

Truth for the World

Bible Question and Answer Booklet

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Truth for the World is a mission work of the churches of Christ. It is a total approach to world evangelism involving radio and television programs, literature and campaign follow-up.

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GOD/CHRIST

QUESTION: What is God like?

ANSWER: We believe none can answer this question fully! There is neither human knowledge, time, nor space that would permit it. Though we may know some things about Him, we can never fully comprehend such concepts as limitless, eternal, and infinite concerning His being and will.

Some attributes of God often ascribed to Him are: self-existent, unchangeable, infinite knowledge, total independence, all-powerful, all-present, righteous, holy, and good. Toward us as sinners, He is full of mercy, “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9). In I John 4:8, we are told that He is love! One of the most beautiful pictures of God in the Bible is found in Luke 15:11-32. Here we see our God lovingly concerned about His children and willing to forgive to the uttermost.

However, we also see Him described as a God of goodness and severity; goodness toward those who continue in Him, but severity toward the disobedient. He will one day judge each of us by Christ (Acts 17:31) according to our deeds (Revelation 20:12).

The nearest one can come to knowing God is through a deep, thoughtful study of His Word. This we recommend to you!

QUESTION: How do we see (know) God in our everyday living?

ANSWER: We can partially see (know) God through His creative handiwork (Psalms 19:1-4 & Romans 1:20) and come to know Him more perfectly through learning (biblical studies) and obedience to His will (I John 4:6). But humankind cannot see (know) Him in the fullest sense; “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9).

QUESTION: Why do we praise God?

ANSWER: To praise God is to express heartily our admiration and thankfulness in prayer and song for what He is; what He has done; what He is doing; and what He has promised to do! We do it, because He is most deserving of it! Also many passages teach that it is the right thing to do. See Psalm 148; Luke 19:37; Romans 15:10-11; Hebrews 2:12.

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QUESTION: Did God plan to insert sin into His creation?

ANSWER: No! James 1:13; "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man."
Since God clearly loves His creation so greatly (John 3:16), the insertion of evil into it would be against His very nature!

QUESTION: Why did God not immediately destroy Satan so that we would not sin?

ANSWER: God does not cause man to be tempted to sin (James 1:12-15). Neither did He create man so he would not have the opportunity to express through his actions the likeness of the God in whose image he was made. Indeed, there would be no spiritual or moral value at all in our lives, if we did not have the choice of right or wrong. Even in this, our loving God through His Son graciously provided the church. He did so that we could be made free from sin by the blood of Christ even when we sometimes choose the wrong way. This provision was according to His eternal purpose (Ephesians 3:9-11).

God will deal with Satan at the appropriate time according to His schedule (Revelation 20:10).

QUESTION: Because God allowed Satan to mislead His people, does this mean that God was powerless to do anything about it?

ANSWER: No! God is all-powerful. If He were not, He could not be God! Please refer to our response to the question above.

QUESTION: If God is the head of Christ, would it not be more proper and honorable to ascribe the headship of the church to God the Father?

ANSWER: This question reflects the reasoning of man rather than the will of God! "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And (God the Father) hath put all things under His (Christ's) feet, and gave Him (Christ) to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:19-23).

Since the Father Himself ascribed the headship of the church to His son, Jesus Christ, it would only be proper and honorable to submit to His wisdom and authority by doing the same! To do otherwise would be to sinfully reject His will in the matter!

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QUESTION: Since God cast Satan out of heaven into this world, does not God become liable for the sin of this world?

ANSWER: No! Satan is in this world by permission, with his power controlled and restrained within certain limits by God. His power, limited to deceit and temptation, is permitted exercise by God in order to try (test) and prove men in this life for one of two possible destinies, heaven or hell (James 1:12; I Peter 1:7)!

QUESTION: A student asked, “who created God?” What are your views on this? How can I make it clear?

ANSWER: The Bible is clear! “Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God” (Psalms 90:1-2). God has always existed!

QUESTION: Does God know when a baby is in the womb?

ANSWER: Yes! David wrote in Psalms 139:13-15, “For thou hast possessed my reins (created my inward parts): thou hast covered (protected) me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth greatly. My substance (body) was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously fashioned in the lowest parts of the earth (in a place away from man’s observation). God told Jeremiah (1:5), “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”

If God knew David and Jeremiah in the womb, it is certain that He knows all who are in the womb today!

QUESTION: When God comes to stay in your heart what will you feel?

ANSWER: The heart that is talked about in the Bible refers to our mind or our understanding. When we receive God’s Word, the Bible, into our minds (our Bible hearts) and we come to believe and obey it, then God dwells in our hearts (minds). He does not actually live in our bodies. He is said to dwell in us, only because we let His words (the Bible) dwell in us (Colossians 3:16). When one obeys the Bible he or she feels (and is) free (John 8:32) and happy (Acts 8:39), because in obedience all past sins are taken away and one becomes a true child of God. These feelings come only because our mind knows that we have been pleasing to God!

QUESTION: Is God the cause of human suffering in certain classes of society?

ANSWER: No! Clearly the Bible teaches that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). However, we must also understand that God lovingly created man

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with the ability to exercise his own free will (Genesis 2:16-17; John 7:17; Revelation 22:17). It is evident as well, that God has continued to love man (John 3:16). Man suffers today because of unwise or sinful choices made in the past, by either himself (I Peter 4:15) or others, including his ancestors (Exodus 34:7; I Kings 21:29).

QUESTION: Why does God not immediately end this world with all its sin and rebellion?

ANSWER: God will accomplish it according to His timetable (I Peter 3:1-8). The answer as to “why” He has not yet done it, is found in II Peter 3:9: “The Lord is not slack (tardy) concerning His promises, as some men count slackness (tardiness), but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

QUESTION: Why doesn't God provide food for His people today?

ANSWER: God will do His part, if we do our part! Paul tells us in I Thessalonians 4:11 to “study to be quiet, and do your own business, and to work with your own hands.” In II Thessalonians 3:10, “For even when we were with you we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.” When man fell in the beginning, God ordained from that time forward that “In the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread” (Genesis 3:19). If we do our part according to God's will, while seeking first the kingdom of heaven and His righteousness, the necessities of life will be added to us (Matthew 6:25-33). See also Psalms 37:25.

QUESTION: If we all trusted God, would racism end?

ANSWER: If all would learn and practice Godliness (Godlikeness) racism would end, because the God we are to imitate is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Galatians 3:28). If any would be like God, he or she must reject racism in all its forms!

QUESTION: Was God slack concerning His promises because Jacob received the blessing instead of Esau?

ANSWER: God is not slack concerning His promises (II Peter 3:9). When Esau, described in Hebrews 12:16-17 as a fornicator and profane person, sold his birthright he also sold the accompanying blessing. The blessing was then justly given to Jacob to whom the birthright had been sold! God does no wrong (Job 34:12; Revelation 16:7).

QUESTION: Can those who sincerely want to know God find Him?

ANSWER: In Revelation 22:17, we read that whosoever will may come! In Hebrews 11:6, it is stated that, “he who cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” Without this faith, however, the writer says, “it is impossible to please Him.” The faith that pleases

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God comes through hearing His Word (Romans 10:17). Therefore, if people sincerely want to know God and prayerfully search for Him, they can find Him, but only in His Word (Matthew 7:24-27; John 12:48). He cannot be found in the religions, books, doctrines, and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9).

QUESTION: In Genesis 1:27, God created man in His own image. Then in John 4:24, we see that God is a spirit. Now, what kind of man did God create, spiritual or bodily man? Are we really like God?

ANSWER: God created the physical body and the spirit of man. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). Man is a living soul (the total being) only when the body and the spirit are joined together. When a body exists without the spirit, there is death, not life (James 2:26). Clearly, since God is a spirit, it must then follow that the spirit of man was created in His image! We have physical bodies. God does not. Therefore, the spirit of man is in His image, but the total man is not! Faithful Christians will not be like Him in the fullest sense until Christ comes again. "Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (I John 3:2).

QUESTION: A man said that if Christ was God He would have known when He was going to return (Matthew 24:36). Is Christ God? If God is the Father and Christ is the Son, who is the Mother?

ANSWER: Yes! Christ is God! (John 1:1; John 5:18; John 20:28; Philippians 2:5-6). It is sometimes difficult for man, largely because of false teaching, to accept the fact of three personalities in one God or one Godhead! The scriptures reveal quite forcefully that there is only one God (Isaiah 44:6). However, with equal force, this one God reveals Himself to us in scripture as God the Father (Ephesians 4:6), God the Son (Matthew 1:23), and God the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4)! These three separate and distinct personalities make up the Godhead or God (Matthew 28:19; Acts 17:29; Colossians 2:9)! Each of these personalities, being all-present, all-knowing, and all-powerful, possesses all the attributes of Deity. They are coequal and coeternal! They are individually and collectively, God!

We learn from the Bible that "God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1), but it was not the Father alone who participated in the creation. In Genesis 1:26, "God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." To whom was God speaking? Undoubtedly, to the other two personalities in the Godhead! We find in Genesis 1:2 that the Holy Spirit was present at the creation and in Colossians 1:16-17, we find that the Son was also present. They were not only there, but were actively involved with the Father in the creation process! Undeniably then, there is only "one" God or Godhead (Isaiah 42:8; 43:10; 45:21), made up of three distinct personalities (Matthew 3:16; 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14).

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It is very difficult for physical man to accept the biblical concept of the Godhead, simply because he tries to understand it from an earthly or physical viewpoint. It cannot be done! It is for this reason that atheists, unbelievers, and skeptics continually reject the miracles of the Bible! The result of this viewpoint is self-defeating, because when man tries to force the spiritual things of God into his own physical limitations, he dethrones God in his own mind to the human level. As long as one fails to comprehend the fact of an enormous difference between physical man and spiritual Deity, he will never be able to accept the truths of the Bible necessary to his salvation. All men everywhere need always to contemplate and understand the following: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

The fact of Jesus not knowing (when He spoke the words in Matthew 24:36) of the time of His Second Coming does not, in any way, disprove His Deity. The statement that "He would have known, had He been God" implies that He wanted to know and the Father wouldn't tell Him. This is foolishness! Deity (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) is all-knowing. This does not necessarily mean that each of them knows everything all the time. It means that each of them can know whatever they want to know whenever they want to know it. At this particular time, the Father only possessed that specific knowledge. When Christ ascended back to the Father (Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 28:18-20), He was given a kingdom, dominion, glory, and all authority. It may be the case that He at that time, or since that time, has opted to know the time of His Second Coming. We cannot know! Whether He has decided to know it should not be of great importance to us. What is important is that we be ready to meet Him when He does come!

The words "Father" and "Son" are not to be understood in the physical sense; nor are we to infer that Christ had a mother because the first person in the Godhead is referred to as His "Father!" The words "Father" and "Son" are used solely to describe the functional and spiritual relationship that exists between the first and second persons of the Godhead. Jesus Christ, as God, is eternal, without beginning and without end (Micah 5:2; Hebrews 7:1-3). Obviously then, He had no need of a father and mother in the physical sense!

QUESTION: Why did Jesus die?

ANSWER: Jesus came into this world to save sinners (I Timothy 1:15; John 1:29). Though "He knew no sin, He was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Corinthians 5:21). The blood of animals could not take away our sin (Hebrews 10:4), so Christ became the only perfect sacrifice, by which we could be sanctified (Hebrews 10:10-12) through His blood, which was shed for many for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28). Because of our sin (which God hates), we deserved the prescribed penalty of death and eternal separation from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). Either we had to pay the penalty for our sins or a perfect, sinless sacrifice had to be found to pay the

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penalty for us. Paul tells us (Romans 5:8-9) that God demonstrated His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." Christ paid the penalty for you and me in His death (I John 2:2).

QUESTION: For whose creation did Christ die?

ANSWER: "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and he is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16-17).

QUESTION: Why couldn't Jesus have destroyed the disease of sin that has plagued our spiritual lives?

ANSWER: Jesus is God (John 1:1) and is, therefore, all-powerful! He does not, however, exercise His power according to man's timetable. When the father of sin (Satan) is finally destroyed at the end of all things (Revelation 20:10), then sin too, will have been destroyed. The coming of that day will be determined only by the God of heaven (Matthew 24:36). God created each of us as free moral agents with the choice of serving Him or serving sin (Romans 6:16). He temporarily allows sin to exist so that you and I may prove our love to Him by the proper exercise of the choice He has given us. The fact of the existence of sin in this life does not mean that it will or should plague our lives! We can overcome it by destroying the "body of sin" in our scriptural obedience to Him (Romans 6:1-18).

QUESTION: Where was Jesus' spirit while His body was in the grave?

ANSWER: He was in Paradise. "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). We note that after He had arisen, He appeared to Mary and said, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17). Clearly then, He was not in heaven during the three days. Neither was He in the place of eternal torment. The Greek word "hades" in the King James Version is most often translated as "hell" and very often does not refer to the place of eternal torment. For example, Acts 2:27 "In reference to Jesus, the passage says, "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in "hell" (Hades) . . ." So with consideration to each of these passages, we learn that Jesus was in Paradise or Hades!

Hades is the place of departed spirits. The righteous, upon death, go to a place in Hades called Paradise or Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22). The unrighteous go to a different place in Hades; a place of torments (Luke 16:19-31). In II Peter 2:4, this place of torments is called Hell. The Greek word for Hell in this passage is Tartarus. Both the spirits of the righteous and the unrighteous dead will remain in the Hadean world (in either Paradise or Tartarus) to await the resurrection and final Judgement. After Judgment, the righteous will go to Heaven and the

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unrighteous will go to Hell, the place of eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46). The Greek word translated Hell that designates the final place of the wicked is Gehenna!

QUESTION: Was Jesus in the grave for three days and three nights?

ANSWER: Yes, as the Jews reckoned time! Today, three days and three nights means seventy-two hours. This was not necessarily true in the first century. The Jews often spoke in round numbers, taking a part for the whole! Christ's body was in the earth part of the day Friday, which the Jews reckoned as a whole day; that is, a day and a night (First). His body was in the earth all day Saturday (the Sabbath), a day and a night (Second). It was in the earth part of the day Sunday, which the Jews reckoned as a whole day; that is a night and a day (Third). Thus, according to the reckoning of that time, Jesus' body was in the heart of the earth three days and three nights!

QUESTION: In what way is Christ the "firstborn (first fruits)" from the dead?

ANSWER: Christ was the first raised from the dead to die no more. Faithful Christians will follow at the Second Coming of Christ (I Corinthians 15:17-23).

QUESTION: Are all of the teachings of Christ to be found in the Bible?

ANSWER: Yes! Further, to add words to the Bible is sinful (Revelation 22:18); to take words away from it is sinful (Revelation 22:19); and to change it in any way is sinful! Those who do so are to be accursed (Galatians 1:6-9)! Anything outside of God's Word, even if it be at the direction of today's Pastors, Priests, Bishops, Archbishops, Cardinals, and Popes, is nothing but the doctrines and commandments of fallible men, and when obeyed will result in sin through vain and empty worship. Such organizations are to be rooted up in the last day! (Matthew 15:3-14).

QUESTION: Jesus was not a sinner. Why was He baptized?

ANSWER: When Jesus came to the Jordan river to be baptized (Matthew 3), John at the first refused to baptize Him saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" What John implied by this was, 'You (Jesus) are without sin and, therefore, do not need to be baptized for the remission of sins, but, I am, indeed, a sinner and have need to be baptized of thee!' Jesus did not argue with the truth of John's statement. In fact, He agreed with it in saying, "Suffer (permit) it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Jesus knew the design and purpose of John's baptism (Luke 3:3), and He approved of it, but by saying "Permit it to be so now," He is telling John that they, in this one case, must make an exception to this purpose, because He was without sin. Nonetheless, Christ insisted that He be baptized in order to "fulfill all righteousness." In other words, God commanded all men everywhere to be

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baptized and because Christ was, at that time, in the flesh (as a man), in order to satisfy the will of the Father, He, too, needed to be baptized in order to fulfill His will, or all righteousness!

Some people today who reject the scriptural teaching of baptism “for the remission of sins,” (Acts 2:38) say, that since Jesus was not baptized for this purpose, neither do they have to be baptized “for the remission of sins.” They, too, want to be baptized (as Christ was) to “fulfill all righteousness.” This could be the case, if they were (as Christ was) sinless, or without sin. But it is the case that they are not without sin, for Paul said in Romans 3:23 that, “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The logical and scriptural conclusion is that since “all men have sinned,” they (all men) cannot be baptized (as Christ was) solely to fulfill all righteousness, but must be baptized for the express scriptural purpose of “remission of sins,” which, in man’s case, results in the fulfillment of righteousness, or God’s will. Christ was the only one not to be baptized “for the remission of sins,” simply because He did no sin (I Peter 2:22). There are no other exceptions, because all other men have sinned! Every man must, therefore, be baptized “for the remission of sins” in order to be saved (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15-16)!

QUESTION: During the temptation of Christ, did he actually fast for forty days or is this just an estimation?

ANSWER: Christ actually fasted for forty days and forty nights! There is no scriptural reason to think otherwise. Note that Moses (Exodus 34:28) and Elijah (I Kings 19:8) also fasted for forty days.

QUESTION: Where was Jesus residing during the forty days before He went to heaven?

ANSWER: During the period of His public ministry, Jesus did not enjoy a residing place as such. He said in Matthew 8:20, “the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.” There is no reason to think that in the forty days after His resurrection it was any different. He did “shew Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them (the apostles) forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” Paul tells us in I Corinthians 15:5-8 of some of Christ’s appearances, being “seen of above five-hundred brethren at once.” However, we have no account of a residing place.

QUESTION: What things did the disciples not understand about Jesus?

ANSWER: There were many things that, at the first, they did not understand. They did not understand when He spoke of His death (Luke 9:43-45; Luke 18:31-34); when He spoke of the Father (John 8:27); when He spoke in parables (John 10:6); nor when He spoke of the establishment of His spiritual kingdom, the church (Luke 18:20-37; Acts 1:6-7). They would not understand or remember

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these things fully until Jesus was glorified (John 12:16), that is, until He was resurrected and enthroned at the right hand of God. The Holy Spirit, who would guide them into all truth (John 16:13) and bring all things to their remembrance (John 14:26) was not promised or could be given to them until after Jesus was glorified (John 7:39). After this was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was given to the twelve in a great way in Acts 2:1-4, after which they understood and remembered all things “whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:13).

QUESTION: Why was the transfiguration not a strange thing to Christ?

ANSWER: Because He was God (John 1:1) it would not be a strange thing, since He was very familiar with miracles (John 11:47; John 12:37). Not only this, but He, being eternal (Micah 5:2; John 8:58) as God, was very familiar with Moses and Elijah, before and after their deaths. And, certainly, it would not be strange for the Son to hear His Father’s words!

QUESTION: Why did Moses and Elijah appear with Christ at the transfiguration?

ANSWER: The purpose of the transfiguration is very significant to us today! Moses represented the “law” and Elijah represented the “prophets.” When God said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him” (Matthew 17:5), He was saying that, under the New Testament dispensation, we are not to hear and obey Moses and Elijah (the Old Testament, i.e., the law and the prophets), but, rather, we are to hear and obey Jesus Christ, God’s beloved Son! The Old Testament (represented by Moses and Elijah) would be fulfilled with the death of Christ and taken out of the way (Colossians 2:14).

QUESTION: Is it true that the blood of Christ is still flowing in Israel today? If so, where?

ANSWER: The blood of Christ is not physically and literally flowing today anywhere! Symbolically, it flows into all the world today in the sense that it continues to cleanse obedient man from sin and will do so until the end of time (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:14-15)!

QUESTION: What does Christ promise if we love and obey Him?

ANSWER: Among many others, he promises forgiveness (I John 1:7-9), the peace that passeth all understanding (Philippians 4:7), eternal life (Matthew 25:46) in a prepared place (John 14:1-3), and that we might be partakers of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4)!

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QUESTION: How can we abide in Christ and Christ in us (John 15:4)?

ANSWER: To abide in Christ carries the idea of “remaining faithful.” Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). We abide in Him by our obedience to His word. (John 15:3,10). He abides in us when we humbly let His words abide in us (John 15:7)

QUESTION: Why did Christ rise on the third day?

ANSWER: It was in fulfillment of His prophecy in Matthew 12:40, that as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so would He be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Undoubtedly, there is a relationship between His resurrection on the third day (the first day of the week-Luke 24:1) and the fact that His disciples throughout all the ages were to worship on the same day of the week!

QUESTION: Were parables used by Christ to make matters clear or to leave His audiences with a question?

ANSWER: The use of parables was a method of teaching by which Jesus, the Master Teacher, illustrated and clarified spiritual truths from a comparison of physical things or common experience. Some in His audiences, desiring to be His disciples, would diligently search out and accept these spiritual truths. To these the teachings were understandable and clear. Others did not have the will to search out and accept the truths being taught. Therefore, they would neither see nor understand the parable (Luke 8:10). Jesus said, “if any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine” (John 7:17)!

QUESTION: Was Jesus a white-skinned man?

ANSWER: The exact tone of Jesus’ skin is neither certain or known. However, being a Semitic Jew from the area of Palestine, it would appear likely that He exhibited the physical characteristics of that people, i.e., olive-skinned.

QUESTION: Why do many people say that Christ will be coming back after 2000 years?

ANSWER: Man has always been trying to predict the time of Christ’s second coming. These predictions seem to increase at the close of each decade (every ten-year period) and more especially at the turn of the century (every one hundred years). It follows then at the conclusion of a thousand, or two thousand, year period that such thinking would be even more common, since this time would also include another decade and another century! Such predictions are sinful, showing a complete disregard for God’s Word which clearly records the words of Jesus, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Matthew 24:36).

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QUESTION: Will Jesus literally return with the clouds of heaven or will He return as He came the first time, i.e., through a miraculous birth?

ANSWER: Jesus will literally return with the clouds of heaven! "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel: which also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11). "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him . . ." (Revelation 1:7).

QUESTION: Will the heavens and earth literally be destroyed at His Second Coming? Will we literally meet Him in the air?

ANSWER: Yes! All of these things are to be taken literally! Note that in II Peter three, where the destruction of the heavens and the earth is foretold, that Peter compared it with what literally occurred when the earth was once destroyed by water. Both are instances of literal destruction!

Those who obey and serve God faithfully in this life will literally meet the Lord in the air at His Second Coming (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). There is no reason to infer a symbolic interpretation of this passage!

QUESTION: Is Jesus God? Would it be blasphemous to say so?

ANSWER: Yes! Jesus is God (John 1:1; Philippians 2:6). It would be blasphemous to say otherwise (I Corinthians 12:3).

QUESTION: Are there other messiahs today besides Christ?

ANSWER: No! "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). See also John 3:16; Ephesians 4:4-6; Hebrews 10:10. Those who claim to be messiahs and apostles today do so without biblical support and are leading the unlearned to destruction (Matthew 15:9-14).

QUESTION: Would you provide evidence that Christ used the Greek language? Was Greek the only language He knew? What language did Jesus use in Matthew 4:17 and Luke 2:46-49?

ANSWER: Jesus while on this earth undoubtedly spoke most often in His native tongue. The language used most commonly in Palestine at that time was a mixture of Hebrew, Chaldaic, and Syriac, called Syro-Chaldaic or Aramaic. This is evidenced further by use of phrases in this language by the inspired writers in Mark 7:34 and Matthew 27:46.

However, since the Bible is verbally (word for word) inspired (I Corinthians 2:13), we can be assured that Christ spoke (Hebrews 1:2) through the Holy Spirit,

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giving the writers of the New Testament the exact Greek words that He wanted them to use and record in the original manuscripts. In fact, in Matthew 16:18, Christ is understood to be actually speaking in the Greek tongue as He uses a play on the two Greek words Petros (Peter-masculine) and petra (rock-feminine), showing that the church was not built upon Petros, but rather upon petra, i.e., the confession that Peter had made in verse sixteen. The usage of the Greek genders in this passage was critical to the understanding of the apostles as He spoke directly to them and just as critical for us today. The Aramaic would not have provided the necessary distinction!

Undoubtedly, Jesus, being God, can speak any language He so desires. In the passages in question (Matthew 4:17 and Luke 1:46-49), Jesus, without doubt, spoke in the language of His hearers (Palestinians) at the time of the speaking. The words that He spoke through the Holy Spirit to the apostles, and which were divinely recorded for you and me, were, with rare exception (e.g., Mark 7:34; Matthew 27:46), in the Greek tongue!

QUESTION: In answer to a question in the Bible Correspondence Course, I answered that Jesus had an earthly father named Joseph. You marked it wrong. Why?

ANSWER: The Correspondence Course is teaching that Jesus was not physically fathered by a human being. This means that Joseph was not a participant in the conception of Jesus (Matthew 1:18). Matthew tells us that which was conceived in Mary was “of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 1:20). Therefore, we may look at Joseph as Jesus’ stepfather, but His true and real Father is the very God of heaven. Thus we refer to Him as the Son of God!

QUESTION: Can man today live without food for forty days, as did Christ (Matthew 4:2)?

ANSWER: It is not likely that any could survive such an ordeal! It seems clear that this particular fasting of Christ was miraculously supported.

QUESTION: Did Jesus drink alcoholic beverages?

ANSWER: No! That Christ stands opposed to the use of alcoholic beverages is made clear in Proverbs 23:29-35 and Isaiah 5:11. Note that these two passages show a connection between “wine” and “strong drink.” Then consider Habakkuk 2:15, “Woe unto them that givest his neighbour drink, that puttest the bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness.” Certainly, this does not suggest that our Lord who was without sin, having kept the Old Law perfectly, including this passage, gave His neighbour (the twelve and those at the wedding in Cana) to drink and “put the bottle to them.” Neither does it suggest that He Himself drank alcoholic beverages. Clearly the opposite is taught!

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QUESTION: Did Christ resurrect in body? If yes, explain I Peter 3:18 and I Corinthians 15:42-44, 50.

ANSWER: Yes! Christ was bodily resurrected (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:36-43; John 20:24-29), as we shall be (John 5:28-29; II Corinthians 5:1-10).

I Peter 3:18 simply teaches that Christ was quickened (made alive/resurrected) through the power and agency of the Holy Spirit, the same power by which our bodies shall one day be resurrected (Romans 8:11)!

I Corinthians 15:42-44 emphasizes the fact that the bodies that will come forth from the grave in the general resurrection (all are to be raised at the same time) will be incorruptible, unlike our present corruptible bodies. Being different from our present “natural” bodies, they are referred to in verse forty-four as “spiritual bodies,” not as “spirits without bodies” (II Corinthians 5:2-3)! The flesh of which the spiritual (heavenly/celestial-vs.40) body is to be made will be unlike anything that now exists on earth. It will not be as the flesh of present man; as beasts, fishes, or birds (I Corinthians 15:35-39), but, rather, God will provide a fleshly body that pleases Him (vs.38). These facts are also evidenced and implied in verse fifty where we are told that our present flesh and blood bodies, which are corruptible, cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (which is incorruptible). Therefore, we will be clothed (II Corinthians 5:1-3) in the resurrection with fleshly, incorruptible, spiritual bodies unlike our present fleshly, corruptible, natural bodies. Note very carefully what Paul is saying in verse fifty. He does not say that incorruptible “flesh and bones” cannot enter heaven! He is saying that corruptible “flesh and blood” cannot enter heaven! Note also in Luke 24:39 that Jesus’ resurrected body consisted of “flesh and bones.” That His resurrected body had been “changed” is further seen by the placing of Thomas’ fingers “into the print of the nails” and the thrusting of his hand “into His side,” indicating an absence of blood as we know it! This is the incorruptible, glorious, “flesh and bones” body that the disciples saw taken up into heaven and the same incorruptible, glorious, “flesh and bones” body that all shall see returning from heaven one day (Acts 1:9-11; Revelation 1:7). In that great day He has promised to ‘change our vile (corruptible) bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious (resurrected) body, . . .’ (Philippians 3:21) and then “we shall be like Him” (I John 4:2)! Note, as well, that the corruptible bodies of those who are alive when the resurrection occurs will also be “changed” into incorruptible bodies (spiritual bodies) fit for an eternity in heaven (I Corinthians 15:51-52)!

QUESTION: Did Jesus become a sinner when He died on the cross for our sins?

ANSWER: No! II Corinthians 5:21 says that Christ “knew no sin.” It was because of this that He could be “made to be sin for us.” This passage does not teach that He became a sinner or even that He literally became sin. It is teaching that He suffered as though He were the sinner; that He only, because of His sinlessness, could do such and be the one perfect sacrifice (sin-offering) whereby “we might

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be made the righteousness of God in Him!" Those who teach that Christ became a sinner at the cross are in error!

QUESTION: Would you please explain Matthew 27:46-47?

ANSWER: In the first part of verse forty-six, Jesus from the cross, 'cried with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani.'" The second part of the verse tells the meaning of the first part, i.e., Jesus had said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Verse forty-eight says that those who stood nearby misunderstood, thinking that Jesus was calling for Elias!

There are many opinions as to what Jesus meant when He said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Clearly, it is the case that Jesus, as Deity, knew what was before Him as He went to Calvary (John 12:27). And as Deity, He also knew that whatever He would have to face that is Father would never totally forsake Him (John 16:32). It follows and appears then that, in keeping with the divine plan; in order for Jesus to experience the fullness of suffering and the total weight of the sins of mankind, that Deity (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) withheld the slightest of support and allowed the human side of Jesus to woefully recite the words from Psalms 22:1, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

QUESTION: Some people say they have seen Jesus Christ. How is this possible if Jesus is a spirit?

ANSWER: Those today who say they have literally seen Jesus Christ are either lying or suffering from mental instability!

Peter says in I Peter 1:8 that we "see Him not," and though we "see Him not" we can still love and believe in Him. As a result, we can then "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Christ says of His followers in John 20:29, "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

The apostle John tells us in I John 3:2 that we "know" when Christ appears we shall be like Him. He also says that "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Since the Bible says that we don't yet know what we shall be like, it follows then that we have not yet seen Christ; nor know what He is like! If we now knew what He was like, that is, if we had seen Him, then we would already know what we will be like! The fact that "it doth not yet appear what we shall be" is evidence of the fact that none today have seen Him!

The answer to the question is summed up in Paul's statement of II Corinthians 5:7 that Christians (all Christians) "walk by faith and not by sight!" If one today had really seen Jesus then he or she would be walking by sight and not by faith, thereby negating and contradicting how God said Christians are to walk!

Those who claim that God literally appeared to them or that God talked directly to them do so in direct opposition to His Word. If these cannot be shown the error in which they engage, they need to be avoided as false teachers who "serve not our

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Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the heart of the simple" (Romans 16:17-18).

QUESTION: What was the reason and what was really happening on the Cross, when Jesus said, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

ANSWER: The phrase was a quote from the book of Psalms 22:1 indicative of one that was in deep suffering. The citing of this passage showed that He alone bore our sins to that cross (Isaiah 53:4-5) and that indeed what He was undergoing was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Certainly, it teaches us also the hatred that our Father has for sin; in that, while with the sins of the world upon His Son, apparently, God temporarily, turned away, rejecting Him in that moment, because of the great love that He had for you and me (John 3:16). Did Jesus have foreknowledge of the events of that day? Of course He did (Luke 18:31-34), but the human side of our Lord could not contain and uttered in much agony the phrase. Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!

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HOLY SPIRIT

QUESTION: Are men baptized in the Holy Spirit today? Do men receive the “gifts” of the Holy Spirit today? How does He work in people today?

ANSWER: It is clear from your correspondence that you believe the church of Christ, as you perceive it, is not the church of the Bible. We make this judgment based on the unscriptural use of the name “New Apostolic Church” (Romans 16:16) in your letter, which indicates an erroneous acceptance of the idea that both the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the associated gifts are available for men today. Please carefully consider the following:

The gifts of the Holy Spirit were imparted to man in only one of two ways: through baptism of the Holy Spirit, of which there are only two recorded cases in the Bible (Acts 2:1-4; Acts 10 & 11); and through the laying on of the apostles’ hands (Acts 8:14-18), which is often confused by some with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We must be careful not to do this! The baptism of the twelve apostles, in the first case, was the fulfillment of Christ’s promise that He would send them the Holy Spirit (John 14:16; John 15:26; John 16:7). The Holy Spirit was sent (Acts 2:1-4) to teach the apostles all things, to bring all things to their remembrance (John 14:26), and to guide them into all truth (John 16:13). As a result, men inspired of God recorded all truth (the Bible) one time, for all time (II Peter 1:3-11; II Timothy 3:16). Since we now have all truth, there is clearly no additional truth to be delivered. Therefore, this reason for the baptism of the Holy Spirit no longer exists!

After the falling of the Holy Spirit on the household of Cornelius, in the second case, God completed the fulfillment of the promise that He had made to Abraham in Genesis 12:3; “and in thee and thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed.” The Gentiles were to be blessed by God following this second case of Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 11:14; Acts 10:48) just as He blessed the Jews following the first case of Holy Spirit baptism. This means that God would at this time grant salvation through Christ to the Gentiles (Acts 11:18), just as He had done to the Jews on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37-47). Since Cornelius and his household were baptized in water for the remission of sins (Acts 10:47-48; Acts 2:38) following Holy Spirit baptism, it is clear that the reason for Holy Spirit baptism was not to save or wash away sin! What then was the reason? The Bible is clear! In Acts 10 & 11; Acts 15:7-9, we find that this household was baptized in the Holy Spirit only as a witness to the Jews that God had also granted salvation in Christ to the Gentiles. Since the promise of God was fulfilled (filled full) at this time, this reason for Holy Spirit baptism also ceased to exist.

All purposes for Holy Spirit baptism, then, were fulfilled. Therefore, there is no reason for it today. To support this conclusion further, we note that Paul wrote in 63/65AD that, at that time, there was only one baptism (Ephesians 4:5). At the same time (65AD), Peter writes and tells us that water “baptism doth also now

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save us" (I Peter 3:20-21). In 65AD then, there was only one baptism and this one baptism was water baptism! This being true, we can only conclude that this one baptism is the baptism of the great commission, which is "unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18-20). There is no room for Holy Spirit baptism today! If there is only one, there cannot be two!

As stated above, spiritual gifts were given in one of two ways in the New Testament, either through the baptism of the Holy Spirit or through the laying on of the apostles' hands. It has been shown above that Holy Spirit baptism does not exist today, but what about the laying on of the apostles' hands? The question that needs to be answered is this: Can one be qualified to be an apostle today? No! To be qualified to be an apostle, one must be an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22) as were the twelve (Acts 1:21) and the apostle Paul (Acts 26:13-18). None living today have seen the resurrected Christ! Therefore, none today can be qualified to be an apostle. Those who claim to be apostles today do so without biblical support (Revelation 2:2). Since there is no Holy Spirit baptism today and since the last apostle died about 2000 years ago, it is evident that spiritual gifts could last only as long as the last person was alive upon whom an apostle had laid his hands. In Ephesians 4:7-14; I Corinthians 13:8-13, we find that spiritual gifts were for the church in its infancy. They were called childish things that would be put away when the church became mature. Some would teach falsely that the mature, or more spiritual, church practices the use of gifts today. This is in direct opposition to what Paul says in verse eleven, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child: but when I became a man (mature), I put away childish things"; speaking of the miraculous gifts that, in verse eight, "shall vanish away" and, in verse nine, "shall be done away."

The only way the church could become complete (mature) was through all scripture (II Timothy 3:16-17), the complete (perfect) law of liberty (James 1:25). In the years following the establishment of the church, the will of God had not yet been fully revealed, written and confirmed by miracles. It was yet in part! The sole purpose of miracles was to confirm the newly revealed word (John 20:30-31). Once all scripture was given by inspiration of God, confirmed and written, it became the complete (perfect) law of liberty, able to "make the man of God perfect (complete), thoroughly furnished unto every good work" (II Timothy 3:17). Since we now have "that which is perfect" (I Corinthians 13:10); that is, the complete, mature, confirmed word of God, in which are "all things that pertain unto life and godliness," and by which we can become complete (mature) as Christians, there remains no need for gifts to day. They have served the purpose for which they were intended!

Are miraculous gifts evident today? When one, without bias, compares what men claim to do today with the miracles performed in the Bible, it will clearly be seen that "biblical" gifts are not evident today! Where is the man today who speaks a foreign language he has not studied or learned? Where are those today who raise the dead? Where are the dead whom they have raised? Why do those who

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claim gifts today die? Why do they go to hospitals for treatment? Why do their families get sick and die? Where are those who walk upon water? Surely, biblical miracles are not being performed today!

Those who claim baptism of the Holy Spirit and miraculous gifts today obviously do so without biblical support. They are pretenders and false claimants of something that does not exist! Not only this, but they, knowingly or unknowingly, arrogantly place themselves on an equality with the apostles! God forbid that we should be found guilty of such!

The Holy Spirit does not work in our lives today separate and apart from the Word of God! He operates only through the instrument of the Word, which is His sword (Ephesians 6:17). Through the Word, He saves us (Titus 3:5), bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God (Romans 8:26), witnesses to us (Hebrews 10:15), strengthens us (Ephesians 3:16), sanctifies us (II Thessalonians 2:13), and He will raise us up in the last day (Romans 8:11) at the direction of Jesus Christ (John 5:28-29). He also makes intercession for us before the throne of God (Romans 8:26-27). Since all of this occurs through the Word of God, what need is there for a “working” apart from it? Absolutely none!

QUESTION: If the gifts have passed away, what about I Corinthians 12, 13, & 14?

ANSWER: I Corinthians 12, 13, & 14 were written to the church at Corinth to help them overcome problems of division and disorderliness in worship services that the misuse of spiritual gifts had caused. Because the apostle dealt with these problems at that time, it in no way suggests that spiritual gifts continue today. To infer so, is to ignore the clear teaching of I Corinthians 13:8-13 and Ephesians 4:8-14, as discussed above.

The so-called “gifts” of today cannot begin to compare with those found in the Bible. Those of today are most often nothing more than pretentious attempts to prove one’s self-righteousness before men. Neither they nor their “gifts” are of God!

QUESTION: What is the difference between the words “Ghost” and “Spirit”?

ANSWER: There is no scriptural difference between these two words. At the time of the King James translation, the word “Ghost” was used in the same way the word “Spirit” is used today. However, the word “Ghost” has been foolishly and childishly narrowed in meaning through the years to represent an imaginary disembodied being whose purpose it is to travel about frightening people.

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QUESTION: What is the “gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38)?

ANSWER: Acts 3:19 is a parallel passage to Acts 2:38. They teach the same thing and explain each other!

Acts 2:38: “Repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Acts 3:19: “Repent, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

The “gift of the Holy Spirit” or “the refreshing that comes from the presence of the Lord” is the many blessings each Christian derives from the Holy Spirit according to His will. In the first century, the many blessings (times of refreshing) from the Holy Spirit would have included miraculous gifts. Today, the many blessings (times of refreshing) from the Holy Spirit do not include miraculous gifts, because their purpose has ceased to exist. (See preceding questions).

QUESTION: Does not Joel 2:28 teach that the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon all flesh? Why do you restrict this to the apostles and the household of Cornelius?

ANSWER: The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was indeed upon all flesh, i.e., both the Jews and the Gentiles. However, to assume that “all flesh” refers to “all men” is to assume too much! If such were the case, one would necessarily and logically have to agree that the Holy Spirit was also poured out even upon sinners! The outpouring of the Holy Spirit as prophesied in Joel 2:28 is not restricted only to the apostles and the household of Cornelius! This, however, does not mean that others were baptized in the Holy Spirit! They were not (See above answers)! It simply means that miraculous gifts were poured out upon others, not through Holy Spirit baptism, but through the laying on of the apostle’s hands.

QUESTION: Does not Jesus tell Nicodemus (and us) that he needed to be baptized in the Holy Spirit (John 3:5)?

ANSWER: No! Jesus is simply saying that baptism in water is through the agency (direction) of the Holy Spirit. Paul says the same thing in I Corinthians 12:13, “for by one Spirit (by His direction) are we all baptized into one body.” The command to be immersed in water comes only through His Word! That Jesus is not telling Nicodemus to be baptized in the Holy Spirit is evidenced by the fact that, at this time, the Holy Spirit had not yet been given (John 7:39). As well, the Holy Spirit was to come only as a “promise” (John 14:16-17; John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7; John 16:13; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4). Neither the apostles, nor any, were ever “commanded” to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. The only baptism of commandment is water baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

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QUESTION: Were not the people in Acts 19:1-7 baptized in the Holy Spirit?

ANSWER: No! They received the “gifts” of speaking in foreign languages and prophecy through the laying on of Paul’s hands (vs.6).

QUESTION: Do you believe that the Holy Spirit is of no use today?

ANSWER: The Holy Spirit is God and has revealed Himself to us through the written Word. To believe that the Holy Spirit is of no use would be to reject the very gospel by which we are saved. However, our understanding of the Holy Spirit cannot be based upon the feelings, doctrines and traditions of men! We must believe and accept the Holy Spirit according to the gospel He has given! To do otherwise, would be to deny Him in disbelief!

QUESTION: What is baptism of the Holy Spirit and the baptism of fire as expressed in Matthew 3:11?

ANSWER: Baptism of the Holy Spirit has been explained above. The baptism of fire is explained quite clearly in Matthew 3:12. In the King James version of the Bible, the eleventh verse ends in this way, “and with fire:” Notice that the many scholarly English translators involved placed a colon (:) after the word “fire.” In English grammar, that which follows a colon is an explanation of that which appears before the colon. Therefore, verse twelve explains the phrase, “and with fire.” That verse twelve (as well as the preceding verse, ten) has reference to the unquenchable fire of hell can not successfully be denied! Also proven by verse twelve is the fact that the word “you” does not refer to everyone, but, rather, is used in the sense that there are those among “you” who will be baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. Obviously, not all people would be cast into hell (immersed in fire)! Similarly, not all people would be immersed in the Holy Spirit. To apply Matthew 3:11-12 to all people, would force the conclusion that none will be saved.

QUESTION: Can one be qualified to be an apostle today?

ANSWER: No! To be qualified to be an apostle, one must be an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22) as were the twelve (Acts 1:21) and the apostle Paul (Acts 26:13-18). None living today have seen the resurrected Christ! Therefore, none today can be qualified to be an apostle! We can be sure that those who claim apostleship today do not represent the church of the New Testament!

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QUESTION: Did Paul see the Lord only in a vision?

ANSWER: The details surrounding our Lord's appearance to Paul are not specified. However, that He was seen of Paul cannot be denied: Acts 9:17, Jesus "appeared" unto him; Acts 26:16, Jesus "appeared" and was to "appear;" I Corinthians 9:1 & 15:8, Paul said he had "seen" the Lord. To deny that "seeing" the resurrected Christ was a requirement for being an apostle is, with bias, to ignore the plain teaching of Acts 1:22. Those who reject this verse are usually falsely holding to the misconception of modern apostles and "gift" usage today.

QUESTION: For what purpose did the apostles impart gifts to others?

ANSWER: To confirm the word (Mark 16:20; Acts 14:3). The word had not yet come in its fullness. It was necessary, in order for the gospel to be proclaimed in all the world (Colossians 1:6) to every creature (Colossians 1:23), that others beside the apostles be involved in it's proclamation! We see an example of this in Acts the eighth chapter when the disciples were scattered abroad and went everywhere preaching the word. Philip at that time went down to Samaria and preached Christ unto them, and the people gave heed unto those things which he spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did (vss. 5-6)!

As an aside, it is also interesting to note that since Philip was not an apostle he could not impart gifts that he performed to the Samaritans. It was necessary that Peter and John be sent to do so (vss.14-17). It is clear then that only the apostles had this ability, which should raise some questions as follows: Why did God not send the Holy Spirit directly to the Samaritans, as some claim is sent to them today? What happened when the last apostle died, if only they could impart spiritual gifts? What happened when the last person died upon whom an apostle had laid his hands? The answers are obvious! Since the purposes for Holy Spirit baptism were totally fulfilled and the apostles no longer live, it is quite evident that there can be no gifts today. These means of conveyance to man no longer exists by the will of God! Neither is there a reason for gifts today, since the word has already been confirmed!

QUESTION: Since some in the church today are still babes, are not gifts still necessary for maturation?

ANSWER: No! Christians today become mature by partaking of the meat of the word of righteousness (Hebrews 5:11-14; I Peter 2:2).

STATEMENT: I find it very difficult to agree that there was a time when the truth was only in part and that gifts ended when it (the New Testament) was completed. The word of God has always been perfect, since God is perfect.

RESPONSE: Clearly, the New Testament was not given in it's totality on the day of Pentecost, but rather it was given and written over a period of years during the first century. Once it was completed, it became the perfect (complete) law of liberty (James 1:25). Upon the New Testament being totally given, confirmed and

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written, the need for gifts (confirmation of the word) no longer existed! Certainly we agree that God is perfect in all that He is and does. We also agree that as God, through the Holy Spirit, guided (led; indicative of progression) the apostles into all truth, it was (and is) perfect (without flaw). In 1 Corinthians thirteen, however, the word "perfect" does not denote "sinlessness" or "without fault" It simply means "complete" or "mature." In verses eight through eleven, this word (perfect/complete) is contrasted with that which is in "part;" that which is to be done away. What was it that was known in part (vs.9)? When would the part be done away (vs.10)? According to verse ten, the part would be done away when the complete (perfect) was come! With the coming of the "complete" law of liberty, Christians would no longer have to know in part, because they would now have all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who hath called us to glory and virtue (II Peter 1:3), through all scripture which would make the man of God complete, furnished unto every good work (II Timothy 3:16-17). It cannot be successfully denied that the gifts were indicative of that which was in part and, further, that which represented childhood or spiritual immaturity/incompleteness (I Corinthians 13:8-11). To the contrary, however, some today, who falsely claim the ability to perform miracles (gifts), represent these as being indicative of spiritual maturity. They do so in opposition to God's Word and Will!

STATEMENT: We still need the Holy Spirit to teach us today in the same way He taught the apostles.

RESPONSE: This allegation is not biblically based. The apostles were guided into all truth. All truth has been recorded by inspired men once for all (Jude 3). It is only through this truth that we become complete/mature (II Timothy 3:15), and only through it can we be saved (James 1:21). If the above allegation was true (with the Holy Spirit teaching and guiding us as He did the apostles) there would be no need for Christians to study the Bible today. In fact, what need of the Bible would we have? That this is clearly false can be seen in many scriptures, e.g., II Timothy 2:2; II Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 5:12-14; et al.

