after time but they never repent of their errors. Instead they just go on to the next silly idea!

Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling 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 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. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have departed from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some. 2Tim.2:14-18

What is Jesus saying to us?

When Jesus speaks to us it is Spirit to spirit and we need to hear from our spirit what He is saying. Of course it may be about something physical, mental or emotional as well as spiritual, such as a warning, some wisdom, encouragement, etc.

"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. 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. But you have this in your favour: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.Rev.2:1-7

God warns, guides, counsels, encourages, instructs us God is greater than any mortal. Why do you complain to him that he responds to no one's words? For God does speak—now one way, now another— though no one perceives it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn them from wrongdoing and keep them from pride, to preserve them from the pit, their lives from perishing by the sword. 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. They draw near to the pit, and their life to the messengers of death. Job.33:12-22

The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. "Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod." They discussed this with one another and said, "It is because we have no bread." Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" "Twelve," they replied. "And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" They answered, "Seven." He said to them, "Do you still not understand?" Mk.8:14-21

They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet: " 'Go to this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving." For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!" Acts.28:25-28

26/02/2025

Psalm 126

Video: Mike Petzer 2023 – 50? 55

Questions

In what way is God's kingdom like a garden?
How is the Word of God like a seed?
How is our heart like the ground?
What sort of harvest can we expect?
What can we do to produce the best harvest?

Comments

In what way is God's kingdom like a garden?

God's Kingdom is alive and growing

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. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this. Is.9:6-7

You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." Lk.1:31-33

"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces. "The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy." Dan.2:44-45

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does. Ps.145:13

God's Kingdom has a Gardener (and also under-gardeners)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. Jn.15:1-4

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." Gen.2:15-17

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard.Matt.20:1*

Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Matt.9:37-38

God's Kingdom has a sowing and reaping

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Gal.6:7-10

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. 2Cor.6:2-11

A wicked person earns deceptive wages, but the one who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward. Prov.11:18

Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap the fruit of unfailing love, Hos.10:12

"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour." Jn.4:34-38

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness. Jas.3:17-18

How is the Word of God like a seed?

God's Word has integral life

For no word from God will ever fail [For with God nothing will be impossible. Literally "no word from God shall be void of power"].Lk.1:37

God's Word grows by itself

This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. <u>All by itself the soil produces grain</u>—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.[Mk.4:26-29]

God's Word will produce more seeds

Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown." … But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop. Lk.8:8;15

But the seed falling on good soil refers to <u>someone who hears the word and understands it.</u> This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.[Matt.13:23]

How is our heart like the ground?

Our heart is the organ that pumps our blood around our body and is essential to life. In the Bible "heart" can refer to our spirit or soul (depending on the context) because both are critical to our life.

Our heart is the wellspring of life

Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil. Prov.4:23-27

Our heart can be receptive or hard

*Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me… My sacrifice, O God, is * a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise. Ps.51:10;17*

Teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever. For great is your love toward me; Ps.86:11-13

Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by eating ceremonial foods, which is of no benefit to those who do so. We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat. Heb.13:9-10

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. Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people. Phile.6-7

May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance. 2Thess.2:5

We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the 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."Acts.14:15-17

And the word of the LORD came again to Zechariah: "This is what the LORD Almighty said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other.' "But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and covered their ears. They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the LORD Almighty was very angry. " 'When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen,' says the LORD Almighty. 'I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations, where they were strangers. The land they left behind them was so desolate that no one travelled through it. This is how they made the pleasant land desolate.' " Zech.7:8-14

Yet you, LORD, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand. Is.64:8

Then the word of the LORD came to me. He said, "Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel. If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it. "Now therefore say to the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, 'This is what the LORD says: Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you. So turn from your evil ways, each one of you, and reform your ways and your actions.' But they will reply, 'It's no use. We will continue with our own plans; we will all follow the stubbornness of our evil hearts.' " Jer.18:5-12

How the precious children of Zion, once worth their weight in gold, are now considered as pots of clay, the work of a potter's hands! Even jackals offer their breasts to nurse their young, but my people have become heartless like ostriches in the desert. Because of thirst the infant's tongue sticks to the roof of its mouth; the children beg for bread, but no one gives it to them.Lam.4:2-4

Our heart is where seeds are planted

Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Jas.1:21-22

What sort of harvest can we expect?

We can expect a good harvest if we have good soil (heart) and good seed (the Word of God)

Our harvest will be righteousness

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. 2Cor.9:10-11

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. 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. Heb.12:10-13

Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness. Jas.3:18

A wicked person earns deceptive wages, but the one who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward. Prov.11:18

The fruit of that righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence forever. My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest. Though hail flattens the forest and the city is levelled completely, how blessed you will be, sowing your seed by every stream, and letting your cattle and donkeys range free. Is.32:17-20

Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unploughed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers his righteousness on you. Hos.10:12

What can we do to produce the best harvest?

God gives the increase but we must do the sowing and watering

You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings? What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labour. For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. 1Cor.3:3-9

Humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.Jas.1:21-25

Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap. As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things. Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let your hands not be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well.Eccl.11:4-

We must keep weeding—ensure that there is nothing in our life that would hinder God's work

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

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. See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done. Heb.12:14-17

Stay in harmony with God

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. Eph.4:3-6

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore. Ps.103

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. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Gal.5:4-6

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 one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. 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 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. Col.3:12-17

19/02/2025

Psalm 125

Video: Mike Petzer 2023 – 50

Questions

Does our spiritual health affect our mental and physical health?
What can we do to stay as healthy as possible?
How should we measure wealth?
What should our attitude be towards money?
Define wisdom
How can we become wise?

Comments

Does our spiritual health affect our mental and physical health?

Yes! We consist of spirit, soul and body —which is what distinguishes us from animals who are only body and soul (personality and emotions) but no spirit (God consciousness).

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.[1Thes.5:23]

Contrary to the teaching of Mind Science or New Thought Metaphysics, man is not essentially a spirit being—he is not therefore, properly part of the spirit realm. Man is a **spirit-soul-body** being. **Both the physical and the non-physical in components in man combine together to form an integrated unity**. This is contrary to the well-known formula of the faith school, "*Man is a spirit, he has a soul and lives in a physical body*".

Man is human, not Divine. He is a created being, not the Creator. The image of God in man does not mean that man can create like God. **He possesses no supernatural or superhuman powers of himself.** Any notion that man has inherent supernatural or god-like powers exalts him unduly and exposes him to the influence of deceiving spirits The Bible teaches that man needs God's supernatural help and cannot rely on any powers latent within himself. Man is dependent upon God and made for the glory of God. This means his proper role is found only in submission to God, not by seeking to control Him or the world of spirits that God has created. This is totally contrary to the New Age teaching about man that suggests he has infinite potential within his own personality. It is also contrary to all forms of metaphysics that teach man has supernatural capacity within himself.