QUESTION: The purpose of Holy Spirit baptism is to give special abilities. You explained that the Holy Spirit indwells only through the word. Since you have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you, but you have no special ability, how is it that you can teach the Bible? Where did you get the ability?

ANSWER: Certainly, none (including myself) are endowed miraculously today. Those who are able to teach the Bible can do so only after having been obedient to such passages as shown in the response immediately above.

The reason for so many different denominations and false doctrines today is that some who claim to be ministers of God's word have not done been obedient to these scriptures, but rather they have immersed themselves in their own imaginations (claiming to be so led by the Holy Spirit) and/or man-made denominational by-laws and directives (Matthew 15:9). Many of these so-called

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Spirit-led folks believe and practice different, contradictory things. Why? Is the Holy Spirit divided? Clearly, where there is contradiction, truth is an impossibility! Which of these folks is telling the truth? Which one is really being led by the Holy Spirit? Which one can we trust? Evidently, we cannot trust in what man says (Matthew 15:9); neither can we trust in what we might imagine to be Holy Spirit directives (Isaiah 55:8; Jeremiah 10:23). We must trust only in His words, for “they are spirit and they are life” (John 6:63). They, and they alone, will judge us in that day (John 12:48)!

QUESTION: Does I Corinthians 12:7 (all men) include Christians today?

ANSWER: No! “Every man” refers to those Christians under consideration during the time when “gifts” were employed. Specifically, Paul is writing to the Corinthian Christians who were misusing the “gifts” (Please read Chapters 12, 13, and 14). To apply this to Christians today would be to negate the force of I Corinthians 13.

QUESTION: Does Mark 16:17-20 teach that gifts of the Holy Spirit are meant for us today?

ANSWER: No! Note carefully in verse seventeen that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were to be done in the name of (by the authority of) Christ. By His authority, the gifts were to be used to confirm the word (verse twenty). Also, by His authority, the gifts were to be done away upon confirmation of that word or “when that which is perfect (complete/mature) is come” (I Corinthians 13:8-11). The “perfect” refers to the complete/perfect law of liberty (James 1:25). Spiritual gifts in their fullness, then, were authorized only during the period between the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4 and the completion of the perfect law of liberty, i.e., the New Testament! Since the New Testament has already been confirmed with “signs” (once confirmed, always confirmed), it is clear that there is no reason for “gifts” today and, further, that those who pretend to practice “gifts” today are violating God’s Word, because they do not have the authority of Christ for their practices!

QUESTION: Some say that the one hundred and twenty disciples (Acts 1:15) were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Is this true?

ANSWER: No! It is not true. Notice in the latter part of the first chapter of Acts that the discussion involves the apostles, specifically about a replacement for Judas Iscariot. In verse twenty-six we read, “and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.” In chapter two, verse one, Luke says, “and when the day of Pentecost was fully come “they” were all in one accord in one place; “they” were sitting in the house (vs.2) and cloven tongues like as of fire sat upon each of “them.” Who are the “they” and the “them” in these verses? These words refer directly to the eleven plus Matthias in the last verse of Chapter one! Can we be sure? Yes! In chapter 1:2-8, to whom was the promise of baptism in the Holy Ghost made? Was it to the hundred and twenty? No!

Compiled by David Amos for Truth for the World

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Clearly, in these verses, commandment (vs.2, 5) and promise (vs.4, 5, 8) was made to the apostles only! The same is true in John 14:16-17,26; John 15:26; and John 16:7,13. In each instance, the Holy Ghost in baptismal measure was promised only to the apostles! Note also, in verse fourteen, that after the baptism of the Holy Ghost (chapter 2:1-4), Peter stood up with the eleven (not the hundred and twenty) and preached. Those who put the hundred and twenty disciples into the commandment, promise, baptism of the Holy Ghost, and preaching in these chapters, do so without scriptural basis. They have wrested God's Word to support their own doctrines!

QUESTION: What does Ephesians 5:18 mean? How can one be filled with the Spirit?

ANSWER: In Ephesians 5:18-19 and Colossians 3:16, which are parallel passages (with each passage explaining the other), Paul is discussing music in the church. In the Ephesian letter, as he begins, he commands, "but be filled with the Spirit." In the parallel passage of the Colossian letter, as he begins, he commands, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." He is saying the same thing! Conclusion: We are filled with the Spirit as we let the word of Christ dwell in us richly!

QUESTION: What is the difference in being baptized with the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit?

ANSWER: Being filled with the Spirit is discussed in the answer to the preceding question. "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" is very different from "being filled with the Spirit," just as there is a great difference in the meaning of the two words "baptism" (immersion) and "filling." Consider the action one would take if he were to "immerse" a cup for cleansing. Then consider the action if he were to "fill" a cup for drinking. The actions and purposes are totally different!

QUESTION: How does the Holy Spirit convict men of sin as John 16:8-13 says?

ANSWER: Romans 3:20 tells us that "by the law is the knowledge of sin." Therefore, we are convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit when we come to a knowledge of His Word!

QUESTION: How is the fruit of the Spirit produced in our lives today (Galatians 5:22-25)?

ANSWER: In Ephesians 5:9, we read, "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth." This verse is telling us what the result will be if we "walk as children of light," as commanded in the preceding verse eight! These two verses combined, then, teach that the Holy Spirit produces fruit (as described in Galatians 5:22-23) through the lives of those who walk as children of light (faithful Christians) according to the truth (the gospel).

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QUESTION: If heaven is a place of no pain, no tears, how can the Holy Spirit of God be grieved (Ephesians 4:30)?

ANSWER: Many times in trying to understand the Bible, we often try to see spiritual things in the light of physical things. When we do so, generally, it leads to misunderstanding. Revelation 21:4 says, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain: for the former things are passed away." In the context of this chapter, we understand that this earth with all of its physical burdens will pass away, because there is being prepared for the faithful child of God a new dwelling place; a spiritual place for spiritual bodies, into which, flesh and blood cannot enter (I Corinthians 15:50). The Holy Spirit, not being of flesh and blood, does not endure physical things as you and I! Neither does He suffer grief as you and I! Ephesians 4:30 simply commands us not to engage in any grief-causing physical conduct, which could possibly result in the separation of our spirit from His Spirit!

It is good to know that when physical things have passed away and are replaced by spiritual things, i.e., when the former things have passed away, sin too will have passed away (Revelation 21:27). When this occurs there will be no grief of any kind, because there will be nothing over which to grieve!

STATEMENT: If the Lord calls people today, then the gifts of the Holy Spirit are still given (Acts 2:39).

RESPONSE: This is an assumption that ignores the totality of what God has spoken on the matter! We cannot know the truth on a particular subject until we study and digest all of the relative scriptures. God calls people today through His Holy Spirit-given Word (II Thessalonians 2:14). Blessings by the Holy Spirit were, and are, given only within the parameters or boundaries prescribed by that Word. From answers to preceding questions, it has been clearly shown that the parameters of God's Word restricted the use of spiritual gifts (by selected Christians) to a specific time, for a specific purpose.

The assumption made in this "Statement" would, when taken to a logical conclusion, demand that every Christian, from the first century until the end of time, be endowed with all of the spiritual gifts. Clearly, from I Corinthians 12, 13, & 14 (written to solve problems with the gifts during the time when they were in use), Acts 8:5-24, and Romans 1:11, we can understand that not all Christians, even in the first century, were endowed with gifts; that only certain Christians possessed certain gifts for a certain time and for a certain purpose!

STATEMENT: If the gifts have passed away, there is no salvation, since we are born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5).

RESPONSE: Again, this passage does not remotely address the issue of miraculous gifts. One is not free to assume that wherever the word "Spirit" appears that Holy Spirit baptism and/or gifts is/are being discussed! The "water" referred to in this passage simply relates to our baptism (immersion) in water for

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the remission of sins. The word “Spirit” tells us by whose direction we are to be baptized in water. In I Corinthians 12:13, we have similar language, “For by one Spirit (that is, through the agency or direction of the Spirit) are we all baptized (in water) into one body.” Indeed, one is saved when he or she is born anew of water and the Spirit!

All must be extremely careful not to read more into a passage than is appropriate. This would be adding to God’s Word (Revelation 22:18-19).

STATEMENT: Ananias was not an apostle, but he laid hands on Paul and he received the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17).

RESPONSE: This, as well, reads more into scripture than was intended. Acts 9:12 states explicitly why Ananias was to lay hands on Paul: “that he might receive his sight.” Nothing more, nothing less! Paul was chosen to be an apostle of our Lord. His becoming an apostle would require baptism in the Holy Spirit, which could only be performed by Christ (Matthew 3:11). Ananias did not have the power to do what our Lord could do! However, his coming to Paul would soon lead to Paul’s baptism in the Holy Spirit. Further, had Paul chosen to reject Ananias, he would also have rejected Christ and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is the sense of the passage in question!

STATEMENT: God still calls people today, as He called Ananias.

RESPONSE: The Bible does not tell us when Ananias was called. In Acts 9:10, we learn that he was already a disciple (Christian) when the Lord appeared to him in a vision. If the “Statement” is intended to imply that we today are “called” by the appearance of the Lord in a vision, it would be in contradiction to II Thessalonians 2:14, “Wherefore He called you by His Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This is the only way men are called, whether to be Christians or to preach the Word!

QUESTION: Jesus, according to Matthew 4:23-24 and other passages, healed people with various diseases. Do pastors, evangelists, and bishops have this same power today?

ANSWER: No! The sole reason for the gifts of the Spirit, which included healings, was to confirm the Word being taught (John 20:30-31). Once all scripture was given by inspiration of God, confirmed and written, the need for gifts then passed away! Such was the will of God (Ephesians 4:7-14; I Corinthians 13:8-13). Men who claim to have the “gifts” today are false teachers and need to be avoided!

QUESTION: If some have the power to heal today, why don’t they heal those in the hospitals?

ANSWER: Your question is quite logical! The fact that they do not heal those in the hospitals is proof that they cannot heal anywhere or under any condition! Some of these “fake healers” also claim to raise the dead, but none of them are

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even seen near a graveyard, unless it is to bury someone they previously failed to heal! They are not of God!

QUESTION: In John 16:12-13, is Jesus telling only His disciples that they will be guided into all truth by the Spirit of truth or is He saying that He will guide people today into all truth?

ANSWER: This promise was only for His disciples; those to whom He spoke on this occasion! He sent them the Holy Spirit as He promised on the day of Pentecost and as recorded in the second chapter of Acts! The writers of the New Testament, being inspired by the Holy Spirit (II Timothy 3:16), were guided into “all truth” (John 16:13) and given “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (II Peter 1:3). Since we have the completed New Testament today, it follows that we, too, have “all truth” and, therefore, “all things that pertain unto life and godliness.” This being true, what need would there be of direct Holy Spirit guidance today? What additional truths could He give us, if we already have “all” of it? Obviously none! There is, therefore, no need of further direct guidance today! All of the guidance and truth that people need today is to be found “indirectly” in God’s Word! This is why each is commanded to “study” (II Timothy 2:15). Certainly, if it were the case that individuals were directly guided into “all truth” by the Holy Spirit today, there would be no need for study, bibles, preaching, preachers, or missionary work of any kind!

Those who claim the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit today are always those who propose religious doctrines and activities foreign to, and outside of, God’s Word! From such sinful foolishness comes the God-opposing and self-opposing denominational system of religion that has filled the world today! Most of its groups are claiming to be directed by the Holy Spirit and yet they contradict; they fight and war against each other. Can any sensibly believe that the Holy Spirit is so divided? Since Christ prayed that His followers would all be one (John 17:21-23), can any sensibly blame the Holy Spirit of Christ for the religious division among these today? Surely not!

QUESTION: Please explain I Corinthians 13:10 as to what the “perfect” is. Basically we teach that it is the complete Word of God as opposed to Ephesians 4:13: “unto a perfect man.” Is this correct?

ANSWER: Both passages are teaching the same truth! The “perfect man” of Ephesians means a “mature/complete man” as contrasted with a child (an immature person) and has reference to the mature church, but note how that maturity is attained: “through the knowledge of the Son of God.” The knowledge necessary for maturity could only come through the completed/mature Word of God! The perfect of I Corinthians 13:10 also means “complete or mature,” but refers directly to that which is able to make the church (Christians) mature (I Corinthians 13:11-12), i.e., the Word of God.

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Clearly, the New Testament was not given in its totality on the day of Pentecost, but rather it was given and written over a period of years during the first century. Once it was completed, it became the perfect (complete) law of liberty (James 1:25) and being confirmed and written, the need for gifts (confirmation of the word) no longer existed! The word “perfect” in the subject passages does not denote “sinlessness” or “without fault.” It simply, as already indicated, means “complete” or “mature.” In I Corinthians thirteen, verses eight through eleven, this word (perfect/complete) is contrasted with that which is in “part;” that which is to be done away. What was it that was known in part (vs.9)? When would the part be done away (vs.10)? According to verse ten, the part would be done away when the complete (perfect) was come! With the coming of the “complete” law of liberty, the church would no longer have to know in part, because it would now have all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who hath called us to glory and virtue (II Peter 1:3), through “all” scripture which alone can make the man of God “complete, furnished unto every good work” (II Timothy 3:16-17).

Both passages teach that when the perfect/mature/complete would become attainable through the perfect/mature/complete Word of God, then the gifts would pass away!

QUESTION: If you are a Christian, but cannot speak in tongues, what can you do about it?

ANSWER: Speaking in tongues as happened in the first century is not the same as the gibberish that people in error engage in today! In the Bible we learn that to speak in tongues was simply to be able (without formal education) to speak a foreign language that already existed (Acts 2:1-11). This is not being done today, nor can it be!

The purpose of miracles and signs in Bible times was to confirm the Word of God (Mark 16:20) that was being spoken, but not yet written. When the Word of God (the perfect law of liberty – James 1:25) was completed, the “gifts” were to fail, cease, and vanish away (I Corinthians 13:8-13). Since the perfect Word of God was confirmed and written about the end of the first century, it follows that at that time the miraculous, including speaking in tongues, passed away according to the will of God. Since we today have the same completed and confirmed Bible, which provides “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (II Peter 1:3), there is clearly no need for the “gifts” today. The faithful child of God will not be involved with such matters!

QUESTION: How are we to understand the word “now” in I Corinthians 13:12 and how are we to understand the word “now” in I Corinthians 13:13? Are they to be understood as referring to different periods?

ANSWER: I believe the context demands different understandings of the usage of the word “now” in the two subject verses. “Now” in verse 12 (in

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contradistinction to “then”) has to refer to that period of time when Paul wrote, before the completed Word of God. “Now” in verse 13 must be taken to mean “in this present life.” The word “abideth” means “remains” and stands in contradistinction to that which is passing away. Therefore, the word “now” (verse 13) would include the “now” time of verse 12, as well as all future time! In other words, faith, hope, and love, were to be prevalent in the life of Christians during that time and would be all that “remained” for all future time in light of the fact that the other items mentioned were to cease!

QUESTION: Please explain further Ephesians 4:7-14.

ANSWER: Note first of all (for ease of understanding) that verses 9 and 10 are parenthetically expressed and are not germane to the issue at hand. Verse 7 states that Christ gives to every obedient person the gift of His grace according to His measure. For example: Acts 2:38 teaches that those who are immersed for (in order to attain) the remission of sins “shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” What did this mean to the people who lived then and what does this mean for you and me today? Allow the Bible to explain! Acts 3:19 is a parallel passage to Acts 2:38. They teach the same thing and explain each other! Peter is saying the same thing to the Jews on Solomon’s porch as he was to the Jews on Pentecost, i.e.; he preached the same sermon and extended the same invitation!

Acts 2:38: “Repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Acts 3:19: “Repent, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

The “gift of the Holy Spirit” or “the refreshing that comes from the presence of the Lord” is the many blessings each Christian derives from the Holy Spirit according to Christ’s measure. In the first century, the many blessings (times of refreshing) from the Holy Spirit would have included miraculous gifts. Today, the many blessings (times of refreshing) from the Holy Spirit do not include miraculous gifts, because their purpose has ceased to exist. What blessings are derived today? Many, not the least of which are forgiveness, mercy, grace, and the hope of heaven!

Verse 8 of Ephesians says basically that when He ascended on high, having overcome the captivity of death, He gave gifts unto men. The gifts could not have been given unless He first returned to heaven from which he had come. Jesus so said in John 16:7, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the comforter (Holy Ghost) will not come to you (the apostles); but if I depart I will send Him to you.”

Verse 11 relates to whom the gifts were given (not how or how many), i.e., apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors (elders), and teachers.

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Verse 12 explains reasons for giving the gifts: Perfecting (maturing) of the saints (Christians), for the work of the ministry (proclamation of the gospel in all the world), and edifying the church.

Verse 13 limits the duration of the gifts: “Till,” an adverb of time, we all come to the oneness (unity) of “the” faith; not simply “faith,” but to a unified system of faith (the gospel) by which, and through which, we can have full knowledge of the Son of God that will enable us to be complete/mature and walking in the image of Christ! When this knowledge would become attainable through that which was, and is, is able to make a person “perfect/mature (II Timothy 3:16-17), the gifts would cease to be. The very same thing is taught in I Corinthians 13:8-10!

Verse 14 says that with our coming of age (no longer as children or the immature – I Corinthians 13:11) we will not be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine taught by those who deceive . . . but speaking the truth (John 17:17 – “Thy word is truth”) in love one may mature up into Christ in “all” things. How do we know false doctrine (John 8:32)? What is our maturation agent (I Peter 2:2)? The gospel of Jesus Christ!

QUESTION: Our “Pastor” says that the “perfect” in I Corinthians 13:10 refers to the Second Coming. True?

ANSWER: No! “Perfect” in I Corinthians 13:10 cannot refer to the Second Coming, because when the “perfect is come” faith, hope, and love will still abide (vs.13). Such will not be the case at the Second Coming, since there will be no need for hope and faith when we see the Christ, for “faith” is the evidence of things “not seen” (Hebrews 11:1) and “hope” that is “seen” is not hope (Romans 8:24). I believe you indicated previously that you were affiliated with the Presbyterians. Allow me to quote Albert Barnes, the greatest Presbyterian Scholar and Commentator to have lived. He says that the word abideth must be understood as to “remain” and “must be understood to be used to denote permanency, when the other things of which he had spoken had passed away, and the sense is, that faith, hope, and love would remain when the gift of tongues should cease, and the need of prophecy, etc.; that is, these should survive them all.” (Barnes Commentary on I Corinthians 10:13, Page 257). Mr. Barnes has written correctly! Logically and scripturally, faith and hope will not remain at or after the Second Coming! Therefore, the “perfect” of I Corinthians 13:10 that ‘is to come’ before the cessation of gifts cannot logically or scripturally refer to the Second Coming.

QUESTION: Does I Corinthians 13:1 teach that there are two kinds of tongues; one of foreign languages; the other a heavenly language?

ANSWER: No! I Corinthians 13:1 does not indicate that there are two kinds of tongues which Christians are to, or may, employ. He is simply saying that even though (if) he had the ability to speak all of the tongues known to men and angels, without love it would avail him nothing. The emphasis here is not on

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languages, but upon love! There appears here to be, however, an allusion to what he heard in II Corinthians 12:4, where he says that he was caught up into paradise and heard words that were unlawful for him to utter (the same would be true of any person). He may, then, in I Corinthians 13:1, be referring to, not what he supposed to be the language of angels, but what he actually heard; a higher, more eloquent, heavenly language. Thus, even though he, too, had the ability to speak with this eloquent language of angels that he had heard with his own ears, as well as the languages of men, the result and effect would be as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal, if unaccompanied with love.

QUESTION: Is it true that we take away the empowering of the Holy Spirit today when we discredit Mark 16:16-20?

ANSWER: It is not true that people are empowered to miraculously heal today as previously discussed. Certainly, we should not discredit Mark 16:16-20 or any part of the Bible. However, to read something into a passage that is not there is to discredit in a most grievous way! This particular passage simply says that confirming signs were to accompany believers. It does not teach here, or elsewhere in the Bible, that every Christian for all time would be able to perform one or all of these signs. The Bible is clear throughout that such was not the case, e.g., Acts 8:13; Romans 1:6-11. Neither is there here a discussion as to who specifically would receive the gifts or of the duration of the gifts. To base a doctrine or belief on one passage to the exclusion of all related material is to violate the intent of the subject. All passages relative to a subject must be studied with understanding and knowledge coming from and based upon the sum of those passages. It should be noted that the particular prophecies of this passage have been fulfilled; that signs did, indeed, follow the believers, but only in the way (I Corinthians 12:11) and during the time appointed of God (I Corinthians 13:10). Demons were cast out (Acts 8:7; Acts 5:16). They spoke in new tongues (Acts 2:4-11). They took up serpents (Acts 28:5). Jesus does not say they "shall" drink some deadly thing, but "if" they should. Knowing that attempts would be made on the lives of the apostles, he gave them assurance, that if by poison, it would not hurt them. Allow me to suggest that if the Pentecostal believes that these confirming signs are requisite today, then it is he or she who refuses to confirm their word with signs that discredit the passage. Where is the Pentecostal today who will take up a deadly viper to confirm what is being taught? Where is the Pentecostal who will drink deadly poison to confirm his or her doctrine? Why is it that they "do" exorcisms, healings, and speaking in tongues, but exclude the other two? May I also suggest that it is not ethical to say that they heard that someone in a far away country did it? There is no proof in such allegations!

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QUESTION: Why weren't all of the gifts mentioned in I Corinthians 13:8?

ANSWER: In I Corinthians 13:8-12, the thrust was not to show that only specific gifts were to cease, but rather to show that that which was in part (the miraculous and the miraculous age, necessary for confirmation and edification) was to terminate when that which was "perfect/complete" came, as previously discussed. The point would have been made no stronger by citing all of the nine gifts, since the purpose of all was the same. Therefore, it is clear and understood by biblical scholars at all levels that the three mentioned are simply representative of the total. The principle is used throughout the scriptures, e.g., Acts 20:7: "breaking of bread" is a part of the worship that stands for the whole; that is, "breaking of bread" in this context, means "to worship." .

QUESTION: Have we concentrated less in the past on the Holy Spirit than the Father and the Son?

ANSWER: The line of thought, that we have not concentrated on the Holy Spirit to the same degree as God and Christ, is to some degree legitimate, since He is the third person in the Godhead. However, I know of none that have suppressed the knowledge, attributes, or functions of the Holy Spirit. It appears that some, especially in the Pentecostal movement, have taken it upon themselves to give "undue" attention to the Holy Spirit, thus relegating the Father and Son to seemingly inferior roles. This ought not to be! The yearning for spiritual gifts by the groups you speak of stems from an immature need to "walk by sight and not by faith," instead of the other way around (I Corinthians 13:11; II Corinthians 5:7). It is an attempt to prove (or to be assured of) one's faith based on a "feeling" of being set free as the result of seeing or experiencing a sign from God (Matthew 12:39). It is a false assurance based on a false premise and it, therefore, will not stand in Judgment! Faith comes only by hearing (which includes acceptance and obedience) the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

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THE CHURCH

QUESTION: Is it necessary to be a member of Christ's church in order to be saved or can one be saved in the Catholic Church, or one of the other denominations?

ANSWER: It is necessary to be a member of the church for which Jesus died in order to be saved. He said that He would build one church (Matthew 16:18). In Acts chapter two, we read of its establishment. Paul said in Ephesians 1:22-23, that the church is His body. Later, in Ephesians 4:4, he tells us that there is only one body. It is into this one body, this church, that one "must" be baptized through the agency (the direction) of the one Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13). The direction of the Spirit comes only through the word of God, which tells us how a person enters that one church. On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), those who "gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (vs.41). "And the Lord added daily to the church (His church) such as were being saved (vs.47). These believing people repented, and were immersed for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), after which they were added to the church that Christ had built. (They were not added to the Catholic Church, which was established 600 years later, nor were they added to denominationalism, which had its several beginnings in the fifteenth century!) All of the saved people on Pentecost Day were members of the church of Christ! Obviously, there is no difference between those who live today and the people of Acts chapter two! When people today, as they, gladly receive His word (when they believe and submit totally to it), repent, confess, and are immersed in water for the remission of sins, they too are added by God to that same church; the one church, the Church of Christ (Romans 16:16). Since Christ built only one church (the church of the Bible), it can only be concluded that all other religious organizations (including the Catholic and Protestant Churches) were built by man (Matthew 15:8-14). In these, there is no promise of salvation; no promise of hope; no promise of the blessings of Christ (Ephesians 1:3). These promises are to be found only in His church; the church of Christ!

QUESTION: Is the church the house of God?

ANSWER: Yes! Please read I Timothy 3:15.

QUESTION: Who is the head of the church in the world and where is he found?

ANSWER: There is no earthly head of the church! Christ is seated at the right hand of God (Acts 2:29-35) and has been made "to be the head of all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:22). Each congregation of the Lord's church is self-governing, answerable only to Christ!

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QUESTION: Are hospitals and schools part of the work of the church?

ANSWER: Hospitals exist for the purpose of healing the physical body and secular schools exist for the purposes of non-religious education. Both of these purposes are admirable and, indeed, may be engaged in by a Christian, often to the furtherance of the kingdom of Christ. However, the works in which the church may be involved will always relate scripturally in some fashion to the great commission, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (Matthew 28:19-20)."

QUESTION: Does the church save?

ANSWER: The saved are added by the Lord to the church (Acts 2:47). After having been added to the church, the saved in the church then go into all the world preaching the gospel so that others can be saved (Mark 16:15-16). Paul says that the church makes known the manifold wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:10). By preaching the gospel then, the church makes known the wisdom of God unto salvation. In this secondary and indirect sense it can be said that the church saves, but it must be realized that there is no direct authority in the church. All authority resides solely in the word of God! Some in the denominational world, such as the Catholic Church, teach that saving authority resides in the church and not the Word of God! Faithful Christians will reject any such notion!

QUESTION: Would you inform me about the organization and the worship of the church?

ANSWER: The church of the Bible is called the church(es) of Christ (Romans 16:16). The head of the church is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22). Each congregation is self-ruling and overseen by a plurality of elders, independent of all other congregations. By this we understand that there is no higher governing body on this earth. Deacons are to serve the congregation under the oversight of the elders. Evangelists are to proclaim the Word (II Timothy 4:1-5). A religious group without this prescribed organization cannot be the church of the Bible!

Worship services on the first day of the week consist of praying, singing (without instruments), partaking of the Lord's Supper (every first day), preaching, and contributing as prospered by God (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Ephesians 5:19). To be pleasing to God, all of these items must be engaged in, with nothing added.

Terms of entry into the church of the Bible are: believing in Christ as the Son of God; repenting of all past sins; confessing with the mouth belief in Jesus; being immersed in water for the remission of sins (John 8:24; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38). After having done this, one must be faithful unto death to receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

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QUESTION: Would you tell me about the unity of the church?

ANSWER: In Ephesians 4:4, the Bible says that there is only “one body.” In Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18 & 24, we learn that the “body” is the church. Therefore, if there is only “one body,” there is clearly only one church. This church is the church of the Bible and is the only church that is of divine origin. All others are of men and will eventually fail (Psalms 127:1). Neither is there salvation to be found in them (Acts 4:12). The only church in which one can be saved is called in the Bible the “church of Christ” (Romans 16:16). It is the church that Christ promised to build (Matthew 16:18); the church that He died to build (Acts 20:28); and the church to which baptized believers were added on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:47). It is that body of believers, called out from this world, who look only to the word of God for their worship practices and conduct of life. It is the church of Christ!

QUESTION: Why was the church of Christ divided?

ANSWER: It had been prophesied that such would happen (Acts 20:28-30; I Timothy 4:1-4; II Timothy 4:3-4; II Peter 2:1-3). These passages (and others) clearly tell us “why” division occurs. It occurred in the first century and in our generation as well! When false teachers are permitted to bring in “damnable heresies” unauthorized by God’s Word (most recently; worldly entertainment, instruments of music, missionary societies, etc.) and when people, having itching ears, heap these teachers to themselves, refusing rather to “try” them, disciples will be drawn away and division will occur.

Though divisions are sure to come, we can be assured that His church; His kingdom shall have no end (Luke 1:33)!

QUESTION: When did Jesus build His church?

ANSWER: In Matthew 16:18, at the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus said, “I will build my church.” So, clearly, the church had not been built at that time. Ten days after Jesus ascended back to the Father, Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), for the first time, told people how to get into the church that Christ promised to build. On that day, three thousand people followed Peter’s instructions and their sins were forgiven (Acts 2:38-41). These, who were thus saved, were by that same process, the first to be added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:47). This particular Pentecost day, then, was the birthday of the church of Christ!

QUESTION: On what date was the church of Christ established? Some say that it was established only four years ago and is, therefore, not as old as the Catholic Church, Methodist, and others.

ANSWER: The exact date of the establishment of the church is uncertain. Most scholars, however, agree that it was established sometime during the period between 30AD and 33AD. Luke tells us in Chapter 3, verse 23 that Jesus’ public

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ministry began when He was about thirty years of age. The evidence in the gospel accounts of Luke 22:15; John 2:13; John 5:1; and John 6:4 indicates that there were four yearly Passovers during Christ's public ministry. From the first to the fourth Passover (at which time He was crucified) would be three full years. It is reckoned from the events of His early ministry that a time period of approximately five months passed prior to His cleansing of the temple during the first Passover (John 2:13-17). There were fifty days between Passover and Pentecost. If we add the three full years, the five months, and the fifty days, we arrive at approximately three and one-half years. Adding this figure to Jesus' age of thirty years at the beginning of His public ministry, we have thirty-three and one-half years. Thus, it is determined that the church was established in 33AD on the first Pentecost following the crucifixion of Christ. Because a mistake of about three years was made in the Christian calendar when it replaced the Roman calendar in 526AD, some scholars hold to the 30AD date. It is certain, however, that the church of the Bible, the church of Christ (Roman 16:16) was established no later than 33AD! So the church of Christ was not established four years ago, but rather it was established more than two thousand years ago.

The Catholic Church was established in the year 606AD, almost 600 years after the church of the Bible was established. The Methodist church did not have its beginning until 1739AD, 1700 years after the church of Christ!

QUESTION: What name is given to the church that Jesus built?

ANSWER: Christ said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church." Christ died for the church (Ephesians 5:25)! Christ paid the purchase price of His blood for the church (Acts 20:28)! Christ is said to be the husband; His church is the bride (II Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:27). In I Corinthians 1:10-13, we learn that to call ourselves after other than Christ is to cause sinful division, and in I Corinthians 3:3-4, we learn that those who do so are said to be carnal, or of the earth!

With the above passages in mind, we can now understand why the apostle Paul would, by inspiration, refer to the various congregations of the Lord's church as "the churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16). We must do no less!

QUESTION: Were the Campbell's inspired?

ANSWER: No! With the completion and confirmation of the word of God, the need for inspired men ceased (Mark 16:20; I Corinthians 13:8-13).

QUESTION: If an individual has never been to a church of Christ can he diligently study God's Word, become a Christian, and establish a congregation of the Lord's church in his area? Can a hand of fellowship and acceptance be given to such an establishment?

ANSWER: Yes to both questions! This is what the Campbell's and others did at the beginning of the Restoration Movement. Many are doing the same thing around the world today!

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QUESTION: What was the restoration movement?

ANSWER: Following the “Dark Ages,” (A period of time lasting for several hundred years through the fourteenth century), men like Martin Luther and others began the task of trying to “reform” the apostate Catholic Church. They were unsuccessful in this attempt and created an atmosphere in which denominationalism had its rise. More recently, primarily during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, men on both sides of the world began to simultaneously, through the providence of God, realize the need to restore New Testament Christianity to its original design and intent. These men had realized that the “Reformation” was a failure and, thus, began what was to become known as the “Restoration Movement.” The success of this effort is seen in the many churches of Christ (Romans 16:16) which now circle the globe!

QUESTION: Where was the church during the Dark Ages and how could it grow without the Bible?

ANSWER: It had been prophesied that a great falling away would come (I Timothy 4:1-5; II Timothy 4:1-5). This apostasy, occurring over many years, was realized in its fullest sense with the development and establishment of the Roman Catholic Church in about 606AD. During these years and for many years to follow, the church of the Bible was greatly oppressed. There are two opinions as to the state of the church during these years. The first is that the true church temporarily ceased to live and function as it did during the first century; that it only existed in “seed form.” The Word of God is described as a “seed” in Luke 8:11 and it is, therefore, held that as long as the “seed” existed, it then follows that the church also would be existent, but in a dormant state. When the “seed” was eventually planted following the “Dark Ages,” it produced the original church, which began then to live and function as it did at the beginning. The second opinion, which I have adopted, is that the church as originally established, though oppressed and driven into near obscurity, never totally ceased to live and function in accordance with the Bible, the will of God. Which opinion is the accurate one is not really important! What is important is that God’s Word (which shall never pass away - Matthew 24:35), though severely suppressed, obviously continued throughout and we have it in its purity today. So no matter where we may be; no matter who we are, if we adhere to its precepts and patterns only, congregations of the church will come into existence and grow exactly as Christ intended, being totally and in every sense the church of Christ! It is comforting for us to know with assurance that His kingdom, the church, will never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44); that it is without end (Luke 1:33) and you and I can be members of it today (Acts 2:38-47)!

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QUESTION: If a Christian man marries a second wife, we know he has sinned, but what will the duties of this person be in the church?

ANSWER: The person in question should not be assigned any responsibility in the congregation until he repents! All of the people involved in the relationship described need to be taught the truth about their condition. Polygamy is sin! God has ordained that marriage is between two people, one man and one woman, until separated by death (Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 7:1-3). When a man and a woman are scripturally married and another person enters that relationship, all of those actively involved do so without the blessing of God. Further, all who knowingly participate in such a marriage are in sin as long as it continues. The above passages demand that the third party be excluded from the relationship, and that all who have participated come to repentance. Without scriptural repentance (Matthew 21:28-31; Luke 13:3; Acts 8:22; Acts 17:30), none can be saved.

After the person in question has been taught and every attempt has been made to win his soul again, if he refuses to repent scripturally, it is commanded of God that fellowship be withdrawn from him, that his soul may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (I Corinthians 5).

QUESTION: May the person referred to in the preceding question continue to lay hands on the sick?

ANSWER: Laying on of hands in the New Testament was the practice of those who had been endowed with miraculous ability. Since the gifts have long since passed away (I Corinthians 13: 8-11), no reason exists today for the laying on of hands. This notwithstanding, as stated in the answer to the preceding question, the person in question should be assigned no responsibility in the church until repentance is forthcoming!

QUESTION: Is it better to walk alone or worship with those who have compromised the truth?

ANSWER: We have a responsibility to teach the erring and compromising to practice the truth! Failing to do so (either on our part or theirs) does not mean that we are relieved of our responsibility to engage in corporate worship (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; Hebrews 10:25)! If there are no faithful congregations in our area, then it becomes our responsibility, in carrying the gospel to the lost, to congregate with those whom we convert the truth! It only takes two people to congregate!

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QUESTION: Since the church of Christ was established in Jerusalem, why is it's headquarters not there?

ANSWER: There is no authority in the Bible for an earthly headquarters. To add an earthly headquarters to the organization of the church would be to add to God's Word, resulting in sin (Revelation 22:18-19). Also, if there were an earthly headquarters, there would have to be an earthly head. Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:22 that there is only one (the) Head who is Jesus Christ! Our Head, who established the kingdom/church (Matthew 16:18-19) and paid the price for it (Acts 20:28), is enthroned at the right hand of God (Acts 2:29-36) as Lord of lords and King of kings (Revelation 17:14) over His kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14). Since our Head, our King, is in Heaven, our headquarters is also in Heaven.

QUESTION: Would you explain about the church that Jesus built; that it has no earthly headquarters?

ANSWER: In Ephesians 4:4, the Bible says that there is only "one body." In Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18 & 24, we learn that the "body" is the church. Therefore, if there is only "one body," there is clearly only one church. This church is the church of the Bible and is the only church that is of divine origin. All others are of men and will eventually fail (Psalms 127:1). Neither is there salvation to be found in them (Acts 4:12). The only church in which one can be saved is called in the Bible the "church of Christ" (Romans 16:16). It is the church that Christ promised to build (Matthew 16:18); the church that He died to build (Acts 20:28); and the church to which baptized believers were added on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:47). It is that body of believers, called out from this world, who look only to the word of God for their worship practices and conduct of life. It is the church of Christ!

The head of the church (the one Body) is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22). Each congregation is self-ruling and overseen by a plurality of elders, independent of all other congregations. By this we understand that there is no higher governing body on this earth. Each congregation answers only to Jesus Christ and His Word! Deacons are to serve the congregation under the oversight of the elders. Evangelists are to proclaim the Word (II Timothy 4:1-5). A religious group without this prescribed organization cannot be the church of the Bible! A religious group with an earthly headquarters staffed by people with unscriptural titles such as "Archbishop, Cardinal, and Pope" cannot, therefore, be the church of the Bible!

QUESTION: As a Catholic, I would like to know about the church from a Protestant point of view. Did Jesus really establish the church through His apostles?

ANSWER: The question implies that the church of Christ is a Protestant denomination. This is not so! The church of the Bible is neither Protestant, Catholic, nor Jewish. The church of the Bible is called the church(es) of Christ (Romans 16:16) and is made up only of Christians (Acts 11:26); nothing more;

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nothing less! All other names and classifications are of men and not of God! The Bible teaches that the one and only head of the church is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22). It does not make provisions for two heads over the one body (church), i.e., an earthly head and a heavenly head, as claimed by the Catholic Church! Each congregation of the Lord's church is biblically shown to be self-ruling and overseen by a plurality of elders (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:7 & 17), with each congregation being independent of all other congregations (I Peter 5:1-2). By this we can be sure that there is no higher governing body on this earth! Deacons also are to serve the congregation under the oversight of the elders (I Timothy 3:8-13). Evangelists are to proclaim the Word (II Timothy 4:1-5). Any religious group without this scriptural organizational structure is of man, not of God!

It is absolutely true that Christ established His church (not Catholicism or Protestantism) through the apostles as they were directed through the Holy Spirit. Please read carefully Acts chapter two, an account of the birthday of Christ's church!

QUESTION: Did Christ really appoint Peter and his successors head of His church until the end of time?

ANSWER: No! The Bible does not even mention the notion or title of "Pope." Neither does it mention or authorize the ecclesiastical structures prevalent in both the Catholic and Protestant organizations of today. These ideas, having their roots solely in the teachings of men, are clearly in violation of plain scriptural teaching as outlined above. Besides this, Peter had no successor; nor can he have any today! To be qualified to be an apostle, one must be an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22) as were the twelve (Acts 1:21) and the apostle Paul (Acts 26:13-18). None living today (including the Pope) have seen the resurrected Christ! Therefore, none today can be qualified to be an apostle or the successor to an apostle! We can be sure, then, that those who claim apostleship today do not represent the church of the New Testament!

QUESTION: What is the work of a woman in the church?

ANSWER: The work of a woman in the church is absolutely vital! In Titus 2:3-5, we learn "that they are to be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to drunkenness, teachers of good things that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, to be keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." She is to be hospitable as was Lydia (Acts 16:15). She is to be charitable as was Dorcas (Acts 9:36). She is to relieve the afflicted (I Timothy 5:10). Certainly, the woman has much to do and should never be found idle in her God-given responsibilities!

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QUESTION: May a woman establish a church?

ANSWER: No! Christ established the church the way He wanted it a long time ago on the day of Pentecost (Acts, chapter two). A woman may, however, teach privately and encourage men and women to “congregate” for scriptural worship. However, this does not mean that she can violate I Timothy 2:11-12; I Corinthians 11:3; and I Corinthians 14:34-35 by preaching to men, overseeing, or “running” the congregation!

QUESTION: Are we to obey church doctrines or Bible doctrines?

ANSWER: If the doctrines of your church are different from the doctrines of the Bible, then you are in the wrong church! If they are different from the Bible, it follows then that they are of man and not of God. Jesus said that the doctrines of men constitute vain (empty) worship (Matthew 15:9). Surely, we will not be judged by their (church) doctrines in that day, but, rather, by the words of Christ (John 12:48). Therefore, “we ought to obey God (the Bible) rather than men” Acts 5:29).

QUESTION: If a person is in sin; refuses to repent; is withdrawn from; divides the congregation, and starts another congregation, will it be recognized as the church of Christ?

ANSWER: Such questions are often difficult to answer without knowing all of the details. However, if a person is in a sin, of which he refuses to repent, and is scripturally withdrawn from, all Christians everywhere (regardless of prior relationships) must recognize and honor that withdrawal action! The man in question is not only guilty of the sin that necessitated the withdrawal, but has also become guilty of causing division in the Lord’s Body! Those in support of the man are in error by not honoring the withdrawal action, and by participating in the sin of division. Though these are still recognized as Christians, they are “erring” Christians. Each involved must repent of their sins to be forgiven and saved eternally.

QUESTION: Is the church supposed to be in the business of making money?

ANSWER: No! The church is in the business of making Christians (Matthew 28:18-20)!

QUESTION: Is it a sin for a church to practice “Sunday School?”

ANSWER: It is my opinion that as much as possible we need to avoid using denominational terminology or phrases, simply because they many times denote and define activities which are unscriptural! However, if by using the term “Sunday School” we mean a certain time set aside on the first day of the week during which people assemble to study the Bible, it is not sin. In fact we are commanded, both by precept and example, to study (II Timothy 2:15; Acts

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17:11). Nothing in God's Word prohibits us from doing so on Sundays! Of course, "Sunday School" should not be engaged in as a substitute for the scriptural worship assembly (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:25).

QUESTION: Would you support a "Non-Sunday School Church" that engages in serious Bible correspondence courses?

ANSWER: If the "Non-Sunday School Church" decided not to have a Sunday Bible Study on the basis of opinion and did not attempt to make it a matter of doctrine to be bound on others, I could support them in teaching the Bible, provided that all other of their teaching and practices were in compliance with the will of God.

If the "Non-Sunday School Church" holds that their decision not to have a Sunday Bible Study is a matter of doctrine to be bound on others; that if others engaged in such they would be sinning, then I would not and could not support them, because such teaching is not scriptural, but is of those who "transgress and abide not in the doctrine of Christ" (II John 9-11). Therefore, any support given would of itself be sin!

QUESTION: There is in Nashville an African Christian Schools Foundation and in Searcy, Arkansas, an African Christian Hospital. These two groups regulate the money sent by American brethren to support people in Africa. Is it right to support these organizations?

ANSWER: If the work being done by these two groups is secular, i.e., it is not work for which the church is scripturally responsible, then support would be a matter of option and would not be improper.

However, if these two organizations were engaged in doing work for which the church is responsible, then support of their work would be sinful. In fact, such organizations would be sinful. No organization can assume the work of the church, in place of the church, without sinning! Any organization, other than the Lord's church, that presumes to assume the responsibilities of the church, as given to it by God, sins and scripturally forfeits its right to exist!

QUESTION: How can we convince people that Christ accepts only one church?

ANSWER: Before any can be convinced of this or any other truth they must first be caused to realize that in religious matters all authority resides solely in the Bible. Many verses can be used to teach and support this basic truth, e.g., Matthew 7:21-29; Mark 16:15-16; John 12:48; John 17:17; Romans 1:16; Galatians 1:6-9; II Timothy 2:15; II Timothy 3:15-17; Revelation 22:18-19; etc. Once this truth is accepted, the honest heart will be receptive to the truth of the one church as taught in Matthew 16:18; John 17:20-23; Acts 2:37-47; Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 4:4-6; etc.

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QUESTION: Can we scripturally have a Church Women's Organization within the church organization?

ANSWER. No! There is no authorization for such. Such sub-organizations are sinful and very often develop into divisive, isolated bodies designed to usurp the authority of husbands, elders, and/or the men of the congregation (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; I Corinthians 11:3; I Timothy 2:11-12). Such activity clearly violates the will of God!

QUESTION: Is it wrong for a congregation to have a fellowship hall (I Corinthians 11:20-22; 33-34)?

ANSWER: Generally speaking, it is not wrong! The Lord has appointed that a plurality of elders is to have the rule over their own congregation. They are to rule only in matters of option, since the Lord has already ruled in matters of faith and doctrine. Some congregations have opted not to own a building, but to rent a facility for worship services. Some have opted to buy a building already erected, others to build a place of worship. There is no specific commandment as to "houses of worship," other than the fact that since it is commanded that we worship, a meeting "place" is clearly and of necessity implied. The "where and how" is a matter of opinion falling under the jurisdiction of the local eldership! If a need arises in a congregation for a fellowship hall in the opinion of the elders, either within or without the "place" of worship, it is their decision to make. God will judge that decision!

A "place" of worship is just that, nothing more; nothing less! It is not to be understood as a "holy place" that can be desecrated by using it for other purposes, such as having a common fellowship meal within it, outside of the worship service!

Without doubt, the erection and use of fellowship halls has been abused by some through misuse and excessive expenditures, to the near exclusion of the Great Commission! It is, as well, true that the same thing can be said about "meeting houses," more aptly described as "Cathedrals!" However, the misuse of "buildings" by some does not mean that having a "fellowship hall" is of itself sinful, as some would claim. Certainly, the passages you suggest (I Corinthians 11:20-22; 33-34) have nothing to do with "buildings" per se! In context, the Corinthians had turned the Lord's Supper into a banquet for the express purpose of enjoying the satisfaction of their own physical hunger and thirst, thereby thwarting the divine purpose of this act of worship. Paul is simply saying, 'when you come together to partake of the Lord's Supper, do it for the right reason (vs.26). Satisfy the physical needs of your bodies in your own houses, not in the worship services!' Note in I Corinthians 16:19 and Romans 16:5 that Paul talks about (and sanctions) the church that meets in the "house" of Aquila and Priscilla. Clearly, this righteous couple ate and drank in the same building (their house) in which the church worshiped. Apparently then, their house (in which they dined) also doubled as a place of worship and a "fellowship hall" (Acts 2:46).

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QUESTION: Since I Corinthians 16:1-2 is an example for us today, is it also implied that our offerings should be given to others? If so, how will the needs of the local congregation be met?