Our mental (soul) health affects our physical health

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.[3Jn.2]

Soul is *psyche*—our will, emotions and intellect. Our will is in our soul. God's will is in our spirit. God's Temple is our body and He dwells in our spirit.

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple. 1Cor.3:16-17

But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit… Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies. 1Cor.6:17-20

Praise and thanksgiving are decisions of our will in our soul:

Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits…[Ps.103:1-2]

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

Praise and thanksgiving release God's will (and the opposite quenches God's will):

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit.[1Thes.5:16-19]

If we decide that we will not praise God, we have forgotten all His benefits and we will become despondent, miserable, ungrateful etc.

Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits.[Ps.103:1-3]

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.[Is.61:1-3]

But praise and thanksgiving dispels despair and despondency. *His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 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, 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. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. 2Pet.1:3-9*

But spirit is stronger than soul and so we can (and must) make our spirit dominate our soul. We do this by persuading / convincing our soul that God is bigger than our conscience and our circumstance.

This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence [will convince our conscience; shall assure/persuade our hearts before Him]: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

We live at a time where people accumulate information and think that is truth but facts are not the same as truth. Facts are a collection of information that produce evidence. Truth is how God sees things—truth is evidence seen from the divine perspective.

What can we do to stay as healthy as possible?

Eat from the tree of Life—*i.e.* staying in fellowship (staying in harmony) with Jesus

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.[Rev.2:7]

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.[Rev.22:1-5]

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.[Rev.22:14]

Live a life worthy of our high calling

For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory. And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.1Thess.2:11-13

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge

of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Col.1:9-14

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. Phil.1:7-8

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. 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.4:1-6

How should we measure wealth?

By our relationship with God. Too often we think of wealth and prosperity in terms of money but Jesus makes it clear that it is not our physical assets that make us rich but our relationship with God—our spiritual assets:

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 [life is not measured by how much you own]." 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

What should our attitude be towards money?

Good servant but bad master!

For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. "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? "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight. Lk.16:8-15

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.3:2-3

Money is not bad

feast is made for laughter, wine makes life merry, and money is the answer for everything. Eccl.10:19

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain. Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me. 1Cor.15:58-16:4

It is the love of money that is the root of evil.

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money

is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 1Tim.6:5-10

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because 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 mere mortals do to me?" Heb.13:5-6

We cannot buy favour with God through money

When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 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."Acts.8:18-23

Define wisdom

Wisdom is the application of knowledge—what we do with what we know

Unlike money, wisdom will preserve us

Wisdom, like an inheritance, is a good thing and benefits those who see the sun. Wisdom is a shelter as money is a shelter, but the advantage of knowledge is this: Wisdom preserves those who have it. Ecc.7:11-12

There is a difference between this world's wisdom and God's wisdom

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

Brothers and sisters, 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. God 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 the one who boasts boast in the Lord."

And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. 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 human 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 declare God's wisdom, a mystery 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: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived" — the things God has prepared for those who love him— these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so 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, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. * 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. The person*

with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. 1Cor.1:18-2:16

Who is like the wise? Who knows the explanation of things? A person's wisdom brightens their face and changes its hard appearance... Whoever obeys his command will come to no harm, and the wise heart will know the proper time and procedure. For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter, though a person may be weighed down by misery… When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe the labour that is done on earth—people getting no sleep day or night— then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all their efforts to search it out, no one can discover its meaning. Even if the wise claim they know, they cannot really comprehend it. Eccl.8:1;5-6;15-17

I also saw under the sun this example of wisdom that greatly impressed me: There was once a small city with only a few people in it. And a powerful king came against it, surrounded it and built huge siege works against it. Now there lived in that city a man poor but wise, and he saved the city by his wisdom. But nobody remembered that poor man. So I said, "Wisdom is better than strength." But the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are no longer heeded. The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools. Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good. Ecc.9:13-18

Words from a wise man's mouth are gracious, but a fool is consumed by his own lips. At the beginning his words are folly; at the end they are wicked madness— and the fool multiplies words. No one knows what is coming—who can tell him what will happen after him? A fool's work wearies him; Eccl.10:12-15

Not only was the Teacher wise, but he also imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true. The words of the wise are like goads [move people to take action; cattle prods–painful but helpful], their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails—given by one shepherd. Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them. Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body. Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: 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. Eccl.12:9-14

How can we become wise?

By fearing (reverencing) God

Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous and they will add to their learning. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For through wisdom your days will be many, and years will be added to your life. If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you; if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer. Prov.9:9-12

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise. Ps.111:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Prov.1:7

Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding. I give you sound learning, so do not forsake my teaching. For I too was a son to my father, still tender, and cherished by my mother. Then he taught me, and he said to me, "Take hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands, and you will live. Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or turn away from them. Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Cherish her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honour you. She will give you a garland to grace your head and present you with a glorious crown." Listen, my son, accept what I say, and the years of your life will be many. I instruct you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths. When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not stumble. Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life. Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evildoers. Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way. For they cannot rest until they do evil; they are robbed of sleep till they make someone stumble. They eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence. The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. Prov.4:1-18

Learn from Creation

Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? Prov,6:6-9

"Four things on earth are small, yet they are extremely wise: Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer; hyraxes are creatures of little power, yet they make their home in the crags; locusts have no king, yet they advance together in ranks; a lizard can be caught with the hand, yet it is found in kings' palaces.

"There are three things that are stately in their stride, four that move with stately bearing: a lion, mighty among beasts, who retreats before nothing; a strutting rooster [or greyhound ; Hebrew girt-of-loins], a he-goat, and a king secure against revolt [a king with his army around him]. Prov.30:24-31

12/02/2025

Psalm 124

Video: Mike Petzer 2023 – 45

Questions

What is an allegory?
How did Adam and Eve deal with their guilt?
How did God deal with Adam and Eve's guilt?
How do we produce fruit?
What sort of fruit should we bear?
Why is it important to agree with God?

Comments

What is an allegory?

An Allegory is a parable or story that illustrates a spiritual truth. It can be a real life story—either history like Sarah and Hagar in Galatians 4, or true to life, such as rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16 or the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 or even a fictional story such as Ezekiel 17.

Both *Allegories* and *Fables* are stories with a moral meaning, but an *allegory* will only feature human characters, while a *fable* may feature animals or other non-human characters. *Parable* is a short story that teaches a moral or spiritual lesson. (Note that these are C21st definitions and when the Bible was written, most words didn't have precise meanings!).

It would be incongruous for Jesus who said that He was the Truth to use an illustration containing falsehood or mythology to explain the Kingdom of God. And so we can accept Jesus' references to historical events and people (including satan), as accurate.

*The word of the LORD came to me: "**Son of man, set forth an allegory and tell it to the Israelites as a parable**. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: A great eagle with powerful wings, long feathers and full plumage of varied colours came to Lebanon. Taking hold of the top of a cedar, he broke off its topmost shoot and carried it away to a land of merchants, where he planted it in a city of traders.*

" 'He took one of the seedlings of the land and put it in fertile soil. He planted it like a willow by abundant water, and it sprouted and became a low, spreading vine. Its branches turned toward him, but its roots remained under it. So it became a vine and produced branches and put out leafy boughs.

" 'But there was another great eagle with powerful wings and full plumage. The vine now sent out its roots toward him from the plot where it was planted and stretched out its branches to him for water. It had been planted in good soil by abundant water so that it would produce branches, bear fruit and become a splendid vine.'

"Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Will it thrive? Will it not be uprooted and stripped of its fruit so that it withers? All its new growth will wither. It will not take a strong arm or many people to pull it up by the roots. It has been planted, but will it thrive? Will it not wither completely when the east wind strikes it—wither away in the plot where it grew?' "

Then the word of the LORD came to me: "Say to this rebellious people, 'Do you not know what these things mean?' Say to them: 'The king of Babylon went to Jerusalem and carried off her king and her nobles, bringing them back with him to Babylon. Then he took a member of the royal family and made a treaty with him, putting him under oath. He also carried away the leading men of the land, so that the kingdom would be brought low, unable to rise again, surviving only by keeping his treaty. But the king rebelled against him by sending his envoys to Egypt to get horses and a large army. Will he succeed? Will he who does such things escape? Will he break the treaty and yet escape?

" 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, he shall die in Babylon, in the land of the king who put him on the throne, whose oath he despised and whose treaty he broke.

Pharaoh with his mighty army and great horde will be of no help to him in war, when ramps are built and siege works erected to destroy many lives. He despised the oath by breaking the covenant. Because he had given his hand in pledge and yet did all these things, he shall not escape." 'Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: As surely as I

live, I will repay him for despising my oath and breaking my covenant. I will spread my net for him, and he will be caught in my snare. I will bring him to Babylon and execute judgment on him there because he was unfaithful to me. All his choice troops will fall by the sword, and the survivors will be scattered to the winds. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken." 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will take a shoot from the very top of a cedar and plant it; I will break off a tender sprig from its topmost shoots and plant it on a high and lofty mountain. On the mountain heights of Israel I will plant it; it will produce branches and bear fruit and become a splendid cedar. Birds of every kind will nest in it; they will find shelter in the shade of its branches. All the trees of the forest will know that I the LORD bring down the tall tree and make the low tree grow tall. I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish." 'I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.' "Ezekiel 17

Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise.

<u>These things are being taken figuratively [which things are an allegory]:</u> The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written:

"Be glad, barren woman, you who never bore a child; shout for joy and cry aloud, you who were never in labour; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband." Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. But what does Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman. Gal.4:21-31

His disciples asked him what this parable meant. He said, "<u>The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables,</u> so that, " 'though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.' And "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop. Lk.8:9-15

How did Adam and Eve deal with their guilt?

They tried to hide and then they made coverings

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 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." And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" Gen.3:6-11

How did God deal with Adam and Eve's guilt?

God found them and made them a covering:

The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to <u>guard the way to the tree of life</u>. Gen.3:21-24

God banished them from the Garden to stop them eating from the Tree of Life until their sins were removed through the death of Jesus. Now, under the New Covenant, we have access to the Tree of Life (the real one not the copy in the Garden) because our sins have been forgiven:

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. Rev.2:7

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. Rev.22:1-5

"Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. "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. "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life. I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll. He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen. Rev.22:12-21

The Tree of Life is Jesus (who is the embodiment of Wisdom)

Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honour. Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her; those who hold her fast will be blessed. Prov.3:13-18

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. 1Cor.1:30

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and the one who is wise saves lives. Prov.11:30

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life. Prov.11:30

How do we produce fruit?

By abiding in the Vine (another allegory)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples… 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.15:1-17

What sort of fruit should we bear?

We should bear the fruit of the Spirit—that is, have the same character as the Holy 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 [Legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way.] Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Gal.5:22-26

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. Col.1:9-12

Peace

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness. Jas.3:17-18

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

Light/openness

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. Eph.5:8-11

Righteousness

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

Why is it important to agree with God?

God is always right

Let God be true, and every human being a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge." Rom.3:4

Woe to those who quarrel with their Maker, Is.45:9

"He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from heaven and is greater than anyone else. He testifies about what he has seen and heard, but how few believe what he tells them! Anyone who accepts his testimony can affirm that God is true. For he is sent by God. He speaks God's words, for God gives him the Spirit without limit. Jn.3:31-34

Jesus is the Truth

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

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.1:14

We can only worship God in spirit and in truth

"Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, 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 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.4:21-24

Our words will condemn or acquit us

For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on

the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." Matt.12:34-37

"If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day. For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say." Jn.12:47-50

Liars will not enter heaven

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death." Rev.21:8

But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. 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 whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us—eternal life. 1Jn.2:20-25

*This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the * Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. We accept human testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have 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. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. 1Jn.5:6-12*

05/02/2025

Psalm 123

Video: Mike Petzer 2023 – 40

Questions

What is salvation?
How are we saved?
Why do some people find the Bible difficult to understand?
How can we know what God thinks about something?
What is the Church?
Is it possible to stay both sensible and spiritual?

Comments

What is salvation?

Salvation is being saved or delivered from enemies and harm but especially from sin.

But I trust in you, LORD; I say, "You are my God." My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me. Ps.31:14

Then he blessed Joseph and said, "May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked faithfully, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the Angel who has delivered me from all harm —may he bless these boys. Gen.48:15-16

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.1Tim.1:15

Salvation is what a Saviour does!

David sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. He said: "The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my saviour—from violent men you save me. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.1Sam.22:1-4

"The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn [strength] of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my saviour— from violent people you save me.2Sam.22:2-3

then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is " 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.' 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.4:10-12

Salvation is what God does.

And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, Lk.1:46-47

And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." Rev.7:10

In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation." Is.25:9

How are we saved?