ANSWER: I Corinthians 16:1-2 and related passages such as II Corinthians, chapters eight and nine, give us an example only of how “needs” are to be met, not where we are to send the collection! The specific “need” in these passages related solely to the poor saints in Jerusalem. Certainly, if we would assume that this passage implies that the local congregation is to send all of their collection to others, we would also (in order to be consistent) have to assume that all congregations would have to send all collections to the poor saints in Jerusalem. This, of course, is not the case! The example given us to meet any “need” (whether it is local or distant) is by every one of us ‘laying by him in store upon the first day of every week.’ If there is a scriptural need in a distant city, it is to be satisfied by using the funds collected in this way. If there is a scriptural need within the local congregation, it, too, is to be satisfied from the same funds!

QUESTION: If a group wants to erect a church building should they develop a money-raising scheme to do so?

ANSWER: The work of the church can be financed only through freewill offerings (I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:6).

QUESTION: Our preacher told us that the church of Christ will not take medicine or go to the hospital. Is this true?

ANSWER: No! It is totally false. Perhaps your preacher is confusing the church of Christ with a denomination called “Church of Christ, Scientist.” It is this false organization that preaches against medicine and hospitals! Please inform your preacher of his error!

QUESTION: Our preacher told us that the church of Christ will not cooperate with unbelievers. Is this true?

ANSWER: It is true that the church of Christ does not condone or promote the sin of the unbeliever. The unbeliever is of the world. Christians are commanded to “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (I John 2:15). James said, “know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God (James 4:4). Christians do, however, cooperate with those in the world to the extent of being good neighbors (Luke 10:30-37), loving their souls (Matthew 22:39), and preaching the gospel to them in accordance with the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-16).

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QUESTION: Our preacher told us that the church of Christ does not allow the wearing of necklaces or earrings. Is this true?

ANSWER: It is not true! Your preacher has been misled. All should be certain of their facts lest they be found guilty of God (Psalms 101:7).

QUESTION: If the kingdom is the church, as you teach, and it has already come, then why did Jesus teach us to pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, etc.?"

ANSWER: Jesus, through His Word, does not teach people today to pray "Thy kingdom come!" In Luke 11:1, "one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach 'us' to pray." Jesus was teaching His disciples of that time to pray for the kingdom to come, because it had not yet come! In fact, both He and John the Baptist were preaching at that time, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand (near)" (Matthew 3:1-2; Matthew 4:17). In Mark 9:1, Jesus said to those standing by that the kingdom would come and be established in their lifetime.

Matthew 16:18-19 clearly shows that Christ intended to build His church and give Peter the keys to that which He had built, i.e., the kingdom, or the church! That the church was established on the Day of Pentecost of Acts two cannot be denied (Acts 2:47). Neither can it be denied that Acts 2:29-36 is an account of the resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of Jesus Christ at the right hand of God! Daniel tells us in chapter seven, verses thirteen and fourteen, that upon the ascension of Christ and His return to the Father that He was to be given a Kingdom that would never be destroyed. Obviously then, Christ, upon His ascension, was enthroned over the kingdom that He had been given, and over which He had been given "all" authority (Matthew 28:18). Shortly after this, we see Philip preaching to the Samaritans things concerning the kingdom of God and the authority of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:12). As a result, those to whom he preached were baptized. Into what were they baptized? Obviously, into that which he was preaching about, i.e., the kingdom of God. But in Acts 2:37-47, we find that those who were baptized were (placed into) added to the church. Certainly, both the people on Pentecost and the Samaritans were baptized into the same institution! The only conclusion to be drawn is that when one is baptized he or she is baptized into the kingdom, which is the church! This is why Paul could say in Colossians 1:13, that we were "translated" into the kingdom of God. Can one be translated into something that doesn't exist? Of course not! Baptism is clearly the point of translation! We are baptized into "one body" (I Corinthians 12:13), which is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). It is the very act, the only act, by which we are translated into the kingdom of God!

Why do we not pray for the kingdom to come? Because it came two thousand years ago! To pray for something to come that is already here would be a violation of scripture (James 4:3; I John 5:14).

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QUESTION: If we are to be true followers within the church of Acts 2:47, should we not do as they did and sell all of our possessions and hold all things in common (Acts 2:44-45)?

ANSWER: The passage in question is not proposing the idea of communism. That is, it is not to be understood that “all” followers sold “all” they possessed and then placed the proceeds into a single treasury so that every man within the church would be economically equal. The phrase “as every man had need” in verse forty-five restricts the suggested action to the extent of the current “need.” The idea is as true today. Christians, who have the resources, should be willing to supply the “needs” of poorer brethren when the occasion arises. It is in this sense that Christians have “all things common” (vs.44).

That this was the case in the early church is evidenced by Peter’s statement to Ananias (Acts 5:4), “whilst it (property that he owned) remained, was it not thy own? And after it was sold, was it (the money received from the sale) not in thine own power?” Clearly, then, we see that the property owned by this Christian was his to do with as he wanted. His sin was not directly related to his handling of this possession, but rather to the fact of his lie ‘about’ the handling of the possession!

QUESTION: What if a church has been established that is not using the name “Church of Christ,” but they are scriptural in organization, work, worship, and doctrine? Is this wrong?

ANSWER: First of all, permit me to say, I know of no such church and do not believe that it exists, for the probability of a group of people being so familiar with the scripture to be right in all other things, yet wrong in “name,” is very near zero! Neither do I believe that any group so familiar with scripture would want to cause division in the church by using a name different from the rest of the body! Therefore, I further believe that if such a learned group would start such a congregation that, upon realizing the name difference, it would comply with the rest of the body to assure the unity that Christ demands of His people (John 17:21-23; I Corinthians 1:12-13).

There are, however, other biblical descriptions (besides Church of Christ – Romans 16:16) that also indicate the “ownership” and “relationship” of Christ, which if applied to all congregations within the body would be appropriate. They are: Church of God (I Corinthians 1:2), Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12), Church of the Living God (I Timothy 3:15), and Church of the Firstborn (Hebrews 12:23).

Nonetheless, that the church of Christ might be undivided before the world (John 17:21) and perfectly (completely) joined together in the same mind and the same judgment (I Corinthians 1:10) it is required and necessary that every congregation within the body be designated and recognized in the same way.

Such “names” as Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, ECWA, SDA, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, Episcopal, Pentecostal, and such like, are unscriptural, divisive, and sinful! They rob Christ of the glory and honor due Him and give it to another! Besides sinning in name, none of these comply doctrinally

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with the Scriptures and are, therefore, to be avoided, because in none of them has Christ placed salvation. Outside of His church, the church of Christ, all will be lost!

QUESTION: Is it right for a congregation to write a letter of disassociation to a sister congregation for any reasons whatsoever? If yes, biblically prove.

ANSWER: It is not right for a congregation to withdraw fellowship from a sister congregation for any reason whatsoever! However, it is right for a congregation to withdraw fellowship from a sister congregation that has 'caused divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine of Christ' (Romans 16:17). Whether individually or congregationally, these are to be marked and avoided. The principle is valid in either case! Would the action not have the same saving effect as with the brother of I Corinthians 5:5? Would such action not have the same cleansing effect as the "purging" of I Corinthians 5:7? Do we not want erring brethren to be saved? Do we not want the church of lord to be pure? If a biblical principle is applicable in a singular sense locally, why would it not be applicable in a collective sense in a different locale? Such brethren, whether near or far, singularly or collectively, being in sin, are engaging in the unfruitful works of darkness and, Paul, in Ephesians 5:11 says, 'have no fellowship with them, but rather reprove them.' Does not one remain in fellowship with those whom he refuses to disfellowship? Of course! But Paul says, "have no fellowship! So not only are we directed to sever the relationship (withdraw fellowship), but we are also "commanded" to confront them (reprove) with their sin. Whether that is done face-to-face or via other communication is a matter of option.

Some under the guise of "church autonomy" suggest that they can teach and practice anything that they would like, whether scriptural or not, and that the rest of the brotherhood must ignore such! Not so! Those who refuse to take scriptural disciplinary action against sister congregations that apostatize from the truth are themselves sinning and in violation of the passages mentioned heretofore!

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WORSHIP

QUESTION: One Sunday evening two men in our congregation put a “feet washing.” Is it right to do this as part of the worship service?

ANSWER: No! There is neither scripture nor precedent for doing so in God’s Word. As an item of worship, it began in the fourth century by the apostate church. Jesus made the statement after washing His disciple’s feet “For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you.” In saying this, He was not instituting an act of worship. He was simply teaching individuals by His example that we should, with humility, submit to one another. It was the custom at that time because of the common footwear and the dusty conditions to wash the feet of those entering one’s dwelling-place. Jesus used this particular custom (perhaps because there was no host present) to teach His disciples for all time not to exalt themselves, but to humbly adopt an attitude of servanthood to each other and to God! To add this practice, or any other, as an item of worship to God is to presumptuously sin against Him (Psalms 19:13)! It is vain worship (Matthew 15:9)! It is to preach another gospel (Galatians 1:6-9)! It is to add to God’s Word (Revelation 22:18)!

QUESTION: Is clapping hands while singing forbidden in the New Testament?

ANSWER: Yes! Hand-clapping (applause) is often engaged in to give praise and honor to ungodly performers and entertainers who with their additional and unscriptural worship practices (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; I Corinthians 14:15) usurp the praise, honor and glory that rightly belongs to our God. They, and those who praise (applaud) them, do not worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24), because they have no authority for that which they do (Revelation 22:18)! Neither is there authority to use the hands to create a rhythmic beat in accompaniment of vocal music when worshipping God. This differs in no way from the use of drums or other rhythm producing instruments! There is no scripture in the New Testament that authorizes the clapping of hands or mechanical instruments in worship to God! In Colossians 3:16, we are told that whatever we do in word (which includes singing) or deed (which includes playing, clapping, and singing), it must be done in the name of (by the authority of) the Lord Jesus. Clearly, from Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16 and I Corinthians 14:15, we see that the music authorized by the New Testament is strictly vocal and congregational, which excludes clapping and playing! We cannot, without sinning, take away from God’s Word (Revelation 22:18). We cannot, without sinning, add to God’s Word (Revelation 22:19). We cannot change His Word in any way (Galatians 1:6-9)!

Neither can we go to the Old Testament to learn how we are to worship under the New Testament. This is true, because the Old Testament was taken out of the way at the cross of Christ. Please read carefully the following passages: II

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Corinthians 3; Galatians 3:16-29; Ephesians 2:13-19; Colossians 2:13-14; Hebrews 7:12; Hebrews 8:7.

QUESTION: Is it a sin for women to leave their heads uncovered during worship services (I Corinthians 11:1-16)?

ANSWER: No! Those who so teach have failed to understand that it was the “custom” in Corinth in the first century to wear a long veil (body length) to show or denote submission. This “custom” is not prevalent in most civilizations today! Although it would be improper to bind “custom,” the principle of submission remains an eternal binding principle (Genesis 3:16)! Thus, the inspired apostle wrote in I Corinthians 11:3, “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is man; and the head of Christ is God.” This means that just as man must be in submission to his head, who is Christ, that the woman must be in submission to her head, who is man. It does not mean that the woman must show her submission by practicing a “custom” of submission (wearing a covering) that was prevalent in first century Corinth!

QUESTION: Are Christians today commanded to partake of the Lord’s Supper?

ANSWER: Yes! We are commanded to do so on the first day of every week! Please read Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:20-29; I Corinthians 16:1-2). To not be obedient to these scriptures is to sin!

QUESTION: Why have many of your kinds of churches stopped using (fermented) wine and substituted grape juice?

ANSWER: The question implies an invalid assumption, i.e., that many of our “kinds of churches” at one time, scripturally and generally, used fermented wine during the Lord’s Supper. Before the implication can be accepted, it must first be validated. Such cannot be done, either scripturally or historically (although rare, individual congregations may have done so). The Greek word for wine (oinos) is used thirty-four times in the New Testament. It is a neutral word that may refer either to fermented or unfermented grape juice and is so determined by the context of the passage. When instituting His Supper, the Lord used, significantly, the phrase “fruit of the vine,” rather than oinos which could have been misconstrued by some to mean fermented wine. In view of these two facts, it is clear that the drinking of unfermented grape juice during the Supper is the justifiable and scriptural response to our Lord’s commands. Those who insist on the use of fermented wine do not do so on the basis of scripture!

That heaven stands opposing the use of alcoholic beverages is made clear in Proverbs 23:29-35 and Isaiah 5:11. Note that these two passages show a correlation between “wine” and “strong drink.” Then consider Habakkuk 2:15, “Woe unto them that givest his neighbour drink, that puttest the bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness.” Certainly,

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this does not suggest that our Lord who was without sin, having kept the Old Law perfectly, including this passage, gave His neighbour (His disciples) to drink and “put the bottle to them.” Clearly the opposite is implied!

Simply from a logical standpoint, we must consider the fact that the Lord knew of the many drunkards (I Corinthians 6:9-11) who would, following His glorification, repent of this sin and be saved. What kind of a loving Savior would then insist that these be reintroduced to alcoholic beverages each Lord’s Day afterwards as part of their worship responsibilities? Would such not cause the drunkard to be tempted? James said that God does not tempt any man (James 1:12-15). We submit that those who would insist that the recovering alcoholic imbibe an alcoholic beverage each Lord’s Day stands guilty of causing one to be tempted and putting a “stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way” (Romans 14:13; Mark 9:42).

With consideration to the above, the question then needs to be asked, when and why have some stopped using unfermented grape juice and turned to that to which the Bible is opposed?

QUESTION: Are Christians today commanded to tithe as those in the Old Testament?

ANSWER: No! Those who live under the laws of the New Testament (Christians) are not bound by the laws of the Old Testament. The Old Law was taken out of the way, because it was fulfilled by Christ with His death upon the cross (II Corinthians 3:13-14; Colossians 2:14). However, Christians have been given instructions on how to give. “Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come” (I Corinthians 16:2). “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

A Christian today is not bound to a specific amount or a specific percentage of his earnings. He is simply instructed to give as God has prospered him. This should not be taken to mean that one can contribute from his leftovers on payday. Certainly this would not be seeking first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). In all of our giving, whether it be time or money, we must do so sacrificially (Mark 12:41-44). This may often exceed the tithe (10 percent) of the Old Law.

QUESTION: Why are women not allowed to ask questions, pray, or preach during the worship service?

ANSWER: It is the will of God! I Timothy 2:11-12 forbids the woman to usurp authority that God has given to the man: “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” The reason given in verses 13-14 is: “For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”

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This does not mean, however, that the woman is inferior to the man. God has assigned different roles to each, and each must function within his or her assigned roles to be pleasing to God. The significant roles assigned to women are expressed in I Timothy 5 and Titus 2. Christian women will have no desire to violate or go beyond the bounds of what God has prescribed for them!

QUESTION: There appears to be a contradiction between I Corinthians 14:33-38/I Timothy 2:11-15 and Acts 2:17-18. The Acts passage seems to allow what the other passages, written by Paul, prohibit. Would you explain!

ANSWER: Since God's Word is "truth," it is clear there can be no contradiction. First of all, Paul's passages do not prohibit a woman from prophesying or teaching, as did Priscilla, working privately with her husband in instructing Apollos (Acts 18:26), and as did the virgin daughters of Philip, the evangelist (Acts 21:8-9). Paul's passages in context simply show that a woman is not permitted to engage in the kind of public teaching or prophesying which exercises rule or authority over the man; that in such settings she is to be in subjection (I Timothy 2:11) and under obedience (I Corinthians 14:34).

Neither does Acts 2:17-18 imply that the prophesying to be done by female recipients of this gift of the Holy Spirit was to be done publicly; in a way to exercise authority over the man. Those who hold that it does are reading something into God's Word that is not there, but is really nothing more than an assumption of fallible man! To so assume is to sin (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19).

The passages under consideration do not contradict, but, rather, are in complete harmony as is all of the Word of God!

QUESTION: In a recent issue of "Truth for the World" (Vol.4, Number 4. August,1995) in a discussion of prayer in public worship, you only speak of a particular kind of prayer. Aren't there other types of prayer? How about Romans 8:26?

ANSWER: Yes! The article you write about deals with public prayer when both males and females are present. The point is rightfully made that, in such an instance, the men of the church are to lead the prayer. Otherwise, the congregation would be in violation of I Timothy 2:8-12).

In I Timothy 2:1, we learn of different types of prayer; 1.) Supplications; a request of God for particular or certain benefits, 2.) Prayers; a more general term, during which we commune with God, expressing our emotions and asking His guidance in our lives, 3.) Intercessions; requests of God on the behalf of others, and 4.) Thanksgivings; thanking Him for both the physical and spiritual blessings He has provided. All of these are often included as we approach our Father with a need (whether for self or others).

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Romans 8:26 is not discussing a different kind of prayer. It is teaching that when we do not know how to express our selves to God (perhaps only with a groaning that cannot be uttered) that the Holy Spirit will intercede in our behalf.

QUESTION: Why when people pray do they say “through Jesus our Lord?”

ANSWER: Jesus is the mediator (go-between) between God and man (I Timothy 2:5). This is why in Colossians 3:17, we are told to ‘give thanks to God and the Father by Him (Christ).’ In saying these words, we sanctify and honor Christ in our hearts, and before men, as our one and only mediator and Lord!

QUESTION: Is it forbidden for a person to justify himself in prayer to God?

ANSWER: Man does not and cannot justify himself alone! It is God who justifies (Romans 8:33). A man is justified by faith (Romans 5:1), when he hears (Romans 10:17) and obeys (Romans 6:16-18) the doctrine of Christ, i.e., the New Testament.

QUESTION: Is it scriptural to close your eyes during prayer?

ANSWER: The Bible does not specify whether our eyes should be opened or closed in prayer. It is, therefore, scriptural to pray either way. For man to presume (and bind on others) that one is acceptable to the exclusion of the other, would be adding to God’s Word. One would be guilty of presumptuous sin! The certainty of prayer is only that our approach to God be according to His will, in reverence, sincerity, and humility, as those who “hallow His name” (Matthew 6:9).

QUESTION: During prayers in church should everyone pray aloud, or is it better for a man to lead?

ANSWER: One of the principles dealt with by the apostle Paul in I Corinthians fourteen is that there should never be confusion in the worship services. Certainly, this was a problem at Corinth, with people speaking in foreign languages that others did not know (vs.23); often at the same time (vss.26-33). Paul directed them to stop this practice, because “God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints (vs.32). They were to do “all things decently and in order” (vs.40). If all in a congregation would pray at the same time, they, too, would be creating a problem of confusion, just like the one in Corinth. Those involved would be doing things indecently and out of order (vs.40), thereby violating Paul’s inspired directives.

A Christian man is to lead the prayer (I Timothy 2:8), with those “occupying the room saying Amen at thy giving of thanks” (vs.16).

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QUESTION: Is it scriptural for a sister in Christ to give comments after the “Bible Study” period, instead of asking questions submissively (as was the case of the women in the worship service of I Corinthians 14:34-35)? Is such a sister in violation of I Timothy 2:12? Is such a sister usurping authority over the men?

ANSWER: If a woman is responding to a man who is in authority during a “Bible Study” period, she would not be in violation of scripture. If she, as the question implies, takes a position of authority over the men in the class by assuming the leadership, she would be sinning, as would all others participating in such an arrangement (I Timothy 2:11-12). The same is true of the formal worship services to God. The woman must be in subjection, not usurping the authority of the man. This means that she cannot participate in a leading or authoritative way.

QUESTION: What is the specific time to partake of the Lord’s Supper?

ANSWER: Acts 20:7 states very clearly that the disciples came together “upon the first day of the week” to break bread. A day encompasses twenty-four hours. Therefore, partaking of the Lord’s Supper anytime during those twenty-four hours would not violate this or any other passage of scripture! As well, in Acts 20:7-8, we are not told at what time on the first day of the week this particular worship service began. We only know that Paul continued his speech until midnight. The service could have encompassed both daytime and nighttime hours or it could have included only nighttime hours. Precisely when, during the worship service, they partook of the Lord’s Supper, we are not told. It could have been at the beginning, the middle, or the end of the service. Apparently, the precise hour was not significant. Otherwise, the Holy Spirit would have so specified. He did specify the “first day of the week.” We must leave it there, being careful not to bind things on ourselves and others what the Holy Spirit has not bound in the New Testament!

QUESTION: Does I Corinthians 14:26-27 authorize groups of two or three singing during worship?

ANSWER: Singing groups are not authorized anywhere in the scriptures! One of the problems in Corinth was that many members of the church with various gifts of the Holy Spirit were speaking at the same time and were, by that, causing confusing and disorderly services. Paul states in the thirty-third verse that God is not the author of such confusion, and in verse forty, that all things were to be done decently and in order. So that there might be order, He directs in verse twenty-seven that no more than two or three sentences were to be uttered at one time, and then by only one person at a time. The passage does not deal with music at all and, therefore, does not authorize singing groups of any kind!

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QUESTION: Is it scriptural to perform simultaneous acts of worship during the assembly, such as singing during communion?

ANSWER: No! Scriptural worship clearly consists of five separate and distinct acts: (1) Singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), (2) Prayer (I Timothy 2:8; Acts 2:42), (3) Teaching (II Timothy 4:2; Acts 20:7), (4) Communion (I Corinthians 11:23-30; Matthew 26:26-29), (5) Giving (I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:7).

There is no command, example, or implication that authorizes simultaneous acts of worship. In other words, there is no authority for doing such. There is no difference in this false practice and the ungodly practice of using singing groups in which one group of Christians attempts to sing for every one assembled. The Bible teaches in the passages outlined above that every Christian is to sing when the singing is done! How can this be when some of the people are eating and drinking while others are singing? It cannot be done!

QUESTION: Does not Galatians 3:28 justify the use of women in a leading role in public worship?

ANSWER: No! The passage simply teaches that all people, regardless of race, status, or gender, are on an equal footing as far as salvation is concerned; that all may come to Christ!

QUESTION: If choirs that mostly sing songs not known to the rest of the church are allowed, would the church be allowed to sing any song that some of the members don't know?

ANSWER: Choirs in worship to God are not authorized by the Scriptures whether a song is known by the rest of the church or not! Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 authorize only vocalized (clearly enunciated words) congregational singing. These passages demand the exclusion of solos, duets, trios, quartets, choirs of any size, and instrumental music, under any and all conditions, in worship to God (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19)!

Worship to God is to be done decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40). Certainly, when a song leader (a man) uses the worship period to teach music, including new songs, he is in error! This does not mean (when there are no songbooks available) that everyone in the assembly, including visitors, must be totally familiar with every song that the leader might select. How is the song leader, or anyone else, to know who knows what, and how much they know? Must he know that every person in the assembly knows every word and every note of every verse? Such is surely impossible and, certainly, God does not demand the impossible. The song leader, however, must always do his best to carefully select scriptural songs and direct the song worship so that all things can be done according to truth, and "decently and in order." (Clearly, it would be indecent and out of order if the song leader were to lead a song that only he and a few others knew!) As well, each individual within the assembly must do their

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best to scripturally fulfill the demands of Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, within the bounds of their own individual capabilities.

QUESTION: If such songs can be sung by members who know them, and those who don't know them can't sing, how does this differ from a choir?

ANSWER: Many reasons! First of all, it is impossible for those who don't know the song to sing it, if there are no songbooks available. Obviously, it is not the intent of these to remain silent and have others do their worshipping "for" them, as is the case when a choir is used! Secondly, those who are singing under these circumstances do not formally constitute a choir whose intent it is to sing "for," or in behalf of, the others! Thirdly, in the case of using a choir, those who don't sing the song are (either of their own accord or at the direction of others) refraining intentionally from singing, while having the capability to do so, and, thus, are in violation of the command to "sing" in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16! The commands of these passages are applicable to each person within the congregation. This means that every person within the congregation, who has the capability to sing, must sing every time there is singing! Anything else is sin! Clearly, there is no authorization in God's Word for one person, or group of persons, to sing for (in the place of) another; just as there is no authorization for one to commune or give "for" (in the place of) another.

Let's assume that in a congregation there are one or more people who were born without the ability to speak. Do these sin by not singing? Of course not! Why? Simply because they do not have the capability of singing! Does the rest of the congregation constitute a choir? Does the rest of the congregation sin by singing when others can't? Of course not! Would such justify the use of a formal choir? Of course not! Individuals who find it totally or nearly impossible to sing must simply do the best they can within their capabilities to satisfy the demands of Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16. And so it is with every member of the congregation!

Choirs and specialized singing groups have been developed to: (1), entertain and (2), to satisfy the pride and ego of man! Neither of these is compatible with worship that is in spirit and according to truth (John 4:24).

QUESTION: If a church cannot sing a song which is not known to some members, how can those members learn it?

ANSWER: Please read the above answers again. When songbooks are available, individuals, by focusing on the words of the book, can tonefully recite these words in concert with the rest of the congregation and, in this way, worship God scripturally. Most learn new songs in this way. However, sometimes it is expedient, especially when song books are not available, to set aside special times for the congregation to learn and practice "new" songs, just as one practices before reading the Scriptures to the congregation, or as the preacher

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practices his sermon! Many times as individuals and congregations we often fail to adequately prepare for properly worshipping God.

QUESTION: In Romans 15:9 and Hebrews 2:12 (Psalms 22:22) are these quotations from the Old Testament: “I will confess to you among the Gentiles and sing to your name” and “I will declare your name to my brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will sing praise to you.” Is this talking about singing together or, I, a single person, singing among the midst of many people?

ANSWER: Certainly, these passages do not support the idea of one Christian singing a solo to the rest of the congregation. The pronoun “I” in these passages refers not to individual members of the church, but to Jesus Christ. Note that in Hebrews 2:11, Paul is discussing “He that sanctifieth.” Of course, this refers to Christ. He also discusses those “who are sanctified.” This obviously refers to Christians who make up the church. He then says that both He who sanctifieth and those who are sanctified are “of One” (God). Because of this relationship that both have with God, He (Christ) is not ashamed to call them (Christians) brethren! In verse twelve, because He is not ashamed of His brethren, He (Christ) will declare God’s name to us and will commune and participate with us in our worship to the Father. Neither the word “I,” the word “sing,” or the word “midst” teach or imply that men are authorized to sing a solo in the worship services of the church. These words simply denote the communion and relationship that Christ has with His church (and within His church), even as we worship God.

QUESTION: If the church must be taught a song not known to them, where in the Bible do we read about Christians coming together to learn a song? Where do we read about the use of songbooks?

ANSWER: Any aid or expedient action which provides a scriptural advantage to complying with a direct statement (command), implication, or approved example from God’s Word is scripturally authorized for use. This would include such things as church buildings, church benches, artificial lighting, meeting to learn new songs, songbooks, and tuning forks or pitch pipes. All of these things, being subordinates (not equal to), provide a scriptural advantage to the accomplishment of the primary purpose or duty. Instruments of music, however, do not fall in the category of authorized expedients, because they are not subordinate to the primary duty or action of making vocal music. That is, instrumental music, being totally different in kind, is, in the realm of music, equal to (not subordinate to) vocal music. Therefore, the use of instruments in worship are not authorized as expedients and, when used, are in addition to God’s Word, violating Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; I Corinthians 4:6 and Revelation 22:18-19.

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QUESTION: Larry Powers says in his tract on choirs that Colossians 3:16 “teaching” means to teach, instruct by word of mouth and “admonishing” means to put in mind, instruct, warn. Therefore, this teaching and admonishing is to be done to one another, which means that all do it at the same time together. If what Larry Powers says is true, then it means that pulpit preaching, teaching, and admonishing are wrong, because only one person does it at one time. Is this true? Please explain.

ANSWER: Brother Powers is correct in his definitions of “teaching” and “admonishing.” He does not say, however, that these definitions constitute the basis for doing them to “one another.” He is saying that since this passage commands that teaching and admonishing in our singing be directed to “one another,” we are, thereby, limited to “all of us doing it at the same time together.” He is correct! The limitations of this passage exclude, and regard as sinful, the use of choirs! We are commanded in Colossians 3:16 to all sing together at the same time. We are not all commanded to preach at the same time (I Corinthians 14:33 & 40).

QUESTION: Nowhere in the New Testament are choirs mentioned. If this means choirs are wrong, then why are not many cups in communion wrong, because nowhere in the New Testament do we read of many cups being used, but only one cup? Since there is no scripture telling us how many cups to use in communion, who decided we should use many cups, and by what authority?

ANSWER: The last part of the first question says that we only read of one cup (container) being used for communion in the New Testament. The first part of the second question says that there is no scripture telling us how many cups (containers) to use. The second question is accurate! There is no passage that tells us how many containers to use! The cup referred to by Matthew in Matthew 26:27 does not refer to the container, but rather to the contents of the container (cup). Notice that Jesus in this passage “took the cup and gave thanks.” Did He give thanks for the container or for the fruit of the vine that was in the container? He told them (His disciples) to “drink ye all of it.” Was He telling them to drink the container or the fruit of the vine that was in the container? If one says that Matthew was referring to the container when he says “the cup.” Then, to be consistent, one would also have to say that Jesus gave thanks for the container, and that He told His disciples to drink the container. Such is foolishness! If a friend asks if you and your wife want a cup of tea and you respond, “Yes, we want a cup,” does this mean you want one cup or does it mean that you and your wife want tea? Obviously, your interest is in the contents of the cup or cups; the tea!

Since the New Testament does not tell us how many containers to use, the option of “how many containers” is left up to each congregation. None has the authority to bind upon another the number of cups to be used, whether one or

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many! To do so is to bind where God has not bound, and to sin thereby (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19).

QUESTION: Since Christ instituted the Lord's supper in an upstairs room and the apostles received the Holy Spirit in an upstairs room, then an upstairs room has some importance to Jesus Christ. Why don't we go to an upstairs room to partake of the Lord's Supper? Do we have Bible authority for taking the Lord's Supper downstairs? Where in the Bible do we read that it does not matter where we observe the Lord's Supper, but it does matter what we observe?

ANSWER: The Bible does not imply or teach that the upstairs room had any special importance or significance to Christ! In New Testament times, most of the houses in Jerusalem had an upper room which was customarily designated as a place set aside for conversation, for devotions, and often for placing of the dead prior to burial. Christ and the apostles used an upper room simply because of custom and availability. The word translated as "upper room" occurs four times in the new Testament; in the two places mentioned in the question (Luke 22:12 & Acts 1:13); in Acts 9:37-38, where the body of Dorcas was laid; and in Acts 20:8, "And there were many lights in the upper chamber." If one would assume from these passages that the Lord's Supper could be taken only in an upper room, then he or she would also have to assume that when we die, our bodies could only be laid in an upper room, and that we could have lights only in an upper room! Surely, such is not the case! Further, if the position suggested in the question was adopted, how could one stop with the assumption that communion should be taken in just any upper room? Why would it not be necessary to assume that it should be taken only in the same upper room; the one that Christ used? Should it be taken in an upper room on the second floor or the third floor? Should we similarly assume that the Jordan River had some importance to Christ since He was baptized there? If so, should we not further assume that we also must be baptized in the Jordan or, at least, in some other river? Would this mean we could not be scripturally baptized in a lake, pool, bathtub, or baptism? Surely not! The important thing clearly is the element of water (I Peter 3:21), not the location of the water. So it is with the Lord's Supper! The important things are the elements of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine (Matthew 26:26-29; I Corinthians 11:23-26), not the location of the service!

QUESTION: Why do men not wear hats during worship to God?

ANSWER: Because it evidences disrespect, indicating non-submission. It, therefore, brings dishonor to our Head, who is Christ (I Corinthians 11:3-4).

QUESTION: Because we now have liberty in Christ, would it be acceptable to burn candles or to sleep in worship services?

ANSWER: No! Neither of these would be proper! We must worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Since sleeping during worship services would clearly

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violate this passage, and since burning of candles in worship services as a religious act is not authorized in the New Testament, both would be sin!

Our liberty in Christ “hath made us free from the (Old Testament) law of sin and death” (Romans 8:2), but we not use that liberty to do whatever we want. We are to walk after, and to be led by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:4-14). This occurs in our obedience to God’s Word!

QUESTION: I have enclosed a document entitled “Breaking Bread.” Would you please explain what is being taught? Is it right or wrong?

ANSWER: The document submitted teaches that as Christians, when we partake of the Lord’s Supper, we should:

- A) Feel that God is talking to us.
- B) Have feelings about how we are living in Christ.
- C) Be thinking about who needs what in the Body.
- D) Be thinking about the lost.

None of the four items suggested above are taught in the Word of God! The Lord’s Supper is simply and solely a reminder; a commemoration of the death of our Savior and is to be taken on the first day of every week (Acts 20:7) in His memory (I Corinthians 11:24-25) to “show forth His death until He come” (I Corinthians 11:26). It is not to be taken to show forth anything else, nor to remember anything else! To partake of the Lord’s Supper for the reasons listed by the author of the document in question is to violate God’s Word!

The author of the document has suggested that Christians think about these four items in order to keep the Lord’s Supper from becoming “boring.” We would suggest that if the death of our Lord on the cross cannot keep the Lord’s Supper from becoming ritualistic and boring, then it is certain that those things suggested by the author, as well, cannot! When a Christian’s worship (John 4:24) is in spirit (the proper attitude) and truth (according to His will), the Lord’s Supper will not be boring or ritualistic to him, but, conversely, will be a significant and praiseworthy highlight of his week!

QUESTION: If a church fails to get wine for communion, is it right to use other juices, such as pineapple or lemon?

ANSWER: No! Most often the reason a congregation does not have non-alcoholic grape juice available is because of a failure to plan ahead. It may be difficult for some, but it is certain that the Lord did not command us to do something we can not possibly do. No matter how difficult it may be, the congregation needs to plan ahead to make sure it has what the scriptures require, i.e., non-alcoholic grape juice!

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QUESTION: Where in the Bible are we told what to wear when presenting a sermon in church?

ANSWER: We are not told to wear a specific type of clothing. It is certain, however, that nothing should be worn which sets the preacher apart from his brethren. This principle is seen in Matthew 23:1-12.

QUESTION: Is there any biblical instructions about who should prepare the Lord's table? Where the elements should be prepared? Who should give thanks? Who is to get the leftovers?

ANSWER: No! Except in the case of giving thanks. This is limited only to Christian men (I Timothy 2: 12), unless there are none present. In determining the other matters contained in the question, we should always remember the exhortation of Paul in Romans 14:19, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

QUESTION: Should there be special seating in the church for the "prominent" members?

ANSWER: No! Christians are all one in Christ (John 17:21; Galatians 3:26-29). Christ spoke strongly against those who loved the uppermost seats in the synagogues, teaching all of us to exhibit attitudes of humility and service (Matthew 23:1-12). If our attitudes are proper and emulate that of our Lord as He washed the feet of His disciples (John 13:1-17), there will be no "special seating" where the saints congregate!

QUESTION: I hold the view that in things that are essential to our salvation there should be unity. In things that are non-essential we should allow liberty. Can issues like the number of cups used at the Lord's Table; women serving the Lord's Supper; ordination of women; and head coverings constitute essentials?

ANSWER: It is "essential" that we are obedient to the Word of God in all issues! In Colossians 3:17, we are told "Whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name (by the authority of) the Lord Jesus . . ." Each issue then that arises must be weighed in the light of this passage and other passages that may be related to the issue. The primary question must always be, "Does the Bible command / authorize the action? For example: there is no commandment that specifies the number of cups to be used during the Lord's Supper. Therefore, it is not essential that we use one cup, nor is it essential that we use multiple cups. The option must be left up to each congregation, with none binding their opinion on the other. In this matter, there must be liberty!

Those who teach that it is essential that women wear hats in worship services have failed to understand that it was the "custom" in Corinth in the first century for women to wear an ankle length covering (veil) to show or denote submission to their husbands. This "custom" is not prevalent in most civilizations today!

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Although it would be improper to bind “custom,” the principle of submission remains an eternal binding principle (Genesis 3:16)! Thus, the inspired apostle wrote in I Corinthians 11:3, “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is man; and the head of Christ is God.” In Ephesians 5:22, he would say, “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord.” Therefore, submission of a wife to her husband is an “essential;” the wearing of a veil/hat by a woman is a “non-essential.” For her to wear or not to wear is not sin, but a matter of liberty and opinion, to be left up to each individual!

As to the issues you raise relative to women being “ordained” and serving the Lord’s Supper, suggesting that this matter is non-essential: In these issues, the Bible clearly specifies what is to be done, negating any opinion which man may have. In other words, in these matters, man has no liberty to exercise his own options. It is “essential” that we abide by the teaching of the New Testament (John 12:48; John 15:10)! In I Timothy 2:11-12, all are clearly bound by the following inspired directive: “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” Any position or activity, then, of a woman in the worship service that takes away the authority of the man is sinful! Within the intent of this passage, she is permitted only to vocally engage in congregational singing (Ephesians 5:19) and to say “Amen” with those occupying the room at the giving of thanks (I Corinthians 14:16), doing such decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40) as she worships in spirit and truth (John 4:24). To this she is limited by the Holy Spirit! To make the issue of the use women in worship services to God a “non-essential,” when God has clearly spoken on the matter, is to pervert the gospel of Christ and be accursed (Galatians 1:6-9).

It is true that in things that are essential there must be unity and that in things that are non-essential there must be liberty. However to take the denominational position that only those things that pertain “to our salvation” are essentials, assumes an attitude and position that only a part of God’s Word is essential to our salvation. This is not true! Obedience to all of God’s Word is essential and critical to our salvation; every book, chapter, verse, and word! The essentiality or non-essentiality of a particular activity or action can only be determined on the basis of the totality of His word, by which all men will one day be judged (John 12:48)!

QUESTION: What are the acts of worship authorized by the New testament?

ANSWER: Scriptural worship clearly consists of only five separate and distinct acts: (1) Congregational Singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), (2) Prayer (I Timothy 2:8; Acts 2:42), (3) Teaching/Preaching (II Timothy 4:2; Acts 20:7), (4) Communion on Sundays only (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-30; Matthew 26:26-29), and (5) Giving on Sundays only (I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:7). To these five acts of worship we are limited! The New Testament (by which we will

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be judged-John 12:48) does not allow women to lead in these matters when men are present (I Corinthians 14:34-35; I Timothy 2:11-12)! Neither does it authorize mechanical instruments of music (including drums); hand clapping; singing groups; choirs; shouting and raucous behavior; or any type of entertainment. To engage in any of these is to violate the Word of God (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19). All worship must be in spirit and truth (John 4:24), as well as decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40).

QUESTION: Is it a sin not to attend mid-week services?

ANSWER: Yes! The admonition of Hebrews 10:25 (to say nothing of Psalms 122:1; Matthew 6:33; Colossians 3:2; etc.) is explicit! We are not to forsake the “assemblings (plural)!” This passage does not say “the” assembly (singular), as though it had reference solely to Sunday morning and/or evening. Neither does “the day (singular) approaching” refer to the next first day of the week or any other day of worship for that matter. To so suggest would also be to suggest that the exhortation to assemble would require each of us to progressively exhort to a higher degree as we go through the week! No scholar through out the ages has so held! The “day” may refer to one of two “days,” with neither violating the context, i.e., either Christ’s symbolic coming in the destruction of Jerusalem or His literal coming to judge all of mankind.

Undoubtedly the time of worship on the Lord’s Day and frequency of worship on other days is a matter of option. In such matters, the collective decision of the elders is totally authoritative and binding upon each Christian under their oversight. Each is to be obedient to those who have the rule over them (Hebrews 13:7,17). To forsake the mid-week service, or any other service so appointed by the elders, is to sin by violating these verses, as well as those cited above! Some would argue, “Well, I don’t think we have to meet during mid-week, because the elders could lord it over the flock and demand that we meet seven times a day, seven times a week!” Certainly they could, but in my 50+ years in the church I have not known any who have so done and, further, I doubt that those who make such an argument have! If any group of elders would lord it over the flock in any way, provisions are made for such an eventuality (I Timothy 5:17-20). Our commitment to the Lord must be never depend on what we think could happen, but rather upon His Word.

QUESTION: Is it right for a fornicator to partake of the Lord’s Supper?

ANSWER: No! A person engaged in such activities has separated himself from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). He or she is no longer walking in the light and is out of fellowship with Him (I John 1:6-7). Before one can worship acceptably, he or she must be in fellowship with Him, because in a state of separation He has hid His face from the impenitent sinner, that He will not hear (Isaiah 59:2)! Jesus said in the sermon on the mount that one is not to worship until he or she is reconciled to a brother who has ought against him (Matthew 5:23-24). How much more

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should an habitual sinner be first reconciled to the Lord before engaging in the worship activity of the Lord's Supper!

QUESTION: Is everything we do worship to God?

ANSWER: No! The Bible clearly distinguishes between service and worship! In Genesis 22:1-14, We see Abraham serving God in that he was obediently preparing to sacrifice his son, Isaac. In the course of his service, Abraham said to the young men that were with him (vs.5), "Abide ye here with the ass; I and the lad will go yonder to worship, and come again unto you." He was not worshipping at the time he was talking to the young men and, clearly, he intended to go to a certain place in order to engage in worship. We can, therefore, scripturally conclude that "worship is service, but not all service is worship!" As well, we can see that "intent" is involved in worship to God, i.e., we must "intend" to worship. One cannot worship God by accident!

To suggest that "all" we do is worship to God, if not blasphemous, closely approaches it! Would those who so teach also hold that hygienic and bathroom functions constitute worship? What about sexual relations between husband and wife? Absurd!

The position is neither logical nor scriptural!

Note a few of many passages that show a difference between service and worship: Deuteronomy 4:19; 8:19; 29:26; I Kings 9:6; 9:9; Jeremiah 8:2; 16:11; 25:6.

QUESTION: Paul says in I Corinthians 14:34 that women should keep quiet in the meeting, and yet the same author says in Galatians 3:26-29 that we are all the same because of the blood of Christ. What does he mean?

ANSWER: Galatians 3:26-29 is not discussing functions and roles of men and women in the church or in the worship services of the church. This particular passage is a "salvation" passage and teaches that all, regardless of race, position in life, or gender (sex), can and must be saved under the New Testament system of faith (as opposed to Old Testament law - Galatians 3:23-25) by being baptized into Christ Jesus.

We must be careful not to take a passage out of context, nor read into a passage more than was intended. Those who use this passage to teach that women may take a leading role in the church are in direct conflict with I Corinthians 14:34-35; I Timothy 2: 11-12, and many other passages. Such is a sinful mishandling of God's Word (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19)!

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QUESTION: If women are forbidden to preach in the church, does this mean that they don't have to talk to unbelievers about Christ?

ANSWER: That the Bible teaches that women are not to teach in mixed (men and women) assemblies; nor to in any way usurp authority over the man is very definite and clear (I Corinthians 14:34-35; I Timothy 2:11-12). This does not mean however that she does not have the responsibility of teaching unbelievers about Christ in a private setting. That we have approved example of such is seen in the case of Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:24-28) and by those who were scattered abroad in Acts 8:1-4. That women have also been directly commanded to teach is, as well, evident (Titus 1:3-4).

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NEW TESTAMENT

QUESTION: Did Satan work through Judas as he did the serpent?

ANSWER: Judas permitted himself to be influenced by the devil (Luke 22:3), whereas the serpent, having no ability to choose, acted at the direction and power that Satan enjoyed at that time!

QUESTION: Will Judas go to heaven or hell?

ANSWER: He will go to hell! Please read Matthew 26:24; Matthew 27:3-10; John 17:12; and Acts 1:16-25. He was referred to as the son of “perdition” (John 17:12). This word carries with it the idea of damnation, ruin, destruction, and perishing. As the “son” of perdition, he would (because of the ungodly character which resulted in his transgression) inherit perdition and all it means.

This does not mean that Judas had no choice in what he did. He was not personally coerced by God to betray Jesus. In Acts 1:25, we see that Judas “fell” by his own transgression. God does not cause any to sin! Man sins when he is drawn away of his own lusts and when lust has conceived it brings forth sin (James 1:13-15). Such was the case with Judas! Such was the case with Herod and Pilate! Neither were these men personally coerced by God to participate in the death of Christ; nor the ones who bruised Him; nor the one who pierced His side. There is no difference between these and Judas. All of these (including Judas) participated in the fulfillment of prophecy! Shall we therefore conclude that these others will not stand to be judged? No! All of them (including Judas) sinned of their own free will, and all of them (including Judas) will be judged on the basis of their own free will actions! God does not predetermine or cause particular individuals to be lost or saved, nor to engage in specific unlawful acts that would affect their eternal destiny! “For we must all (each and every individual, including Judas) appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one (including Judas) may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

The transgression of Judas (caused by his ungodly character) against Christ could have been forgiven, as were those on Pentecost (Acts 2:23; Acts 2:36-47), so long as Judas lived, had he been willing to bend his will to the Lord's. The transgression of Judas in taking his own life (caused by his ungodly character that rejected the will of God) could not be forgiven, because there is no provision or opportunity to become saved after death occurs (Hebrews 9:27). Thus he has gone “to his own place,” the place of perdition!

QUESTION: How did the apostles convert to Christ?

ANSWER: They were converted by obeying Him, i.e., by “following Him” according to His will! (Matthew 4:22; Mark 1:18; Luke 5:11, 28). Today, we must do the same. There is no other way! The question is sometimes asked, “were the

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men who became apostles of necessity immersed in water for the remission of their sins?" The answer is yes! In Romans 6:3-4, the apostle Paul said, "Know ye not that so many of 'us' as were baptized . . . Therefore, 'we' are buried with Him by baptism . . ." Also in Titus 3:5, "He saved 'us' by the washing of regeneration, . . ." Peter said in I Peter 3:21, "Baptism doth also now save 'us'." Certainly the personal pronouns "us" and "we" include the apostles themselves. Baptism was as necessary to their obedience as is ours today!

QUESTION: What is truth?

ANSWER: Jesus Himself answered this question in John 17:17, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." This means that all of the truth that pertains unto life and godliness can be found only in the Bible (II Peter 1:3); that there are no additional truths to be found in any man or in any religious organization! It is by this Book, that all will one day be judged (John 12:48).

QUESTION: In Matthew 5:3-12, it says that those who possess these characteristics will be saved outside the church. Would you explain this?

ANSWER: When Jesus spoke these things the kingdom (church) had not yet been established. In Matthew 16:18-19, we see clearly that the church (kingdom) was yet in the future. Jesus, at the beginning of His earthly ministry, "came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (it is not yet here, but it is near). In Matthew 5 (before the kingdom came), Jesus is simply saying that participants in the coming kingdom (which was established on the first Pentecost after His death-Mark 9:1; Acts 2:22-47) will be those who possess the characteristics described in Matthew 5:3-12. There is absolutely no indication in this or any other passage that anyone can be saved outside of the church!