We are saved through the resurrection of Jesus:

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.3:2-22

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. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 1Cor.15:17-20

We are saved by grace through faith *i.e.* by God's goodness when we trust Him—He gives it, we receive it.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Eph.2:8-10

All the makers of idols will be put to shame and disgraced; they will go off into disgrace together. But Israel will be saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation; you will never be put to shame or disgraced, to ages everlasting. Is.45:16-17

Why do some people find the Bible difficult to understand?

It is not in their own language.

There are now 7,164 known languages spoken by people worldwide, and as of November 2024 the whole Bible has been translated into 756 languages, the New Testament has been translated into an additional 1,726 languages, and smaller portions of the Bible have been translated into 1,274 other languages (Wycliffe Global Alliance). Thus, at least some portions of the Bible have been translated into 3,756 languages (about half of the world's total languages).

They do not have the Holy Spirit

*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. 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. 1Cor.2:9-16*

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. 2Pet.3:15-16

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

Even in our own language we need God's help to understand the Scriptures:

Teach me, LORD, the way of your decrees, that I may follow it to the end. Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart. Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight. Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word. Ps.119:33-37

"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 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 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." Jn.16:12-15

I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him. 1Jn.2:26-27

And we need to the encouragement of others to understand and apply the Scriptures — especially those who are called and trained to teach

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. 2Tim.2:2

These are the things you are to teach and insist on. If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. But godliness with contentment is great gain. 1Tim.6:2-6

The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. 1Tim.5:17

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. 1Cor.12:27-31

You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. Tit.2:1-8

The Levites… instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read. Neh.8:7-8

How can we know what God thinks about something?

Read the Bible and compare what others say with what God says in the Scriptures

Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. Acts.17:11-12

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way… So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. 2Thess.2:1-15

"He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.' " 'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' " Lk.16:27-31

Irenaeus (about AD 200—he was taught by Polycarp who was taught by John the apostle)

Heretics boast of their belief-system as perfect in knowledge, but it is found neither in the prophets, nor the Lord Himself nor the apostles. They patch together their views from sources other than the Scriptures. As the proverb says, they endeavour to weave ropes of sand. They also try to adjust the Lord's parables, the prophets sayings, and the apostles' words, to their own odd teachings, doing this with an air of plausibility, so that their system might seem to enjoy some basis. In the process, they ignore the harmony and inter-connectedness of Scripture thus tearing the truth limb from limb and destroying it.

By ripping texts out of context, dressing them up in new meanings, and changing one thing into another, they deceive many by this evil skill of adjusting the Lord's oracles to their own opinions.

They behave as though an expert artist had put costly jewels together into a beautiful image of a king, and then someone else had taken the picture to pieces, rearranged the jewels, and produced a shoddy image of a dog or fox and then claimed this was the king's beautiful image made by the expert artist! The deceiver points to the jewels, which the original artist had so wonderfully arranged into the king's image, but which the deceiver has now reshaped into the image of a dog. By pointing to the jewels, he deludes the ignorant who have no idea what a king looks like, convincing chem that this pathetic picture of a fox is the image of the beautiful king! Likewise, these heretics stitch together myths and fables, and then by violently twisting Scripture's words, phrases, and parables, they try to adjust the oracles of God to their own fabricated fictions.

What is the Church?

The gathering of Believers

The Church is not a building but the Family of God, the meeting together of fellow Believers. The word "*Church*" in the NT is the Greek word "*ekklesia*" (ἐκκλησία) from where we get "*ecclesiastical*" and is defined as: "*a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place for the purpose of deliberating*" (to deliberate means to discourse or debate with action taken after careful consideration).

Is it possible to stay both sensible and spiritual?

Yes!

We should pray with spirit and soul (mind)

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 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 saints. Eph.6:16-18

Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction? Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the pipe or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker is a foreigner to me. So it is with you. Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church. For this reason the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding. Otherwise when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer, say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying? You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified. 1Cor.14:6-17

Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the portico of the temple, its buildings, its storerooms, its upper parts, its inner rooms and the place of atonement. He gave him the plans of all that the Spirit had put in his mind for the courts of the temple of the LORD and all the surrounding rooms, for the treasuries of the temple of God and for the treasuries for the dedicated things. 1Chron.28:11-12

"I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. I approached one of those standing there and asked him the true meaning of all this. "So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: Dan.7:15-16

29/01/2025

Psalm 122

Video: Mike Petzer 2023 – 35

Questions

What do we mean by "the Word of God"?
Why do we believe that the Bible is the Word of God?
How can we understand what the Bible means?
Is the Bible the only way God communicates with us?
Does it matter which translation of the Bible we use?
How is God's Word our spiritual food?
Why must we serve (worship) only God?
Why mustn't we test God?

Comments

What do we mean by "the Word of God"?

The Word of God is Jesus

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Jn.11-2

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron sceptre." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.Rev.19:11-26

Jesus is also called the Word of Life

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 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.1:1-4

Word in Greek is λόγος (logos) and means *intelligence*, *word as the expression of that intelligence*, *the embodiment of an idea*. And so it applies to Jesus who is the embodiment of God:

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.1:14

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.Col.1:15

God is Spirit and so He cannot be seen. And so when God is seen, it is the embodiment of the invisible God—Jesus the Word of God

No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known. Jn.1:18

In the OT when God was seen, we call it a "*Christophany*" (or "*Theophany*") — an appearance of Christ (or God) *c.f.* Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Gideon, Samson's parents, the 4th man in the fire, *etc.*

Why do we believe that the Bible is the Word of God?

The Bible (Scripture) (OT and NT) **is called the "Word of God" because it God's communication to us of Jesus**.

"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.Prov.30:5-6

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God,Lk.5:1

"And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,' he is not to 'honour his father' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. Matt.15:3-6

So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Acts.6:2

Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 2Cor.4:2

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how 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.3:14-17]

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… 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. Rom.3:7-8;14

How can we understand what the Bible means?

God inspired and authored the Bible directly through the Holy Spirit

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2Pet.1:20-21

"Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus— he was one of our number and shared in this ministry." Acts.1:16-17

And so God must give us revelation to understand the Bible—which Jesus did when He was on the earth and now the Holy Spirit does.

As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." 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?" …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. Lk.24:27-45

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. Ps.119:17-18

The Bible is not difficult to understand when we have the Holy Spirit to give us spiritual insight, but those without the Holy Spirit cannot understand the spiritual part of it

However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived" — the things God has prepared for those who love him— these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so 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, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. 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. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human

judgments, for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. 1Cor.2:9-16

Is the Bible the only way God communicates with us?

No! God speaks though various ways including creation, circumstances, sickness, hardship, dreams, prophesy, conversations,

since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. Rom.1:19-20

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. Ps.19:1-4

And the heavens proclaim his righteousness, for he is a God of justice. Ps.50:6

For God does speak—now one way, now another—though no one perceives it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn them from wrongdoing and keep them from pride, to preserve them from the pit, their lives from perishing by the sword. "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. They draw near to the pit, and their life to the messengers of death. Job.33:14-22

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people 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. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' Acts.2:14-21

However, since the New Covenant, God always speaks though Jesus—*i.e.* in harmony with what Jesus said and taught as recorded in the Scriptures

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. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.Heb.1:1-3

Does it matter which translation of the Bible we use?

Jesus is the incarnate Word of God not the Bible. The Bible is God's record of the Word of God, inspired and authored by the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit's life and power in in the communication of God's Word not in the physical words of the text. That is why we need to understand what is written—both mentally and spiritually!

Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth." The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. Acts.8:30-34

all the people came together as one in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the teacher of the Law to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded for Israel. So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate

*in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law. Ezra the teacher of the Law stood on a high wooden platform built for the occasion. Beside him on his right stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah and Maaseiah; and on his left were Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam. Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. Ezra praised the LORD, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. The Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan and Pelaiah—instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear * and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read. Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is holy to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law. Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." The Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be still, for this is a holy day. Do not grieve." Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them. Neh.8:1-12*

There no original manuscripts of the Scriptures and so we only have copies of copies which have to be translated into our language. Language changes about every 40 years and so the translations are constantly reviewed.

The NT was written in

The oldest New Testament fragment (from John 18) that we have today is the Ryland Papyrus P52, (dated from A.D. 100-150) currently on display at the John Rylands University Library in Manchester, UK. It was purchased in 1920 by Bernard Grenfell on the Egyptian antiquities market. However, it wasn't really "discovered" until 1934 when it was translated by C. H. Roberts. It comes from a codex (ie. book form, not a scroll) and contains parts of seven lines from the John 18:31–33 on the front, and parts of seven lines from verses 37–38 on the back. (*N.B.* it is written in Cursive Greek which has no punctuation, sentences or paragraphs!)

Front

ΟΙ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΟΙ ΗΜΙΝ ΟΥΚ ΕΞΕΣΤΙΝ ΑΠΟΚΤΕΙΝΑΙ ΟΥΔΕΝΑ ΙΝΑ Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΠΛΗΡΩΘΗ ΟΝ ΕΙΠΕΝ ΣΗΜΑΙΝΩΝ ΠΟΙΩ ΘΑΝΑΤΩ ΗΜΕΛΛΕΝ ΑΠΟΘΝΗΣΚΕΙΝ ΕΙΣΗΛΘΕΝ ΟΥΝ ΠΑΛΙΝ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΠΡΑΙΤΩΡΙΟΝ Ο ΠΙΛΑΤΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΦΩΝΗΣΕΝ ΤΟΝ ΙΗΣΟΥΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΙΠΕΝ ΑΥΤΩ ΣΥ ΕΙ Ο ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΩΝ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ

the Jews, "For us it is not permitted to kill anyone," so that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spoke signifying what kind of death he was going to die. Entered therefore again into the Praetorium Pilate and summoned Jesus and said to him, "Thou art king of the Jews?"

Back

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΕΙΜΙ ΕΓΩ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΥΤΟ ΓΕΓΕΝΝΗΜΑΙ ΚΑΙ (ΕΙΣ ΤΟΥΤΟ) ΕΛΗΛΥΘΑ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΚΟΣΜΟΝ ΙΝΑ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΗΣΩ ΤΗ ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ ΠΑΣ Ο ΩΝ ΕΚ ΤΗΣ ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑΣ ΑΚΟΥΕΙ ΜΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΦΩΝΗΣ ΛΕΓΕΙ ΑΥΤΩ Ο ΠΙΛΑΤΟΣ ΤΙ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥΤΟ ΕΙΠΩΝ ΠΑΛΙΝ ΕΞΗΛΘΕΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΥΣ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΟΥΣ ΚΑΙ ΛΕΓΕΙ ΑΥΤΟΙΣ ΕΓΩ ΟΥΔΕΜΙΑΝ ΕΥΡΙΣΚΩ ΕΝ ΑΥΤΩ ΑΙΤΙΑΝ

a King I am. For this I have been born and (for this) I have come into the world so that I would testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears of me my voice." Said to him Pilate, "What is truth?" and this having said, again he went out unto the Jews and said to them, "I find not one fault in him."

How is God's Word our spiritual food?

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

God's Word (the Scriptures in our heart) feeds our spirit, like bread and honey feeds our body

Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." "Sir," they said, "always give us this bread." Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. Jn.6:32-35

Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever." Jn.6:53-58

I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me. How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Ps.119:102-103

Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. Prov.16:24

God's Word will strengthen and nourish our whole person:

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… This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones[Prov.3:1-8]

My son, pay attention to my words. Open your ears to what I say. Do not lose sight of these things. Keep them deep within your heart because they are life to those who find them and they heal the whole body. Guard your heart more than anything else, because the source of your life flows from it.[Prov.4:20-23]

Why must we serve (worship) only God?

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only. [Deut.6:13]'"

The Lord is the only true God

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. Deut.6:4-5

All other "*deities*" or "*gods*" are deceptions and we need to follow the Truth

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]

On that day living 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. The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name.[Zech.14:8-9]

Why mustn't we test God?

Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test. [Deut.6:16]'"

Faith is trusting not testing and God will always keep His Word—but in the way He chooses not in necessarily in the way we want.

The LORD said to me: "What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name. But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death." You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed. Deut.18:17-22

Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God." When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him. About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price." Peter said to her, "How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also." Acts.5:3-9

Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses." The apostles and elders met to consider this question. After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. 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." Acts.15:5-11

The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. So they quarrelled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?" But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?" Ex.17:1-3

22/01/2025

Psalm 121

Video: Mike Petzer 2023 – 30

Questions

Why is religion common to all of humanity?
What makes Christianity unique amongst all religions?
What is repentance?
Why is repentance integral to true religion?
What was John the Baptist's mission?
Why was John the Baptist the last of the Old Covenant prophets?

Comments

Why is religion common to all of humanity?