QUESTION: Would you explain Matthew 5:17-18?

ANSWER: Jesus is saying that He did not come for the purpose of destroying the law and the prophets (Old Testament). His purpose was to fulfill it! He further stated that nothing would pass from the law (Old Testament) until that time when all of it would be fulfilled. That time came when He died on the cross. At that time all of the Old Testament was fulfilled or filled full. Upon its fulfillment, it had served its purpose of bringing man unto Christ (Galatians 3:24-25). Because it had served its purpose, it was, at that time, taken out of the way (Colossians 2:14). It was nailed to the cross in His death (Colossians 2:14)! When Christ (the Testator) died, His New Testament became effective (Hebrews 9:16-17), "a better covenant, which was established upon better promises, for if that first covenant (Old Testament) had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second" (New Testament) - (Hebrews 8:7-8).

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QUESTION: In light of Matthew 5:34-37 and James 5:12, would it be wrong to “swear to tell the truth so help you God” as a witness in court?

ANSWER: No! Taking such an oath would not be wrong. In the Old Testament we find that the Jews were commanded to “swear” by the “Lord thy God” (Deuteronomy 6:13). However, it had become the practice of the Jews in the first century to profane the name of God by taking His name irreverently and in vain (Exodus 20:7) through the misuse of “oaths” often designed to shade or cover up the truth. It is to such oaths that these passages refer. That this is the case is made clear by James, “but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay” (vs.12). The thrust of this passage teaches that Christians are to be known for their truthfulness rather than their need of taking frivolous oaths to support insignificant matters. That not all oaths are wrong is seen in the fact that the inspired apostle Paul often invoked them, e.g., Romans 1:9; Galatians 1:20. It is also significant that even God Himself “swore” (Hebrews 6:13-20). So, clearly, not all oaths are sinful.

QUESTION: What did Jesus mean when He said “new” wine should not be put in “old” bags (Matthew 9:17)?

ANSWER: Notice that this particular passage is a continuation of the discussion about fasting in verses fourteen and fifteen. Jesus was telling His disciples in verse seventeen, that just as it was unfitting to put “new” wine in “old” bags (bottles), because both the wine and the bags would be destroyed, it was also unfitting and improper that they should fast after the manner of the Pharisees. In other words just as “new” wine and “old” bags do not go together, neither does my teaching about fasting agree with the Pharisee’s doctrine about fasting!

QUESTION: Jesus said in Matthew 13 that the “tares” should be left in the garden. Do the tares represent those in the denominations who cannot be convinced of the truth?

ANSWER: All who are not in the church of Christ are in the world (Matthew 12:30). The word “tares” in this passage, therefore, includes, but is not limited to those in the denominations.

QUESTION: What is Jesus teaching us in Matthew 15:22-28?

ANSWER: In this passage a Gentile woman came to Jesus to plead with Him to heal her daughter. Jesus’ response to the woman’s request (verse 26), “It is not proper to take the children’s (Jews) bread, and to cast it to dogs (Gentiles),” was not made in order to be harsh, but rather to test her faith and humility. Her reply in verse twenty-seven, “Truth Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master’s table” showed her great humility and persistent confidence that Christ could and would heal her daughter. This account teaches us that we should incorporate the same humility and faith in our lives.

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QUESTION: Would you explain Matthew 20:16? Who are the first and the last?

ANSWER: The last (in order of time) to begin laboring in the kingdom of God may receive greater reward than those who first (in order of time) began laboring in the kingdom. It will not be the responsibility of humankind to decide the justice of rewards given in the Judgment, but rather to Him whose judgment is just (John 5:30). In the last phrase of the verse (many are called, but “few” are chosen), we learn that there will be “many” who will receive no reward at all, but, rather, punishment! This is clearly the application of the same phrase in Matthew 22:13-14! For further contrast and comparison of the “few” and the “many,” please also read Matthew 7:13, 14, 21 & 22.

QUESTION: To whom does the “Son of Man” refer in Matthew 24:37? To Jesus or to the Father?

ANSWER: In verse thirty-six of this chapter, Jesus begins to answer a question asked of Him in the latter part of verse three, “Tell us . . . what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” His disciples wanted to know when HE would return! He referred to HIS return as the “coming of the Son of Man” in verse thirty-seven. Jesus Christ is, therefore, the Son of Man!

QUESTION: Would you explain what appears to be a discrepancy between Luke 23:39-43 and Matthew 27:38-44; Mark 15:32? Did one or two of the insurgents rail on Jesus? I know that all scripture is inspired of God and truthful!

ANSWER: Since there can be no discrepancy in God’s inspired Word, there appears to be two possibilities: (1) At the first, both railed on Jesus (of which Matthew and Mark speak), one later repented, while the second continued to mock (of which Luke speaks) or (2), what one said was attributed to the group, in this case two! This practice was common. For example: Mark 7:17 says, “His disciples asked Him concerning the parable.” Matthew 15:15 tells us that specifically it was Peter who spoke. Compare also Mark 5:31 / Luke 8:45 and Luke 9:13 / John 6:8-9. Today if a lone police officer gave me a ticket for speeding, I might tell my friends that the “Police pulled me over” or that the “Police gave me a ticket.” Certainly, there is no discrepancy between what actually happened and what I reported. The important fact I am trying to relay is not how many policemen were involved in giving me the ticket, but rather the fact that I got a ticket.

QUESTION: Would you please explain Luke 17:20-21?

ANSWER: The Jews believed that the promised Messiah of the Old Testament would come with great outward show and establish an earthly kingdom from which the world would be ruled. Jesus, the promised Messiah, told the Pharisees in this passage that He did not come to establish an earthly, physical kingdom as

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they thought; one that people could observe with the eye. He, to the contrary, taught that the promised kingdom He came to build (Matthew 16:16-19) was to be a spiritual kingdom; one to be perceived by the heart, rather than the eye!

QUESTION: John 1:12 says that those who believe have been given the power to be saved. In other words they will be saved. Then why aren't the devils who believe also saved (James 2:19).

ANSWER: John 1:12 does not teach that those who believe are saved. This passage teaches that those who believe have the power (the right or privilege) to become the sons of God. They do not become the sons of God; they are not saved until following their belief and after they have obeyed Him! (Hebrews 5:8-9; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5; Romans 6:16-18). This is what is being taught in James, chapter two: Faith (belief) without works of obedience is dead (vss.14, 17, 20, 24, 26). To support this truth, James says in verse nineteen that the disobedient devils also believe, and tremble. It is obvious that the devils are lost and that their belief in Christ does not save them. And the same is true of humans who only believe and do not obey. They, too, are lost, because "faith (belief) without works is dead" (vs.20). Consider carefully verse twenty-four, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith (belief) only." This passage (and John 1:12) teaches that justification (forgiveness & salvation) is not ours by belief (faith) only (alone). It is true that one must believe in order to be saved, but clearly, belief only is not enough.

QUESTION: Please comment on I Corinthians 3:12-15. a) In what way will the fire try our works? b) How can one's work be burned and himself be saved? c) To what work is Paul referring?

ANSWER: In verse twelve, we see that a man's work is classified in two ways: 1) gold, silver, and precious stones; 2) wood, hay, and stubble. The first, being tested by fire, is purified; the second, being tested by fire, is destroyed. Men build upon the foundation of Christ (vss.10-11) by converting people to Him (I Peter 2:4-6). Some of these converts (the gold, silver, and precious stones) will remain faithful and stand the testing (fire) of Judgment. Some (the wood, hay, and stubble) will not. The Christian will be rewarded by knowing his work (the faithful convert) was saved. When he knows his work (the unfaithful convert) has not stood the testing (fire) of Judgment, he will suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved. The phrase, "yet so as by fire" simply conveys the idea that a man's salvation in Judgment will not be based upon how many of his converts remain faithful, but will be determined by his own faithfulness to God. In other words, he, as well as his converts, will go through the testing (fire) of Judgment (II Corinthians 5:10).

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QUESTION: Who is the man Paul saw in his vision of II Corinthians 12:1-4?

ANSWER: That Paul is speaking of himself is established in verse six of this chapter. He begins to speak of himself in verse four as “a man in Christ” in order to avoid in this chapter what could possibly have been perceived as excessive boasting because of what he said in the preceding chapter. In chapter eleven, he stated that he was not one whit behind the very chiefest apostles (vs.5) and then speaks at length about his accomplishments and sufferings in the cause of Christ. He did not do this for personal glory, but rather to offset charges that had been brought against him by the Judaizing teachers of Corinth. It is clear from chapter eleven that Paul found this kind of argument personally distasteful, but, nonetheless, necessary. In verse one he had asked the Corinthians to bear with him a little in what might seem to be the folly of boasting. After having done so, Paul begins chapter twelve by stating that it was not well (expedient) for him to carry this type of discussion further. He would, therefore, change subjects and begin discussing “visions and revelations of the Lord.” In order to avoid in this passage what might appear to be further boasting, he does not refer directly to himself, but rather indirectly as “a man in Christ.”

QUESTION: Does the establishment of our faith in the four gospels assure us of the promises of Jesus?

ANSWER: Inspired writers often use the word “faith” to refer to that “system of faith,” “which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3), i.e., the New Testament. The books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are a part of this “system of faith” and they, along with the other books of the New Testament, contain the precious promises of Jesus (II Peter 1:1-4).

QUESTION: Would you explain Matthew 21:44?

ANSWER: Jesus in this chapter is talking to the chief priests and elders of the Jews. Beginning in verse thirty-three, He presents a parable designed to show that, because they had rejected Him (vs.42; see also Psalms 118:22-23; Acts 4:11-12), the kingdom of God would be taken from them and given to the Gentiles. In verse forty-four the “Stone” is a clear reference to Christ. Whosoever (including, but not limited to the Jews) shall stumble at this “Stone” (Christ) will be broken to pieces, but not totally destroyed, i.e., there remains an opportunity for repentance. However, if penitence is not forthcoming and the “Stone” (Christ) falls (comes in judgment) upon whosoever, they will be destroyed.

These verses have primary reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred in 70AD. However, by use of the word “whosoever,” we are given to understand the direct applicability of this passage to all men everywhere!

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QUESTION: Does Acts 15:20 prohibit Christians today from eating blood?

ANSWER: Yes! The reason given in Leviticus 17:10-14 for not eating blood is "Because the life of the flesh is in the blood." The fact that "the life is in the blood" was true when James spoke and it is true today. Thus, the commandment by the Holy Spirit through James that Gentiles, then and now, should (as did the Jews) abstain from such. Further, there is no justification for restricting this commandment solely to the eating of blood sacrificed to idols, as some do!

QUESTION: Why did the wise men bring gifts to Christ?

ANSWER: It was customary in the east at that time to show respect for those of high office by presenting gifts. Their bringing gifts to Christ was quite appropriate since the wise men believed Him to be "born King of the Jews" (Matthew 2:2).

QUESTION: What is meant in I Timothy 2:15 . . ."she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety?"

ANSWER: First of all, the passage does not teach that childbearing is the act by which a woman is saved, that is, this act does not constitute a plan (or a way) of salvation. Neither is there an implication that all women who do not bear children are going to be lost! If we consider this particular verse in context with those preceding it (vss.8-14), we see a contrast or comparison between the responsibilities and proper relationship between Christian men and Christian women. In verses eleven and twelve, Paul shows that women are to be in submission to the man (see also I Corinthians 11:3); that they are not to teach, nor usurp authority over the man. In verse thirteen and fourteen, he tells us why this is the case. Then, in verse fifteen, he says, 'the preceding notwithstanding, she will be saved, not in participating in the authoritative role of the man, but, rather, in (not by) the role that God assigned the woman in this life (Genesis 1:16), i.e., in (not by) childbearing and all it involves.' This, however, does not end the matter, since, at this point, Paul inserts a qualifying clause; "if (if and only if) they continue in the faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." In other words, though women are not permitted to assume the role of the man, she, nonetheless, can be saved in the role of the woman, provided that in its doing, "she continue in the faith and charity and holiness with sobriety!"

QUESTION: Would you please explain I Timothy 5:23-25?

ANSWER: The twenty-third verse is an account of Paul prescribing the use of wine only as a medicine to treat Timothy's stomach ailment and other infirmities. Had Timothy been in the habit of drinking wine, it would not have been necessary for Paul to tell him what to do for his illness. Clearly then, this passage does not authorize the use of wine under other than medical conditions. Such would be sinful! Please read Proverbs 23:29-35; Isaiah 5:11; Habakkuk 4:2; I Corinthians 6:9-11; and Galatians 5:19-21.

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Verses twenty-four and twenty-five deals with the sins of man and the good works of man. Some men's ungodly actions are, by nature, apparent to all, and may, therefore, be righteously judged as sinful (John 7:24) in this life by others. Some sins are engaged in deceptively and undercover, and though they may remain hidden in this life, will eventually be revealed at the final Judgment (II Corinthians 5:10). The same is true of the good works of man. They cannot be concealed or hidden forever. Many of them will be made known in this life to the glory of God (Matthew 5:16). Those not seen in this life will, as the sins of man, be made known at the Judgment.

QUESTION: Should we anoint the sick with oil as James teaches in James 5:14-15?

ANSWER: No! Oil was customarily used in Bible times both medicinally and symbolically. Such is rarely, if ever, the custom today. Additionally, the anointing in this passage was to be accompanied by miraculous gifts that had been bestowed upon the elders through the laying on of the apostles' hands. When the miraculous action commanded of the elders was followed, the miraculous result was sure and without doubt, i.e., "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up" (vs.15). That such is not the case today is evidenced by reality. If such were the case today, then it would also be the case that none in the church today would ever die. Since this is not the case, it can safely be concluded that the action of James 5:14 (including the anointing with oil) was to temporarily serve a special purpose for a special time, i.e., the miraculous age, which found fulfillment with the completion of the written, perfect Word of God (I Corinthians 13:8-12).

QUESTION: Would you explain Colossians 2:16?

ANSWER: Notice in verse fourteen of this chapter, that the apostle Paul is discussing the fact that the Old Testament Law had been blotted out by Christ, because it was against us and contrary to us. Had it not been blotted out, it would have conflicted with the New Testament Law, which became effective upon the death of Christ (Hebrews 9:15-17). Therefore, He took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. See also Romans 7:1-7; II Corinthians 3:1-18; Galatians 3:19-29; Ephesians 2:11--18; Hebrews 7:12; and Hebrews 8:6-10. In verse sixteen, Paul discusses the "holy days" and "sabbaths" that were a part of the Old Testament Law. He is saying, "in view of the fact that you are no longer under that Law, you are not bound to keep these "days." Therefore, don't let any man judge you (or pronounce sentence upon you) regarding them. There were Jewish teachers at that time who were trying to force Christians to go back under the Old Law for justification by keeping the "days" in question. Paul is saying, 'don't let it happen.' In fact, in Galatians 5:1, he says to "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage (the Old Testament Law). In verse four, he warns that those who go back under that Old Law have "fallen from grace."

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QUESTION: Would you explain Colossians 3:2 and 3:5?

ANSWER: The phrase, "If ye be risen with Christ" is understood in light of Colossians 2:11-13. In verse eleven, Paul discusses the circumcision of Christ by which the body of the sins of the flesh are put off. In verse twelve, he tells us when those sins are put off: It is when ye are "buried with Him in baptism, where in also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." It becomes clear then that the phrase in chapter three, verse one, "If ye be risen with Christ" alludes to a spiritual resurrection at baptism, during which one, having been dead in sin, puts off sin and consequently is risen or made alive in Christ. Since this is the case with one who has been baptized; one who has been made alive, he or she is to "seek those things which are above" (vs.2) and to mortify (put to death) in our bodies the sins of the earth, such as fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desires, and covetousness, which is idolatry (vs.5).

QUESTION: Does Colossians 4:11 have reference to Jesus Christ?

ANSWER: No! The name "Jesus" was relatively common among the Jews in New Testament times. Jesus, Joshua or Jehoshua was the Jewish designation of one of Paul's companions and fellowworkers named in this passage. He was known by the name "Justus" among the Gentiles.

QUESTION: What is Peter teaching in I Peter 5:6?

ANSWER: Verse five of this chapter tells us that if we are to be recipients of the grace of God, we must be humble. Verse six teaches that a Christian must never be guilty of exalting himself. We are to leave that to God who will exalt the humble Christian, either in this life or in the Judgment to come. I would suspect that many who promote and receive the exaltation of others in this life will be disappointedly surprised at that time.

QUESTION: Most of the apostles were uneducated. How did they manage to do Gospel work?

ANSWER: The apostles were guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). He taught them all things, and brought all things to their remembrance, whatsoever Christ had said unto them (John 15:26). The Spirit, however, did not come to make uneducated men educated. Neither does He so do today! It is not necessary that one be highly educated to do God's work! Many faithful Christians without significant formal education have often accomplished great things in the service of God. Whatever talent has been given, one is required to use to His glory (Matthew 25:14-30)!

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QUESTION: Why did the apostles decide to use assistants?

ANSWER: The men who went with the apostles to proclaim the gospel were not assistants in a formal sense. They too, were those involved in preaching the gospel according to the great commission of Mark 16:15-16. The task before them was great and, undoubtedly, the apostles alone could not have accomplished the feat of taking the gospel into all the world as was done by the time Paul wrote the book of Colossians (Colossians 1:6). That the Holy Spirit was also involved in such decisions can be seen in Acts 13:2.

QUESTION: How many were chosen to go with the apostles?

ANSWER: We are not told! However, many of these “helpers” are identified in Romans 16; I Corinthians 16; Colossians 4; II Timothy 4; Titus 3; and many other passages.

QUESTION: What kind of men were chosen to go with the apostles?

ANSWER: The character of one of these is seen in a description of Barnabas, a companion of the apostle Paul, “a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and faith.”

QUESTION: How did the apostles want to spend most of their time?

ANSWER: As they did, proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ! Please read II Corinthians 11:21-33; II Timothy 4:6-8.

QUESTION: Was Theophilus a Christian and very rich?

ANSWER: It appears from the phrase “those things wherein thou hast been instructed” (Luke 1:4) that he likely was a Christian. The phrase “most excellent Theophilus” (vs.3) indicates that he was a man of means and high office. To what degree we are not told.

QUESTION: In Luke 22:36, does Jesus encourage self-defense?

ANSWER: In this passage, Jesus instructed his disciples to carry a sword. A sword may be used either offensively or defensively. Clearly, Christ did not instruct them to use the sword to hurt or make war (Matthew 5:38-48; Matthew 10:16), but rather defensively, because the country into which they were being sent was very dangerous; filled with wild beasts and robbers. Those who hold that Christians may not defend themselves do so without scriptural support!

QUESTION: Why did Paul often use diatribe in His writings?

ANSWER: The word “diatribe” is defined as abusive language. I do not believe that this definition is descriptive of Paul’s writings! We must remember that the apostle simply wrote “words” as directed by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 2:13). The “words” as given by the Holy Spirit were those necessary to communicate

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the will of God in the most effective manner. At times, especially when dealing with sin (I Corinthians 4:18-21), the words were filled with indignation. At other times they were filled with love and tenderness (II Corinthians 2:4). Always were they designed and proclaimed to the betterment of men's souls!

QUESTION: Would you please explain Hebrews 10:28?

ANSWER: Throughout the book of Hebrews, the writer contrasts or compares Moses' Law (the Old Testament) with Christ's Law (the New Testament). Please see 7:12; 8:7-13; & 10:9.

In chapter ten, verses twenty-eight and twenty-nine, a comparison is made of punishment under Moses' Law versus punishment under Christ's Law. If a person despised (rejected) Moses' Law, he or she was put to death by stoning at the mouth of two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:1-7). If we (all people everywhere) who live today during the Christian age, despise and reject Christ's Law, we will receive "sorer (worse) punishment" (verse 29) than those who lived during the Mosaic age and under Moses' Law. There remains today, for anyone who rejects the last and final sacrifice of Jesus Christ (verses 12 & 26), a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation (vs.27)! See also II Thessalonians 1:7-9.

QUESTION: Why are Paul's writings referred to as epistles and letters?

ANSWER: An epistle is the same thing as a letter. The words are equal in meaning. The apostle's writings are so-called, because (at the direction of the Holy Spirit) they were, and indeed are, letters of communication (or messages of authority) written for distribution to others, including all people today!

QUESTION: In Acts 1:9-11, Christ enters heaven with flesh and blood, and it was written that flesh and blood cannot enter into heaven. What is your stand on this?

ANSWER: Acts 1:9-11 does not say, nor imply, that at the ascension Christ's body consisted of flesh and blood. Neither does Luke 24:39 say that His resurrected body was of flesh and blood. It simply says that His body was flesh and bones! What kind of flesh? We do not know (I Corinthians 15:35-44), but we do know that it was not flesh and blood as we know it, for, as stated, such cannot inherit the kingdom of God (I Corinthians 15:50). We also know that at our resurrection we too, as Christ, shall have a body (II Corinthians 5:1-4) and that it will be "fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Philippians 3:20-21; I John 3:2).

QUESTION: Luke 14:26 says I must hate my brother. I John 4:20 says if I hate my brother, I am a liar. Please explain?

ANSWER: The word "hate" in Luke 14:26 simply means to love less! Please read a parallel passage in Matthew 10:37, which teaches this same principle!

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QUESTION: In Romans 8:16, what is the difference between the spirit which is in man and the Spirit Himself?

ANSWER: This passage teaches that the Holy Spirit (the third person of the Godhead - Matthew 28:19) bears witness with the Christian's spirit that he or she is a child of God. This witness comes only through the Word of God! When a person accepts and is obedient to the truth given (John 16:13), his or her spirit can then witness in agreement with the Holy Spirit that he or she is a child of God; a Christian!

QUESTION: Why did the blind man in Mark 10:50 cast away his garment?

ANSWER: The man desperately wanted to be healed and believed that Jesus could make him see again! When Jesus called for him, he, not wanting any delay, cast aside his garment. The garment was undoubtedly his outer garment, which was a large piece of cloth that might have kept him from responding quickly!

QUESTION: What does it mean when some say, "All will be judged alike?"

ANSWER: In referring to the Judgment Day (See Matthew 25:31-46), John said in Revelation 20:12, "And I saw the dead small and great stand before God; and the books were opened." The words "small and great" convey the idea that no matter what position is held in this life; no matter how great; no matter how educated; no matter how much money, we all (presidents, kings, religious leaders, farmers, housewives, and laborers) will be judged in exactly the same way. Certainly, this is the case, because "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). All people will be judged solely by the words (New Testament) of Christ (John 12:48) with consideration to the things they have done in the body (while in this life), whether it be good or bad (II Corinthians 5:10). Those who disobeyed the New Testament while in the body "shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous (obedient) into life eternal" (Matthew 25:46).

QUESTION: Would you kindly show me how the Samaritans were baptized, since they did not receive it of Christ or His apostles?

ANSWER: Please read John, chapter four. In verse forty-one we see that Jesus taught the Samaritans and, in verse forty-two, they came to believe that He "is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." That their belief in Christ resulted in baptism cannot be denied (John 3:26; John 4:1-2). Also in Acts 8:5-6, we see Philip preaching to the people of Samaria. Then in verse twelve, we find them being baptized. In verses fourteen and twenty-five, Luke tells us that the apostles, Peter and John, also preached to the Samaritans, undoubtedly in fulfillment of the prophecy of Christ in Acts 1:8, "ye (the apostles) shall be witnesses of me in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth."

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QUESTION: What was Paul's thorn in the flesh?

ANSWER: Though we cannot be absolutely certain, it appears likely that Paul was afflicted with some sort of vision impairment. Please refer to the following passages: Acts 9:1-9 & 18; Galatians 4:13-15; Galatians 6:11.

QUESTION: Would you please provide a general comment on the book of Revelation and explain the symbols "seven, six hundred sixty-six, one thousand, beast, pit, Babylon, and rod of iron?"

ANSWER: The Revelation was written at a time when Christians were suffering extreme persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire. It was written in symbolic language which Christians, being familiar with similar language of the Old Testament, would be able to understand. Their persecutors would not be able to understand. The message of the book is that the church would (and will) overcome any and all persecution, and one day be victorious.

Scholars are not always in agreement as to the symbolism of Revelation. However, it appears that most are in general agreement with the following: The word "seven" denotes that which is perfect or complete. The word "six" denotes that which is sinister. Therefore, a multiple of this number (666) would denote that which is extremely sinister." "One thousand" years is not literal, but refers to a long, definite period of time. The word "beast" as used in Revelation 11:7 refers to the power of Satan manifested in the Roman government. The word "beast(s)" used in Revelation 4:6-11 is more correctly translated as "living creatures." The "pit" is a reference to hell. "Babylon" represents Rome. The "rod of iron" denotes a rule of power and firmness.

QUESTION: What do the "seven Spirits of God" in Revelation 4:5 represent?

ANSWER: Reference to the "seven Spirits of God" is also made in chapter one, verse four. Please note in verses four and five, John invokes the blessing of grace upon the seven churches of Asia from three personalities, that is, 'from Him (the Father), "the seven Spirits," and (the Son) Jesus Christ. These three personalities are obviously those who make up the Godhead. Clearly then, "the seven Spirits of God" would be symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

But why the number seven? This number throughout the Bible symbolically represents completeness or fullness. The phrase in question then, would symbolize the completeness, fullness, and finality of the work of the Holy Spirit in carrying out the will of the Father.

QUESTION: What is the holy city, New Jerusalem, of Revelation 21:2? Is it the "new heavens and the new earth" of verse one?

ANSWER: Yes! This passage teaches that the source of the "new heavens and the new earth" (New Jerusalem) is God!

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QUESTION: What does Revelation 11:11-12 mean?

ANSWER: The book of Revelation was written in symbolic language and is not to be understood literally (Revelation 1:1, the word signified means that John was shown things in “signs,” which must shortly come to pass). So it is in this passage. It, too, was written in signs or symbolic language. Verses eleven and twelve refer back to those Christians (vss.9-10) who had suffered great persecution at the hands of the “beast,” or the Roman Empire (vs.7). After three and one-half days (a symbolic number representing a period of time designated by God), these ones were to overcome their persecution by the power of the Spirit of God; and to be raised spiritually victorious in this life, as well, as in the life to come!

QUESTION: If we understand that the mark of the beast in the forehead (Revelation 14:9) is a type of baptism, does this mean that we can sprinkle?

ANSWER: No! As we have already studied, the “beast” is symbolic of the Roman Empire. Since the “beast” is the one who gives the mark (Revelation 13:16), it could not possibly mean baptism. Certainly, the “beast” (the Roman Empire) did not command that we be baptized. Christ proclaimed the doctrine of immersion! It is of (came from) Christ! The mark is of (came from) the “beast.” Revelation 13:16 says that the “mark” is received in the “right hand” and the forehead. If one were to adopt the suggestion in the question, he would also erringly have to adopt the position that one could sprinkle the “right hand” in place of immersing the entire body in water! The fact is that the passages in question have nothing whatever to do with baptism!

QUESTION: What does “no gatherings” mean in I Corinthians 16:2?

ANSWER: “Gatherings” is another word for “collections.” Paul was coming to visit the church at Corinth to receive from them what had previously been “gathered” on the first day of each week. These particular “gatherings” were to be taken to Jerusalem to relieve and help the poor Christians in that city. Paul ordered the Corinthians to be diligent in their giving, so that no “gatherings or collections” for this purpose would be necessary upon his arrival.

QUESTION: Is it true that Elijah went into heaven (II kings 2:9-11)? If so, how is it that Jesus said. “no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven?”

ANSWER: Yes! “Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (II Kings 2:11). The quotation in the second part of the question is to be found in John 3:13. To understand it, we must consider the context in which Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus, especially verse twelve! He is simply stating that He was the only one who could speak of heavenly things, because He had been there before coming to this earth. So then, we understand the phrase “no man hath ascended

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into heaven” to mean that no man has ever gone there to learn about heavenly things so that he might return and speak of those things to others!

QUESTION: What is the meaning of the “foolishness of God?”

ANSWER: This biblical phrase does not mean that God is foolish or that He does foolish things. It simply refers to those things which God appoints or commands that appear foolish to men. For example, in I Corinthians 1:21, we are not to understand that preaching is foolishness, but rather that sinful man by worldly wisdom perceives (falsely) that preaching is foolishness. Please read carefully I Corinthians 1:18-31.

QUESTION: Why was Stephen taken out of Jerusalem to be stoned to death?

ANSWER: It was the custom and law of the Jews (See Leviticus 24:16 & 23; Numbers 15:35-36; I Kings 21:13; and Hebrews 13:12-13)

QUESTION: In Acts 15:21 there were those who preached Moses in the synagogues every Sabbath. Why did they not preach Christ?

ANSWER: James is not talking about Christians in this verse, but is talking about those unconverted Jews who were still keeping the Law of Moses. To preach Christ (Philippians 1:15-16) is to preach the Law of Christ; the New Testament! When the Jews preached Moses, they preached the Law of Moses; the Old Testament.

QUESTION: Why did Jesus command His disciples at the first not to go to the Gentiles?

ANSWER: The passage under consideration is Matthew, chapter ten. Here we find what is called “The Limited Commission.” The disciples were told to go only to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (vs.6). Jesus said, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24). Though His personal ministry was to be only to the Jews, He, as God, evidently purposed from eternity that the Gentiles should (at a time which He would determine) become fellow heirs with the Jews (Ephesians 3:1-11). That the Gentiles would be called by His name only after the tabernacle of David was rebuilt (the church on Pentecost) was prophesied in Amos 9:11-14. We read about its fulfillment in Acts 15:15-17.

Though we haven’t been told the reasons why the gospel should first go to the Jews, it seems quite appropriate that God should cause such to happen, since they were chosen from the beginning as those people through whom the promised Messiah was to come.

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QUESTION: Is Pentecost a Jewish feast or was it begun by Christ for the purpose of giving the Holy Spirit?

ANSWER: There were three major Feasts of the Jews that occurred once every year: Passover, Tabernacles, and Pentecost. The Feast of Pentecost came fifty days after Passover on the first day of the week. It was known by three other names; Feast of Harvest (Exodus 23:16); Feast of the First fruits (Leviticus 23:17); and Feast of Weeks (Exodus 34:22). It is clear then that the feast of Pentecost was established and kept thousands of years before Christ.

Jews on this day would come to Jerusalem from every nation under heaven (Acts 2:5) to worship. It is believed that there were more people in Jerusalem during this time than any other; an appropriate day on which to first proclaim the saving power of the gospel of Christ. It was to this particular Pentecost Day of Acts, chapter two, that many prophecies concerning the establishment of His kingdom had pointed (Isaiah 2, Daniel 2, and Joel 2). All of these found their fulfillment in the birthday of the church of Christ on the Pentecost Day of 33AD.

QUESTION: Would you please tell me about the synoptic gospels: the date of each and their problems?

ANSWER: The first three accounts of the gospel, Matthew, Mark, and Luke are often called the synoptic gospels (from the Greek sunopsis, a seeing together). This is because they have much in common and, generally, present the Lord's life and ministry in Galilee in much the same way. There is much speculation as to the dates of each and the order in which they were written. However, most scholars agree that all three were written before 70AD, most likely between 40AD and 63AD. Since specific dates cannot be accurately assigned, guessing which of the three was written first would not be wise.

Problems alleged to exist between the synoptic gospels are only in the minds of those who reject the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible (I Corinthians 2:12-13; II Timothy 3:16). There are no problems with the inspired word of God. It is truth!

QUESTION: Who wrote the book of Hebrews?

ANSWER: Most of the 1st and 2nd century churches, and also the early church fathers, received the epistle as written by the apostle Paul. Much internal evidence also offers proof that it is his writing, e.g., Hebrews 10:34, 13:23. As well, the structure and arrangement of the book is very similar to the other writings of Paul, especially his epistles to Rome and Galatia. By far, the greater weight of evidence and scholarship supports this reasoning.

QUESTION: In Revelation 7, why is the tribe of Dan omitted?

ANSWER: The Bible does not reveal the reason. Some hold that it was because of the continuous idolatry of the tribe of Dan as described in Judges 18:30-31. However, this, and all other suggestions, are nothing but speculation. Though

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there is no harm in wondering about such matters, undue consideration should not be given to the things God has not revealed, but rather to those things He has revealed (Deuteronomy 29:29).

QUESTION: In I John 5:16-17, what is the “sin unto death?”

ANSWER: God will forgive all sins that we confess and turn away from (I John 1:7-10). The “sin unto death” then is a sin, which one will not confess and turn away from!

QUESTION: Should Mark 16:9-20 be included in the Scriptures?

ANSWER: Yes! The reason some would like to see it omitted is because it is devastating to the doctrine of salvation by “faith only.” Clearly, from verse sixteen, in order to be saved one must believe and be baptized. Rather than admit the truth of this biblical fact, it seems easier for some to attempt to remove it entirely! They attempt to do this on the basis that two of the three earliest manuscripts (the Vatican and Sinaitic) do not include the passage. However, the Alexandrian does. As well, there is a blank space in the fourth century Vatican manuscript where this passage should have been, which simply indicates that the copyist had not yet completed his work! Also, verse eight of Mark sixteen obviously was never intended as a concluding remark.

It is significant to note also that the Vatican manuscript omits many other large passages, which the detractors include as scripture. Honesty in translation would demand that if one omitted passage is excluded, then all such passages should as well be excluded! To do otherwise would be to compromise one's integrity, which, clearly, some in this matter have done. What these men also fail to properly report is that there are 1,400 other manuscripts and versions in which the passage does appear!

Additionally, the early church fathers quoted from the last verse of Mark long before any of the three earliest manuscripts were written. For example: A few years after the first century ended, Irenaeus (a disciple of Polycarp, who was a personal acquaintance of the apostle John) quoted Mark 16:19, when he said, “But Mark in the end of his gospel says, ‘And the Lord Jesus, after that He had spoken to them, was received up into heaven, and sat at the right hand of God.’”

Without doubt, Mark 16:9-20 is a passage within God's Word. In fact, His Word would be incomplete without it!

QUESTION: Romans 1:24-32 says men have changed from the natural use of women to men which is against nature. Has the manner of dress brought this about?

ANSWER: In the passage under consideration, the disgusting sin of homosexuality (and its consequences) is being discussed. The manner of dress exhibited by those who engage in this sin cannot properly be identified as the

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root cause of homosexuality. The cause of homosexuality is basically that men have rejected God! Professing themselves to be wiser than He, they turned to idols, worshipping the creature rather than the Creator. As a result, God gave them up unto reprobate minds, vile affections, and uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts (Romans 1:18-32).

It is certain, nonetheless, that a deviate manner of dress is a part of homosexuality and often a contributing factor to this and many other sins as well. God has always desired that mankind dress appropriately: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (I Timothy 2:9-10); "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God (Deuteronomy 22:5).

QUESTION: II Timothy 3:1-17 warns us of God's judgment upon wicked men. Part 1: Does verse ten apply to believers? Part 2: Shall we be saved if we believe in the Gospel?

ANSWER: Part 1: All men everywhere from the cross until the end of time will be judged by all of the New Testament (John 12:48). In this sense, all scripture applies to everyone, because it alone is necessary to salvation. However, in verses ten and eleven of this chapter, Paul is talking about the persecutions that had befallen him as a result of his doctrine and manner of life in Christ. And then in verse twelve, we find him applying the same principle to all godly believers in Christ: "Yea, and all that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Though verses ten and eleven refer directly to Paul himself, he, through applying the principle contained therein to "all who live godly" in verse twelve, assures that verse ten does apply to believers, though indirectly!

Part 2: We shall be saved if we believe the Gospel, if we understand that "believing the Gospel" means to trust it, have confidence in it, and to obey it! We must not only hear the Gospel, but we must also do what it says (Matthew 7:21-29)! To only agree that the Gospel is God's Word is not enough. The devils do that much (James 2:19).

QUESTION: How are Christians chastised?

ANSWER: First, we must realize that God does not chastise by sending evil, suffering or sickness upon the children whom He loves. However, neither does God protect us (as individuals or congregations) from the consequences of our sins, but rather permits us to be chastened thereby that we might not engage further in the sin, causing us to be partakers of His holiness and producers of the peaceable fruit of righteousness (Hebrews 12:10-11).

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QUESTION: Is the place Jesus gone to prepare (John 14:1-3) for the righteous and the sinner?

ANSWER: No! Only the righteous will go to the prepared place of John fourteen. In Matthew 25:34, we learn that on the great Judgment day Jesus will say to them, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Another, or a different place, is prepared for sinners. In Judgment day, Jesus will say to them, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

QUESTION: In John 19:23-24, the soldiers took Christ's clothes. In the fortieth verse, Nicodemus and Joseph wound Jesus' body in linen clothes for His burial. In John 20:7, we see that, after the resurrection, the linen clothes were left in the tomb. Where then did Christ get clothes in which to make public appearances before His ascension?

ANSWER: The Bible does not provide this information. However, the miraculous provision of clothing, if required, would certainly present no obstacle for the One who created all things (Colossians 1:16-17)!

QUESTION: Are people possessed by "demons" today?

ANSWER: No! However, the fact of "demons" during the time of Christ cannot be denied (Matthew 4:24). But their presence at that time was for a specific purpose, i.e., in order for Christ to prove His divinity, by showing His power over Satan. Jesus clearly taught in Matthew 12:22-30 that he had come to bind Satan. He mightily accomplished that deed as seen in Revelation 20:1-3. This binding of Satan and his servants resulted in their power being limited only to evil influences. Today, when the faithful child of God resists these influences in obedience to the word of God, the devil will flee from him (James 4:7). People today are not possessed by demons, as were some in the first century!

QUESTION: Is it right to withdraw fellowship from sinners who will not repent?

ANSWER: It is commanded, but must be done in accordance with God's will. Please read Romans 16:17-18; I Corinthians 5; II Thessalonians 3; I Timothy 1:19-20; and Titus 3:10-11.

QUESTION: After the death of Jesus, how many sons did Mary bear? Name them all.

ANSWER: Most scholars agree that since there is no account of Joseph appearing at the crucifixion that he had, by this time, died. This being true, and given the fact that Mary would now be very nearly fifty years of age, it would be highly unlikely that she had additional sons following the death of Christ. However, from Matthew 13:55, we learn that, during the life and ministry of Christ on this earth, He had four brothers whose names were James, Joses, Simon,

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and Judas. In the following verse, we are told that He also had sisters. How many or their names is not revealed.

QUESTION: Is the grave Hell?

ANSWER: In the Old Testament the Hebrew word Sheol was often translated as “hell.” Other times it was translated as “grave.” This does not mean that Hell is the grave; nor does it mean that the grave is Hell, in the sense that the question is asked! Sheol is the place of disembodied spirits, not a hole in the ground. The equivalent of Sheol in the New Testament is Hades. This Greek word in the King James Version is most often translated as Hell, but is also translated as the grave (I Corinthians 15:55). It often does not refer to the place of eternal torment! For example (Acts 2:27): In reference to Jesus, the passage says, “Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (Hades) . . .” Jesus did not go to the place of eternal torment, but rather He went to a place called Paradise (Luke 23:43).

Sheol/Hades is the place where all spirits go when death occurs. The righteous go to a place within Hades called Paradise or Abraham’s Bosom (Luke 16:22); the unrighteous go to a different place in Hades; a place of torments (Luke 16:19-31). In II Peter 2:4, this place of torments is also called hell. The Greek word for hell in this passage is Tartarus. Both the righteous and the unrighteous will remain in the Hadean world (in either Paradise or Tartarus) to await the resurrection and final Judgment. After Judgment, the righteous will go to heaven (the new heavens and new earth-II Peter 3:13) and the unrighteous will go to hell, the place of eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46). The Greek word translated “hell” that denotes this final place of the wicked is Gehenna!

When the words Sheol/Hades are translated as “grave,” the root meaning remains the same. It is the place of all departed spirits! It is nowhere suggested in God’s Word that the piece of earth into which our bodies are placed upon death is the “hell” to which we refer above! This is to say that the grave is neither Tartarus, nor Gehenna!

QUESTION: If the lost are going to suffer an eternal burning, will it be in heaven or on earth?

ANSWER: It will be neither in heaven, nor on the earth. Peter tells us that this earth will be totally destroyed (II Peter 3:10). Only the righteous will go to heaven (Matthew 25:34). A different place has been prepared for the sinner; a place of everlasting fire (Matthew 25:41) and everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46). In Matthew 5:29-30, this place of everlasting punishment in the English language is called “hell.” In the Greek language, the word is gehenna.

QUESTION: Is it true that there is no place of eternal punishment (hell)?

ANSWER: No! It is not true! Just as surely as the Bible teaches that there is a heaven, it also teaches that there is a hell! Please read the following passages:

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Matthew 25:30, 41,46; Revelation 14:10-11; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20: 10-15.

QUESTION: What will burn in hell? The soul? The flesh? Or both?

ANSWER: At the resurrection all will be bodily raised; the good and the bad (John 5:28-29). All will be judged (Matthew 25:31-46). The righteous will go into life eternal; the bad into everlasting punishment (Vs.46). Both the resurrected body and the soul of the wicked will be cast into hell (Matthew 10:28)!

QUESTION: In Luke 16:23 and II Peter 2:4, it seems like there are two hells. If one hell is before Judgment Day, what is the purpose of Judgment?

ANSWER: When a person dies, the spirit goes by God's direction to Hades (one of the words translated as "hell" in the King James Bible), which denotes the "place of disembodied spirits." This is where Lazarus and the rich man of Luke sixteen went upon their deaths. (This is also where Christ and the "thief on the cross" went when they died. Christ did not ascend to the Father and heaven until forty days after His resurrection - John 17:20 & Acts 1:3. In Acts 2:34, we learn that David is still not ascended into the heavens, because he, too, remains in Hades). Lazarus was carried by angels into the part of Hades referred to as paradise or Abraham's bosom, while the rich man awoke in the part of Hades referred to as a place of torments! Each of these will remain where they are until the general resurrection of the dead (John 5:28-29). The same is true of David and the "thief on the cross." In the resurrection, their spirits (and all the dead, righteous and unrighteousness) will leave the Hadean world and rejoin their changed bodies (I Corinthians 15:51) to stand before Christ in judgment (II Corinthians 5:10). The righteous (those obedient to Christ) will then go to Heaven (Matthew 25:24). The unrighteous (the disobedient) shall be cast into the lake of eternal fire and brimstone (Matthew 25:41 & Revelation 20:14-15)!

The passages in the question refer to the same place. The word "hell" in II Peter 2:4 is from the Greek word "tartarus" and is described as a place of reservation "unto judgment." The rich man of Luke 16 remains in the same place, i.e., the place of torments, also reserved "unto judgment." The final destination for the ungodly following judgment is from the Greek word "gehenna," also translated "hell" in the English (Matthew 10:28).

There is going to be a Judgment Day, because God has appointed it (Acts 17:31) so that: every knee shall bow and every tongue confess (Romans 14:11); everyone shall give account of himself (Romans 14:12); everyone may receive the end result of that which was done in the body (II Corinthians 5:10); everyone will know exactly the why of their end result (Matthew 25:31-46); and to hear final sentences pronounced (Matthew 25:34; Matthew 25:41).

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QUESTION: Is it in order to say that the saints have been resurrected with Christ - Matthew 27:52-53? Who were these people? What were their names?

ANSWER: It is in order to say that many of the saints were resurrected from the dead at that time. (Of course, this is not to be confused with the general resurrection of the dead at the end of time in which "all" of the dead will be raised.) The Bible does not tell us the names of these or who they were, other than the fact that they were saved people or "saints." Upon their resurrection they went into the city of Jerusalem and appeared to many. Though the purpose of their appearance is not given, it seems reasonable to assume that it was done to convince the Jews of the power and divinity of Christ.

QUESTION: Was the resurrection of Matthew 27:51-53 the first resurrection? Are there not two resurrections indicated in I Thessalonians 4:13-17 and John 5:28-29?

ANSWER: No to both questions! Those mentioned in Matthew 27:51-53 were certain followers of Christ who, apparently, had recently died and were known of those to whom they appeared in Jerusalem. Further reason for their resurrection is not stated. However, that it attests, along with the resurrection of Christ, to our future resurrection cannot be denied. Another blessed assurance for the faithful child of God!

The "first" resurrection spoken of in Revelation 20:5-6 is symbolic and involves only those previously described in Revelation 20:4, i.e., the disembodied souls who had been slain for the cause of Christ. In Revelation 6:9, these same souls are seen as being under the altar. They are symbolically resurrected (the first resurrection) from under the altar to enthronement in order to reign in figurative judgement with Christ for a "thousand years," a period of time typical of an indefinite, but complete period of time. This "first resurrection" has no reference to you and me. Note in verse four; "And 'they' (those slain for His cause) lived and reigned . . ."

I Thessalonians 4:13-17 reads as follows: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." This passage needs to be read in context. The idea of two resurrections, one for the righteous and one for the wicked, is not under discussion. The two groups of people under discussion are those who are dead in Christ and those who are alive in Christ before the promised meeting with the Lord in the air! The Thessalonians apparently believed that only the righteous living would benefit from Christ's return. Paul corrects this misunderstanding by saying that the dead in Christ will rise first (before the meeting with Christ in the air), then after having been resurrected, they will join those who are alive in Christ. Both groups then will ascend as one group to meet the Lord in the air at the same time.

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In John 5:28-29, we read, “marvel not at this: for the hour is coming. in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, And they shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.” This passage speaks of a single hour (the hour) when all (doers of good and doers of evil) that are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth. They that have done evil will be resurrected to damnation; they who have done good will be resurrected to life This passage clearly teaches the truth of one general resurrection!

QUESTION: Would you explain Revelation, chapter seventeen?

ANSWER: A thorough explanation of this chapter would require volumes. However, a general understanding of this passage can be attained by realizing that most of the symbols used (great whore-vs.2, woman on a scarlet coloured beast-vs.3, Babylon the great-vs.5, beast-vs.8, seven heads and ten horns-vss.7-12) refer to Rome, the Roman Empire, Roman rulers, and those nations under the influence of Rome. The chapter teaches that the Roman Empire and it's influences would make war (vs.14) with the Lamb (Christ) and His called, chosen, and faithful (Christians), but that the Lamb would overcome and be victorious. History clearly shows that Christ and His church did gain the victory over Rome, surviving even the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD. The reign of Christ over His church existed in 70AD, it exists today, and it will always exist (Daniel 7:14; Revelation 11:15)! The Roman Empire, to the contrary, ceased to exist over fifteen hundred years ago!

QUESTION: Why are Christians forbidden to cry and mourn for the dead as Jesus did (John 11:35)?

ANSWER: Christians are not forbidden to weep for loved ones who have passed from this life! It was natural for Jesus to weep for Lazarus whom He loved (John 11:36) and it is, likewise, natural for us to do the same. However, we do not sorrow as those in the world do when a loved one dies, because faithful Christians have the glorious hope of meeting and living together again in the eternal world to come (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

QUESTION: In my letter I have stated my thoughts on the subject of taking a brother to law (I Corinthians 6:7-8). Do you agree? What can you offer?

ANSWER: Some of the things you suggest in your letter relative to legal matters constitute compliance with Roman 13:1-7 and would not, therefore, be wrong, i.e., to settle an estate among Christians or to use the courts to clear a deed or title. This would also be true of the faithful, innocent party divorcing their mate (in accordance with Matthew 5:32,19:9) for the cause of fornication.

Indeed, as clearly stated in your letter, it is not wrong, but truly right, for an eldership to protect the church property from unscrupulous apostates who would steal it away. In Acts 25:10-11, Paul was practicing what he taught in Romans

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13:1-7. This is, that earthly rulers are put in place for our good, i.e., to protect us, our name, our person and our property; to guard our liberty; and to protect our rights under the law. If God has put them in place for our protection and defense, we not only have the right to use them, but the responsibility of doing so, especially when charges are brought against us as individuals or congregations that reflect poorly upon our Lord. Neither is it wrong to defend our Christian lives and character according to the law under which we live!

In I Corinthians, chapter six, Paul is saying that we are not to initiate or pursue an action designed to cause the appearance of brethren before worldly Judges. He does not say, as some would have us believe, that we are not to defend and protect ourselves (whether individually or congregationally) through the “powers” He has ordained!

I do not believe that any of the items suggested in your letter would be a violation of scripture. Certainly, as faithful Christians, we should not take a brother to law, nor should we initiate anything that would result in such. To the contrary, we are to suffer wrong, even to the point of loss, but this, as stated above, does not mean that when forced into a legal situation that reflects detrimentally upon our character as Christians, or upon the Lord and His church, that it would be sinful to call upon those ordained of God to avert the inequity. I imagine that many property-usurping apostates would have the faithful believe otherwise!

QUESTION: Is it right to “judge.”

ANSWER: We are commanded not to judge unrighteously (Matthew 7:1-5). However, we are commanded to judge righteous judgment (John 7:24)!

QUESTION: Is it right for a Christian to judge his enemy by praying that God will do bad things to him?

ANSWER: No! “Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good unto them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven . . .” (Matthew 5:43-45).

QUESTION: In Colossians 3:5, what is the meaning of uncleanness? Of inordinate affection? Of evil concupiscence?

ANSWER: Uncleanness is that which we think or do that has its source in a spirit rebellious to God. Words with similar meanings include filthy, evil and impure! Inordinate affection means unnatural passions of the flesh. This may include passions for sodomy, bestiality and other unlawful sexual activity. Evil concupiscence means evil desires and is similar to inordinate affections, but is used in a broader sense to include a deep longing and yearning for the unnatural and sinful activities of the flesh.

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QUESTION: Romans 10:9-10, what does it mean? Why do some say this is all one has to do to be saved? How can one show that belief (mental assent) is not enough for salvation?

ANSWER: Some in the religious world today hold that all one must do to be saved is to believe (understand and accept) that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. They many times refer to this passage in support of their false doctrine. However, often they fail to comprehend that “belief” in Jesus Christ is more than just mental assent. As used in the Bible, e.g., John 3:16; Acts 16:30-31, the meaning of “believe” is “trust in Christ, conjoined with obedience to Him.” So it is in the verses in question! This particular passage says nothing of repentance. Are we to conclude that we are not required to repent for the remission of sins? Surely not, because in Acts 2:38 & 17:30-31, we are commanded to repent! Similarly, this particular passage says nothing of baptism. Are we to conclude that we are not required to be baptized for the remission of sins? Surely not, because in Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; & I Peter 3:21, we see that baptism precedes and is necessary to salvation! When a man “with the heart believeth unto righteousness” (Romans 10:10), he is calling upon the name of the Lord (vs.13); he is faithfully obeying the gospel (vs.16); and he is hearing the word of God (vs.17). The phrases are synonymous! Each of these verses implicitly includes belief, repentance, confession and baptism as works of obedience (not works of righteousness) necessary and prior to salvation.

Extreme care must be taken in studying the Bible not to take a passage out of context in order to support a preconception (as do the proponents of “faith only”), nor to base a doctrine upon a particular verse without consideration to similarly related verses. This is a misuse of Holy Scripture!

The doctrine of “faith only” is easily shown to be false in a reading of James 2:14-26. Notice: Vs.14: Faith without works cannot save!

Vs.17: Faith by itself is dead!

Vs.18: Faith is shown by works!

Vs.19: The devils have faith only!

Vs.20: Faith without works is dead!

Vs.21: Abraham was justified by his works!

Vs.22: Faith is made perfect by works!

Vs.23: Abraham was said to believe God when he became obedient!

Vs.24: A man is justified by works and not by “faith only!”

Vs.25: Likewise, Rahab was justified by works and not by “faith only!”

Vs.26: Faith without works is dead!

QUESTION: In the Bible, it says to try the different faiths or spirits to see if they be of God, and if they confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, they are of God. Would you please explain this passage (I John 4:1-3).

ANSWER: The spirit of anti-Christ was manifested specifically at the time of this writing by a group known as the “Gnostics.” These claimed that Jesus did not really come in the flesh; that He only “appeared” to be human. John is simply

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telling Christians how to distinguish them from true Christians, i.e., if they confess that Christ came in the flesh, they are of God. If they do not confess that Jesus came in the flesh, they are not of God, but rather anti-Christ.

As these Gnostics, there are those today who teach this and other false doctrines. We are to “try” all of them by the word of God whether they are of Him!

QUESTION: Does not Ephesians 4:11-13 teach that there are apostles today?

ANSWER: No! Here stated is the simple fact that Christ gave some to be apostles. Because there were apostles at that time does not mean there are apostles today. Clearly these being discussed in this passage were those of Acts 1:26, in addition to Paul (Romans 11:13). In order for these to be apostles they had to have been eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22). None today have seen the resurrected Christ and cannot, therefore, be qualified to be apostles today! Those who claim apostleship today are false prophets, wresting the scriptures to their own destruction. Surely a prudent person will see that those who claim to be apostles today cannot do the works performed by the apostles of Jesus Christ. They cannot speak in foreign languages that they have not studied; they cannot heal the sick; they cannot heal themselves and their own families; and they cannot raise the dead. All of which proves the falsity and foolishness of their anti-scriptural claims.

QUESTION: What does it mean in Revelation 13:17-18 that none might buy or sell unless he had the mark of the beast?

ANSWER: The book of Revelation was written to Christians who were being persecuted at the hands of the Roman Empire to assure them that they would eventually be victorious. The “beast” in this passage has reference to the Roman Empire. It is teaching that only those who lived at that time with allegiance to the Roman Empire would in some way be so identified and, thus, be able to buy and sell. Christians to whom John was writing, and who were opposed to Rome, would not be able to buy and sell. They would, therefore, be caused to suffer temporarily as a result. The passage is not teaching that there is to be a future “great tribulation” during which Christians will live in a “cashless society!”

QUESTION: What is being taught in I Peter 3:3?

ANSWER: The apostle is telling Christian women in verses one and two of this chapter that they can win their husbands to the Lord if their manner of life is appropriate. In verses three and four, he is contrasting an inappropriate lifestyle for women of that time with an appropriate lifestyle. Some women in that time conducted themselves sinfully by being vain and proud, having a desire to dress and arrange their hair in such a way as to draw the attention of others to their persons (often for purposes of immorality), rather than dressing in such a way to show that they were in subjection only to their own husbands. So Peter tells them

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not to dress and arrange their hair as the immoral, haughty, and proud women of that day, but rather to dress in such a way that a life of subjection, meekness, and quietness would be portrayed, as holy women who trust in God! The lesson for women today is that they need also to dress modestly as those professing godliness; dressing as those in subjection to their own husbands, and not dressing in such a way as to entice and attract the view of others!

QUESTION: In Matthew 20:20-23, the baptism of suffering is applied to the believer who is physically suffering from fever or disease. After these were anointed, did he or she become saved immediately?

ANSWER: This passage has nothing to do with fever, diseases or salvation from sin. Jesus is only saying that His disciples would “suffer” much pain and many trials with Him as they worked for the kingdom of God. This “suffering” was referred to as a “baptism” because they were to be “immersed” in it; it was to be an “overwhelming.” All faithful Christians, even today, will similarly suffer! “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus (the saved) shall suffer persecution” (II Timothy 3:12). Clearly, one does not suffer as they enter the kingdom (church). He or she enters the kingdom (church) in order to suffer (with Him who suffered and died for us)!

Only one submissive act will effect our salvation and, thereby, place us in the one body (kingdom/church) of Christ; that is, an immersion in water for the remission of sins.

QUESTION: John 1:1 says that God created the universe with words. Can you tell me how these words were made?

ANSWER: In John 1:1-5, “The Word” refers to Jesus Christ, not the “words” by which the worlds were created. Certainly the worlds were spoken into existence (Psalms 33:9) and the fact of Christ’s participation in the creation is clearly without doubt (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17). Based on these passages then, the words by which the worlds were made were those commandments “spoken” by God ordering all creation into existence! “The Word” spoken of in John 1:1 (Jesus Christ, God the Son) was not “made,” since His “goings forth have been from old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2). He is eternal, “having neither beginning of days, nor end of life” (Hebrews 7:17; Hebrews 7:3).

QUESTION: Would you please explain what John 1:1 means?

ANSWER: The verse reads, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” A) “In the beginning” means in the beginning of time or before the world was created. B) “Was the Word” means that the Word, Jesus Christ, (John 1:14) was already in existence at the beginning of the creation. Paul tells us the same in Colossians 1:17, “He is before all things.” Micah 5:2, likewise, teaches that Jesus Christ (the Word) existed before all things, because He is eternal. He is called the Word because through Him the

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nature and purpose of Deity would be revealed and communicated to the world © “and the Word was with God” means the Christ was in total and complete fellowship with the Father, and implies that He was a participant in the creation process (Colossians 1:16). (D) “and the Word was God” means that Christ possesses all the attributes of Deity, and is, therefore, God, and equal to the Father (John 10:36; Philippians 2:6).

QUESTION: What are the “greater works” discussed by Jesus in John 14:12?

ANSWER: The passage, directed to the apostles, does not teach that they (or Christians today) would be able to exercise more or “greater” power than did Jesus when He walked on the water (Matthew 14:25), calmed the sea (Mark 4:39), and raised the dead (John 11:43-44). What “greater” power could there possibly be? Obviously there is none “greater” in this sense! The “greater works” then of John 14:12 must not be understood to refer solely to miracles, but to all of things that the apostles did (as directed by the Holy Spirit) to further the cause of Christ! Christ’s earthly ministry was limited to the area around Judea, but the “great commission” that He gave to them in Mark 16:15-16 was to go into “all the world.” Therefore, the works that were to be done by the apostles would be “greater” in scope. Also to be considered is that, after Christ’s return to the Father, His apostles would be able, as they went into “all the world,” to proclaim for the first time the “great” historical facts of His crucifixion, death, resurrection, and ascension. The “greater works” of John 14:12 then must be understood with reference to the fullness of the message to be proclaimed, as well as the scope and effect of that message!

QUESTION: Does I Corinthians, chapter eleven, teach that women should wear a head covering today in worship to God? Are we to understand that hair is the covering to which this passage refers?

ANSWER: Women were obligated to wear a “veil” in the worship services of the church at Corinth. It was the custom of that time for women to show submission to their husbands by covering their heads. If a woman of Corinth worshiped without this “covering,” it indicated that she was in rebellion to the rule of her husband and, therefore, in violation of God’s will (Genesis 3:16). Paul, by supporting this custom at Corinth, is teaching the eternal principle that women are not to do anything that would show rebellion to their husbands, i.e., their “heads” (I Corinthians 11:3). However, wearing of a “veil” (or not wearing a “veil”) in other times and places was not a custom that indicated rebellion. Certainly, this is not the custom in most places today! Where this is no such custom there can be no issue of submission and, therefore, in such places, the wearing of a “covering” is not scripturally binding!

That the “covering” under discussion by the apostle is an artificial covering, and not the hair, is made clear by his reference to both in I Corinthians 11:6.

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QUESTION: Would you explain Hebrews 4:1-13?

ANSWER: In the latter part of the preceding chapter, the apostle Paul discusses the fact that, because of the hardness of their hearts in unbelief, many of the Israelites who left Egypt did not enter into God's promised "rest," i.e., the land of Canaan. In verse one of the chapter in question, he shows that for Christians the promise of a rest (heaven) still remains, but that we should fear lest any of us come short of it, as the Israelites did Canaan. In verse two, he says that they had heard the will of God preached, but they did not believe it! We need to be careful that we do not do the same and miss our promised rest! In verses three through six, Paul proves that there is a "rest" for the faithful Christian. He argues that, from the creation, a rest had always been available to the faithful of God and, that even He, on the seventh day, rested from His labors. Paul also shows from Psalms 95:7-8 that David also warned against not being able to enter the "rest" of God because of a hardened heart (vs.7). In verse eight, the name Jesus is a mistranslation in the King James Version. It should correctly be translated as Joshua! Paul is saying here that Joshua had not satisfied and finalized God's promise of a "rest" by entrance of Israel into Canaan. The promise was much more than this, otherwise David would not have mentioned it years later. The writer makes a concluding statement in verse nine, based on the above, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." Verse ten shows that the person who heaven will rest from his or her labors much as God rested from His labors. Therefore (vs.11), we should "strive" to enter in lest we fall in disobedience as did the Israelites in the wilderness. Verses twelve and thirteen speak of the power of God's word in revealing the inner man, and that God knows everything that we do, even the thought and intents of the heart. If our actions, thoughts and intents in this life are guided by God's Word, we will be permitted to enter into the "rest" He has provided for His people. If God's Word does not guide us, we cannot enter in, but will be lost eternally!

Certainly, the above is not an exhaustive study of this passage, but it is hoped that a basis for further study and understanding as been provided.

QUESTION: Does I Corinthians 7:39 teach that a Christian widow can only marry another Christian?

ANSWER: Throughout the seventh chapter, Paul is giving inspired "advice" to those in marriage relationships and those seeking marriage partners. For example, in verse twenty-seven, he states that a man should "not seek a wife," and in the next verse he says, "But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned." So Paul is not commanding men not to marry, but rather he is simply giving them inspired "advice" or "judgement" (vs.25) because of the "distress" (persecution) they were experiencing at that time (vs.26). This inspired "advice" would then apply only to those at that time who were suffering that "distress" (persecution) and should not, therefore, be applied to men (or women) today! The same is true of verse thirty-nine! Because of the "present distress," Paul is giving inspired "advice" or "judgment" (vs.40-"after my judgement") to the widows who lived then,

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telling them that if they were to marry, it should be “only in the Lord,” that is, they should marry another Christian. A husband who was not a Christian during this time would likely not be able to understand, encourage, and help his Christian wife endure the persecution, as would an understanding Christian husband.

Certainly, it is always best for a Christian to marry another Christian in any circumstance, but we must not bind where God’s Word has not bound. At the same time, we need to understand that any relationship into which a Christian enters with the knowledge that it will cause him or her to compromise his or her Christianity is wrong (Matthew 6:33).

QUESTION: Will those who have not heard the gospel be lost in Judgment Day? What about Romans 7:7-8?

ANSWER: Yes! They are lost today (Mark 16:15-16) and if they do not hear the Gospel, which is God’s only saving power (Romans 1:16), they can never believe and be saved (Romans 10:14). All of the nations of the world have, at a time in the past, heard the Gospel of Christ (Colossians 1:5-6; Colossians 1:23), but have since rejected and forgotten God. David said of these, “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God” (Psalms 9:17). The fact of the unbeliever (within a nation that forgot God) being lost, because he did not hear the Gospel, is, therefore, not to be attributed to God, but, rather, to his ancestors who once knew God, but refused to glorify Him as God (Romans 1: 20-31).

Romans 1:32 says of these, “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them.” These nations at one time had the knowledge of the coming judgment of God and, in spite of this knowledge, rejected the righteousness of God (Romans 1:17) in favor of a life of wickedness for themselves and their children! Nonetheless, it is also true that the subsequent generations in far places who truly never had the opportunity to hear the Gospel (though they will be lost), will not be punished as severely as those who had opportunity (Luke 12:46-48).

Romans 7:7-8 does not teach that alien sinners who never heard the gospel are not lost! Paul is discussing the Law of Moses and simply says that, before the law of Christ, he would not have known that covetousness was sin, except the Law of Moses had said, “thou shalt not covet.” This does not mean that the people who had never heard this law were in a safe or saved condition before God, because he already said (Romans 3:9) that both Jews and Gentiles were “all under sin;” that “all (Jew and Gentile) have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Paul is simply teaching in this passage (as in Galatians chapter three) that the old law has been taken out of the way; that we are dead to it (Romans 7:4); that we have been delivered from it (Romans 7:6); and that one cannot transgress (sin against) a law that has not been given (as in the case of Abraham-Romans 4), or a law that has been taken out of the way (as in the case of Christians-Romans 7:1-6). In other words, those who lived before and after the Law of Moses cannot be condemned by it (Romans 4:15), neither can any be justified by it (Romans 5:1)!

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QUESTION: What does it mean in II Thessalonians 1:8, “them that know not God?”

ANSWER: The phrase includes the heathen who worships other than the true God and those who refuse to acknowledge Him (Romans 1:18-32).

QUESTION: What is baptism for the dead in I Corinthians 15:29?

ANSWER: Though there are many interpretations of this passage, it is certain that it does not mean that the living are baptized for the dead (Hebrews 9:27). The passage reads. “Else what shall they do which are baptized for “the dead,” if “the dead” rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for “the dead?” The chapter is written to prove that Christians who had already died, and those who were yet to die, have the hope of a resurrection because Christ first resurrected. It is my opinion that “the dead” refers to how the Corinthians perceived those who were already dead, i.e., with no hope of a resurrection. The word “for” in this passage is from a Greek word *huper*, which means “in view of.” Therefore, the passage may be interpreted “Else what will become of you who are baptized ‘in view of’ the dead whom you believe rise not at all? Why are you then baptized ‘in view of’ those who have no hope of a resurrection?” In other words, “in view of” your belief that the dead have no hope of a resurrection, why are you then baptized?

QUESTION: What does it mean in Hebrews 7:1-3 that Melchisedec was “without father; without mother; without descent?”

ANSWER: Under the Old Law, the men of the tribe of Levi were to be appointed as priests (vs.5). Yet, that Levitical priesthood was to change under the New Law with Christ, who was from the tribe of Judah (vs.14), becoming the High Priest (vss.17, 26). He had no physical priestly lineage in the tribe of Levi. The same was true of Melchisedec. He, likewise, had no physical priestly lineage in the tribe of Levi (vs.6), but nonetheless, he became a priest of the most high God (vs.1) to whom Abraham gave a tenth of his spoils (vs.3). When it says that Melchisedec was without father, mother, and descent, reference is made solely to the fact that his ancestors (his descent); his father and mother were not listed in the genealogy of the priesthood, because they were not of the tribe of Levi. Being of the tribe of Judah, the same was true of Christ! He, therefore, became a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec (vs.17)!

The passage does not imply that Melchisedec never had an earthly father and mother, nor that he was eternal!

QUESTION: Regarding Revelation 14:2-3, why this revelation? Who are the four living creatures?

ANSWER: The main thrust of the book of Revelation is to show that, in spite of many trials and tribulations, the church of Christ would one day be victorious! Those bought from the earth represent Christians who have been purchased with the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 12:12). Indeed, this passage shows in a very

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beautiful way the victory of the saints; being pictured as singing praises to God before His heavenly throne!

The four living creatures are those heavenly beings described more fully in Revelation 4:6-11, who give glory and honor and thanks to Him who occupies the throne. They tirelessly do so, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Man has written much concerning these beings, little of which is certain. Perhaps in heaven, God will cause us to understand these creatures more fully!

QUESTION: Would you explain Revelation, chapters 12 through 20?

ANSWER: To explain each of these chapters in detail would require volumes. The main thrust of the book of Revelation, however, is to show that, in spite of many trials and tribulations, the church of Christ would one day be victorious; that Christians who lived at that time would overcome the persecutions being pressed upon them by the Roman Empire which held the nation of Israel captive. Generally, the chapters in question have to do with the church (the woman of chapter twelve); her afflictions and persecutions by Rome (the beast and his followers-chapter thirteen); a view of the heavenly Jerusalem prepared for the faithful, which stands in contrast to the destruction of earthly Jerusalem (chapter fourteen); the wrath of God poured out upon the persecutors of God's people (chapters fifteen through eighteen); a description of the one (Christ) by whom the judgment on Rome would come (chapter nineteen); the binding and loosing of Satan, the final end of Satan, and the final judgment of all (chapter twenty); and the church triumphant (chapters 21 & 22). Though this is a rather sparse outline of this section of The Revelation, perhaps it will aid in your studies.

QUESTION: Please explain in I Peter 3:18-20 and I Peter 4:6. Who did the preaching? To whom? What was the result?

ANSWER: The spirits in prison (II Peter 2:4) referred to in 3:19 are the same as the dead referred to in 4:6. The dead were not dead at the time the preaching took place! They were dead at the time Peter was writing and they remain dead today! Preaching to the dead while they were dead would have served absolutely no purpose (Luke 16:26-31; Hebrews 9:27). These passages simply teach that Christ in the Spirit (3:18-19) preached through the person of Noah (II Peter 2:5) to those that lived before the flood. The result of Christ's preaching in the Spirit through Noah was that all the disobedient (3:20) were lost in the flood (for eternity) and that eight souls were saved by the water (3:20) which separated them from the sinful pre-flood world; a figure or example of our salvation and separation from this sinful world through the waters of baptism (3:21).

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QUESTION: Is the resurrection meant only for those who partake of the Lord's Supper? If yes, explain why, but if no, explain John 6:53-54.

ANSWER: No! There is to be a single resurrection in which "all" of the dead will participate! "All" that are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth; some to eternal life; some to eternal death (John 5:28-29)! "All" must appear before the judgment seat of Christ (II Corinthians 5:10! "Every" knee shall bow, and "every" tongue shall confess (Acts 14:11)!

John 6:53-54 has nothing to do with the Lord's Supper! This passage is teaching that Christ is the bread of life (vs.48) and we are to eat of this bread (Christ) in order to live forever! Consider three verses in this passage together! Verse forty-seven tells us who "hath eternal life:" those who believe on Him. Verse fifty-four also tells us who "hath eternal life:" those who (symbolically) eat His flesh and drink His blood. Therefore, those who believe on Him are those who (symbolically) eat His flesh and blood. Verse sixty-three explains "how" we (symbolically) eat of His flesh and blood and gain life: The "words" that He speaks unto us, they are spirit and they are life! It is His Word then that gives us life. Therefore, when we partake of His word we are partaking (symbolically) of His flesh and blood; we are partaking (symbolically) of Him, the bread of life that came down from heaven (vs.51)!

QUESTION: What baptism did John the Baptist receive? Where was he baptized?

ANSWER: The Bible does not reveal the answers to these questions. However, it is certain that if he was baptized or not baptized, it was according to the will of God. But whether he was or not has no bearing on Christ's command that under His New Testament, all (without exception) must believe and be baptized (immersed for the remission of sins) in order to be saved (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38).

QUESTION: Do such passages as Philippians 3:12 and Hebrews 12:14 teach that men can attain to a degree of "sanctification" so that they can no longer sin?

ANSWER: In I John 1:6, the inspired writer says to Christians, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

Sanctification in the Bible simply means a "setting apart." When one becomes a Christian, that person becomes a "saint" (Romans 1:7; Romans 16:2; I Corinthians 1:2), because he or she has been "sanctified," i.e., set apart from the world (Romans 6:18; James 4:4)! In Philippians 3:12, Paul is not talking about sanctification. The word "perfect" as used in this passage does not mean sinlessness. It properly means "complete," "fulfilled," "matured," or "finished." Therefore, Paul is not saying that he had not yet reached a state of sinlessness, but rather he is saying he had not yet completed or fulfilled his hopes and goals. In verse fifteen, he says "Let us therefore, as many as be "perfect" . . . He did not

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say in verse twelve that he was not perfect and then contradict himself in verse fifteen. The idea is “as many as would be perfect! Why was he not yet “perfect?” Because (vs.14), he had not yet reached the mark, he was still “pressing” toward it!

The word “holiness” in Hebrews 12:14 (from the Greek hagiasmos) also means “sanctified” or “set apart,” and could have been so translated. The idea here is that Christians are to follow a path that is set apart from the world, “without which no man shall see the Lord.” The same idea is taught in Romans 6:20-22; I Thessalonians 4:7.

QUESTION: One is teaching that a man may sleep with his girlfriend without sinning provided that he later marries her. He quotes I Corinthians 7:36 as a proof text. Is this true?

ANSWER: No! The man is effectively teaching that fornication is blessed and sanctioned by God. This is blasphemy! There can be no sexual relationships outside of the marriage bed! Such sinfulness is condemned throughout the Bible (I Corinthians 6:9-11 & 17; I Corinthians 7:2; Galatians 5:19-21).

In I Corinthians 7:36-38, Paul is discussing a father and his virgin daughter. He is not speaking of a boyfriend and his girlfriend and he is not speaking of two people who are engaged to be married. Paul is telling the father that in view of the present distress (persecution that was upon them) it may be wiser not to betroth or permit his daughter to marry. But if the time passes when she would otherwise have been married, if the decision is made (for various reasons) to permit the marriage, it is okay. Neither the father nor the daughter has sinned! So if one gives his daughter in marriage, Paul says in verse thirty-eight, he doeth well. If one does not give his daughter in marriage (because of the present distress) he doeth better.

The man who is teaching that fornication (sexual relations outside of marriage) is approved of God needs to repent of his false doctrine and return to Christ lest he and others be eternally lost!

QUESTION: Would you please explain Revelation 14:4? Who are they that were not defiled by women? And who were these women?

ANSWER: As always in studying the book of Revelation it is necessary to remember that it was written in signs or symbols (Revelation 1:1). John, in this passage is providing his readers a view of the heavenly Jerusalem and the character of its inhabitants. These are they who have been redeemed from among men (vs.4); they who have been bought by the blood of Christ out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (Revelation 5:9); they who have remained faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10). “They who are virgins” also is symbolic and simply implies that the redeemed of heaven are “spiritually pure.” The “women” symbolically represent the influences and doctrines of man which when followed will cause one to be spiritually impure and, therefore, undeserving

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of heaven. Specifically, reference is to the influences of the Roman Empire as represented by the “woman” described in Revelation 17:1-6; the “great whore” (vs.1); the “mother of harlots.”

QUESTION: Would you please explain Revelation, Chapter 20?

ANSWER: Literally volumes have been written about this book and, especially this chapter. Certainly, there is not time to deal with all of it. However, perhaps an outline of the chapter will aid in your further study and understanding.

The book of Revelation was written in symbolic language and is not to be understood literally (Revelation 1:1, the word signified means that John was shown things in “signs,” which must shortly come to pass). So it is in this passage. It, too, was written in signs or symbolic language. This means that something else is represented by such words and phrases as “key,” “bottomless pit,” “thousand years,” “seal,” “etc.”

It appears that verses one through three refer to a time specified by God (prior to Judgment) during which Satan is to be restrained after which he is to be loosed for a “little season.” (Certainly, Satan has been restrained by the resurrection and the Gospel of Christ over the last two thousand years!) None, however, knows the termination of Satan’s restraint! What all is involved and the duration of the “little season” is all conjecture and guesswork. The only thing we can know for sure is that it will happen!

Verses four through six do not have reference to a physical reign on this earth by Christ and/or His saints. This section is also symbolic! It simply teaches that those who, for the cause of Christ, were beheaded/martyred (this excludes all others, you and me for example), would sit in judgment (by their past godly lives) on those who are still alive. These martyred ones are the only participants in the symbolic “first resurrection.” In Revelation 6:9-10, we see these under the altar. In Revelation 20:4, they have been raised (resurrected) to sit on judgment seats. “Blessed and holy” are these because the second death (vs.6), as described in verses fourteen and fifteen, “hath no power” over them!

Verses seven through nine relates that following the “loosening” of Satan for the “little season” there will be great spiritual conflict between his forces and the church. This is not to be understood as a literal, physical war!

The final Judgment of all mankind and the ultimate disposition of Satan and his followers is discussed throughout the remainder of the chapter.

The Revelation was written at a time when Christians were suffering extreme persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire. It was written in symbolic language because Christians, being familiar with similar language of the Old Testament, would be able to understand, while their persecutors would not! The primary message of the book to Christians at that time, and to us today, is that the church of Christ will overcome any and all persecution, and one day be victorious.

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QUESTION: People say 666 will come after Christ comes. Is this true? Who is 666 (Revelation 13:18)?

ANSWER: Chapter thirteen of Revelation is a discussion of the activities of the beast and his followers which has reference to the Roman Empire and its persecution of the church at that time. The number six in prophetic literature indicates that which is sinister. A multiple of this number (666) would indicate the extremely sinister. This "number" or "mark" (vss.16-18) is symbolic and should not be taken literally. It simply represents some distinguishing practice or activity that would identify certain ones at that time as being under the influence of Rome and in opposition to the church. Certainly, it has no reference to some individual who will come one day to bring havoc and persecution to the church. Such suggestions are foolishly and sinfully propagated by the false teaching of the premillennialists.

QUESTION: Does Matthew 24:1-14 tell us what signs will appear before Christ's second coming?

ANSWER: No! In verse three of this chapter, Christ's disciples had asked Him two questions: (1) When will Jerusalem be destroyed? (2) What shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world? In verses 4-35, Jesus is dealing with, and answering, only the first question. Note carefully in verse thirty-four that Christ said that all of the things He had discussed in the preceding verses would be fulfilled (come to pass) before the generation that lived at that time would pass away. A generation is understood to consume about forty years, and it was about forty years after Christ spoke these words (70AD) that Jerusalem was destroyed. It came to pass exactly as Christ had foretold!

There are many similarities between Christ's symbolic coming in the destruction of Jerusalem and His promised Second Coming. Many misapply the symbols of Matthew twenty-four (scripturally applicable only to the destruction of Jerusalem) to Christ's second coming. Verse thirty-four does not permit such a misapplication! The symbols of Matthew twenty-four are easier to understand if one is aware that the same type of symbolic language was used in the Old Testament when God came symbolically in judgment upon Babylon, Damascus, Ethiopia and Egypt. Certainly, the Jews of Christ's day would have understood. Please refer to Isaiah, chapters thirteen-eighteen, especially Isaiah 13:6-11!

In verse thirty-six, Jesus begins to answer His disciple's second question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming?" In this verse Christ said that only the Father knew the answer. In verses thirty-seven through Matthew 25:46, He discusses His second coming and, in summary, He says that there will be no signs given; that business will be going on as usual when He returns! Because this is true, He says, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (vs.42). All of the verses from verse forty-two through fifty-one (especially verses forty-four and fifty) show that Christ will come unexpectedly. How could this be true if one were given signs leading up to (and pointing to) His Second Coming? Obviously, it couldn't!

Compiled by David Amos for Truth for the World

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All of the “signs” of Matthew twenty-four preceded the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD. None of these signs have been given to point to the Second Coming of Christ! He will return unexpectedly; without warning! “Therefore, be ye also ready” (vs.44).

QUESTION: Does Mark 9:43-48 teach that we must literally cut off our hands if they offend or cause us to stumble?

ANSWER: No! Christ is simply teaching that whatever the personal cost, suffering, loss or difficulty, His followers are to cut off those sins that come through temptations which are often caused by, or result from, the use of the hand, foot, or eye. Christians have been bought with a price (the blood of Christ). Therefore, our souls and bodies (and all of it's parts), which belong to Him, are to be used to His glory; not in the sins of this world (I Corinthians 6:20)!

QUESTION: In John 9:1-7, Jesus healed a blind man by spitting on the ground and mixing the saliva with dirt and putting the mud on the man's eyes. If a man did that today in Africa, they would say he was a Witch Doctor. What is the difference?

ANSWER: Undoubtedly Jesus did not need to use spittle in healing the blind man. He could have spoken it done as He did in Matthew 9:27-31. His purpose then lies in one of three reasons, perhaps all. (1) He wanted to test the man's faith by requiring an action which would show his faith, i.e., going and washing; (2) As an example to following generations that God grants blessings upon those who are believe and obey; and (3) Since the Pharisees wrongly held that it was wrong to use medicine or to heal on the Sabbath, Jesus proved the foolishness of their position by applying the mud and directing the man to go and wash, resulting in his healing, thereby, showing the true will of God regarding the Sabbath.

The difference between what Jesus did and what a Witch Doctor does should be obvious from the above. The Witch Doctor has no real or unselfish purpose in applying anything to a blind man's eyes, because he, as well as others, knows that not he or anything he uses will, or could, bring about a restoration of sight.

QUESTION: Please explain Mark 11:22-24.

ANSWER: Jesus is not here saying that a man with sufficient faith could or would literally move mountains. Reference to so doing in verse twenty-three is a proverbial form of speech (which the Jews would have easily understood) and simply means that one with proper and sound faith in God will be able to overcome all earthly trials and obstacles no matter what, or how difficult, they may be.

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QUESTION: According to Hebrews 4:15, Jesus was tempted. How could He be tempted if He was God in human flesh?

ANSWER: There is no doubt that Jesus submitted Himself to the influence of the Holy Spirit, permitting His own temptation as a man (Matthew 4:1). It was because He was in the flesh (John 1:14), that He could both be so tempted and die a physical, sacrificial death. He could have done neither had He not been made in the "likeness of man" (Philippians 2:5-8). As well, in order for Him to be the Saviour (I John 4:14) and Advocate (I John 2:1) of those who are tempted, it was necessary for Him, if He would be "touched with the feelings of our infirmities," to be "tempted like as we are" Hebrews 4:15).

QUESTION: Does Hebrews 6:1-2 teach that we should place no emphasis on repentance, baptisms, etc.?

ANSWER: No! Chapter six continues the thought of the closing verses of chapter five: Christians are not to continue taking only the milk of the Gospel, thereby remaining babes in Christ, i.e., understanding only the first principles, but rather are to grow to maturity by also partaking of the meat of the Gospel (those things beyond first principles) that they might have the ability, based on mature knowledge, to discern between good and evil and to impart that knowledge as teachers!

QUESTION: Relative to the word "elements" in II Peter 3:10, I believe that the vast majority of biblical scholarship misunderstands the usage of the word. Further, based on Strong's number 4747, I believe that the word "means" the "Law." Would you comment?

ANSWER: I, too, agree with Strong's definition of the word as follows: neut. of a presumed der. of the base of 4748; something orderly in arrangement, i.e., (by impl.) a serial (basal, fundamental, initial) constituent (lit.) proposition (fig.): - element, principle, rudiment.

There is absolutely nothing in this definition that would cause any, except those who had been preconditioned, to suggest that the word "element" means "Law." Most often this preconditioning comes either directly or indirectly through those people or splinter groups who have been influenced by the Jehovah's Witnesses who, in turn, are proponents of the position you advocate. May I, without malice, suggest that this foolishness stands on a par with many other of their heretical beliefs.

The meaning and usage of the word under discussion is defined by the context in which it is found. Certainly in Galatians 4:3, 9 we understand a direct reference to the Old Law. However, it is the context and not the definition alone that causes us to understand the reference. There is nothing in the context of II Peter three that would demand or suggest that the word is to be similarly understood as "the Law." Indeed, the context demands reference solely to those base elements of which our heavens (cosmos) and earth were made. The word "earth" in verse ten

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is defined by Strong's number 1093 as "the solid part or the whole of the terrene globe: - country, earth, ground, land, world." The context and the definition of this word stands, as well, in opposition to your suggestion. The material world to be destroyed at the day of the Lord answers to the material world that perished in the flood, that and that alone!

In II Peter 3:10 the heavens means the heavens (cosmos); the elements means the elements (not Law); the earth means the earth; the works means the works. There is no reason, scripturally, theologically, grammatically, or otherwise to adopt the position you espouse.

QUESTION: Does Hebrews 13:8 teach, since Jesus does not change, that the gifts continue today?

ANSWER: No! Hebrews 13:8 does not teach that there will always be Holy Spirit baptism and/or the gifts of the Spirit! This passage is teaching that the gospel of Jesus Christ is always constant; that it does not change as men would have it do! It also teaches that the character of Christ does not change. It does not teach that He does not employ different methods that are in accord with His constant word! For example: He changed the law of circumcision (Genesis 17:13 versus Romans 2:28-29); He changed the law of the Passover (Exodus 12:14 versus Hebrews 9:12); He changed the Law and the priesthood (Hebrews 7:12); and He no longer makes man from the dust of the earth, nor woman from the rib of a man. Did Christ violate Hebrews 13:8 when He made these changes? Obviously not! The point of the verse is simply that the attributes and character of Christ are the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. That different methods are employed by Christ at different times in the history of His people is clearly demonstrated by the above passages, in addition to many others!

QUESTION: Will you explain Romans 14:5-6?

ANSWER: This particular chapter in overview teaches that we should not judge another in matters of opinion and that we should not bind our opinions on another. In the verses of study (5 & 6) Paul is saying that if a person wants to set aside a particular or certain day to honor God, it is okay as long as he is convinced in his own mind. Do not judge him or restrict him from doing so! (The Lord's Day [Sunday] is not at issue here. All Christians are commanded to worship on this day). The same is true about eating habits. If a person has a conscience against eating certain foods, don't insist that he violate his conscience by eating what you eat. Neither are we to insist that a person refrain from eating certain foods (I Timothy 4:1-4). These things are matters of opinion in which all Christian have liberty. In these and similar matters we are not to place a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in our brother's way (verse 13) by forcing our opinions on him! Verse 23 teaches that if a person in such matters violates their conscience, he or she sins. As a result of that sin, a person can be destroyed (verse 15). Therefore, Paul instructs us: Don't do anything to cause a

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brother to be lost. Not only don't force another to accept your opinion, but give in to your brother's opinion, if it doesn't violate your own conscience (verse 21).

It is important that we understand that only opinions are under discussion in this chapter. In matters of commandment, whether by direct instruction, approved example, or inference, all Christians must be obedient. Our opinions do not come before, or offset, God's directives to us!

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OLD TESTAMENT

QUESTION: Is the Old Testament written for our example, yes or no?

ANSWER: The Old Testament has been taken out of the way and replaced by the New Testament of Jesus Christ. Please read carefully the following passages: Romans 7:4-7; II Corinthians 3:13-14; Galatians 3:24-25; Ephesians 2:13-16; Hebrews 7:12 / 8:7. In Colossians 2:14, we see that the handwriting of ordinances (Old Testament) was blotted out; that it was against us and contrary to us. Therefore, He took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross!

Although we are not bound by the laws of the Old Testament, as we study it we will develop a better understanding of the New Testament. As we read about the prophecies of the Old Testament being completely and gloriously fulfilled in the New Testament, it serves, as well, to deepen our faith in God and His word! Also, in the Old Testament, we can learn more about the never changing nature of our God.

Yes! The Old Testament was written for our example and, for this reason, we are commanded to study it! "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). Also, in I Corinthians 10, we read about something that happened to the children of Israel in the Old Testament. In verse eleven, Paul says, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

QUESTION: Does Genesis 3:15 refer to a conflict between Christ and Satan?

ANSWER: Yes! In this conflict, Satan was to bruise Christ's heel, i.e., our sin, occasioned by the influence of Satan, would cause Christ to die for us that we might receive the atonement (Romans 5:8-11). Jesus was to bruise Satan's head, i.e., "that He, through death, might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14).

QUESTION: Was King Saul not in the original plan for Israel?

ANSWER: Clearly, God was displeased with the Israelites choice of having a king, as did the nations around them. In so doing God said, " they have rejected me!" Please read I Samuel 9.

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QUESTION: Would you explain the phrase “to obey is better than sacrifice?”

ANSWER: This phrase is found in I Samuel 15:22. In verse three of this chapter Saul had been directed by God to “utterly destroy” the Amalekites. He disobeyed (did evil - vs.19) by taking King Agag alive (vs.8) and sparing the best of their herds (vs.9) which he intended to be used in sacrifice to God. Samuel told Saul that it would have been better for him to have obeyed God rather than to have sacrificed the animals he had been directed to “utterly destroy.” Because of his stubbornness and rebellion toward God in this matter, Samuel said that Saul had “rejected the word of the Lord.” As a result, God rejected him from being king (vs.23).

The lesson for us today is that true obedience to God is the important issue, not acts of worship improperly motivated!

QUESTION: Why was God not with Goliath during his fight with David?

ANSWER: God will not be with or support those who act contrary to His will. In this case the Philistine, Goliath, was in defiance of the armies of the “living God” (I Samuel 17:26).

QUESTION: What is the difference between the Ten Commandments and the law of the tabernacle?

ANSWER: Depending on usage, the phrase “law of the tabernacle” could possibly have reference to the ten commandments, since the commandments (on two tables of stone) were kept in the ark of the covenant which, in turn, was kept in the tabernacle. The phrase could also be used in reference to those “laws” regarding the design of the tabernacle or those laws governing the communion of man with God through the tabernacle.

QUESTION: Exodus 20:13 says, “Thou shalt not kill.” Does this refer to animals and other creatures, or to human beings?

ANSWER: This passage prohibits the premeditated murder of a human being. That it refers only to humans is clearly seen in that God (before the New Testament) directed the killing of sacrificial animals (Leviticus, chapter one).

Note, as well, in Genesis 18:1-8, that the messengers (angels) of the Lord ate the flesh of animals. See also Acts 10:13-14.

QUESTION: What are the “old paths” as mentioned in Jeremiah 6:16?

ANSWER: Judah had forsaken the God of their fathers and gone after false gods (Jeremiah 2:28). Jeremiah 6:16 is a call for Judah to return to Jehovah and abide by His will, the “old paths.” “But they said, we will not walk therein” (vs.16). As a result, Jerusalem was overthrown (Jeremiah 38:28) and Judah was carried

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into Babylonian captivity. Certainly, the lesson in this for us today is that we must walk in the “old paths” as set forth in the New Testament of Jesus Christ in order to be pleasing to God, turning neither to the right or the left!

QUESTION: A: In Genesis chapter eleven, why did men try to build the tower of Babel? B: Were those involved a humble people? C: What was the one language used prior to this event? D: Was this the beginning of our languages today?

ANSWER: A: Man attempted to build the tower that they might make a name for themselves, lest they be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth (Genesis 11:4). B: That they wanted to make a name for themselves shows that they were a proud people; C: Though uncertain, some believe that the one language was Hebrew; D: The Jews so believe. However, with the many thousands of languages and dialects prevalent today, such is without supporting evidence.

QUESTION: Why did not the new king of Egypt “know” Joseph (Exodus 1:8)?

ANSWER: The Hebrew word translated “knew” in this verse often means to acknowledge or to approve. Therefore, we should not understand this passage to mean that the new king had no knowledge whatever of Joseph, but rather that he did not “approve” of him or his activities under the previous king.

QUESTION: Why was Jacob blessed by God even though he had deceived his father?

ANSWER: It was the will of God, as He promised in Genesis 25:23, that the older of the twins would serve the younger. God kept that promise which had its root's in the promise made to Abraham that through his seed all nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:2-3). Neither the deceitful act of Rebekah and Jacob toward Isaac; nor Isaac's attempt to give the blessing to Esau rather than Jacob, while knowing the will of God; nor the profane Esau's (Hebrews 12:16-17) request for the blessing that he had sold to another could deter the providence of God in this matter!

If God worked His providence only through those who do no wrong, certainly His providential will would be totally thwarted, since all of us do err. This does not mean, however, that in the receipt of His blessings, we do not suffer the consequences of sin, nor that we are free, as God's children from His chastening (Hebrews 12:5-11). Concerning Jacob's deceitfulness, it might be well to ponder the fact that just as he deceived his father, even so was he deceived many years later by his own children (Genesis 37:29-36)!

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QUESTION: How many years did it take Noah to build the ark?

ANSWER: In Genesis 6:1-3, we learn that God gave the wicked people of Noah's day an additional one hundred and twenty years to repent. At some point during this period God instructed Noah to build the ark. At the end of the one hundred and twenty years the flood came upon the earth. We are not told the exact time required to build the ark; only that it was constructed "during" the period of grace granted by God.

QUESTION: Did God provide Noah the exact type of wood that He required?

ANSWER: God does not demand of any those things that are impossible! That Noah had access to "gopher" wood, previously provided by the Creator of all things, is evidenced in Genesis 6:22, "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he."

QUESTION: Did God recall Cain or did he die as a vagabond?

ANSWER: There is no biblical evidence that Cain ever repented. It appears that, at least, at the time of his crime he was more concerned about his punishment than repentance (Genesis 4:13-14).

We are not told where he died, but it is most likely that his death occurred in the land of Nod, in the city of Enoch that he had built.

QUESTION: What covenant did God make with Abraham?

ANSWER: In Genesis 12:1-3 God first promised Abraham that He would (1) make of Him a great nation and (2) that in him would all nations of the earth be blessed. This promise was repeated to his son Isaac (Genesis 26:1-50) and his grandson Jacob (Genesis 28:13-14). The blessing to all nations through Abraham was wonderfully fulfilled in Christ. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Galatians 3:16).

When one is born again (baptized into Christ) he has put on Christ (Galatians 3:26-27). (Note that one does not put Christ on before baptism!) "And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29). This passage shows how we become heirs and are blessed through the Seed of Abraham!

QUESTION: Would you explain Proverbs 16:4?

ANSWER: The idea is that God has made everything suitable to His own purpose, even an "evil day" suitable to the divinely appointed end of the wicked who disobey Him!

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QUESTION: Why did God call David a “man after His own heart?”