Religion is the worship of a deity and we are spiritual beings

Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, LORD, my faithful God. Ps.31:5
Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, my soul. I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. Ps.146:1-4

We are created in God's image

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 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.26-28

We were created to worship/serve God

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]
The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work [serve or worship] and take care of it.[Gen.2:15]

What makes Christianity unique amongst all religions?

Jesus—His deity, His humanity, His conception, His life, His death, His resurrection, His ascension. All religions except Christianity are based on works—what we do—but true Christianity is about what Christ has done for us. No other religion except Christianity has any factual evidence to verify their claims but Christianity is based on the fact of Jesus' resurrection—that He died and rose from the grave. The evidence of Jesus' resurrection was verified by hundreds of people who actually witnessed the risen Jesus plus millions of people since who have affirmed that Jesus has changed their lives by making peace between them and God

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.
*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… But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 1Cor.15:1-8;20*

What is repentance?

Change of mind—which leads to change of attitude, change of thinking, change of conversation, change of expectations, change of lifestyle

True repentance which will always include these 5 A's:

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.

Forgiveness is unconditional (because it is by grace); 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.

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.[2Cor.7:9-10]

Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble. So watch yourselves. If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. 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." The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"Lk.17:1-5

Why is repentance integral to true religion?

Repentance is the doorway to faith and forgiveness of sins which leads to salvation

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. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honour and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favouritism.[Rom.2:4-11].

Repentance must be genuine

prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God.[Lk.3:8]

What was John the Baptist's mission?

Prepare the way for Jesus and the Kingdom of God

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]

He also declared that Jesus was the Sacrificial Lamb who would take away the sins of the world:

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! He is the one I was talking about when I said, 'A man is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.' I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel."[Jn.1:29-31]

Why was John the Baptist the last of the Old Covenant prophets?

Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 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. For 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.11:11-15

Because the New Covenant began with Jesus

John was the greatest of the Old Covenant prophets because he was the one who heralded in the Messiah—he actually met Jesus instead of seeing Him in the distant future like the other OT prophets

Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."Jn.8:56

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. Matt.13:13-17

Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things. 1Pet.1:10-12

For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them." Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him. Jn.12:39-41

15/01/2025

Psalm 120

Video: Mike Petzer 2023 – 25

Questions

Should there be differences in the Church?
Can we be different without being divisive?
Why is Jesus referred to as a "stone" or a "rock"?
How did Simeon recognise the Baby Jesus as the Messiah?
How does Jesus cause people to fall and rise?

Comments

Should there be differences in the Church?

Yes! We need to keep the Faith and teach sound doctrine!

Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1Tim.4:16

[Elders] 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. Titus 1:9

You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. Titus 2:1

We should contend for the faith—which means that we must oppose unbelief and bad doctrine.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. 2Tim.4:7

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. Though you already know all this, I want to remind you Jude.3-5

Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth explaining that sometimes there must be divisions:

But in the following instructions, I cannot praise you. For it sounds as if more harm than good is done when you meet together. 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! When you meet together, you are not really interested in the Lord's Supper. For some of you hurry to eat your own meal without sharing with others. As a result, some go hungry while others get drunk. What? Don't you have your own homes for eating and drinking? Or do you really want to disgrace God's church and shame the poor? What am I supposed to say? Do you want me to praise you? Well, I certainly will not praise you for this! 1Cor.11:17-22

The analogy of the Body being the Church shows that we each have different callings, giftings and functions

There is one body. But it has many parts. Even though it has many parts, they make up one body. It is the same with Christ. We were all baptized by one Holy Spirit into one body. It didn't matter whether we were Jews or Greeks, slaves or free people. We were all given the same Spirit to drink. The body is not made up of just one part. It has many parts. Suppose the foot says, "I am not a hand. So I don't belong to the body." It is still part of the body. And suppose the ear says, "I am not an eye. So I don't belong to the body." It is still part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, how could it hear? If the whole body were an ear, how could it smell? God has placed each part in the body just as he wanted it to be. If all the parts were the same, how could there be a body? As it is, there are many parts. But there is only one body. The eye can't say to the hand, "I don't need you!" The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you!" In fact, it is just the opposite. The parts of the body that seem to be weaker are the ones we can't do without. The parts that we think are less important we treat with special honour. The private parts aren't shown. But they are treated with special care. The parts that can be shown don't need special care. But God has joined together all the parts of the body. And he has given more honour to the parts that didn't have any. In that way, the parts of the body will not take sides. All of them will take care of each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it. If

one part is honoured, every part shares in its joy. You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it.1Cor.12:12-27

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.Rom.12:3-8

But we only have partial knowledge this side of glory

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a 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.1Cor.13:8-12

Because we are one Body, should live in harmony with others in the Body—under the headship of Jesus

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. 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. Rom.12:14-19

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.Col.3:15-17

Can we be different without being divisive?

Yes—on some things! Every generation faces new expressions of old heresies but we should never compromise on the doctrines contained in the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed—they are non-negotiable.

I urge you to keep in your hands the Creed drawn up by the fathers at the Council of Nicaea. Champion it fervently, with confidence in the Lord. Set an example to your brothers and sisters everywhere. Show them that the conflict in which we are engaged is one of defending Truth against heresy, and that the adversary has various tricks. *Athenaeus*

We can disagree about other doctrines but should not let them become divisive, however, we should stand firm on moral issues. And as with all matters, we should ensure that we are actually interpreting the Word of God correctly and not seeing issues through our tradition or culture—exegesis not eisegesis!

Before Jesus' Resurrection the Disciples had disputes

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. 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 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. "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."Lk.22:24-32*

Paul and Barnabas had disputes with others

Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. Acts.15:1-2

Paul and Barnabas also had disputes with each other.

Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.Acts.15:36-41

Paul and Barnabas' dispute was eventually resolved (There is no comment on who was right or wrong in this division!)

Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.2Tim.4:9-11

The Biblical way of resolving disputes is to bring it to the Church

If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord's people? Or do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church? I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers! The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters. 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. "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything. You say, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both." The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 2Cor.6:1-13

By dishonouring other Believers, we dishonour Jesus Himself. Some of the people were behaving selfishly and ignoring the other members of the Church—which is Christ's Body.