ANSWER: Because God could and did look upon David's heart (I Samuel 16:7). He knew the kind of man that David was! Though he sinned by committing adultery and murder, none can deny the penitence, piety, humility, and devotion to God of this great king of Israel. God never implied that David was not going to sin. He was a sinner, as we are! And, as David, when we are willing to confess and repent of our sins, we can know “the Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die” (II Samuel 12:13). In spite of our weaknesses and failures, if we develop and exhibit the godly characteristics of this great king, we, too, can become men and women after God's own heart!

QUESTION: Would you explain Ezekiel 19:1-14?

ANSWER: This chapter is divided into comparisons. The first (vss.1-9) is a description of God's justice which He poured out through other nations upon Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim during their reigns in Jerusalem, because they had turned the people away from Him. The lioness in verse two refers to Jerusalem. The first young lion (vs.3) refers to Jehoahaz; the second young lion (vs.6) refers to Jehoiakim. The second comparison (vss.11-14) describes the captivity of all the Jewish peoples, represented by a vine (vs.10), who at the first were blessed greatly by God (vss.10-11). But when they rejected Him and turned to idols, He permitted them to be destroyed and carried away into captivity, as depicted by the destruction of the vine (vss.12-14).

QUESTION: Who was the mother of King David?

ANSWER: The Bible does not give us her name. She is, however, referred to as the handmaid of God in Psalms 86:16 & 116:16.

QUESTION: Why was Uzzah killed (I Chronicles 13:9-10)?

ANSWER: Because he violated the command of God by “putting forth his hand to the Ark” (II Samuel 6:6-7). God had previously given commandment that man “shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die” (Numbers 4:15). In touching the Ark, Uzzah sinned and the anger of the Lord was kindled against him (I Chronicles 13:10). Indeed, this should be an example and an admonition for us today (I Corinthians 10:11). God expects to be obeyed! There is no excuse for sin (I Samuel 15:22-23).

QUESTION: Was Nathan (David's son) a prophet?

ANSWER: Nathan, the prophet (II Samuel 7:2), should not be confused with David's son, also called Nathan (II Samuel 5:14)! There is nothing to indicate that David's son was a prophet!

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QUESTION: Why was David not allowed to build a house for God?

ANSWER: Because David was a man of war who had shed much blood upon the earth (I Chronicles 22:6-11; I Chronicles 28:2-3)!

QUESTION: Would you explain Proverbs 31:6-7?

ANSWER: Solomon is not here authorizing strong drink generally. He has reference only to strong drink used to mercifully dull the senses of criminals who were being tortured or put to death. This type of drink was offered to Christ while on the cross (Matthew 27:34). It is significant that He refused to drink it!

QUESTION: Who succeeded Pharaoh after his death?

ANSWER: The word "Pharaoh" is a general designation previously applied to the rulers of Egypt. It is believed that the Pharaoh who ruled during the time of the Israelite oppression was Ramses II. The Pharaoh reigning at the time of exodus is believed to be Menetaph II, the thirteenth son of Ramses II.

QUESTION: Where was Joseph buried?

ANSWER: Joseph died in Egypt at the age of an hundred and ten, was embalmed and placed in a coffin (Genesis 50:26). We learn in Genesis 50:24-25, that Joseph had given commandment that when God would bring the children of Israel into the land that He had promised his fathers, his bones would also be taken out of Egypt. This was fulfilled by Moses (Exodus 13:19). In Joshua 24:32, we learn the Joseph's bones were finally buried in the city of Shechem.

QUESTION: Would you please tell me which kingdoms are represented in Daniel 2:38-45?

ANSWER: Daniel begins the interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream in verse 36 of chapter two. He speaks of four earthly kingdoms as follows:

Kingdom No.1, represented by the head of gold, under Nebuchadnezzar, was the Babylonian Empire. Judah was carried into captivity in 588 BC. This kingdom survived until 562 BC.

Kingdom No.2, represented by the breast and arms of silver, under Darius and Cyrus, was the Medo-Persian Empire. This kingdom existed from 562 BC until 330 BC.

Kingdom No.3, represented by the belly and thighs of brass, under Alexander the Great, was the Grecian or Macedonian Empire. It existed from 330 BC until 166 BC.

Kingdom No.4, represented by the legs of iron and feet of iron and clay, under the Caesars, was the Roman Empire. It existed from 166 BC until 476 AD.

It was during the days of these Roman kings that the God of heaven was to set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44). Jesus and John the

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baptist both began preaching during the rule of the Roman Empire that the kingdom of heaven was very near (Matthew 4:17; Matthew 3:2). In Mark 9:1, Jesus said that the kingdom would be established during the lifetime of the people to whom He was speaking. In Matthew 16:18-19, Jesus referred to His kingdom as His church; the church of Christ. This promised kingdom/church came into being in a grand way in Acts, chapter two on the day of Pentecost. People, for the first time, upon their obedience to Christ, were added by Him to His church. They became citizens in the kingdom of God that had been foretold of by Daniel hundreds of years earlier. When people today are obedient to Christ in baptism, they too, just as those on Pentecost Day, will be added to His church and became citizens of that same kingdom!

QUESTION: In Genesis 10:31, it was written “after their tongues” (more than one tongue), but in Genesis 11:1 it was written that the “whole earth was of one tongue.” Is this a contradiction from the compiler/translator? Or from whom?

ANSWER: There is no contradiction! The genealogy listed in Genesis 10:21-31 encompasses a period of time both before and after the “division” of chapter eleven. Note in Genesis 10:25 that one of the two sons born to Eber was Peleg (a name which means division), “for in his days was the earth divided.” The genealogy of Chapter ten begins with Shem and goes through Peleg (who lived during the “division”) and then transfers to his brother Joktan and his sons. The genealogy beginning in Genesis 11:10 also begins with Shem and goes through Peleg, and then continues on through his son Reu, showing the ancestry path leading up to Abraham. Clearly, Shem lived before the “division,” Peleg lived during the “division” and Peleg’s son and posterity through Abraham lived after the “division.” As surely as Peleg’s son (chapter 11) lived after the “division,” Joktan’s son’s (chapter 10) also lived after the “division,” as shown in verse 31! Hence, just as the genealogy of chapter eleven, covers a period of time before and after the “division,” so it is with the genealogy of chapter ten. There is, therefore, no contradiction between Genesis 10:31 and Genesis 11:1.

QUESTION: Will those who died in the flood be punished a second time in the Judgment?

ANSWER: These, along with all others who lived and died during the one hundred and twenty years probationary period before the flood (Genesis 6:3), had been preached to by the Spirit of Christ through Noah (I Peter 3:19). All of these had opportunity to be saved spiritually at that time, but rejected spiritual salvation. Had those of this number who were yet alive at the time of the flood, been spiritually reconciled to God, they would also have been saved physically, as was Noah and his family. However, those who died physically, whether before or during the flood, without being saved spiritually, are said by Peter to be kept in “prison” (I Peter 3:19). So, the punishment reserved for those who reject and disobey God then, is not mere physical death, with the soul still being saved

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eternally. This blessing is to be the lot and destiny of only the righteous who accept and obey God. The disobedient of all the ages (including those who died in the flood) are to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God and the glory of His Power (II Thessalonians 1:7-9)! The disobedient souls of those who died in the flood then are, without doubt, being guarded in the prison of the Hadean world, reserved unto the great Judgment Day (Luke 16:22-31; II Peter 2:4-5; Jude 6)!

QUESTION: Is Isaiah 66:17 applicable to us today?

ANSWER: No! The prophecies of Isaiah sixty-six are neither applicable today nor tomorrow! They had their total and complete fulfillment in the return of the Jews from Babylonian captivity!

QUESTION: Who wrote the last chapter of Deuteronomy?

ANSWER: We are not told. Most scholars speculate that Joshua, Moses' successor was the author. In fact, some believe that this chapter was intended to be the first chapter of Joshua.

QUESTION: Why do you believe that the Israelites marched around the walls of Jericho thirteen times?

ANSWER: In the book of Joshua, chapter six, verse fourteen, we learn that they marched around the city once a day for six days, a total of six times! On the seventh day they marched around it a total of seven times (vs.15). Adding the six times to the seven times, we see a total of thirteen times!

QUESTION: Who are the sons of God in Genesis 6:2? Are they angels?

ANSWER: The phrase "sons of God" refers to those men who "walked with God;" those who conducted themselves as His children. The same is said of Christians today (I John 3:1). The "daughters of men" refers to those women not counted among His children. The passage in question states simply that men who previously followed God took wives of women who did not follow God.

Certainly, the phrase "sons of God" cannot refer to angels, since heavenly beings are not given in marriage (Matthew 22:30).

QUESTION: Why did Obadiah relay Elijah's message to King Ahab (I Kings eighteen)?

ANSWER: Obadiah was the governor of Ahab's house (vs.3) and undoubtedly had access to him. At God's command, Elijah was on his way to see King Ahab to arrange a challenge to the four-hundred fifty prophets of Baal in order to prove that Jehovah was God. While on his way, Elijah saw Obadiah and asked him to tell King Ahab that he had come to meet with him. Obadiah, apparently knowing

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that Ahab was angry, feared that he would be slain. Nevertheless, given assurances by Elijah, Obadiah talked to Ahab and arranged the meeting.

QUESTION: What does it mean, “O troubler of Israel?” Who troubled Israel?

ANSWER: Israel had been suffering from a drought for more than three years at this time. King Ahab held Elijah, the prophet of God, responsible for it, and said in verse seventeen, “Art thou he who troubleth Israel?” It was really Ahab himself who had troubled Israel. “in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim” (vs.18). It was Ahab who had brought the great drought upon the land by provoking the God of Israel to anger (I Kings 16:30-33).

QUESTION: How did the three and one half-year’s drought end?

ANSWER: Following the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, the people of Israel turned from worshipping Baal to worshipping the God of Elijah. When this occurred, the drought ended!

QUESTION: Would you explain the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations?

ANSWER: The Patriarchal dispensation is generally referred as the period of time from the creation of Adam until the law was given through Moses at Mt. Sinai. During this period God spoke to, and dealt through, the heads of the families (the Patriarchs). The Mosaic dispensation began with the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai and continued until the cross of Christ. At this time the old law was nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14), ushering in the Christian dispensation with all mankind being answerable only to the New Testament. This final dispensation will continue until the end of time!

QUESTION: Please explain. Do the seven days of unleavened bread (Exodus 12:14-16) come before or after the fourteenth day of the month? How are we to observe the Passover today?

ANSWER: The Feast of the Passover began on the fourteenth day of the first month, which the Jews called Abib. It continued seven days from that time until the evening of the twenty-first day of the month (Exodus 12:18).

Christians today do not keep the Passover. The Old Testament was taken out of the way and replaced by the New Testament of Jesus Christ. Please read carefully the following passages: Roman 7:4-7; II Corinthians 3: 13-14; Galatians 3:24-25; Ephesians 2:13-16; Hebrews 7:12/8:7. In Colossians 2:14, we see that the handwriting of ordinances (Old Testament) was blotted out; that it was against us and contrary to us. Therefore, He took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. Look carefully at verse sixteen! The passage says that since Christ has taken the Old Law out of the way by nailing it to His cross, we are not to let any man judge us “in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new

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moon, or of the sabbath days.” In other words, these feasts are not to be bound upon Christians today! Our Passover today is not the lamb of the Old Testament, but, rather, the Lamb of the New Testament, “which taketh away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). He is our “Passover” (I Corinthians 5:7)!

QUESTION: Where may I read of the history of the prophet Daniel?

ANSWER: Beside the book of Daniel, please also read Ezekiel 14:14, Ezekiel 28:3, Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14, and Hebrews 11:33. Note also in the book that bears his name, he is also called Belteshazzar.

QUESTION: What does Psalm 37:25 mean?

ANSWER: The passage reads: “I have been young and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” This scripture is beautifully explained in Matthew 6:24-33. Verse thirty-three is the summarizing passage: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things (food, drink, and clothing) shall be added unto you.” The teaching is not that these things will miraculously appear in front of us, but God will providentially aid the faithful in procuring the necessities to sustain life!

QUESTION: Do not some Old Testament passages teach that the Ten commandments will stand forever (Psalms 111:7-8)?

ANSWER: No! The words “for ever” in the Old Testament mean “throughout the appointed time” or “age lasting.” For example consider carefully the usage in Exodus 12:14; Leviticus 6:18; Leviticus 7:36; and Numbers 10:8. In these the words “for ever” clearly mean “throughout (or in) their (your) generations.” Notice too, the Old Testament says that circumcision was to be an “everlasting covenant” (Genesis 17:13). Yet, Paul says in Galatians 6:15 that circumcision avails nothing in Christ! In Numbers 25:13, Moses said that the Levitical Priesthood would be “everlasting,” but in Hebrews 7:12, we learn that it had been changed. How can this be? Clearly, the same is true with these as with the Sabbath. They were to exist “for ever in their generations,” throughout their appointed times.

QUESTION: Why is it that some prophets like Elijah went to heaven alive while others died and were buried?

ANSWER: The Bible does not tell us specifically why God translated Elijah. However, of Enoch, who was also translated, it is said in Hebrews 11:5, “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”

Though all reasons for the translation of these two men of God cannot yet be known, it appears likely that such was done, at least in part, to provide evidence to those living during the Old Testament period that a future state of existence

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with God through faith was a reality, in spite of the fact that “it is appointed unto men once to die” (Hebrews 9:27)! These actions were, as well, recorded for those of us who live under the New Testament (Romans 15:4). Therefore, these actions, in addition to the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, bear witness to the fact that from the beginning it has been the intent of God that all who are faithful to Him can be assured of a future life in a place called “Heaven” (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 14:1-3).

QUESTION: What is the meaning of the name “Moses” and in which country was he born?

ANSWER: The name Moses means “drawn out.” He was so named because Pharaoh’s daughter drew him out of the water (Exodus 2:10). He was born in the country of Egypt (Exodus, chapters one and two).

QUESTION: Was it God’s will that the daughters of Lot commit adultery with him?

ANSWER: No! God causes no man to sin! “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:13-15).

QUESTION: Did Lot’s daughters become his wives after they committed adultery with him?

ANSWER: No! From II Peter 2:7-8, we read that Lot was a righteous man who hated the lifestyle of the wicked! For him to take his two daughters to wife would be to live in a lifestyle that he hated. As well, he would have violated God’s Word. “None of you shall approach to any that is near kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the Lord” (Leviticus 18:6). It is also clear from Genesis 19:30-36, that Lot did not want to be involved in such a sin, but rather it was born in the hearts of his two daughters who first enticed their old father to become drunken! Surely this account of ungodliness ought to make each of us more aware of the folly and sin of using alcoholic beverages.

QUESTION: To whom does Psalm 119:19 refer?

ANSWER: Most scholars agree that David was the inspired author of this psalm. In verse nineteen he confesses that he is a stranger to this world and prays that his eyes would be opened to God’s Word so that he might behold the wondrous things of the world to come. This is what the Hebrews writer discusses in Chapter 11:13-14 as he writes about the faith of certain men and women who lived under the Old testament: “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and confessed that they

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were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a better country."

QUESTION: Who is referred to as the messianic prophet?

ANSWER: Isaiah! This is because much of his book tells of the coming of the Messiah; Jesus Christ and His Church. Note particularly chapters 2 & 53.

QUESTION: Is it true that the first time rain fell on the earth was at the time of the flood?

ANSWER: In Genesis 2:5, immediately following the creation, we learn that "the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth." In verse six, we find that the earth was watered by a mist that went up from the earth. In Genesis 7:4, just prior to the flood, God said, "I will cause it to rain upon the earth for forty days and forty nights." This is the first account of rain falling in the Bible!

QUESTION: Did man exist before Adam?

ANSWER: No! The inspired apostle Paul states in I Corinthians 15:45 that Adam was the first man!

QUESTION: Will Cain enter heaven?

ANSWER: There is no evidence that Cain ever repented of his sins. Without repentance, none can be saved (Luke 13:3).

QUESTION: What kind of a tree was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Did the partaking of its fruit symbolically represent sexual intercourse?

ANSWER: There is no reason to believe that the tree was not a literal tree! Neither is there any reason to believe that the eating of its fruit represented sexual intercourse. Such suggestions are nothing but the foolish musings of man!

QUESTION: Was Adam and Eve black or white? Where did the black race come from?

ANSWER: We have not been told the color of Adam and Eve's skin. However, that the various races of today originated through the three sons of Noah appears evident, since all others were destroyed in the flood. Ham and his descendants were later found in parts of Arabia and Africa. Shem's descendants settled in Mesopotamia and the east. Japheth's descendants located in Europe and parts of Asia. The name "Ham" comes from a Hebrew word that means swarthy and sunburned. This descriptive definition, coupled with the location of his descendants, suggests that the black race came through him.

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QUESTION: Is it true that the first month of the Bible year is April; that God created the world during this month?

ANSWER: We do not know the exact month and year of the creation! According to Jewish tradition, God created the earth 3,760 years and three months before the beginning of the Christian era. This tradition is upheld in the Jewish Calendar with the Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah) beginning in the autumn, rather than on January 1, according to our present calendar.

QUESTION: Does the Garden of Eden exist today? If so, where? Do angels with a flaming sword still guard it?

ANSWER: To answer the first question is to answer all three. No! The Garden of Eden no longer exists. It had been created by God as a home for sinless man. When man through sin fell, he was separated from God and lost the home created for him (Genesis 3:23-24). We are not told how long after the fall of man that the Garden existed. Some speculate that it was for a short period; others believe it existed until the flood. Nobody knows! Certainly, however, it does not exist on this earth today!

QUESTION: Why are there different accounts of creation?

ANSWER: Genesis 1:1 through Genesis 2:3 is a detailed account of creation, in the order of creation. In Genesis, the second chapter, there is no intent to present another complete account of creation, nor to follow the actual sequence of creation. Moses is only relating certain creation events in the order necessary to discuss properly that which follows, i.e., the fall of man!

QUESTION: Did God create man first and then create the woman from him (Genesis 2:22-23) or did He create them both at the same time as the Bible states in Genesis 1:27?

ANSWER: Genesis 1:27 does not state that the man and the woman were created at the same time! It simply says that God created them male and female! Genesis 2:7 and Genesis 2:22-23 explains how they were created and in what order! Also see I Timothy 2:12-13!

QUESTION: Was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil an actual tree?

ANSWER! Yes! There is no reason to think otherwise. Genesis provides us with a literal, historical account of the creation and subsequent events. Jesus knew it was literal and historical when He quoted from Genesis, chapters one and two, in Matthew 19:4-6. We, therefore, cannot doubt Him or the words of Moses (John 5:46-47).

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QUESTION: Was the serpent created good?

ANSWER: In Colossians 1:16-17, we read that He created all things! In Genesis 1:31, we find that everything God made was good! The serpent was simply an instrument used by Satan to tempt Eve. Because of this, Satan is sometimes called a serpent (Revelation 12:9)!

QUESTION: Why was the woman so stupid to believe the lies of the devil?

ANSWER: Eve was tempted then, as we are tempted today. Temptation can come in three ways; through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (I John 2:16). When lust conceives, it brings forth sin (James 1:14-15). Eve was tempted through these lusts and yielded to them and, therefore, sinned. So it is with us today! Eve was no more stupid than you and I! Indeed, all have sinned (Romans 3:23).

QUESTION: Did Adam and Eve die, as God said they would, on the very day they ate of the forbidden fruit?

ANSWER: Yes! Death is a word that means "separation" (James 2:26). In Isaiah 59:2, we are told that our sins "separate" us from our God. This is why people who live in sin are said to be dead in their sins (Ephesians 2:1-2). On the day Adam and Eve sinned by eating of the tree, they died spiritually and were separated from God! Also on that day, they began to die physically, because they no longer had access to the tree of life.

QUESTION: When Cain was "driven from the face of the earth" (Genesis 4:14), was he removed from the earth?

ANSWER: No! The phrase "from the face of the earth" is perhaps better translated as "from off the ground." It seems that Cain was talking about the fruitful ground that he had tilled before his sin; the ground that had received his brother's blood. It was from this land that God had driven him to become a fugitive and a vagabond.

QUESTION: How was it possible that the earth was without form, because our earth has a particular shape like an egg? If God created the heavens and earth, then where did the water come from?

ANSWER: The creation account in Genesis 1:1-2 reads as follows: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and void: and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

The phrase "In the beginning" means that before the acts of creation, nothing existed! All was eternity! The word "created" carries the idea that all existing elements; all existing material came into being by the word of God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) at precisely that time. This obviously included the elements of

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hydrogen and oxygen of which water is comprised. The fact that God created from nothing is attested to, as well, in the New Testament. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which appear" (Hebrews 11:3). Immediately following the bringing into existence of all matter, the earth was without form and void (vs.2). This means that God had not yet spoken the laws that were to govern the arrangement and orderliness of those things that he had created. This action was completed by Him during the total creation period of six literal twenty-four hour days. In summary, God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in six days created everything that has ever existed from absolutely nothing (including water) and placed into effect laws that caused and provided for the continuing orderly arrangement and function of it all!

David, in Psalms 33:9, said it this way, "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."

QUESTION: What is the essence of the mark of Cain's forehead (Genesis 4:15)?

ANSWER: The Bible does not say that a "mark" was set in his forehead! Surely, such a visible "mark," indicating that he was a murderer, would have led others to slay him! Rather, according to the passage in question, the "mark" was to assure Cain that he would not be slain. The word "mark" comes from a Hebrew word (oth) which means a "sign" or "token." Therefore, the passage would have been better translated "the Lord showed (or gave) Cain a sign to convince him that none would be allowed to kill him."

QUESTION: In Genesis it says Cain traveled to the east of Nod and married. Please who were the people who lived there at that time?

ANSWER: In Genesis 4:16-17, we learn that Cain traveled to the east of Eden into the land of Nod, which simply means a "place of wandering." The passage does not teach that Cain got his wife in this "place of wandering." The phrase "knew his wife" does not mean that he met her east of Eden. It only means that they engaged in marital sex in that place, which resulted in the birth of their firstborn son, Enoch (See also Genesis 4:1). It appears most likely that Cain already had his wife and took her with him when he traveled to the east of Eden!

In Genesis 5:4, we are told that Adam "begat sons and daughters." Clearly, from these, Cain found his wife, and from these came those who eventually inhabited the city that Cain built in the "place of wandering," which he named after his firstborn.

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QUESTION: Please explain Isaiah Chapter 19 in full detail.

ANSWER: A detailed study of this chapter would require volumes and more time than is available. However, perhaps an outline of the chapter followed by responses to the specific verses and questions cited in your letter would aid your further private study.

The chapter is a prophecy through Isaiah about those things that were to befall Egypt as follows:

- A. God is seen figuratively coming in a cloud in judgment upon Egypt (vs.1).
- B. The effect of this judgment would cause much confusion and fear (vss.1-2).
- C. The people would turn to their idols for comfort (vs.3).
- D. Egypt would be conquered by a foreign power (vs.4).
- E. They would suffer many physical discomforts (vss.5-10).
- F. All of their princes and wise men would be looked upon as fools (vss.11-16).
- G. God's people would become a terror to them (vs.17).
- H. Many Egyptians would be converted to the one true God (vss.18-20).
- I. The one true God would eventually heal their land (vss. 21-22).
- J. An alliance would develop between Israel, Egypt and Assyria (vss.23-25).

(Verse two question): Egyptians being set against Egyptians. Was this fulfilled or is it yet future?

(Verse two answer): It was fulfilled. Shortly after this prophecy, there was civil war in Egypt.

(Verse sixteen question): What does it mean that Egypt shall be like unto women?

(Verse sixteen answer): It means that they would be alarmed and fearful as a woman might be (See B. above).

(Verse nineteen question): How would Egypt raise an altar to God, since they never recognized Him?

(Verse nineteen answer): See H. above. Many Egyptians at that time did come to recognize and honor Jehovah.

(Verse twenty-four question): What was the connection between Israel, Egypt and Assyria?

(Verse twenty-four answer): See J. above.

(Verse twenty-five question): Is Egypt and Assyria of today to be blessed before Israel?

(Verse twenty-five answer): No! In Christ, "God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him."

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Although the prophecies in Isaiah have been fulfilled, it is interesting to note the similarity of imagery used in chapter thirteen (about Babylon), chapter seventeen (about Damascus), chapter eighteen (about Ethiopia) and chapter nineteen (about Egypt) with that used in Matthew chapter twenty-four about the destruction of Jerusalem!

QUESTION: Would you explain Daniel's seventy weeks of prophecy?

ANSWER: This prophecy foretells of the coming of the Messiah. The seventy weeks, or 490 days, is, for many reasons, to be understood as representing 490 years. This practice was often the case in biblical prophecy (Ezekiel 4:6). In Daniel 9:24-27 we learn that the Messiah was to appear and accomplish His mission during the 70 weeks or within the 490 year period from the decree (commandment) going forth to rebuild the temple. This period was to include 69 (7+60+2) weeks (483 years - perhaps to the recognition by the Father that Christ was His Son, the promised Messiah) in addition to the final (70th) week or 7 years. The decree to rebuild the temple (Ezra 7) went forth in about 454 BC. Adding thirty-three years (the approximate age of Christ at His death), we are now in the midst of the seventieth week of the 490-year prophetic period (486-487). His mission (as described in Daniel 9:24), during the final week, including His death on the behalf of others (Daniel 9:26), was completely fulfilled. There is little, if any, doubt that this final week also included the establishment and confirmation (through the giving of the Holy Spirit) of the kingdom (the church) of which Daniel had previously prophesied (chapters two and seven). Certainly, this, and the complete fulfillment of all other Old Testament prophecies, attests mightily to the inspiration and accuracy of God's Word.

QUESTION: What are the two tribes that make up Judah?

ANSWER: Judah and Benjamin. Please refer to I Kings 12:21, 23; II Chronicles 11:1, 10, 12, 23; II Chronicles 14:8; II Chronicles 15:2, 9.

QUESTION: There seems to be a contradiction between what is stated in Exodus 33:20 and the encounters that occurred between God and some of the Old Testament prophets. Please explain.

ANSWER: No man has literally looked into the face of God (I John 4:12). Man has, however, seen manifestations of God in miraculous situations such as the burning bush, etc., but never God Himself. In Exodus 33:11, it is stated that "Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend." This passage does not imply that Jehovah (who is a spirit) took on Himself a fleshly existence so Moses could look into His face. It simply affirms that God spoke unto Moses directly and openly, as would a friend.

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QUESTION: Did God create the dinosaurs at the same time that He created all other beasts?

ANSWER: I believe that the answer lies in Exodus 20:11, "For in six days (not periods of time) the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and "all" that in them is, . . ." "All" leaves nothing out! Therefore, it is clear that God in making "all" the beasts within that six-day period also at the same time created the dinosaurs!

QUESTION: Would not the belief that dinosaurs existed millions of years ago conflict with the Bible?

ANSWER: Yes! But, Science cannot prove their allegations relative to the age of the earth. Even their radiometric dating methods are based on assumption, not facts! According to Luke's genealogy at the direction of God, the Holy Spirit, (Luke 3) the age of the earth is approximately 10,000 years. What scientists refuse to accept is the truth that God created everything with the appearance of age. How old was the earth two days after God created it? Obviously, the earth was two days old, but how old did it appear to be? The same is true of Adam. He was actually two days old, two days after he was created. How old did he appear to be? We don't really know, but we do know he appeared to be much older than he actually was! Scientists have assumed the rate of processes that bring about change is the same today as it was in the beginning. According to them the rate has never changed and will never change. Therefore, applying today's rate of change to a measurable unit can tell us the age of the earth. For example, we can know today the build-up rate of sediment and we can measure the depth of the sediment. Simply dividing the depth by the build-up rate will project the time required to deposit the sediment. But, one, in order to accurately project the time required, must first prove that the build-up rate remained meticulously constant through the period of build-up. This, the scientist cannot do! Beyond this, to apply a current rate to that which was created with the appearance of age, even if the rate were proven to be constant, would prove absolutely nothing relative to the actual age of that which was created! "Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar" (Romans 3:4).

QUESTION: When were the dinosaurs destroyed?

ANSWER: We cannot know with certainty how or when it came about. Scientists cannot prove their theories and the Bible does not speak to the issue. It is possible, however, perhaps probable, that the universal flood of Noah's time brought about drastic changes in climate and temperature that were responsible for their disappearance. Since we can't know for sure, we must leave the truth of the matter to eternity.

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QUESTION: “We know from Science and Biology that such creatures (dinosaurs) did exist.” Is this the only way we can know?

ANSWER: May I suggest to you that we also can know of their existence from the fortieth chapter of the book of Job, verses fifteen through thirty-four. “Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. Lo now is strength is in his loins, and is force is in the navel of his belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. He is the chief of the ways of God; He that made him can make His sword to approach unto him. Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play. He lieth under the shady tress, in the covert of the reed, and fens. The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about. Behold he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not; he trusteth that he can draw Jordan up into his mouth. He taketh it with his eyes; his nose pierces through snares.” Some have suggested that the “behemoth” is an elephant, but in light of verse seventeen the suggestion is without merit, because the creature here discussed “moveth his tail like a cedar.” The tail of an elephant is nothing but a wisp!

QUESTION: What does “pertaineth” mean in Deuteronomy 22:5?

ANSWER: The word translated “pertaineth” in the subject passage means “something prepared.” In this case, the passage means ‘a woman shall not wear that which has been “prepared for” the man and the man shall not wear that which has been prepared for” the woman.’ Such is an “abomination unto the Lord thy God.”

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ELDERS

QUESTION: I have been informed and have proof that an elder is guilty of child molestation, but he continues to deny it. Should this man continue to serve as an elder?

ANSWER: Clearly, a man proven guilty of child molestation should not hold the office of elder! He is not qualified to do so (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9). You suggest that you were “informed” of the elder’s guilt. Let me caution you concerning Paul’s words to Timothy (I Timothy 5:19), “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but under two or three witnesses.” This means that one is not to accept as valid an accusation against an elder, unless there are two or three witnesses to support the charge! Such would be sin and require repentance of those involved in the communication, i.e., the transmitter and the receiver! You state in your letter that you are unfaithful to the Lord. Before you can scripturally deal with the elder’s situation, you must first deal with your own unfaithfulness by returning to your first love (Matthew 7:3-5; Acts 8:22). If the demands of the above passages have been satisfied and you have proof positive that the man is guilty as charged, as a faithful Christian it would be your responsibility to go to him alone with the evidence in order to gain his soul. If he will not hear you, then take two or three witnesses (to gain his soul). If he neglects to hear them, tell it to the church (to gain his soul). If he neglects to hear the church, let him be to you as a heathen man and a publican (Matthew 18:15-17) “that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (I Corinthians 5:4-5). If you were “informed” of this elder’s guilt by another “Christian,” he or she as well should be called upon to repent, if he or she did not first go to the erring brother. Many often carry gossip to others (sometimes for self-seeking and ulterior purposes) under the guise of seeking advice, which, of course, is sinful and soul damning!

Note: (Too many times use of the biblical principle of Matthew 18:15-17 is avoided by those who demand its application solely to situations in which one has been personally affronted. Though this is the immediate context in which the passage is found, it is undeniable that this Christ-given principle is obviously the most effective way of dealing with sins that are not public in nature, whether personal or non-personal. This biblical approach will always bring less permanent damage to the accused; about whose soul we are to be concerned and whom we are trying to reclaim. As well, it will, without doubt, result in less damage to the local congregation and to the body of Christ in general. It does absolutely no good to the accused, the congregation, or the cause of Christ to unnecessarily showcase sin! Certainly and clearly, however, additional principles and patterns are set forth, and to be used, when dealing with the public teaching of false doctrines, e.g., Romans 16:17-18; II Timothy 1:15; II Timothy 2:16-18; Titus 1:10-16).

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QUESTION: May women scripturally serve as deacons and elders?

ANSWER: The qualifications for these offices are found in I Timothy 3:1-3 and in Titus 1:6-9. That these unchangeable qualifications relate only to men can clearly be seen in these passages by the use of only masculine nouns and pronouns. Additionally, both elders and deacons are to be the husbands of one wife (I Timothy 3, verses 2 and 12). Women, therefore, cannot fulfill this God-given qualification!

Also, women cannot scripturally become elders and deacons (deaconesses) because such would result in a violation of I Timothy 2:9-15. This scripture forbids women to usurp the authority that God has given to man. Verses nine and ten read, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

QUESTION: If a man has been chosen to be an elder, because of his money - doesn't visit the sick, his children don't fear the Lord, he is not careful with his tongue, his wife attends the denominations, can he be dropped? If yes, how? If no, why not?

ANSWER: Clearly, a man guilty of these things is not qualified to be an elder. It is also evident that such a person, unless, he repents will be lost in eternity. If you have proof positive that the man is guilty as charged, as a faithful Christian, it would be your responsibility to go to him alone with the evidence in order to gain his soul. If he will not hear you, then take two or three witnesses (to gain his soul). If he neglects to hear them, tell it to the church (to gain his soul). According to I Timothy 5:19-20, the man should be rebuked publicly, that others also may fear! If he neglects to hear the church, let him be to you as a heathen man and a publican (Matthew 18:15-17) "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Corinthians 5:4-5). In other words, the fellowship of the church is to be withdrawn from him (II Thessalonians 3:6-15) until such time as he is brought to repentance.

If the man is willing to repent, he should be restored to full fellowship in the congregation. However, he should not under any circumstances be in the office of an elder, since it is clear, according to the question, that he lacks many of the qualifications (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9), especially that of ruling his own house well. Certainly he is not qualified to take care of the church of God (I Timothy 4-5).

QUESTION: In light of a statement in your correspondence course that "Nowhere do you read of a pastor (preacher) being head over a congregation," would you explain Ephesians 4:11?

ANSWER: The thrust of the paragraph in which this statement was made was to show that the denominational world has departed from the scriptural pattern for the organization of the church. The denominations have rejected the divine pattern by assigning the title of "pastor" to the preacher, or the evangelist, thus

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giving him the rule over the local congregation. First the word “pastor” is never scripturally applied to the preacher or evangelist. The words preacher and evangelist refer to the same function in the church. In other words, the evangelist is the preacher! Note that Paul told Timothy, in II Timothy 4:2, to “preach the word,” and then in II Timothy 4:5, he told him to “do the work of an evangelist.” Therefore, they are the same!

The word “pastor” is another word used to describe the work of an elder. It is from the Greek word *poimen*, which means to “tend” or “feed, or to “take care of.” In Acts 20:28, as Paul is talking to the Ephesian elders or overseers, he instructs these to “feed” the church of God. The word “feed” in this passage is also from the Greek word *poimen* (pastor). What Paul then is saying to these elders is, ‘you elders are to “pastor” (feed) the church.’ So then, we can see that the elders are the pastors, not the preacher (evangelist). This is, as well, made clear in the passage questioned. Notice that Paul shows a clear difference between evangelists (preachers) and “pastors.” Why does he make this distinction? Simply because the word “pastor” in Ephesians 4:11 refers to elders, not to preachers (evangelists)!

The statement in the correspondence course is true. “Nowhere do you read of a preacher (erroneously called a “pastor” by the denominations) being head over a congregation.” The “rule” of a congregation belongs only to a plurality of elders within the local congregation (Hebrews 13:7,17; I Peter 5:1-4). The “rule” of a congregation was not assigned to the preacher. He, as all others in the local congregation, is to be under the “rule” of the elders, and is to be obedient to them within the guidelines of God’s Word!

QUESTION: Do we have spiritual leaders in the church today?

ANSWER: There is no earthly head of the church! Christ is seated at the right hand of God (Acts 2:29-35) and has been made “to be the head of all things to the church” (Ephesians 1:22). Each congregation of the Lord’s church is self-governing, answerable only to Christ!

Each congregation is overseen by a plurality (more than one) of elders, independent of all other congregations. It is the responsibility of these men to “feed the church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). By this we understand that there is no higher governing body on this earth and to this we are limited! Deacons are to serve the congregation under the oversight of the elders. Evangelists are to proclaim the Word (II Timothy 4:1-5). A religious group without this prescribed organization cannot be the church of the Bible!

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QUESTION: If an elder's wife dies must he step down? Does he have the right to step down?

ANSWER: No! If an elder served well during the life of his wife, he retains the qualifying family background necessary to serve after her death. Those who hold that he must step down would have to take the position that if his believing children died, he, in this case, would also have to step down. Yet, not many will go this far! If an elder has the proven ability of having had his children in subjection, even though they die, as in the case of the wife passing away, he retains the same ability.

If an elder "wants" to step down for any reason, it is his right to do so! If he no longer has the desire to serve in that office, he has disqualified himself and must step down (I Timothy 3:1).

QUESTION: How can one become an elder if his wife belongs to a denomination? If a man can't control his own house, how can he take care of the Lord's church?

ANSWER: Such a man is not qualified to be an elder! Certainly, he does not have the rule of his own house and his ability to teach appears also to be, at best, questionable. Neither would he be of "good report of them which are without." For such a one to seek or accept the position of elder is a violation of God's Word (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9), and is therefore sinful. This man needs to be approached as a brother in keeping with Paul's admonition of I Timothy 5:19-20, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others may also fear."

QUESTION: What is the work of deacons in the church?

ANSWER: The English word deacon comes from a Greek word that means "servant." Deacons do not rule, nor have authority! They are to serve the congregation under the oversight of the elders.

QUESTION: What do we call the person who chairs the church meetings?

ANSWER: I assume from the question that there are no elders where you worship. If there are, these men, of course, would have the authority to chair meetings. If there are no elders then one of the brethren should be appointed to chair the meeting. Having no authority, it would be his purpose to assure orderly transaction of the business at hand. Under no circumstances, should a woman chair such a meeting, unless it is in a congregation made up solely of women (I Timothy 2:11-12). To refer to a man chairing a meeting as the "chairman," because it describes the function he is doing would not be wrong. However, allow me to suggest that you avoid using any title or expression that might elevate one brother over another. Nothing good can come from it, but will often create jealousies and division within a congregation. Even the words preacher, teacher, deacon, and elder are not to be used as titles. These are to be used simply to

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describe the function being done by individuals or groups. We all have names! Let us use these!

QUESTION: Can we appoint someone as a deacon who drinks?

ANSWER: No! One who drinks cannot be a faithful Christian and only faithful Christian men can become deacons (I Timothy 8-13)! Please read Proverbs 23:29-35; Isaiah 5:11; Habakkuk 4:2; I Corinthians 6:9-11; and Galatians 5:19-21. In addition to the clear teaching of these passages, also consider the fact that the partaking of alcoholic beverages (in any amount) lowers one's resistance to temptation and, further, that those who do so, very often yield to all sorts of ungodly sins. How can one who drinks alcohol pray (as all have been commanded to do) that they will not be led into temptation (Matthew 6:13)? To do so would be to make a mockery of God and His word! The apostle Paul in I Corinthians 6:19 states that, as Christians, we are not our own; that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, belonging to Him! It follows then that to introduce any substance of harm (such as drugs, alcohol or tobacco) into that which houses the Holy Spirit would be inappropriate. As well, such activity in one's body certainly does not glorify God and would, therefore, be a violation of I Corinthians 6:20.

Some have foolishly opted to exempt deacons from the foregoing on the basis of I Timothy 3:8, which states that they are not to be "given to much wine." This passage is not authorizing the deacons (or any other) to take wine in small amounts. It simply says that in order for one to be qualified as a deacon he cannot to be given to drunkenness!

QUESTION: By what authority do churches of Christ have committees composed of elders and deacons?

ANSWER: By the authority of the New Testament (I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; Philippians 1:1; Hebrews 13:7,17; I Peter 5:1-3)!

QUESTION: Is it scriptural for an elder or deacon to be appointed by his fellow elders and deacons without input from the congregation?

ANSWER: No! Some men in the sixth chapter of Acts were to be selected to perform a particular function within the church. These were not to be elders, but, nonetheless, this scriptural selection process was at the direction of inspired men. These told the disciples in Jerusalem to "select ye out among you" the men to serve. Man can devise no better way! The congregation, under the oversight of the elders, then should make the selection with extremely careful consideration to the qualifications of elders and deacons as detailed in I Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:6-9. Certainly, however, this should not be construed to mean that the present elders who "watch for your souls" (Hebrews 13:7) do not have the right (collectively) to reject from the eldership those against whom valid charges are brought, whether as to qualifications or conduct of life!

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QUESTION: If one does not meet the qualifications to be an elder is he allowed to do or carry out the duty of an elder if there are no other elders in the church?

ANSWER: A man who is not qualified to be an elder should not conduct himself as an elder. Neither should the congregation accept him as an elder. Even if the man was qualified to be an elder, he could not scripturally function as such, unless there were others also qualified and appointed. The Bible demands that there be a plurality (more than one) of elders in each congregation (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). This does not mean that one who is not qualified to be an elder, but yet is a faithful Christian, cannot lead in worship and participate in collective decision-making relative to congregational matters on an equal basis with the other faithful men in a congregation until such time as qualified men can properly be selected to serve.

QUESTION: Are the following positions scripturally correct?

1. If a man has but one faithful child he cannot scripturally serve as an elder.
2. If one of a man's children have becomes unfaithful after leaving home, the father cannot be appointed as an elder.
3. If a man is appointed as an elder, after which one of his believing, faithful children leaves home and apostatizes, the man becomes disqualified at that point.
4. That Proverbs 22:6 says that if we teach our children well, they will always remain faithful.

ANSWER: In I Timothy 3:1 the record says that in order for one to be an elder he must be "One who ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity." Titus 1:6 says, "having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly." Although in both instances the plural (children) is used, there is no logical or scriptural basis to conclude that the Holy Spirit is teaching that a man with but one faithful child falls short of this qualification. As we look to God's Word, we often find that the singular and plural of "children" are used interchangeably. For example: In Genesis 21:7, Sarah said, "Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given "children" (plural) suck for I have given him a son (singular) in his old age. Though having but one son, Sara indicated that she had given suck to children (plural). In Luke 14:26, Jesus said we cannot be His disciple if we don't love Him more than our children (plural). Shall we understand this to mean that one cannot be qualified to be His disciple if he has only one child (singular) to love less than Him? Of course not! Consider I Timothy 5: 9-10: Here a widow could be taken into the number "if she brought up children." Does Paul imply here that an otherwise qualified widow who had brought up only "one" child could not be taken into the number? Certainly not! How about the slave to be set free at the fifty year Jubilee (Leviticus 25:41). He was instructed to take his "children" with him. But what if he only had one child to take? Could he still be freed? Of course! The same principle is true in Timothy and Titus. And the same principle is true today. For example: If I were to stand before an audience and

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you, having but one child, were a part of that audience and I would announce to all, “all fathers who have children come forward and I will give you each of you a thousand dollars,” would you come to collect the money? I think so! I know if the situation were reversed, I would be the first down the aisle! Consider this: An elder has two children living under his roof who have been faithful, dedicated Christians for five years. The children cannot be accused of riot or being unruly. Both are in subjection to their father with all gravity. One of the children dies in an accident. The elder’s ability to take care of his own house has not changed. He had the qualifications before the child’s death and he retains the qualifications after the child’s death. Nothing has changed! Clearly, scripture and logic support the conclusion that if a man has at least one child who is a faithful Christian, he is not, thereby, unqualified or disqualified. One who has but one faithful child is as qualified as one who has two or more faithful children.

When a man leaves home he is to “leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they two shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). The man is no longer under the tutelage (guardianship, care, protection, teaching, and instruction) of the father. He has left his parents and begun a new home over which he is guardian, caretaker, protector, teacher, and instructor. What that person does after he leaves home should not be a determining factor in the subject situations, because when the child leaves his father’s home to start a new home, the father’s responsibility for the child terminates! He is to rule his own house well, which excludes his child’s house!

Proverbs 22:6 does not teach that if our children are trained well they will never depart from the faith! Training a child “in the way he/or she could go” does not mean to train him or her as a Christian. It means to train the child according to, and in concert with, his natural abilities and talents. If we do this when the child is grown he will not depart from that for which he has been trained. To suggest that a properly trained child will never depart from the faith goes too far. In fact, such a suggestion clearly implies that it is impossible for the properly trained one to fall from grace which would be contradictory to such passages as Galatians 5:4; I Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 10:26-29, and many others.

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SALVATION/BAPTISM

QUESTION: What is faith?

ANSWER: Faith in Christ is not simply belief or mental assent that He exists and is the Son of God! Saving faith is belief in Christ, conjoined with obedience to Him! This obedient faith is described, by example, throughout Hebrews, chapter eleven, which we encourage you to study. Without this kind of faith, "it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6). James tells us that without obedient works, faith is dead; a faith that cannot save (James 2:14-26).

QUESTION: How do we get faith?

ANSWER: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Since faith comes from hearing the word of God, we need to study always (II Timothy 2:15) and we need to be obedient (righteously active) to that which we learn. We need to be constant in prayer (I Thessalonians 5:17) and we need to diligently add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. If we do these things we will make our calling and election sure, and we will never fall (II Peter 1:5-11).

QUESTION: Is water baptism necessary to salvation? Please send supporting scriptures.

ANSWER: Yes! Baptism is essential to salvation! The following scriptures clearly support this statement.

(Mark 16:16) He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved! Both belief and baptism come before and are necessary to salvation. God's formula is B+B=S! Man would often insert his own formula as B=S+B! To do so is to reject the will of God!

(Acts 2:38) Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Christ for the remission of sins. In this verse, we see that both repentance and baptism are necessary to the remission of sins. Some try to say that "for" in this passage means "because of." This is unscholarly and foolish. The word "for" in this passage means the same as the word "for" in Matthew 26:28! Conclusion: Whatever Christ's blood is "for," repentance and baptism are "for."

(Acts 22:16) And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. Again, we learn that baptism precedes washing away of sins! In this passage, Saul had been on his knees in prayer for three days and three nights, after which he was told to arise and be baptized to get rid of his sins. Question: Why didn't the seventy-two hours of prayer (with fasting) get the job done? Why did Ananias tell the believing Saul to

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quit waiting? Why did he tell him to go get baptized to wash away his sins? Simply, because Paul had to obey the Lord's command of Mark 16:16 & Acts 2:38 (above).

(Romans 6:3) Baptism is that which puts one into Christ! Only in Him is there salvation (II Timothy 2:10; Acts 4:12). In order to get to that salvation, we must obey that which puts us into Him!

(Galatians 3:27) When one is baptized into Christ, he or she puts Christ on! Christ is not put on before baptism!

(I Peter 3:21) Baptism doth also now save us! Just as the water of the flood separated Noah from a sinful world; just as the water of the flood cleansed a world of sin, even so baptism is that which separates and cleanses today, because it is at this point of obedience (baptism) that the blood of Christ is applied (Revelation 1:5; Romans 6:1-5; Hebrews 9:22). Baptism washes away sin (Acts 22:16); His blood washes away sin (Revelation 1:5)! How can both be true? One way! They occur at the same time!

QUESTION: Can a person save himself?

ANSWER: A person cannot devise his own plan of salvation; nor is he saved by "works of righteousness" (Titus 3:5). However, without "works of obedience" one cannot be saved (James 2:14-26). These are the "works" Peter referred to in Acts 2:40 when he told those (and us) on Pentecost day, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." What were these "works" they were told to do? Verse thirty-eight answers, " (You believers) Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins . . ." Verse forty-one, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Thus, they are said to have saved themselves in their obedience to God's saving plan! Titus 3:5: 'not by works of righteousness, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration/renewing (baptism),' which is described as the new birth in John 3:3-5!

QUESTION: Can a person have his sins remitted (be saved) before or without baptism? Can one go to heaven if he or she has not been baptized?

ANSWER: The answer to both questions is "No!" Baptism precedes and is essential to salvation. Without scriptural baptism none can enter heaven! Scriptural baptism is an immersion in water "for" (in order to) the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and that which puts one into the "one" body (church) of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13). Please additionally read Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:26 & I Peter 3:21. Note in these passages that baptism comes before salvation; that baptism puts one into Christ; and that "baptism" doth also now save us!

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A true Christian is not one who merely says, "I am a Christian," but one whose life conforms to the will of our Lord. In Matthew 7:21, Jesus said, "Not everyone that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." In verses 22/23, we learn that in Judgment Day many will claim to be Christians, but He will say to them, "I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity." One then must become, and remain, a Christian according to the Bible. No other way will do, nor stand in the Judgment (John 12:48).

To become a New Testament Christian, one must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24); repent (turn away from) of sins (Luke 3:3); confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus (Romans 10:9-10); and be immersed in water (Acts 8:35-39) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) into the one body (I Corinthians 12:13) of Christ, which is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). This church is His church and is, therefore, to be called by His name, the church of Christ (Romans 16:16). It is to this church that one is added by God after being obedient to the above scriptures. Then, and only then, can it be said that one is a true New Testament Christian! Any other way will not do! Any other church will not do!

QUESTION: If one is baptized by immersion into a denomination, does one need to be baptized again?

ANSWER: The church of Christ is the one and only body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18 & 24). It is the church that Christ promised to build (Matthew 16:18); the church for which He died (Acts 20:28); and the church to which people were added on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:47). All denominations have their origin in the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9) and are, therefore, impostors that will one day be rooted up (Matthew 15:13). To be immersed, poured, or sprinkled into a denomination avails absolutely nothing, since such lacks biblical authority. When one enters a denomination, he or she does not change their relationship with the world. They remain in the world, since denominationalism is of the world and not of God. Notice carefully in Acts 19:1-5 that certain Ephesians had been immersed in water for the wrong reason, that is, unto John's baptism! After Paul preached to them, they were then baptized properly, that is, by the authority of (in the name of) the Lord Jesus. Scriptural baptism is an immersion in water (Romans 6:1-5) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) into the one body (I Corinthians 12:13), the church of Christ (Romans 16:16). This action and its purpose must be understood by the person being baptized. Otherwise, it is of no effect at all! Any person, whether in a denomination or not, must be scripturally baptized to be added by God to the church of the Bible, the church of Christ.

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QUESTION: Why isn't it necessary for a Christian who falls away to be rebaptized to be restored to one's salvation?

ANSWER: Usually when this question is asked, it is an effort to prove on the basis of one's own logic (exclusive of scripture) that baptism is not necessary to one's salvation. So first let's look at just a few verses related to this issue. Jesus said in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." There are two divine formulas given in this passage. One is the formula that results in one's salvation. The other is the formula that results in one being damned. In other words, the passage tells us how to be saved and it tells us how to be lost. The formula for salvation is clear. It is B+B+S (Belief+Baptism=Salvation). It is the same idea as in mathematics; 2+2=4. The formula for damnation is also clear: UB=D (unbelief=Damnation). That the formula for salvation is proper cannot successfully be denied, since both belief and baptism evidently precede salvation! Some have attempted to change God's formula for salvation in this way: B=S+B (Belief=Salvation+Baptism). Clearly, those who do so are violating God's Word (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19). Sometimes the immature argument comes back, "Well, God did not say, 'he that believeth not and is not baptized shall be damned'." This statement is illogical and reflects poorly upon the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Undoubtedly, He was (and is) aware of the fact that unbelieving people do not ask (or want) to be baptized! To command that people not do something that they have no intention of doing would be foolish and redundant!

On the day of Pentecost, sinners asked Peter the question, "what shall we do?" He said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Christ for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:38). So we see that baptism is for (to bring about) the remission of sins! Some will argue that the word "for" means "because of." This is not true! Peter used the Greek word "eis," which means "unto" or "with a view toward." Had he wanted to convey the idea of "because," he would have been consistent and used the same Greek word he used earlier in the chapter. For example, in verse twenty-five, we read the word "for" and in verse twenty-seven, we read the word "because." The Greek word used by Peter in these two verses is the word "gar," which means "because" or "because of." He did not use the word "gar" in Acts 2:38, but rather he used the word "eis." Jesus, in Matthew 26:28, used the identical expression, "for the remission of sins," as did Peter in Acts 2:38. He said that His blood was shed "for the remission of sins." Whatever the phrase means in one place, it must also mean in the other place. Surely one would not argue that Christ shed His blood "because of" the remission of our sins! Clearly, He shed His blood "in order to" bring about the remission of our sins. Therefore, we can only rightly conclude that whatever Jesus' blood was "for" in Matthew 26:28, that is what repentance and baptism are "for" in Acts 2:38! Consistency and honesty demand this truth!

Repeatedly, throughout the New Testament, we read that baptism washes away sin (Acts 22:16); that baptism puts one "into" Christ (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27)

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where salvation is found (II Timothy 2:10); and that baptism doth also now save us (I Peter 3:21). So baptism for the remission of sins is not a man-made doctrine, it is of God!

Now to the question, why does not a Christian have to be rebaptized after falling from grace? (By the way, those who contend that one cannot fall from grace need to consider such passages as Galatians 5:4; I Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 6:4-6; Hebrews 10:26-29; II Peter 2:20-22; and a host of others.) The reason is simply this: God gave two laws of pardon! One is for the alien sinner (one who has never known Christ). This first law of pardon is: (1) Hear-John 6:44-45; Romans 10:17; (2) Believe-John 8:24; Mark 16:16; (3) Repent-Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30; (4) Confess-Romans 10:9-10; Be baptized-Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. After doing these things, God will add one to His church (Acts 2:47). He must then be faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10).

The second law of pardon is for the Christian who has turned his back on God. We see this clearly set forth in Acts, the eighth chapter. In verse twelve, Philip baptized both men and women in the name of Jesus Christ! This is to say that he baptized them for the same reason that Peter had baptized in Acts 2:38; that is, for the remission of sins! Upon their baptism (just as He did in Acts 2:47), God added them to His church. In verse thirteen, we also see that Simon believed and was baptized, which resulted (according to Christ's promise) in his salvation (Mark 16:16-B+B=S). In verses eighteen through twenty, we learn that Simon (now a Christian) sinned; his heart was not right with God! Peter then told this erring Christian what he must do: God's second law of pardon: (1) Repent; and (2) Pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. John says the same thing as he writes to Christians in I John. To them only (not to alien sinners) he writes in chapter one, verse nine, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The reason then why Christians do not have to be baptized every time they commit a sin is because God has given two laws of pardon; one for the alien sinner; the other for the erring Christian!

The only account in the Bible of people being rebaptized is found in Acts 18:24-19:5. These were immersed the second time, because they did it for the wrong reason the first time. For example, if one today would be baptized as an outward sign of an inward grace (to show that they had already been saved), it would be for the wrong reason. This baptism would be both defective and ineffective! To be approved of God, the individual would then have to be rebaptized according to His purpose and design (Matthew 7:21-29); that is, for (in order to) the remission of sins!

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QUESTION: If none can be saved outside the church without baptism, how is it that Jesus saved many without the church or baptism when He was on the earth?

ANSWER: During Jesus' earthly ministry, the Great Commission of Mark 16:15-16 had not yet been given; the church had not yet been established. It did not come into existence until fifty days after His death. Therefore, the people saved by Jesus during His public ministry, having lived under the Old Testament Law (including the thief on the cross) were saved neither in the church, nor out of the church! Jesus physically healed and forgave sins while on this earth in order to prove His divinity (Matthew 9:1-6), not to set a pattern by which men for all time could receive remission of sins. This one authorized pattern was set forth for the first time on the birthday of the church, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). It is binding upon all men everywhere, even unto the end of the world (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:39). Those who gladly receive and obey this one pattern will be added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:41-47). There is no other pattern; no other way!

QUESTION: Is there a difference between being "born again" and being "baptized?" Can one be sanctified without baptism or without being born again?

ANSWER: No! To become a New Testament Christian, one must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24); repent (turn away from) of sins (Luke 3:3); confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus (Romans 10:9-10); and be immersed in water (Acts 8:35-39) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) into the one body (I Corinthians 12:13) of Christ, which is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). This church is His church (Matthew 16:18) and is, therefore, to be called by His name, the church of Christ (Romans 16:16). It is to this church that one is added after being obedient to the above scriptures. Then, and only then, can one be said to be "born again." If one has been "born again" (baptized), he or she is then a true Christian.

When one is baptized into Christ (becomes a Christian), the old man, dead in sin, is buried in water, and a new man is born, being raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:1-5). There is a coming forth from the water (as a baby coming forth from the womb). A new birth into Christ has occurred! It is only at this point (baptism) that one can be said to be "born again!" Therefore if any man is "baptized into Christ" (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27), he is a new creature, having been born again, "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17b).

The word "sanctified" simply means to be "set apart." When one is "born again" in obedience to baptism, he or she has been sanctified, that is, he or she has been set apart from this world! Therefore, the answer to the second part of the question is no! One cannot be sanctified without being scripturally baptized. Neither can one be scripturally baptized (born again) without being sanctified!

Compiled by David Amos for Truth for the World

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QUESTION: What action must a Christian take when he sins in order to continue in the faith?

ANSWER: John provides the answer in I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This confession involves accompanying sorrow and a departure from sin. An example is seen in Acts 8:22 where Peter told an erring Christian, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."

Continuing in the faith demands a continual walk in the light (of His Word), "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:9).

QUESTION: Does the New Testament authorize the practice of sprinkling and pouring as baptism?

ANSWER: Sprinkling and pouring in the place of immersion (a burial) was not generally practiced until early in the thirteenth century. The word "baptism" in the New Testament comes from the Greek word "baptizo." This word means to dip, immerse, submerge, plunge, sink, or overwhelm. In Mark 16:16 our Lord literally specified and authorized only the following: "He that believeth and is immersed (baptismos) shall be saved." The command to be buried in water relates to a single specific action, which excludes all other actions. Pouring (from the Greek word cheo) and sprinkling (from the Greek word rhantizo) are totally unrelated actions. Had our Lord authorized either of these, He would have used the words describing these actions. He did not! Those who teach and practice sprinkling and pouring in the place of a burial are guilty of presumptuous sin (Psalms 19:13; II Peter 2:10) and are, therefore, without God (Isaiah 59:1-2). The people upon whom they sprinkle or pour water are still in their sins, because they have not obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which frees from sin (Romans 6:16-18).

Every account of water baptism in the New Testament was an immersion (burial) in water for the remission of sins, and into the one body of our Lord; that is, the church of Christ! There is no other baptism that will save!

QUESTION: Is it necessary to be a member of the Catholic Church, Pentecostal Church or any other church in order to be saved?

ANSWER: It is not necessary to belong to either the Catholic Church, the Pentecostal Church or any of today's denominations! However, it is necessary to be a member of the church for which Jesus died. He said that He would build one church (Matthew 16:18). In Acts chapter two, we read of its establishment. Paul said in Ephesians 1:22-23, that the church is His body. Later, in Ephesians 4:4, he tells us that there is only one body. It is into this one body, this church, that one "must" be baptized through the agency (the direction) of the one Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13). The direction of the Spirit comes only through the word of

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God, which tells us how a person enters that one church. On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), those who “gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (vs.41). “And the Lord added daily to the church (His church) such as were being saved (vs.47). These believing people repented, and were baptized for the remission of sins, after which they were added to the church that Christ had built. (They were not added to the Catholic Church, which was established much later in 606AD; they were not added to the Pentecostal Church, which began around the beginning of this century; nor were they added to denominationalism, which had it’s many beginnings since the fifteenth century!) All of the saved people on Pentecost Day were members of the church of Christ! Obviously, there is no difference between those who live today and the people of Acts chapter two! When people today, as they, gladly receive His word (when they believe and submit totally to it), repent, and are immersed in water for the remission of sins, they too are added by God to the same church; the one church, the church of Christ (Romans 16:16). Since Christ built only one church (the church of the Bible), it can only be concluded that all other religious organizations (including the Catholic and Pentecostal Churches) were built by man (Matthew 15:8-14). In these, there is no promise of salvation; no promise of hope; no promise of the blessings of Christ (Ephesians 1:3). These promises are to be found only in His church; the church of Christ!

QUESTION: Is the purpose of water baptism to lead us to a “good conscience,” or is it “for the remission of sins?”

ANSWER: I Peter 3:21 teaches that “baptism doth also now save us” and that it is the answer of a “good conscience” toward God! Therefore, this passage teaches that obedience to God in baptism results from one previously having had a “good conscience.”

Mark 16:16 teaches that those who believe and are baptized shall be saved. Acts 2:38 teaches that baptism is “for (in order to) the remission of sins.” Acts 22:16 teaches that it “washes away sins.” I Peter 3:21 teaches that it “doth also now save us.” Those who would teach that one is saved before and without baptism wrest these (and other) passages to their own destruction. In spite of this, there are those who teach the exact opposite by adding one word to each of these passages; the word “not.” For example some falsely teach that: “those who believe and are [not] baptized shall be saved;” “baptism is [not] for the remission of sins;” “baptism does [not] wash away sin;” “baptism doth [not] also now save us.” By adding the word “not,” those who do so, follow in the steps of the Devil. God said that if Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden tree they would “surely die” (Genesis 2:17). The devil added one word; the word “not.” He said they would “[not] surely die” (Genesis 3:4). Adam and Eve sinned and were separated from God, because of the addition of this one word. If we today listen to, and accept, this one word [not] as a part of these passages, we, too, will sin and be separated from God! Any who accepts this false teaching does despite unto the

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Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:29), contradicting the words of our Lord; the very words by which they will one day be judged (John 12:48).

We must be extremely careful that we allow the Bible to form our religious beliefs! We must never use the Bible to force, cause, or twist it to comply and conform to our preconceptions and desires. "God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar" (Romans 3:4)!

Every account of water baptism in the New Testament, including that of Cornelius and the Phillipian jailer, was an immersion for the remission of sins, and into the one body of our Lord; that is, the church of Christ! There is no other baptism that will save!

QUESTION: Is the baptism of Acts 2:38 water baptism or Holy Spirit baptism?

ANSWER: It is an immersion in water! The baptism of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; John 14:15-26; John 15:26; John 16:7-14; Luke 24:49; Acts 2:1-4) was a promise made to the apostles (not a commandment) and fulfilled in Acts 2:1-4. A promise is not something to which a person can render obedience as demanded in the great commission of Matthew 28:18-20. Understanding this principle can help us to see which baptism is under discussion by an inspired writer as we study. Passages dealing with commandments to be baptized can always be taken to mean water baptism. For example, in Acts 2:36, the people to whom Peter was preaching asked, "what shall we do?" Peter commanded them. "Repent and be baptized" (vs.38). We can know then, without doubt, that this does not refer to Holy spirit baptism, because it is something people were commanded to do in order to gain the remission of sins (salvation). If the baptism here had signified Holy Spirit baptism, there would have been nothing for anyone to do! They would simply have received the promise!

QUESTION: What is meant by, "We are saved by faith, but not faith alone?"

ANSWER: Some falsely teach that a person is saved by "faith only" when they first believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that there are no acts or works of obedience required in order to become a New Testament Christian. This false doctrine is clearly refuted in James 2:14-26! Note especially verse twenty-four, "Ye see then how that by works (of obedience) a man is justified, and not by faith only."

To become a New Testament Christian, certain actions are commanded to which one must be obedient in order to be saved! One must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24): repent (turn away from) of sins (Luke 3:3); confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus (Romans 10:9-10): and be immersed (baptized) in water (Acts 8:35-39) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) into the one body (I Corinthians 12:13) of Christ, which is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23).

The doctrine of "Faith Only" is of man, and not of God!

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QUESTION: Why is baptism necessary in our lives?

ANSWER: Because it is a commandment of God (Acts 2:38), which when obeyed from the heart results in freedom from sin (Romans 6:16-18) and puts us "into" Christ (Romans 6:3) wherein salvation is to be found (II Timothy 2:10). It is the final act of obedience which results in our salvation (Mark 16:16), and by which we are added to the church of the Bible (Acts 2:47). Without obedience to baptism (an immersion in water), none of these blessings would be ours!

QUESTION: What is the baptism of Matthew 28:18-20?

ANSWER: It can only be "water baptism!" Obviously, the baptism in this passage is one of commandment. This means that everyone is commanded to be baptized. Holy Spirit baptism was never commanded, but, rather, it was a promise to be fulfilled (Acts 1:4-5). Since at the time of the writing of Ephesians 4:4 by the apostle Paul, there was clearly only "one baptism" and since the baptism of Matthew 28:18-20 was to be effective until the "end of the world," it can only be concluded that the promise of Holy Spirit baptism was fulfilled prior to the writing of the book of Ephesians in 63/65AD. Also in 65AD, Peter wrote about water baptism being the baptism that "doth also now save us" (I Peter 3:20-21). So then, Paul said in 63/65AD, there is only "one baptism!" Peter says at the same time that this one baptism is "water baptism." We know further that the baptism of Matthew 28:18-20 is the only baptism that would continue until the "end of the world." Therefore, the baptism spoken of in this passage can only be "water baptism."

QUESTION: Which baptism in the New Testament is right, Matthew 28:19 or Acts 2:38?

ANSWER: Both are right, because they are one and the same. There is no difference! Jesus in Matthew twenty-eight was speaking to the eleven disciples and gave them the Great Commission, "All power (authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." This passage is a commandment Jesus gave directly to His disciples and was first carried out by them in Acts, the second chapter. The question that needs to be considered at this point is: Were Peter and the others obedient or disobedient in Acts two to the Lord's command? If they baptized in a way different from that commanded, then they were disobedient! If they were baptized in the same way that Christ commanded, then it follows that they were obedient! Since three thousand souls were saved that day, and added by the Lord to His church, it is evident, and without doubt, that He was satisfied that Peter and the others had been obedient to Him. Since it is clear that they were obedient and pleasing to the Lord, it can only be concluded that there is no difference in the baptism of Matthew 28:19 and that of Acts 2:38!

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QUESTION: Who will enter eternal life?

ANSWER: It is true that not all will enter eternal life! Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in that way. Because narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." In Matthew 7:21-23, He tells us that even some religious people will not enter eternal life, because the religious things they do are not done according to the will of God! Then in verses twenty-four and twenty-five, He tells us who will enter eternal life! They are the ones who hear the sayings of Jesus and do them! Jesus says these people are wise! He also says, in verse twenty-six, that people who do not do what He says are foolish! Jesus' sayings (His words) are only in His New Testament, and in it are all things that pertain unto life and godliness (II Peter 1:3). These are the words by which all of us will one day be judged (John 12:48).

QUESTION: Where in the Bible does it say that baptism forgives sins? The KJV says that Christ's blood forgives sin.

ANSWER: You are exactly right! Christ's blood was shed for many "for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28), and it is also said to "wash us from our sins" (Revelation 1:5). These quotations are very easy for us to understand. Well, in Acts 2:38, the Bible also says that baptism is "for the remission of sins." In Acts 22:16, Saul was told to "be baptized, and wash away thy sins . . ." To be honest and consistent then, one can only conclude that the Bible teaches that what ever Christ's blood was shed "for," baptism is "for" the same thing! It would be quite unethical for one to say that it does not mean the same thing in both places! It, therefore, cannot be successfully and honestly denied that both (Christ's blood & baptism) are "for the same thing, i.e., the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28 & Acts 2:38)! We also see from the above that the Bible says that Christ's blood washes away sin and, likewise, that baptism washes away sin (Rev. 1:5 & Acts 22:16)! How can these things be? If the Bible is true (and it is), there can certainly be no contradictions. The only logical, scriptural answer is that they both must occur at the same time! This is what the Bible teaches! It is in baptism that one contacts the blood of Christ that washes away sin! Baptism saves us because it is in this act of obedience that we are baptized into His death (Romans 6:4) where his cleansing blood was shed. This is why Peter in I Peter 3:20-21 could say that just as "water" saved (vs.20) Noah and his family (by separating them from this sinful world) that baptism in the same way (like figure) "doth also now save us" (by separating or cleansing us from our sins - vs.21)!

Some religious folks try to put the blood of Christ (salvation) at the point of belief before and without baptism. Such is a wresting of scripture (II Peter 3:16). The Bible is clear. In Mark 16:16, Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The words "shall be" are clearly future. Therefore, both belief and baptism precede salvation. Jesus said, 'if you will believe and are baptized, I will promise you salvation.' The logic in this statement is easily understood in other

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settings. For example, if I said to you, 'if you wash my car and mow my lawn, I promise you two-hundred dollars.' What would you have to do to get the two-hundred dollars?" Would I owe you two-hundred-dollars if you only washed my car? Of course not!! I didn't promise you two hundred dollars for washing my car! But this is exactly the logic used by those who claim that Jesus said He promised salvation at the point of belief. It is the same as if they were saying; 'You promised me two-hundred dollars for washing your car!' All would normally understand what was required to gain the two hundred dollars. Yet, not all will apply the same logic fairly and honestly in considering the requirements of Mark 16:16? You see, the divine formula given by Christ in this verse is without doubt $B+B=S$ (Belief plus Baptism equals Salvation). Those who would remove baptism from God's plan of salvation teach a different formula, i.e., $B=S+B$ (Belief equals salvation plus baptism). The question then becomes not "what does the Bible say?" It is obvious! The question now is Will I obey God or man? Will I obey Christ's divine formula or will I obey man's formula?

QUESTION: Why do some not see the importance of baptism?

ANSWER: Some fail to see because they do not study the scriptures as commanded (Acts 17:11; II Timothy 2:15). These and others are often led into error by false teachers (II Peter 2:1; I John 4:1). These teachers, through the god of this world, hide the truth of the gospel from those who are lost, so that "the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine unto them (II Corinthians 4:4). This is the reason why we always need to be careful not to "believe every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).

QUESTION: If one has to be baptized to be saved, why did Jesus not say in the latter part of Mark 16:16 "But he that believeth not and is baptized not shall be condemned?"

ANSWER: Mark 16:16 tells us how to do two things. (1) It tells us how to be saved: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; (2) It tells us how to be lost: He that believeth not shall be damned. Jesus did not add the words "and is baptized not" in the last part of the verse, because He knew that unbelieving people would not request, nor submit to baptism! The additional words would have been redundant and meaningless! Even if an unbeliever would be foolish enough to request baptism and could find someone foolish enough to baptize him, it would serve no purpose, because "he that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18).

QUESTION: What about the thief on the cross?

ANSWER: The New Testament law under which we live today did not become effective until Pentecost day; fifty days after Jesus (and the thief) died on the cross (Acts 2; Hebrews 9:16-17). The thief neither lived nor died under the New Testament, as we today. The Great Commission of Christ in Matthew 28:18-20

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and Mark 16:15-16 was first proclaimed in Acts chapter two, after the thief died! On this day Peter presented the terms of salvation to believing Jews in verse thirty-eight: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." These same terms of salvation are applicable to everyone from that day until the end of the world (Matthew 28:20; Acts 2:39). The thief on the cross was not answerable to these terms of salvation, because he died before they were proclaimed! Examples then of how one is saved today should not be based on those (like the thief) who lived under a different Law and different circumstances, but rather they should be based on those in the book of Acts who also lived under the New Testament. All of the people in these examples, without fail, were saved when they believed, repented, confessed, and were baptized! We can do no less if salvation would be ours!

QUESTION: John 1:12 says that those who receive Christ have been given the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. Does this mean that our sins still remain before we are baptized?

ANSWER: Yes! Our sins remain until we are baptized! John 1:12 does not teach that those who believe are saved. This passage teaches that those who believe have the power (the right or privilege) to become the sons of God. Notice carefully: He did not say that believers are the sons of God. He said, believers have the right to become the sons of God! "Become" speaks to the future, not the present! They do not become the sons of God, i.e., they are not saved until following their belief and after they have obeyed Him! (Hebrews 5:8-9; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5; Romans 6:16-18). This is what is being taught in James, chapter two: Faith (belief) without works of obedience is dead (vss. 14, 17, 20, 24, & 26). To support this truth, James says in verse nineteen that the disobedient devils also believe, and tremble. It is obvious that the devils are lost and that their belief in Christ does not save them. And the same is true of humans who only believe and do not obey. They, too, are lost, because "faith (belief) without works is dead" (Vs. 20). Consider carefully verse twenty-four, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith (belief) only." This passage (and John 1:12) teaches that justification (forgiveness & salvation) is not ours by belief (faith) only (alone). It is true that one must believe in order to be saved, but clearly, belief only is not enough.

QUESTION: What things must a sinner admit?

ANSWER: He must admit that he is a sinner (Romans 3:23) and that he wants (and needs) to be saved from his sins. Having admitted such, he must then turn in obedience to God's Word that his soul might be saved (James 1:21).

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QUESTION: What does it mean to believe?

ANSWER: It does not mean that one gives only mental assent that Christ is God's Son. It is much more than that, because even the devils do that much (James 2:19). It means that one must put his total trust and confidence in Jesus Christ by becoming fully obedient to His commandments. It means becoming a true Christian, not by denominational standards and teachings, but solely on the basis of New Testament teachings.

QUESTION: Is not the statement, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit for the remission of sins" a prayer? If it is, how can God hear a heathen's prayer?

ANSWER: The statement cited in the question is not a prayer, but rather is an affirmation by the one doing the baptizing that such is being done by the authority of (in the name of) the Godhead!

QUESTION: Some teach that to baptize "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" is wrong; that we must baptize "in the name of Jesus only." They further teach that this phrase must be stated as one is being baptized. Is this right?

ANSWER: No! It is not right! "In the name of" simply means "by the authority of." When one baptizes "in the name" of Jesus, he is baptizing "by His authority!" In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus had been given all authority. With this authority, He commands us in this passage to baptize "in the name of" the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, even unto the end of the world.

In Acts 2:38, baptism was said to be "in the name of Jesus Christ"; in Acts 8:16, "in the name of the Lord Jesus"; in Acts 10:48, in the name of the Lord." Since all three of these are different, should one have to decide which of the three is the "divine" formula? Or may we select one of the three? The truth is that any of the three would be scriptural! To baptize in the name of Jesus Christ is simply to baptize by His authority! What did He authorize? He authorized baptism in the name of the Father, and if the Son, and of the Holy Ghost for all time! Therefore, when one baptizes in the name (by the authority of) Jesus Christ he is baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost!

Must one recite a specific formula when immersing another in water? It is, indeed, the wise and expedient thing to do! This would be especially true if nonbelievers were present. However, none of the passages referred to above teach (nor do any others) that we are commanded to "say" (formulate) the words "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Neither is there any passage that commands us to "say" (formulate) the words "in the name of Jesus Christ." When people insist on this unscriptural position, they add to God's word, binding the commandments of men (Revelation 22:18-19; Matthew 15:9). None of the passages, normally used to support this unscriptural doctrine,

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teach what one is to “say” as he baptizes another! Every one of these passages simply teaches what he is to “do,” and by whose authority it is to be done! There is no biblical record of anyone having said anything during an immersion. However, that it is wise to do so, as stated above, cannot be denied. This writer has never failed to do so, and plans to do so in the future. Nevertheless, we must never bind on others what God has not bound!

To show the inconsistency of those who bind this false doctrine on others, we need to look at Colossians 3:17, which uses the same language, i.e., “in the name of.” This passage reads, “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus . . .” Acts 2:38 reads, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ . . .” Consistency and honesty demand, since identical words are used, that both passages be interpreted the same way! In other words, if Acts 2:38 teaches that when we baptize someone we must “say” the formula, “I now baptize you in the name of Jesus Christ,” then Colossians 3:17 teaches that whatever we do in word or deed, we must also “say” the formula, “I now speak this word or do this deed in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Those who hold to the false doctrine that we must recite a divine formula when baptizing a person are inconsistent, because they fail to practice what they preach about Acts 2:38 when it comes to Colossians 3:17. The plain truth is that neither passage demands the recitation of any kind of formula.

It can only be concluded that whatever may be said during a baptism, whether in the name of Jesus; in the name of the Lord; in the name of the Lord Jesus; or in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, it is not wrong - no sin has been committed - no scripture has been violated! Since all three personalities are one in thought, will and doctrine, and constitute the “One God,” to baptize by the authority of (in the name of) any, is to baptize by the authority of (in the name of) all three. Conversely, to baptize by the authority (in the name of) all three, is to baptize (in the name of) each!

QUESTION: If a Christian is not available, and one has learned the Gospel and wishes to be baptized, can a non-believer (male or female) baptize him?

ANSWER: Though undoubtedly wise and expedient for a Christian brother to be the “baptizer,” there is no principle in scripture that would prohibit another from doing so in the absence of male Christians. Neither are there any personal characteristics required of one in order to be the “baptizer.” Importance at a baptism relates only to the one being baptized. If he or she is a true, penitent believer, having confessed faith in Jesus Christ, and is immersed for the remission of sins, all scriptural requirements have been fulfilled (Mark 16:16; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38). Salvation is then granted, whatever the sex or spiritual condition of the “baptizer.”

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QUESTION: It is true that Judas Iscariot baptized people, but this was before he betrayed Jesus, and it was while the Law of Moses was in force. Is this not the same as Jesus forgiving the thief on the cross? In other words, we can't use this example today, because we are under the Law of Christ.

ANSWER: I understand the question to be: "Is the reason we do not use the baptism performed by Judas (John 4:2) as an example today because he lived under the Law of Moses?" The answer would be "No!" This would be the case, because the baptism performed by the disciples before the Day of Pentecost was not a part of the Mosaic Law! It had its beginning with John, the son of Zacharias (Luke 3:2-3), in about 29AD.

If this question is related to the two preceding questions, i.e., if it is being suggested that non-Christians or sinful people today would have been scripturally approved to baptize others today, had it been the case that Judas performed his baptizing after he sinned by betraying Christ, the answer would still be "No!"

The reason for not using the baptism performed by the disciples before the Day of Pentecost as an example today is because this baptism was effective only until the Day of Pentecost. It was called "John's baptism" (Acts 19:3). On Pentecost Day, the baptism of Christ became effective (Acts 2:38) and it alone will remain in effect until the end of the world (Matthew 28:18-20). In Acts 18:24 through Acts 19:5, we read of Ephesians who had been improperly baptized with "John's baptism" after the Day of Pentecost. These were instructed by the apostle Paul to be baptized with "Christ's baptism," clear evidence that John's baptism had become ineffective! This is the reason why we cannot use the baptizing performed by Judas as an example today! The only approved examples of baptism for people today are to be found in the book of Acts, from Pentecost day forward!

We cannot use the baptism of John (as performed by Judas) for our example because it is not a part of the Law of Christ for Christians today!

QUESTION: Is a person lost or saved by the deeds of others?

ANSWER: No! The Bible is explicitly clear on this matter! In Ezekiel 18:20, we read the following: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Clearly, every man is innocent or guilty before God on the basis of his own actions; not the actions of another!

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QUESTION: There are children of Methodist parents whom we have taught and who have come to a knowledge of the truth. They have requested baptism. If the children are baptized their parents, who hold positions in the Methodist Church, may send them out of their homes and discontinue school support. What should we do?

ANSWER: It seems that the first thing to do is to approach the parents in an effort to teach them the truth or, at the very least, explain the situation. Apparently, the parents are influential people. The conversion of these could very well open more doors for the Lord. If the parents reject the truth and terminate school support, there is no choice, considering the value of a soul, but to immerse those who have requested it! Though such may result in further hardship on those involved, no matter the outcome, all must trust and obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29). Nothing is more important!

QUESTION: Does Ephesians 4:5 teach that there is only one baptism or does it mean that the baptism we get is one in Jesus alone? What about the baptism of Holy Spirit and fire?

ANSWER: First we need to consider in Ephesians 4:4-6 what the word "one" means! Clearly, in the account of Matthew's gospel, we read of water baptism (Matthew 28:29); of Holy Spirit baptism (Matthew 3:11); and, in the same passage, the baptism of fire. It cannot be successfully denied that these are "three" different and distinct baptisms. Neither can it be successfully argued that the word "one" in Ephesians 4:4-6 means "three." Whatever it means when it speaks of 'one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, and one God,' it must also mean when it speaks of one baptism! In other words, if this passage teaches that there is "one" Lord, then it must also teach that there is "one" baptism. If there is "one" there cannot be "three." It is impossible! If the Holy Spirit wanted us to understand that there were "three" different baptisms at the time of this writing, He would have used the word "three," not the word "one!"

The Holy Spirit had been promised (Acts 1:5) and His coming was fulfilled (satisfied) in Acts 2, 10 & 11. Since the purposes for which the Holy Spirit came were totally satisfied, this baptism, and the need for it, no longer exists! The baptism of fire is not for today, because it is yet future! Matthew 3:12 clearly shows that this baptism has reference to the unquenchable fires of hell!

There is, therefore, only "one" baptism today! It is the baptism of water, which "doth also now save us" (I Peter 3:21).

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QUESTION: Is it proper to wear a bathing cap when being baptized to preserve a hair-do or permanent?

ANSWER: Personally, it is difficult for me to understand one's concern over such insignificant and trivial matters when the most profound and important act of his or her life is about to occur. Nonetheless, since an immersion; an overwhelming; a burial would be taking place, assuming prior scriptural belief, repentance, and confession, there is no reason to suggest that the baptism would be invalid, provided that it be "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38) and into the "one body" (I Corinthians 12:13) of Christ.

QUESTION: How can we immerse during the dry seasons when the rivers are dried up? Must we travel to far away rivers? Must we wait for the rainy season?

ANSWER: Since immersion is the only baptism that will save, it is imperative that a person to be baptized be taken to sufficient water as quickly as possible. God who has commanded it, has not given us something to do that is impossible! So the question is not "can it be done," but "how committed are we to keeping His commandments and getting it done?" During a recent stay in Zambia during the dry season, we found it necessary to dig a hole in an otherwise dry river bed to gain sufficient water for immersion. Whatever is required to be in compliance with God's Word, must be done! There is no choice in the matter!

QUESTION: Does Acts 19:5 refer to baptism in the Holy Spirit?

ANSWER: No! This is clearly indicated because of what happened in verse six. Had the Ephesians been baptized in the Holy Spirit in verse five, there would have been no reason for Paul to have lain hands on them in verse six to impart the spiritual gifts of speaking in other languages and prophesying. The gifts would have come with the baptism of the Holy Spirit had it actually occurred (Acts 2:1-4 & Acts 10:44-48). The baptism refers to water baptism by the authority of the Lord Jesus. These had previously been baptized in water "unto John's baptism" after his baptism had become ineffective at Pentecost at which time the Lord's baptism in water became effective for all men everywhere, "even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:37-47).

QUESTION: How can I, as a Christian, know when I repent and pray that I have truly been forgiven?

ANSWER: We must put our trust in the Word of God as little children! John said in I John 2:1, "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." An advocate is one who pleads the case of another. This is what Jesus Christ does for us in the presence of the Father. Just before this verse, in chapter one, John assures us that if we walk in the light (the light of God's Word) that the "blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (vs.7). In verse eight, we

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are told that all people sin, but “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (vs.9). This verse clearly tells us that Christ will not fail us (He is faithful). This simply means that when we confess our sins, turn from them in repentance, and pray to the Father through the Son, that forgiveness is guaranteed and granted in full measure! The sins are gone completely and God will remember them no more (Hebrews 10:17). At this point, we need to follow the example of the apostle Paul. He said, “. . . forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14). So then, we need to forget and press on! To press on means to walk in the light! It means to serve our Lord with all of our strength. If we do this our thoughts will be turned from sin and will be focused on our Lord and what we can do for others in His service. There will be found no place for the Devil (Ephesians 4:27)!

In your letter, you express fear of attending worship services because of distress over your sins. God wants all of us never to forsake the assemblings of the church. This would also be sin (Hebrews 10:25). It is during these assemblings that we gain strength and are edified (built up). It is a time when brethren are to provoke one another unto love and good works (Hebrews 10:24). It is a time when we are spiritually fed the Word of God, without which one would die spiritually. Please always attend all of the services of the church!

Please also be assured that no matter what your past has been, if you, as a child of God, have turned from your sin and prayed to God through Christ for forgiveness, it is done! Be assured too that He has said, “I will never leave thee or forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5) and that nothing can separate you from His love (Romans 8:37-39).

QUESTION: If a man embezzled billions in government money and used it to build houses and factories, purchase automobiles, and to marry, how can he make restitution when he becomes a Christian (Luke 19:1-8)?

ANSWER: Not knowing the details (including the laws of your country) involved in this situation makes it impossible to give specific (step-by-step) answers to the question. However, that restitution must be made is without doubt. The very nature of true repentance demands that all wrongs be set aright, where possible. Clearly, there are cases in which a person has truly repented, but restitution is impossible, e.g., a man may repent of murder, but obviously he cannot bring one back from the dead. However, whatever one can do, he must do! In the case in question, the man would obviously have to report himself to the Government's authorities, give up all that he has illegally gained to them, and suffer the penalties demanded by the law. Otherwise, true repentance has not occurred, without which one cannot become a Christian!

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QUESTION: Can a woman be saved who is involved in witchcraft?

ANSWER: She can only be saved by belief in Christ (John 8:24), repenting of (turning from) all sins (including the sin of witchcraft), confessing her belief in Christ (Romans 10:10) and being immersed in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Those who continue in activities such as witchcraft will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 19-21).

QUESTION (Part 1): A Greek scholar said that the Greek word *eis* is a transitional word, which in Acts 2:38 means “going from outside of Christ into Christ.” I agree, but when he talked about Romans 10:10, he said, “the NIV erred in their interpretation of this verse.” He made a statement something like this, “I don’t know why anyone would interpret it like that.” He offered no explanation as to why he made this statement, since the NIV translates *eis* as a transitional word! Please explain!

(Part 2): How is *eis* to be used? Are we to understand that *eis* can be translated using the word “unto?” Is “unto” also to be understood as a transitional word?

(Part 3): Why does the ASV, KJV, and NKJV translate *eis* in Romans 10:10 as “unto” and many of the other versions do not?

ANSWER (Part 1): The person you are quoting in your query is absolutely correct. Look at the differences between the two:

KJV: For with the heart man believeth “unto” (*eis*) righteousness and with the mouth confession is made “unto” (*eis*) salvation.

NIV: For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

The NIV does not as much as translate or even acknowledge the Greek word *eis*! In fact, there is no translation involved. This ungodly version simply takes the opportunity to insert the heretical view of John Calvin that at the moment of belief one is immediately saved. In so doing, the NIV is no longer the pure Word of God! It is no longer inspired, because its words are men’s words and not God’s! It is no longer a word-for-word translation, but is rather a commentary by those who will risk damnation (theirs and ours: Revelation 22:18-19; Galatians 1:6-9; Matthew 15:14) to perpetuate their own beliefs! The KJV accurately and painstakingly translates the Greek words into their English equivalents. Thus the King James remains inspired as the pure Word of God!

(Part 2): The Greek word *eis* may be properly translated as: “for,” “unto,” “in order to,” “with a view to;” all of which are transitional as indicated by the original. Note that there is nothing transitional in Romans 10:10 of the NIV. The false doctrine of this “version” erringly concludes that the transition is not “unto,” but that it has already taken place!! Clearly then, the authors of the NIV have changed God’s intent in the matter!

(Part 3): The preceding answer largely answers Part 3. The other versions have not actually translated the original Greek words! The authors of these books

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simply imply that the common man cannot understand what the inspired writer's words mean; that God did not inspire men to write in words that we could understand; and that they, therefore, will not supply His word's, but since they are wiser than God and His inspired writers, they will tell us in their own words what they think God meant to say! How foolish of man to buy into every book that comes along simply because on the cover it says, "Holy Bible!" Certainly, most of them are not "Bibles" and just as certain, there is nothing "Holy" about them!

There are two (2) major reasons for all of the different modern translations: (1) love of money; since the "Bible" is the best selling book of all time and (2) the establishment and/or perpetuation of a false doctrine that cannot be sustained by accurate and scholarly translations free of mortal error, such as the ASV, KJV, and NKJV.

QUESTION: Would you please explain John 3:16 as relates to our salvation? Does it not teach that we are saved at the point of belief?

ANSWER: No! It does not! Saving faith in Christ is not simply belief or mental assent that He exists and is the Son of God! Saving faith is belief in Christ, conjoined with obedience to Him! This obedient faith is described, by example, throughout Hebrews, chapter eleven, which we encourage you to study. Without this kind of faith, "it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

There are those who falsely teach that a person is saved by "faith only" when they first believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that there are no acts or works of obedience required in order to become a New Testament Christian. This false doctrine is clearly refuted in James 2:14-26! Note especially verse twenty-four, "Ye see then how that by works (of obedience) a man is justified, and not by faith only." It needs also to be stated that a man is "not" saved by works of merit or righteousness. Note Titus 3:5; "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by (through) the 'washing of regeneration' (baptism), and renewing of the Holy Spirit." This coincides with what Peter told believing people to do on the Day of Pentecost: "Repent, and be baptized . . . (not by works of righteousness, but by works of obedience) for the remission of sins."

To become a New Testament Christian, certain actions are commanded to which one must be obedient in order to be saved! One must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24): repent (turn away from) of sins (Luke 3:3); confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus (Romans 10:9-10): and be immersed (baptized) in water (Acts 8:35-39) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) into the one body (I Corinthians 12:13) of Christ, which is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). It is at the point of baptism that the blood of Christ is applied and from which we rise to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:1-6), having been born again of water and of (at the direction of) the Spirit.

The doctrine of "Faith Only" is of man, and not of God!

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QUESTION: Does not John 10:27-29 teach that one cannot fall from grace?

ANSWER: It does not! The doctrine of “once saved, always saved” is as foreign to the Bible as salvation by “faith alone.” One is truly grasping at straws to support this false teaching by using this passage! Note that in order for the sheep (Christians) to receive “eternal life” and to “never perish” Christ requires two things that His sheep must “actively do.” Not simply two things they must believe, but, rather, two things they must “do!” First, the sheep must “hear” (which involves obedience). Secondly, the sheep must “follow” (which involves continuing obedience). Question No.1: Is the granting of eternal life by Christ to His sheep dependent upon their “hearing and following?” Question No.2: If “hearing and following” are prerequisites to gaining eternal life (and clearly they are), what happens to those who don’t “hear?” Question No.3: What happens to those who hear, but don’t “follow?” The answers are obvious!

It is true that “no man” can pluck the sheep who hears and follows Christ out of His Father’s hand, but this passage does not even hint that a man cannot himself quit hearing and following Christ. This same disciple said in the fifteenth chapter of this Gospel account that a man must abide (keep His commandments / remain faithful) in Him (vss. 4, 5, 6, 7, 10). He also said that if one does “not” abide in Him (keep His commandments / remain faithful) he is “taken away” (vs.2); he is “cast forth” (vs.6); he is gathered with others who do not “abide” (vs.6); he is cast into the fire (vs.6); and he is burned (vs. 6). Certainly, it is not indicated that these were “plucked” out of the Father’s hand by some man or power (they weren’t), but it is clearly and irrefutably indicated that they “chose” not to “abide” (remain faithful) and, therefore, have been “taken away” and “cast forth” (fallen from grace); to one day “be cast into the fire and burned.”

Neither this passage, nor any other teaches that one cannot fall from grace!

QUESTION: Since none can enter heaven without New Testament baptism, will those who lived before the New Testament be able to enter in? What was the importance of Christ’s death to those who lived before the New Testament?

ANSWER: Those who lived faithfully under the Old Testament while it was in existence, i.e., before the cross of Christ and before Christ’s baptism, will be judged by that particular law. Those who were faithful to that law will be saved eternally. From the Day of Pentecost of Acts Two, when Christ’s baptism became effective, until the end of time all who would enter into heaven must be baptized and remain faithful to Him as commanded throughout the New Testament (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Revelation 2:10, and others).

Christ’s death is important to those who lived under the Old Testament, as well as to we who live under the New Testament. In Hebrews 10:1-4, the writer says that sacrifices were made yearly under the Old Testament for the sins of the people, but that those sacrifices could not make them perfect. In verse four, he says the reason they could not be made perfect was that the blood of the bulls

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and goats that were sacrificed could not take away their sins. It, therefore, was necessary that Christ shed His blood, not only for people today, but also for those who lived faithfully under the Old Testament (Hebrews 9:15; 10:1-18).

By His blood must all enter heaven; those under the Old Testament and those under the New Testament. Access to the blood of Christ by those under the Old Testament came only through their obedience to that Law. Access to the blood of Christ by those under the New Testament (all men today) can come only through obedience to its teachings! To be covered by the blood of Christ today then; to become a New Testament Christian, one must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24); repent (turn away from) of sins (Luke 3:3); confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus (Romans 10:9-10); and be immersed in water (Acts 8:35-39) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) into the one body (I Corinthians 12:13) of Christ, which is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). The blood of Christ is applied in this final act (baptism) which is "into His death" (Romans 6:4) where His blood was shed!

QUESTION: What kind of baptism did Paul and Silas use to baptize the Jailer and all his family (Acts 16:30-33)?