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

The Master, Jesus, on the night of his betrayal, took bread. Having given thanks, he broke it and said, This is my body, broken for you. Do this to remember me. After supper, he did the same thing with the cup: This cup is my blood, my new covenant with you. Each time you drink this cup, remember me. What you must solemnly realize is that every time you eat this bread and every time you drink this cup, you re-enact in your words and actions the death of the Master. You will be drawn back to this meal again and again until the Master returns. You must never let familiarity breed contempt. If you give no thought (or worse, don't care) about the broken body of the Master when you eat and drink, you're running the risk of serious consequences. That's why so many of you even now are listless and sick, and others have gone to an early grave. If we get this straight now, we won't have to be straightened out later on. Better to be confronted by the Master now than to face a fiery confrontation later. So, my friends, when you come together to the Lord's Table, be reverent and courteous with one another. If you're so hungry that you can't wait to be served, go home

and get a sandwich. But by no means risk turning this Meal into an eating and drinking binge or a family squabble. It is a spiritual meal—a love feast. 1Cor.11:23-34

Why is Jesus referred to as a "stone" or a "rock"?

The OT was written to explain God's plan of salvation that would be revealed in the NT and fulfilled through Jesus. This every illustration or analogy of Jesus was to show a facet or aspect of Him and our salvation. Each illustration is only a partial explanation of the whole story of salvation.

Stone

The Temple and the Altar was built with stone not with man-made bricks (like the Egypt buildings) This signifies the deity of Jesus (and also that it is what God does that counts, not what we do).

God has made Jesus the most important part of the building, even though people rejected Him

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. For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," and, "A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. 1Pet.2:1-8

Rock

Jesus is a place of refuge

For I proclaim the name of the LORD: Ascribe greatness to our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He. Deut.32:3-4

The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be my God, the Rock, my Saviour! 2Sam.22:7

But the LORD has become my fortress, and my God the rock in whom I take refuge. Ps.94:22

Jesus is the source of water (the Holy Spirit)

I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. Ex.17:6

They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. 1Cor.10:2-4

*Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "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. Jn.7:37-39*

Jesus is the place of glory

Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen." Ex.21:31-33

How did Simeon recognise the Baby Jesus as the Messiah?

By the Holy Spirit

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel." Lk.2:25-32

How does Jesus cause people to fall and rise?

We are already fallen sinners and spiritually dead and we recognise our fallenness by Jesus' holiness but **we rise through Jesus' resurrection**—anastasis

"This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. Lk.2:34

To some Jesus is the aroma of life and is precious but to others, Jesus is the aroma of death—He has become offensive.

In Christ, God leads us from place to place in one perpetual victory parade. Through us, he brings knowledge of Christ. Everywhere we go, people breathe in the exquisite fragrance. Because of Christ, we give off a sweet scent rising to God, which is recognized by those on the way of salvation—an aroma redolent with life. But those on the way to destruction treat us more like the stench from a rotting corpse. This is a terrific responsibility. Is anyone competent to take it on?[2Cor.2:14-16]

For us, Jesus is the highest authority and His Name is above all names; it is like anointment poured forth; it is like honey from the comb. But for many other people, Jesus is just a swear word and instead of being the Way, He gets in the way; instead of being a Rock in which to take refuge, He is a stumbling stone over which they trip.

Christ is the living Stone. People did not accept him. But God chose him. God places the highest value on him. You also are like living stones. As you come to him you are being built into a house for worship. There you will be holy priests. You will offer spiritual sacrifices. God will accept them because of what Jesus Christ has done. In Scripture it says, "Look! I am placing a stone in Zion. It is a chosen and very valuable stone. It is the most important stone in the building. The one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." The stone is very precious to you who believe. But to people who do not believe, "The stone the builders did not accept has become the most important stone of all." And, "It is a stone that causes people to trip. It is a rock that makes them fall." They trip and fall because they do not obey the message. That is also what God planned for them. But God chose you to be his people. You are royal priests. You are a holy nation. You are a people who belong to God. All of this is so that you can sing his praises. He brought 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.2:4-10]

08/01/2025

Psalm 119:169-176

Video: Mike Petzer 2023 – 19.30

Questions

Why is the Holy Spirit the "*Vicar of Christ*"?
How do we deputise for Jesus Christ?
Why is it important to properly understand the basic doctrines of Christianity?
Does it matter what we believe about the bread and wine of Communion?
What is a "*sacrament*"?
How do we receive spiritual benefit or grace?

Comments

Why is the Holy Spirit the "*Vicar of Christ*"?

Jesus is now in heaven at the right hand of the Fathe:

But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.[Lk.22:69]

Jesus is no longer physically on the earth but when He ascended to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people." (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions ? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) 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. Eph.4:7-14

And so the Holy Spirit is Jesus' "*deputy*" or representative on earth.

But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 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 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." Jn.16:7-15

However, unlike Jesus who could only be in one place at a time, the Holy Spirit is not restricted by physical limitations—and the Holy Spirit dwells <u>in us</u>, not just <u>with us</u>.

If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you <u>another Counsellor</u> 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.Jn.14:15-18

All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.Jn.14:25-27

How do we deputise for Jesus Christ?

Every genuine Christian is a follower of Christ and acts as His agent or "*deputy*".

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.28:18-20

This makes every Believer a "*vicar*" of Christ because we are Jesus' representatives in the world.

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."Jn.8:31-32

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.Jn.15:7-8

Christians represent Christ to the world!

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.1Jn.4:16-17

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.1Cor.11:1

Why is it important to properly understand the basic doctrines of Christianity?

This side of Glory we only have partial understanding (even though we know more now than when we first believed)

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a 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.1Cor.13:8-12

However, we should at least aspire to maturity and we have a duty ensure that we are not deceived—especially as God has given us everything we need for a godly life

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 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; 2Pet.1:3-5

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work2Tim.3:16-17

And in any case, good theology makes Christianity easy whereas poor theology makes Christianity hard!

We should make every effort to keep the Faith!

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. Though you already know all this, I want to remind you Jude.3-5

But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 1Tim.6:11-12

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. 2Tim.4:7

Athanasius the Great (296-373) I urge you to keep in your hands the Creed drawn up by the fathers at the Council of Nicaea. Champion it fervently, with confidence in the Lord. Set an example to your brothers and sisters everywhere. Show them that the conflict in which we are engaged is one of defending Truth against heresy, and that the adversary has various tricks. What makes a martyr isn't just refusing to burn incense to idols, but refusing to deny the faith: this, too, is a glorious proof of the soul's integrity. Scripture condemns as outcasts not only those who turned away to idols, but also those who betrayed the truth. Judas was ejected from apostleship, not because he offered sacrifice

to idols, but because he was disloyal to Christ. Hymenaeus and Alexander fell away, not by worshipping idols, but because they "*made shipwreck of the faith" (1Tim.1:19)*. Conversely, the patriarch Abraham obtained the crown, not because he suffered a martyr's death, but because he was faithful to God. The other saints of whom Paul speaks — Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the rest — weren't perfected by shedding their blood; it was by their faith they were justified. To this day we admire them, since they were at least prepared to die for their devotion to the Lord. To add an example from our own history, think how the blessed Alexander (*Bishop of Alexandria prior to Athanasius, dying in 328*) fought to the death against the Arian heresy; though he was an old man, what great hardships and toils he bore, until extreme age gathered him to his fathers. Many others have laboured heavily in refuting this ungodliness, and now enjoy in Christ the wonderful reward of their faith! Let's consider that everything is staked on this conflict, and chat the choice before us now is to deny or maintain the faith

Athanasius, fourth-century Bishop of Alexandria, is abidingly famous for his lifelong and costly defence of the Deity of Christ against "*Arianism*" which reduced Christ to nothing more than the first and greatest of God's creations. To this denial of Christ, the opposition was led for forty-five long and bitter years by Athanasius, both doctrinally and by virtue of his gifted qualities of leadership. For this, he was sent into exile by hostile Emperors no fewer than five times. Athanasius spent seventeen years away from his beloved Alexandria, hiding sometimes from search-parties of imperial troops, for years at a stretch, in the trackless wastes of the Egyptian desert. Sometimes the opposition got so strong an upper hand in Church and state that it seemed Athanasius was virtually alone: hence the Latin tag *Athanasius contra mundum* (Athanasius against the world). He never really stood alone, but he did unflinchingly spearhead a demoralised orthodoxy in its darkest days, when even popes of Rome crumpled in compromise. By also, later on, arguing for the full Deity of the Holy Spirit, Athanasius paved the way for the Cappadocian Fathers' complete expression of Trinitarian theology

Does it matter what we believe about the bread and wine of Communion?

Yes because we worship in spirit and truth—we can't worship in a lie!

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.4:24-25

Jesus was crucified only once and so think that the bread and wine is His literal body and blood and then to offer this on a "altar" is to re-crucify Him.

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. Rom.6:8-10

It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. Heb.9:23-28

Moses couldn't enter the Promised land because he broke the symbolism of Jesus dying only once:

The LORD answered Moses, "Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders

*of Israel. And he called the place Massah * and Meribah because the Israelites quarrelled and because they tested the LORD saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?" Ex.17:5-7*
The LORD said to Moses, "Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink." So Moses took the staff from the LORD's presence, just as he commanded him. He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honour me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them." Nu.20:7-12
For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. 1Cor.10:1-6
On that same day the LORD told Moses, "Go up into the Abarim Range to Mount Nebo in Moab, across from Jericho, and view Canaan, the land I am giving the Israelites as their own possession. There on the mountain that you have climbed you will die and be gathered to your people, just as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people. This is because both of you broke faith with me in the presence of the Israelites at the waters of Meribah Kadesh in the Desert of Zin and because you did not uphold my holiness among the Israelites. Therefore, you will see the land only from a distance; you will not enter the land I am giving to the people of Israel." Deut.32:48-52

What is a "*sacrament*"?

A "*sacrament*" is something physical that imparts spiritual benefit to its recipients. That is why we call the bread and wine "*emblems*" and communion and baptism "*ordinances*" instead of "*sacraments*" Communion is accepted widely as a *'sacrament'* and a *'means of grace'*, even in many evangelical churches but for me as a Pentecostal the whole subject takes on a deeper richness. The phrase *'a means of grace'* is a common and easy phrase. But it is a weevil word corrupting beliefs.

Grace was the centre of theology until the Pentecostals showed the work of God was by the Holy Spirit, not by any other emanation or force. The *'means of grace'* meant ways to accumulated grace sufficient to give souls access to heaven, that is by religious acts, fasting, prayers and so on. Taking communion was particularly a good 'sacrament' a meritorious physical act conferring automatic effects.

Pentecostal thought, as I have known it for a lifetime, is that no physical act has any reward without the operation of faith. Salvation is by faith, not by any act, but faith must act to bring salvation. Bread and wine were important in Scripture from the day when Melchizedek the priest of Jerusalem brought bread and wine to Abraham, confirming God's promise of the land to Abraham. As a tent dweller he could farm neither bread nor wine. However, so much for that. I would like to make bread and wine more meaningful. **Jesus is present, though not IN the emblems, but with us**, where two or three gather in His name. We partake physically with faith, and benefit physically and spiritually.

When Jesus instituted this ordinance He was alive, and the disciples could not *'eat'* Him or drink His blood. But communion is far more than a remembrance of Christ as Zwingli said. We partake of physical elements by faith and receive the physical and spiritual realities of Christ. The act is important. It is as close as anything could come to signify the physical realities of the Gospel. It is a truly Pentecostal act, our bodies receiving as well as our spirit.

At the Lord's Table, I open myself completely in surrender to God. I don't just eat, thinking that in some way it will do me good, any more than just the act of listening to sermons has any sacramental and automatic effect. I admit that listening to some sermons has been a trial of spiritual character, but merely hearing adds nothing to my heavenly grace banking account. Any religious rite must be joined with a conscious faith act.

It is precisely to ensure that we do draw near for physical and spiritual blessings that Jesus told us to do this, partake of bread and wine. As I eat, my eating becomes an act of my spirit to reach out to Jesus. Eating bread is so natural and simple, a child can eat. That is what it means, come simply, naturally to God who feeds us on the bread of heaven as we open our mouths and open our souls consciously to Him. I don't come merely for a new cleansing. I am cleansed already or I dare not come at all.

Some eat thoughtlessly assuming that the bread is holy and in a mysterious way they imbibe God. One of my church members would not let the birds eat the remaining crumbs from the communion table, but always ate it herself – with milk. But God is not to be manipulated automatically and helplessly by a piece of bread, Paul says Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, not by ritual. I myself think of Him as coming and coming as the everlastingly coming One, flooding my soul in a never ending stream of life. "*Moment by moment I've life from above",* that wonderful hymn says.

How do we receive spiritual benefit or grace?

The only real "*sacrament*" is that simple yet profound trust in God and His Son Jesus Christ — faith:

The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.[Gal.5:6]

No one can please God without faith. Whoever goes to God must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who seek him.[Heb.11:6]

Faith imparts salvation, both the salvation from the eternal consequences of sin (life eternal) and also the salvation from the present consequences of sin (life enjoyable).

God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift. It is not based on anything you have done. No one can boast about earning it. God made us. He created us to belong to Christ Jesus. Now we can do good things. Long ago God prepared them for us to do.[Eph.2:8-10]

We belong with those who have faith and are saved.[Heb.10:39]

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.[2Tim.3:15]