ANSWER: The Roman Jailer was immersed in water for the remission of sins, just as were those on the Day of Pentecost in Acts two. Peter had told those to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. This is exactly what (after hearing the Word of the Lord) the Roman Jailer did. He washed their stripes (an indication of his repentance) and was baptized. The result was the same for him as it was for those on Pentecost. In verse thirty, the Jailer had asked, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul's response was: "Believe on (surrender completely to) the Lord Jesus Christ." The Roman Jailer did not have "faith in Christ" at that point, neither was he saved at that point! We can know this because the same apostle says that "faith" comes by hearing (accepting and obeying) the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Therefore, the Jailer could not have had "saving faith" until after he had heard the Word of the Lord. In other words, he could not have had "saving faith" without obedience to that which he had been taught (James 2:14-24). It is not enough simply to believe in Christ (to give mental assent to His Deity), because even the devils do that (James 2:19.) Additionally, Peter tells us that "God is no respecter of persons." This means that however one is saved, all must be saved! How were the people on Pentecost saved? The Roman Jailer was saved in exactly the same way! It is significant, too, that it is said of the Roman Jailer (just as the Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8:26-40) that he rejoiced in his salvation after his baptism (not before). The American Standard Version says in verse thirty-four that he "rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God." Clearly then the Jailer is said to have "believed" in God (in response to Paul's directive of verse thirty-one) after he had been baptized (not before)!

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QUESTION: What can I do to help another friend who believes she will be saved by her good deeds alone?

ANSWER: Certainly it is necessary that Christians engage in doing good works (Matthew 25:31-41). However, it is just as certain that one cannot be saved without obedience to the totality of the New Testament, the Law of Christ (Matthew 7:21-29; Romans 6:16-18; Romans 8:1-2; Ephesians 2:8-10; I Peter 1:22; I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9). It is by all of the Law of Christ that all will be judged (John 12:48), not simply by the good deeds we may do. Consider Cornelius in Acts, chapter ten. In verse two, we find he was a man of many good works, yet he needed to hear “words” by which he could be saved (Acts 11:14). His “works” did not save him! Peter spoke “words” to him (as recorded in Acts 10:34-43) so that he could receive remission of sins (vs.43). In verse forty-eight, Cornelius was there given a commandment, which if “obeyed,” would result in the promised remission of sins. This was the very thing that Peter had commanded those on the Day of Pentecost to do (Acts 2:38). None can be saved in any other way, because God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

QUESTION: How can our inner man be changed?

ANSWER: The inner man is changed and strengthened by the Spirit through the Word of God (Ephesians 3:16). As we study, accept, and apply biblical principles to our lives in everything that we do, the inner man and the outer man will be changed in thought and conduct as followers and children of God (Ephesians 5:1).

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MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

QUESTION: Is it a sin to use and/or sing to the accompaniment of mechanical instruments of music in worship services?

ANSWER: Yes! It is sin to do so because there is no scripture in the New Testament that authorizes the use of mechanical instruments in worship to God! In Colossians 3:16, we are told that whatever we do in word (which would include singing) or deed (which would include playing and singing), it must be done in the name of (by the authority of) the Lord Jesus. Clearly, from Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16 and I Corinthians 14:15, we see that music authorized by the New Testament is vocal and congregational! We cannot, without sinning, take away from God's Word (Revelation 22:18). We cannot, without sinning, add to God's Word (Revelation 22:19). We cannot change His Word in any way (Galatians 1:6-9)! Neither can we go to the Old Testament to learn how we are to worship under the New Testament. This is true, because the Old Testament was taken out of the way at the cross of Christ. Please read carefully the following passages: II Corinthians 3; Galatians 3:16-29; Ephesians 2:13-19; Colossians 2:13-14; Hebrews 7:12; Hebrews 8:7.

Mechanical instruments of music were first introduced into worship services in the eighth century, almost eight hundred years after the establishment of the church of Christ in 30-33AD. In fact, they have only become widely accepted in the last one hundred fifty years as religious groups moved progressively away from the purity of the Gospel. Clearly then, it is certain that the use of instruments was not included in the apostles' doctrine (teaching). We have been admonished to continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42)! Would one be continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine if he or she did something not included in their doctrine? Obviously not! Would he or she be violating God's Word? Surely!

QUESTION: May Christians today look to the Old Testament for authorization to use instruments of music in worship to God?

ANSWER: No! Those who have lived, are living, and will live from the cross of Christ until the end of time are to be judged only by the New Testament of Jesus Christ (John 12:48).

The Old Testament has been taken out of the way and replaced by the New Testament. Please read carefully the following passages: Romans 7:4-7; II Corinthians 3:13-14; Galatians 3:24-25; Ephesians 2:13-16; Hebrews 7:12; 8:7. In Colossians 2:14, we see that the handwriting of ordinances (Old Testament) was blotted out; that it was against us; that it was contrary to us. Therefore, He took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross! Because of this, Christians cannot look to the Old Testament for authority to offer animal sacrifices, burn incense or worship with mechanical instruments. More important, there is no authority in the

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New Testament for us to engage in any such acts today. To do so is to sin and fall from grace (Galatians 5:4).

The New Testament, by which we will be judged, authorizes only congregational, vocal music (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16-17).

QUESTION: Does the use of instruments of music by David before King Saul justify the use of instruments in worship services today?

ANSWER: No! A careful study of Romans 7:1-7 reveals that if one attempts to live under the Old Law and the New Law at the same time it is equal to a person having two marriage partners at the same time. Paul says in Romans 7:3, that such a person is committing adultery! The person with two marriage partners is guilty of physical adultery, while the person who attempts to live by the Old Law and the New Law together is guilty of spiritual adultery. Both are sins that will cause one to be lost! In fact, Paul states very clearly that when one tries to justify by the Old Law, that individual has “fallen from grace” (Galatians 5:4). In verse four of Romans seven, Paul says, we “are become dead to the law” and that we “should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead.” In verse five, we are told that “we are delivered from the law” and should serve it no more. In verse seven, we are clearly told what law we are dead to, and delivered from, i.e., the law that said, “thou shalt not covet.” In other words we are dead to, and delivered from, the Old Testament law. Since this is true, we may not go to the Old Testament to learn how to worship God today. We are under the New Testament of Jesus Christ. Under it alone (lest we be guilty of spiritual adultery) we must learn to live and worship, because by it alone we will one day be judged (John 12:48).

There is no authority in the New Testament of Jesus Christ for the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship. Similarly, there is no authorization in the New Testament for the use of choirs, quartets, trios, duets, solos, dramatic presentations, hand clapping, shouting, dancing, and suchlike! The music that our God authorizes in His Word is simply vocal and congregational. We have not the authority to add to it, nor to take away from it (Revelation 22:18-19)!

QUESTION: Is it right to use instruments of music for weddings in the church building?

ANSWER: It is wrong for the simple reason that it teaches those who (in error) perceive the “meeting house” to be the “church” that it is okay to use mechanical instruments in worship to God. Since both worship and weddings occur in the place of worship, they often hold that if the instrument can be used in the wedding, (often in accompaniment of hymns, which is as well sinful - Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16) it can, likewise, be used in the worship service. Indeed, they (because of their misperception) see the inconsistency in what the church sometimes practices. Not only sinful practices, but anything that could

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detrimentally affect the destiny of a soul needs to be avoided, whatever the cost (Matthew 18:6).

QUESTION: Can we justify the use of instruments in worship on the basis that God created the materials of which they are made?

ANSWER: No! On the same basis one could argue for, and justify, the use of animal sacrifices in worship, since, clearly, God created animals! As well, one could argue that since God made fruits and grain from which alcohol comes, we could, therefore, justifiably become drunken in worship to God! Further, since God created “all” of the elements from which “all” things are made, we could, based on the theory proposed, use any or “all” things in existence in worship to God in any way we might so elect. Surely, such confusion was not in the purpose of God (I Corinthians 14:33)! Neither was it left up to man how he would worship (John 4:24)!

QUESTION: What is the difference between instruments and human beings? Both are His creation.

ANSWER: The difference is that human beings can worship! Instruments cannot! Neither can they satisfy the purpose of God in the music that He has authorized. In Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, we learn that God-approved music in worship demands “singing,” “making melody in our hearts,” “speaking,” teaching one another,” and “admonishing one another.” The instrument does not and cannot answer to, or fulfill, the demands of music in Christian worship! Only human beings in compliance with His will can satisfy these scriptural requirements!

QUESTION: Could it be that the reason for not using instruments in the early church was that they were not available?

ANSWER: No! They were available in New Testament times, as well as in Old Testament times. Please read Psalms 150! The reason they could not be use in New Testament times (including today) is supplied in the answers to the above questions.

QUESTION: Where in God’s word did He command us not to use instruments in worship?

ANSWER: Since people today are bound only by the New Testament, the question would more appropriately be, “Where in the New Testament did God command us not to use instruments in worship?” Even more appropriately the question should be, “Where in the New Testament did God begin or start (authorize) the use of instruments in worship?” The answer is: He didn’t! Certainly those who add the instrument are adding to God’s Word in defiance of Revelation 22:18. These are guilty of presumptuous sin (Psalms 19:13)!

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Another answer to this question could rightly be: He commanded us not to use instruments in the same place He commanded us not to use animal sacrifices, incense burning, the lighting of lamps, etc.

The reason that there is so much confusion in the religious world today is that men have come to believe that if God did not specifically say “you can’t do it,” it is okay to go ahead and do it! This thinking is foreign to the Bible! When God specifically tells us how to do something, everything else is automatically excluded. One example is: God specified that Noah’s ark was to be built out of “gopher wood” (Genesis 6:14). Noah did exactly what God had commanded him to do (Genesis 6:22) and thereby pleased God and became an “heir of righteousness” (Hebrews 11:7). When God commanded Noah to use “gopher” wood, He automatically excluded all other woods, such as, oak, pine, cherry, birch, etc. God was not obligated to say, “don’t use oak,” “don’t use pine,” “don’t use cherry,” etc. Noah understood that he could not use a replacement wood or a multiplicity of woods without sinning, i.e., transgressing God’s commandment (1 John 3:4). The same principle remains valid today! There are two kinds of music, i.e., vocal and instrumental. God said we are to sing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 14:15). When God commanded “sing,” He automatically excluded the playing of instruments, just as in the case of Noah’s ark. When God commanded fruit of the vine and unleavened bread to be used during the Lord’s Supper, He automatically excluded all other drinks and food on His table! If the argument is valid (and it isn’t) that one can use the instrument because God did not specifically command us not to use it, the same argument could be rightly be used to place a “Big Mac” on the Lord’s Table, because surely God did not command us not to use a “Big Mac.” In fact, in worship services, we could do anything we wanted to do under this argument and call it “worship.” We could dance, swim, sacrifice animals, sleep, talk to our neighbor, watch a hand-held television, etc. Surely, God did not command us not to do these things! All who would worship God need to realize that we are only permitted to do what He authorizes us in scripture to do! All else is in violation of His authorization and is, therefore, sinful!

If people could understand this vital biblical principle, it would go a long way in answering the Lord’s prayer for unity among believers (John 17:20-23).

QUESTION: In Matthew 16:19, Jesus promised Peter that whatsoever he would bind on earth would also be bound in heaven and whatsoever he would loose on earth would also be loosed in heaven. Can we not do the same today and thereby authorize the use of instruments in worship to God? It should be proper if ‘whatsoever we do, we do it all in His name’ (Colossians 3:17).

ANSWER: This same promise was also made to the other apostles (Matthew 18:18). But we must understand that this promise was tied into the promise that the apostles would be given the Holy Spirit who would “teach them all things” (John 14:26) and guide them “into all truth” (John 16:13). The “binding” and the

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“loosing” that the inspired apostles would do on this earth would not be of themselves, but rather as they were so led to do by the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, the Bible would be of men, and not of God! All of the “binding” and “loosing” that was to be done (only by inspired men) was ended with the completion of the written Word of God. Therefore, nothing can be “bound” or “loosed” today that has not already been “bound” or “loosed” in God’s Word. This being the case, it is true then that all who would be pleasing to God today are “bound” to congregational singing without the instrument in keeping with Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19. To use the instrument in violation of these passages would be to “loosen” that which the Holy Spirit has “bound”. The result of so doing is sin (Revelation 22:18-19)!

Further, we cannot “bind” or “loosen” in His name! The phrase “in the name of the Lord Jesus,” in Colossians 3:17, means by the authority of the Lord Jesus! Paul is saying in this passage, that everything a Christian does must be done by the authority of Christ. His authority can be found only in that which has already been “bound” and “loosed” through inspired men at the direction of the Holy Spirit, that is, in the Word of God!

To “loosen” where God has “bound” or to “bind” where God has “loosed” is to reject the authority of Christ; to preach a false gospel; and to be accursed of God (Galatians 1:6-9)! Such is the case with those who would employ instruments in worship to Him!

QUESTION: Does not Colossians 3:17 authorize instrumental music when it says, “Whatever you do in word (singing) or deed (playing instruments), do all in the name of the Lord Jesus?”

ANSWER: This passage does not remotely support the above statement! The phrase “in the name of the Lord Jesus,” in Colossians 3:17, means by the authority of the Lord Jesus! It does not mean that we can do whatever we like as long as we say we are doing it as Christians to glorify Christ! Paul is simply saying in this passage, that everything a Christian does must be done only by the authority of Christ as expressed in His Word. The authority of Christ relative to music in worship to God is expressed in the preceding verse (sixteen) which limits us to vocal congregational singing, thereby excluding the use of instruments. There is no authority anywhere in the New Testament for instruments of music in worship. Since there is no authority for the “deed” of playing instruments in worship, this “deed” when performed is sinful! Just by saying or thinking “we are doing it in the name of Christ” does not change the deed from sin to righteousness!

One of the things that cause so much religious division is the unscriptural position expressed in the above statement. When people begin believing that they can do anything they want in worship to God simply by affirming that they are doing it under the banner (in the name) of Christ or Christianity, then all sorts of ungodliness in worship will be permitted. Those with this unscriptural notion

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can, and often do, perform all kinds of entertainment for themselves and others during worship to God, simply by proclaiming that such is being done under the name of Christ. We could dance in worship, perform tricks of magic, prepare and eat hamburgers, sleep, talk to our friends, or anything else we could imagine, if this were true. It is evident, however, from the New Testament that none of these things can be performed in worship without sinning (including playing on instruments), because none of them can be performed in the name of (by the authority of) Jesus Christ! To engage in any activity in worship for which there is no authority is to sin and be separated from God!

QUESTION: What is the meaning of “choir?”

ANSWER: A “choir” in a church is a group of people, generally consisting of both men and women, who often (1) lead the singing in a church, (2) sing to the church, and (3) sing for the church. In either or all of these cases, such is sinful! There is no authorization in God’s Word for singing groups in worship services! Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 are instructions and exhortations relative to acceptable worship for all Christians for all time. In these passages, we are taught that our singing is to be corporate (collective or congregational) with vocally enunciated words by which we teach and admonish one another! No other type of music is authorized, and would, therefore, be in error! This is to say that the Bible does not authorize, and reckons as sin, the use of solos, singing groups, humming, whistling, drums, or any type of musical instrument!

QUESTION: Is it wrong to use instruments of music outside the church?

ANSWER: It is wrong to “worship” God with instruments of music inside the church building and outside of the church building! It is not wrong to play non-religious music on instruments. The sin is not in the instrument. The sin occurs when we introduce into worship that which God has not authorized. God has not authorized the playing of instruments in worship. It is therefore sinful to do so! The same is true of quartets and singing groups used to entertain visitors and the rest of the congregation. God has not authorized this practice. It, too, is therefore sinful!

QUESTION: What will happen to those who sin by using instruments in worship to God?

ANSWER: God will not excuse or forgive any sin where there is no repentance! Therefore, unless there is true repentance, the same thing will happen to these as all others who disobey God! Paul tells us in II Thessalonians 1:7-9, “To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God, and from the glory of His power.”

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QUESTION: Where in the Bible are we allowed to make inferences in one thing, but not allowed to make inferences on other things?

ANSWER: We can only infer what the Bible implies! For example: When studied in context we understand that Hebrews 2:12 does not really imply that we may sing solos in worship to God. If we infer that it does, then we have inferred improperly and err in so doing. If we infer that Matthew 26:27 implies and authorizes the use of one container only during communion, we are wrong. We must rightly divide the Word of Truth (II Timothy 2:15). This means that we cannot draw conclusions or inferences by taking passages out of context in order to justify personal likes and desires! We must not, for any reason or under any circumstance, infer what God has not clearly implied in His Word!

QUESTION: Would you please explain Revelation 5:8 as relates to the use of instruments of music? Does this passage justify their use in Christian worship today?

ANSWER: The book of Revelation was written in symbolic language and is not to be understood literally (Revelation 1:1, the word signified means that John was shown things in "signs," which must shortly come to pass). So it is in this passage. Notice in the immediately preceding verses the symbolic language used relative to the Lamb, an obvious reference to Christ. Surely none would hold that Christ has seven literal eyes, seven literal horns, and seven literal spirits. All of these things are figurative and represent something else! He tells us in the verse under consideration that the golden bowls of incense represents something else. In this case, incense figuratively represents the prayers of the saints. So it is with the word "harps." The writer is not speaking of literal harps, but rather in reference to something else. Most scholars hold that this reference to harps has to do with "praise" to God. Remember, heaven is not a physical place with physical things. It is a spiritual place!

In addition to this, worship service to God in the church is not remotely mentioned in this passage. If we were to try to use this verse as a basis for worship in the church, in order to be consistent, we would also have to insist that each (all) worshipper(s) have a harp and a bowl of incense. Clearly, those who would seek in this passage a pattern for Christian worship are in violation of the most basic rules of biblical interpretation!

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INFANTS

QUESTION: Some say that according to Ezekiel 18:20, “babies are born sinless.” Can you look at Job 15:14, 25 & Psalms 51:5 and tell me how these are to be comprehended? Other scriptures for consideration are: Job 14:4; Psalms 58:3; John 3:6.

ANSWER: Some in the denominational world teach that infants are born with sin and are, therefore, candidates for baptism. Before dealing with the above passages, perhaps it would be wise to answer the question, “Should infants be baptized?”

There is no reference whatever in God’s Word to the baptism of infants! The purpose of baptism is to bring about the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Infants do not and cannot commit sin. Neither do they inherit sin! “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (Ezekiel 18:20). Since an infant neither commits, nor inherits sin, baptism would serve no scriptural purpose. Additionally, belief in Christ (John 8:24), repentance (Acts 17:30), and confession (Romans 10:10) are necessary before one’s obedience in immersion. An infant, incapable of doing these things, cannot, for this reason, be a proper candidate for baptism! Again, given that an infant cannot sin and does not inherit sin, he or she obviously has no sin and is, therefore, not separated from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). It is of these that Jesus spoke when He said, “for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:14). For anyone to adopt and practice infant baptism and sprinkling, they must first assume that Christ either forgot to tell us about it in the scriptures, or that He just did not realize its importance! When man assumes such and legislates in the place of God, he is guilty of presumptuous sin! This is the case with sprinkling and infant baptism!

As well, sprinkling as a substitute for scriptural baptism (immersion) is a doctrine not of the Bible, but of men! Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins was the only practice commanded and practiced during New Testament times by the early church! See Matthew 3:16; John 3:23; Acts 8:35-38; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12. The first recorded case of other than baptism by immersion was performed on a man by the name of Novation in 251AD (Neander, Church History I, 325). Pouring water upon the candidate’s head in cases of an emergency was approved by Pope Stephen in 753AD (Edinburgh Encyclopedia III, 245-246). The council of Ravenna accepted either sprinkling or immersion in 1311AD. These men and their councils have sinned by binding their traditions on men, negating in their lives the very Word of God by which they will one day be judged! Immersion only is commanded of God. Immersion only is accepted by Him! Immersion only will put one in contact with the cleansing blood of Christ!

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The verses in question:

(Job 15:14, 25): Chapter fifteen has no reference at all to infants. The phrase in verse 14, “and he which is born of woman, that he should be righteous” is simply the way Eliphaz refers to the character of “man” generally, and to Job (a full grown man) indirectly! Note that throughout the chapter, and especially in verse ten, that men of age are under consideration, “With us are both the gray headed and very aged men, much elder than thy father.” To single out a verse from the middle of a discourse about the character of mature men and apply it to infants would be improper. Also notice that the phrase “born of woman” is used elsewhere, e.g., Job 14:1-4; Job 25:14; Matthew 11:11; and John 7:28. Each time reference is to mature men!

The one being spoken of in Job 14:25 is not an infant, but rather the “king ready to battle” in verse 24.

(Psalms 51:5): “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” The “sin” referred to is not something that David did or inherited. The passage says that David was born of a mature person who had sinned (his mother) and that his conception and birth took place in a sinful world! Note Psalms 14:3, David does not say here that men are born “aside” and “filthy,” but rather he says that they are all “gone” aside; they are “become” filthy! Clearly implied is: a moving from one state to another; that if one has “become” filthy, he must have previously been clean. So it is with all men, including David.

(Job 14:4): “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.” This passage in no way implies that an infant is born in sin! In context, we find in reading verse one of this chapter that just the opposite is true, Man that is born of woman is of few days (marginal reading: short of days) and full of trouble. Note that such was not true of man at birth, but, rather, short days (compared with all his days) after his birth!

(Psalms 58:3): “The wicked are estranged from the womb: They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.” The second part of this verse explains the first part of the verse and means that man “goes astray” soon after birth, speaking lies! Note that he “goes” astray; not that he “was” astray! When does he “go” astray? When he speaks lies!! The person referred to in this passage is one who understands and tells lies! Such excludes infants!

(John 3:6): “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.” This passage has absolutely nothing to do with infants, but is simply contrasting flesh and spirit.

Truth for the World

Bible Question and Answer Booklet

QUESTION: Would you please explain Luke 18:15-16 in relation to infant baptism?

ANSWER: Some brought their children to Christ, perhaps looking for Him to bless them in some way. The disciples rebuked the parents of these children (verse fifteen), apparently believing that such was improper. Jesus used the situation to teach a lesson! He said (vs.16), "Suffer (permit) the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The lesson: Sinful man cannot enter the kingdom of God unless he becomes like a little child in disposition and character!

The passage does not teach that infants are to 'come unto Christ' in order to be immersed, sprinkled, or poured. Those who so teach read into the passage that which God did not intend (Revelation 22:18-19)!

QUESTION: Does the phrase "all have sinned" in Romans 3:23 include children who have not yet come to the age of accountability?

ANSWER: No! In the context of this chapter, the word "all" refers to Jews and Gentiles, just as it does in verse nine. Of course, we realize that an infant is either Jew or Gentile, but, nonetheless, to infer that the "all" includes infants and, therefore, they are sinners is to read into the passage that which it does not teach. As well, such inference creates contradictions with other passages. For example, Ezekiel 28:15 teaches that we are perfect, or without sin, as infants; that iniquity is found in us at a later time in life. Ezekiel 18:20 teaches that we do not inherit sin. It is said of the "little ones" who left Egypt that they only (except Joshua and Caleb) would inherit Canaan, because they "in that day had no knowledge of good and evil" (Deuteronomy 1:39). So it is today. Without the mental capacity to know good and evil, one cannot sin. Infants clearly do not have the capability of knowing good and evil and, therefore, have no sin!

QUESTION: Does not the Bible teach that children can also be received into the covenant of God's grace since they can believe (Matthew 18:1-6)?

ANSWER: This passage does not teach that sinful children are received into God's grace upon the condition of "faith only" in Christ! Jesus is teaching here that sinful man cannot enter the kingdom of God unless he becomes as (like) a little child in disposition and character! Nothing more, nothing less! Any one (adult or child) who is capable of believing may be baptized in order to be saved (Mark 16:16). Since Matthew eighteen is talking about "little ones" capable of believing (vs.6), one must be careful not to use the passage to support a false doctrine relative to infants. Certainly, we can see the difference between newly born infants incapable of believing and "little ones" capable of believing!

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QUESTION: Should we not baptize infants against their will, since Ephesians 6:4 teaches that adults are baptized against their will?

ANSWER: Since Ephesians 6:4 has nothing to do with baptism, it is assumed that the author of the "question" is referring to Romans 6:4. Neither of these passages, however, teaches that adults are to be baptized against their will. To the contrary, Romans 6:16-17 clearly shows that obedience from the heart requires a 'yielding of one's self,' which means to give up; to surrender. In Revelation 22:17, Jesus said, "whosoever will" may come!

QUESTION: Isn't it true that even after adults are baptized they still are not free from sin; that they are unaware of their sins, just like infants?

ANSWER: Roman 6:12-15 shows that man is aware of his sin! Romans 6:16-18 teaches that when one obeys from his heart that form of doctrine (baptism), he is then made free from sin! See also John 8:32 and Romans 6:8. At baptism one is freed from his past sins. When sin occurs after baptism, the Christian in fellowship with Christ will continue to be cleansed by the blood of Christ as he confesses his sins (I John 1:6-9). Certainly confession of sins demands an awareness of sins!

QUESTION: When an infant dies, doesn't God decide where the child will go?

ANSWER: God has already decided! Since only sin can separate one from God (Isaiah 59:1-2) and since infants cannot sin (Ezekiel 18:20; Ezekiel 28:15), it follows that these are not in need of salvation, because they have not been lost! In death they shall remain eternally in a safe relationship with a loving Father!

QUESTION: What is a good age to baptize a child?

ANSWER: When a person comes to a knowledge of good and evil and understands that he, in his sins, is separated from God; when he comprehends the purpose of the blood atonement of Christ; when he understands the purpose of baptism as it relates to forgiveness and the singular nature of the kingdom (the church); when he has a deep desire to repent of his sins and to confess faith in Christ; when he is ready to commit a life of service to his Lord, then he is ready to be immersed! He can be nine or ninety! The restriction is not in age, but in knowledge and understanding!

Truth for the World

Bible Question and Answer Booklet

QUESTION: Did the infants of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24-25), and those who perished in the flood (Genesis 7:21-23), die because of inherited sin? Did God not kill these infants in anger because of their “wrongful deeds?” Doesn’t Exodus 20:5 teach that God punishes children for the sin inherited from their fathers?

ANSWER: The answer to all of the questions is No! What “wrongful deeds” could an infant perform? Sin is a transgression of God’s Law (1 John 3:4). Which of God’s laws can an infant transgress? Surely there are none! Without the mental capacity to know good and evil, an infant is incapable of sinning!

In Ezekiel 18:20, it is clearly shown that a person dies spiritually (is separated from God - Isaiah 59:1-2) because of their own sins. This means that the son will not die spiritually because of the father’s sin; nor will the father die spiritually because of the son’s sin. Since an infant cannot commit “wrongful deeds” of his own accord, and since the Bible plainly says that he does not inherit sin, it follows that an infant remains in a “safe” relationship with his loving God as long as he remains an infant! This, however, does not mean that the son will never physically experience the effect of his father’s sin. Often this is the case. For example, a father may spend all of his living on alcoholic beverages rather than buying food for his children. Or, a child may die as a result of a father’s ungodly sex life! The father is clearly guilty of the sin! Though the children are not guilty, they certainly often suffer, and sometimes die, as a result of their father’s sin. It is, therefore, the father of the children (not God) who causes the suffering. The suffering of the children is but a natural result of the father’s sin. This is the meaning of such phrases as “visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children” found in Exodus 20:5 and 34:7. Clearly, when God, because of the sins of parents, executes divine judgment upon a nation or a people, the children, though not guilty of their parent’s sins, must naturally experience the consequences of that judgment! It was true of Sodom and Gomorrah! It was true of those who died in the great flood! It was true of the Jews carried into captivity, and, as well, of those who died in the 70AD destruction of Jerusalem!

Does this mean that God was wrong? Does it mean that in His judgment He improperly punished the infants of Sodom and Gomorrah and in the flood? Of course not! God cannot sin or do wrong! Some thoughts that would be good for consideration are these: What would the final destiny of these infants have been had they been brought to maturity in the traditions and teachings of their ungodly parents - heaven or hell? Obviously hell! If Ezekiel 18:20 is true (and it is) what will be the final destiny of these children - heaven or hell? Obviously heaven! Which course was the better of the two for the infants involved? Obviously God in His wisdom pursued the best course!

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Bible Question and Answer Booklet

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE

QUESTION: Is there anyway a man can scripturally divorce his wife apart from adultery on her part?

ANSWER: No! "But I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:9). The word fornication means any kind of unlawful sexual activity! The word except means if and only if!

QUESTION: A woman has been involved in an adulterous relationship with a married man. The man's wife has died. Is the woman now free to scripturally marry the widower?

ANSWER: If the widower and the woman with whom he had been involved were not previously married or married, but scripturally divorced, i.e., for the cause of fornication, and both truly repent, then they may scripturally marry (Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:1-9; Romans 7:1-3).

QUESTION: Upon being divorced from her first husband, a woman married a second man, who is now dead. She desired to return to her first husband, but couldn't since he had already remarried. Can she with God's approval marry another? Another Christian?

ANSWER. She cannot marry under either case with God's approval, unless the divorce from her first husband was for the cause of fornication, in which she was the totally innocent party (Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:1-9).

QUESTION: Can one be forgiven while remaining in a second marriage after having committed adultery and divorcing the first spouse?

ANSWER: No! The one described above has no right to the spouse of the second marriage and continues in a state of adultery! He or she can only be forgiven if repentance is forthcoming (Luke 17:3), which would involve dissolution of the relationship. Both persons in this relationship will continue in sin as long as the relationship exists.

QUESTION: Would the person described in the above question have to live as a single person the rest of his or her life?

ANSWER: This person would have to remain single or return to his first wife! A person may be married a second time upon the death of their spouse (Romans 7:1-3) or if he or she is the totally innocent party in a previous marriage having divorced his or her spouse "for the cause of fornication" (Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:9). Except for these two reasons, "second marriages" are nothing more than adulterous relationships. All participants who continue in such will not inherit the kingdom of God (I Corinthians 6: 9-11).

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Bible Question and Answer Booklet

QUESTION: If a married couple (professing Christians), with children, accepts the truth that their marriage is not scriptural (each having left their previous mates without scriptural cause), may they, with God's approval, remain in the marriage with the proviso that they abstain from sexual activity? Some so teach today!

ANSWER: For many, many reasons, no! Since it is a fact that marriage neither begins nor ends with the initiation or cessation of sexual activity, the relationship suggested by the querist remains an unscriptural marriage; that a man and woman are living in a marriage relationship, whether sex is involved or not! Paul tells us that in a marriage relationship (I Corinthians 7:1-5) there is to be sexual obligation one to the other. The querist's suggestion to the contrary is, 'continue the marriage relationship exactly as before, but ignore the sexual obligation and be pleasing to God!' Clearly, there has been an unapproved, unscriptural joining together of two people in which God had no part! It does not follow then, that man is not permitted to put asunder that which God hath joined together (Matthew 19:6), while, at the same time, he, as suggested, is permitted to join together (or perpetuate) that in which God has no part, simply by saying, "just stop having sex!" The inspired apostle said in I Corinthians 7:10-12, "Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband!" He did not say, 'Let her enter into and/or remain in a sex-free marriage!' This ungodly marriage remains a marriage irrespective of sexual activity and, additionally, both participants remain in sin until the relationship is dissolved!! Cessation of sex is not equal to "remaining unmarried," nor to dissolution necessary to comply with the term!

Of those who hold that it is scriptural to remain in such a relationship, how many would agree that upon studying with an alien sinner in the same situation, that in addition to recommending dissolution accompanied with the scriptural options of returning to the first mate or remaining single, that a another option now be suggested, i.e., "we can baptize you into Christ and you can remain married, just stop having sex." Sounds ridiculous, but what is the difference? I personally know of an elderly Christian man and woman who wanted to marry, but were told that such was improper, because the woman involved divorced for reasons other than fornication. They accepted the truth and are now faithfully serving God. It is doubtful that, because of age, that sex would have played a part in their proposed marriage under normal circumstances. Were we wrong in not providing the proposed option, i.e., "sure, you can get married, since you're too old to have sex?" "In fact, we'll have our preacher perform the ceremony right here in the building!" Why not tell our elderly folks who are hurting for companionship to go out and marry any "moral" man you want (regardless of prior divorces and relationships), "as long as it's solely for companionship and no sex is involved!" We all know of very notable, capable, faithful Gospel preachers whose wives have long-since forsaken them. Would the same rules apply to them? Would it be acceptable if one of these great men suddenly announced he was going to get married, but he wasn't going to engage in sex with his new bride. Would we be consistent in our suggestions? Who would believe it? How many not in the

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church would believe it? How many would be wondering, “Will he and his new bride really abstain?” How many elders would be inviting him to speak? How many lectureships would he be invited to speak on? Would it be different for these! If so, why?

In relationships as suggested by the querist, it is very often true that neighbors, friends, and relatives know the “facts” involved with prior marriages, but do not know that the affected couple is abstaining from sex. First of all, there is in these situations an element of sinful hypocrisy and intent to deceive (which is a lie)! Any activity or relationship that must be kept “undercover” by Christians is faulty! When neighbors and relatives are deceived (whether intentional or not) into thinking that such relationships are approved of God, what by implication and example is being taught? Does such glorify God? Surely, there are those who have been led to believe error (perhaps even fatally) by such unscriptural examples.

Some would say, however, “we feels it’s best for the children.” What about couples who have no children? Do the same rules apply? What rule says that the children cannot be loved and properly taken care of if the unscriptural marriage is legally and scripturally dissolved! What rule says that this unscripturally married couple may live together, pretending that their marriage is approved of God? What rationale concludes that it is “best” to permit two people who have no right to each other to live in a private, secluded, and often intimate setting? Can they really pray, “lead us not into temptation?” How does this square up with I Corinthians 7:1-5? Would not such ones, in light of this passage, be better off living alone minus the evident and apparent intimacy? It may or may not be more difficult to separate, but that is not the issue! Could it be that more emphasis is in reality directed to “saving face” with less embarrassment and the assurance of financial security? There is no doubt that there is a vital and scriptural obligation that provisions (spiritually and physically) be made for involved children. However, I fail to see how it would be “best” for children to see their parents violating scripture; playing the role of “pretenders;” and being taught that it is okay and proper for a married couple (Mom and Dad) to abstain from “sleeping” together, while every one thinks they are! The scriptures, notwithstanding, there can be little doubt that such will, to some degree (perhaps significantly) result in negative psychological impact on the children. We need to quit worrying about “upsetting the apple cart” and just do that which is honest, open, and scriptural. Nothing could be better for the children (and Mom and Dad) than that!

QUESTION: If there are children involved in a second adulterous relationship, what is the responsibility toward them?

ANSWER: Sadly, the earthly consequences of sin often bring hurt and sorrow to many. However, children caught up in an adulterous relationship do not provide an excuse for continuation of the adultery. Nonetheless, that they are to be provided for by those who brought them into this world is without doubt (Ephesians 6:4; I Timothy 5:8).

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QUESTION: Is it lawful for a man to put away his first wife for every cause and marry a second?

ANSWER: No! Please read carefully Matthew 19:3-9!

QUESTION: What is Paul saying in Hebrews 13:4? When is marriage honorable and the bed undefiled?

ANSWER: Paul is simply stating that marriage is honorable and the bed undefiled in the case of all men everywhere! Sexual activity outside the bond of marriage is dishonorable in the case of all men everywhere!

Marriage is honorable and the bed undefiled when one man and one woman have been joined together by God (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6), i.e., when two are married in accordance with the will of God. All other marriages are sinful and dishonorable!

QUESTION: Would it be scriptural for a Christian to remarry after his wife had departed with the statement that she was just baptized, but did not believe?

ANSWER: The scriptures are binding upon all people everywhere, whether they are Christians or not! If the divorce was not “for the cause of fornication” (Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:9), neither the husband nor the wife can scripturally remarry. If the “cause” for the divorce was fornication, with one party being totally innocent (that is, he or she did not contribute in any way to the guilty party’s sin), the innocent one is free to remarry.

QUESTION: I am now twenty-three years of age. Am I fit to marry?

ANSWER: Some people are ready to marry at a younger age; some at twenty-three, while some who don’t mature properly should never marry. Although, we are not aware of all the circumstances, it would appear from your letter that you are mature enough to accept the responsibilities of marriage. However, a man who is mature and considering marriage will be sure that he will be able to support a family. More importantly, he will be sure that his marriage with the one and same woman is to last until death, and that it is consistent with the will of God in every respect! Please read (and reread) very carefully Matthew 19:3-9!

QUESTION: If you kiss someone other than your own husband or wife, is it a sin?

ANSWER: Some kisses may be sin. Others may not. In some countries kisses are a form of greeting or bidding another farewell! These are not motivated by unlawful desires and would not be sinful. This was the case in New Testament times. For example: Paul in Romans 16:16 said, “Salute one another with an holy kiss.” Other kisses may be motivated by unlawful desires or engaged in to promote such. This type of kiss would be in violation of Colossians 3:5

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(uncleanness, inordinate affection, and evil desires) and would, therefore, be sinful. The faithful child of God will avoid such and set his or her affections on things above (Colossians 3:2).

QUESTION: If a divorced man, who has a great family with a second wife, accepts the gospel, do I have a scriptural right to baptize him?

ANSWER: If the divorce from the first wife was for the “cause of fornication” (Matthew 5:32), with the man being totally innocent, and, if the second wife had a scriptural right to marry, he may be scripturally baptized. If the divorce was not “for the cause of fornication,” then the man and his second wife are living in adultery. Neither of these could scripturally be baptized without first repenting (Acts 2:38). This means that their marriage, in which God took no part, would first have to be dissolved. Even if the divorce from the first wife was “for the cause of fornication,” if the second wife had no scriptural right to marry, both would still be living in adultery. This situation would also demand repentance prior to scriptural baptism.

QUESTION: Can a Christian marry an unbeliever?

ANSWER: Yes! In I Corinthians 7:12-14, we see that Christians may be married to non-Christians. Though it is not sinful for such a marriage to exist, it can clearly be seen that success in marriage is much more likely if both parties are Christians, i.e., if both are going in the same direction, having the same interests and goals in serving their common God!

QUESTION: How can there be more harmony and happiness in the home?

ANSWER: Many things have been said on this subject. In fact, volumes have been written, and still many questions appear unanswered. When all has been written, all the seminars held, and all the speeches made on this subject, only one answer will remain. Simply put, harmony and happiness in the home can and will only come when Christian families, having the same spiritual dreams and aspirations, learn to love each other as God has commanded. There is no other way! The love that God commands husband and wife to have for each other is discussed in Ephesians 5:22-31. The Greek word here for love is Agape. It means that when we love in this way, we will put the object of our affections before ourselves in everything. This is to say, as husbands, we will put the wants, needs, and desires of our wives before our own. As wives, we will put the wants, needs, and desires of our husbands before our own. Any other system or approach will not do! Without doubt, one of the greatest reasons that God commanded us to love in this way is because of the resultant blessing of harmony and happiness in the home. God's way works!

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QUESTION: I committed adultery during my first marriage of which my wife had no knowledge. She pursued a divorce that I did not contest. I married another woman with whom I had a child. Does my adultery during the first marriage mean that I cannot be married to my present wife?

ANSWER: The reason that you cannot be scripturally married to the second woman is because it is an adulterous relationship! Although you were guilty of adultery during the first marriage, your wife (not knowing) did not put you away for “the cause of fornication” (Matthew 5:32). Matthew 19:9 tells us that the second marriage in both instances, hers (if she remarried) and yours, are adulterous. Had she put you away because of adultery, she then, as the innocent party, would have had the right of remarriage. You, as the guilty party, would not have had the right of remarriage. Your options in order to be right with God are: (1) repent and, if possible, return to your first wife, while making provisions for the child born to the second woman, or (2) repent and live a righteous celibate life, while arranging for the child(ren). All adult parties involved need, as well, to repent! Please read carefully Matthew 19:3-12.

Certainly, the consequences of sin in this life are difficult for all of us, but just as certain is the fact that bending of the will to His, in this and all matters, will be well worth it all in eternity when this short life is over! Know, too, that God stands willing to forgive all things of which we repent!

QUESTION: Since most of God’s Kings in the Old Testament engaged in polygamy, why is it forbidden today?

ANSWER: From the beginning it was God’s law that there be one man and wife, and that the two would become one flesh (Genesis 2:22-25; Matthew 19:3-9)! These two would be bound only to each other until separated by death (Romans 7:1-3). There is no room in the God ordained marriage for more than two people! During the Old Testament dispensation, God suffered (permitted) temporary changes to His original plan, because of the hardness of the hearts of the Jews. Because of this, Moses suffered them to put away their wives (Matthew 19:8). Jesus tells those of us under the New Testament dispensation that “from the beginning it was not so” (Matthew 19:8). In verse nine, Jesus says, “But I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.” Jesus effectively tells people under the New Testament that we are not permitted to adopt the marriage practices of those who lived previously, but rather we are to go back to God’s original plan from the very beginning, that is, one man, one woman, for life!

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QUESTION: A man was never married, but lived with two different women at different times, both of whom were eventually put away. He was married to a third who bore him two children, but who left him, because he could not pay the bride price. He later apologized and she desires to go back with him. A) Is she in her right marital home? B) Must they be joined, since both are unbelievers? C) Is one of the first two women his rightful wife?

ANSWER: A) If the man was not legally and scripturally married to either of the first two women, he was living in an adulterous situation. It goes without saying that both he and the two women need to repent of this sin! If the third woman was not previously married or if she were previously married, but divorced because her husband committed fornication (Matthew 5:32), she may scripturally return to the man in question, if he had not married anytime previously. If he had been married previously, the only way he could marry would be if that wife had committed fornication. It would appear from your letter that no matter what the case may be, extreme caution needs to be exercised by both individuals! Sexual relations are only to be engaged in by a couple (husband and wife) who have been legally and scripturally joined. All sexual relations outside the marriage relationship are sinful. Those who engage in such will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21). B) All people everywhere (believers and unbelievers) are answerable to the New Testament by which all men will be judged (II Corinthians 5:10; John 12:48). None may live together as husband and wife without legal and scriptural marriage! All who attempt to do so commit fornication/adultery. C) Not being legally and scripturally married to either of the first two women, neither would be his lawful wife.

QUESTION: I have committed adultery. Do I have to go to the husband of the wife with whom I committed adultery to say, "forgive me?" Or should I only pray for forgiveness?

ANSWER: Without doubt, both parties in this adulterous relationship need to repent and confess. The confession of this or any other sin needs to be as public or publicized as was the sin. If known to one, confess to one. If known to few, confess to few. If known publicly, confess publicly. It serves no purpose to publicize sin where it is not known (James 5:16; I John 1:7-8)!

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QUESTION: If one cannot live with his wife, can he still worship? No adultery or sin was committed on the part of the wife.

ANSWER: I take the phrase “cannot live with his wife” to mean that the husband does not want to live with his wife and has put her away without scriptural grounds, i.e., for the cause of fornication (Matthew 5:32). It is also assumed that the marriage is scriptural. If this be the case, then the man has sinned and needs to repent by being sorry for his sin and making proper restitution by returning to his wife (See Malachi 2:15-16). Christ has made it very clear that man is not to put asunder what God hath joined together (Matthew 19:6). To do so is to sin! Matthew 19:9 is violated as well! Until proper repentance and restitution is made, the sin will not and cannot be forgiven (Luke 17:3). One who persists in such rebellion cannot worship God acceptably (Matthew 5:23-24)!

In order for a marriage to thrive there must be a concerted effort on the part of both husband and wife to collectively put God first in all things, following which they need to learn to put the other before their own likes and dislikes. Then, and only then, will a marriage be right and acceptable in the eyes of our Father!

QUESTION: If a woman divorces her husband for the cause of fornication and marries again, what advice would you give the second husband?

ANSWER: “Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13)!

QUESTION: If a Christian sister is the second wife to a certain man and the first wife dies, what is the stand of the Christian sister?

ANSWER: Polygamy is sin! God has ordained that marriage is between only two people, one man and one woman, until separated by death (Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 7:1-3). When a man and a woman are scripturally married and another person enters that relationship, all of those actively involved do so without the blessing of God. Further, all who knowingly participate in such a marriage are in sin as long as it continues. The above passages demand that all additional parties be excluded from the relationship, and that all who have participated come to repentance. Without obedient repentance (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30), none can be saved or added to the Lord’s church (Acts 2:38; Acts 2:47). All who participate in any polygamous relationship are guilty of adultery! It does not follow then, because a first wife dies, that the second marriage becomes acceptable to God. The relationship between the second wife and the man remains adulterous, because God did not join them together in marriage as polygamists in the first place! If the second woman became involved in the adulterous relationship after she became a Christian, she needs to repent (sever/cut-off/get out) of the relationship and pray God, if perhaps the thought of her heart may be forgiven (Acts 8:22). If she was baptized after becoming involved as the “second wife,” while remaining impenitent in the relationship, the baptism was invalid. She would have to, if this were the case, repent of all past sins, including the present

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relationship (Luke 13:3), confess Christ (Romans 10:9-10), and then be scripturally immersed (Acts 2:38). After having been obedient to God's Word in whatever way is demanded she would then be free to scripturally marry. Extreme care, however, should be taken to assure that similar adulterous situations would not develop in the future. The man involved also needs to repent of polygamy and adultery, with no intent of ever being involved in such again. He too, then, would be free to marry!

QUESTION: A man has divorced his wife and married another woman. Can the man leave his second wife and return to his first wife, when the first wife now has a friend?

ANSWER: If the man divorced his first wife for the cause of fornication and was scripturally joined in marriage to the second wife, he cannot! If he did, he would be sinning by divorcing the second wife (to whom he was joined by God) without scriptural cause and by committing adultery with his ex-wife (Matthew 19:3-9)! If he divorced his first wife without scriptural cause, he sinned, and then compounded the sin by committing adultery with his second partner in a marriage not approved of by God. In this case, scripture demands that he repent by leaving the second partner and returning to the first. If it is the case that the first wife has "a friend" (I assume this means that unlawful sex is taking place), she and the "friend" are committing the sin of adultery. The first wife and the "friend" need to repent and discontinue the relationship or they are both going to be lost eternally. If there was not scriptural cause for the original divorce, the first wife and the husband need to reunite. If circumstances prohibit a reunion, then both the husband and the wife must remain single and celibate (Matthew 19:9).

QUESTION: If a man and woman are married for many years and the wife does many things to hurt and kill the husband, is he free to divorce her or must they continue to live together until separated by death?

ANSWER: There is only one scriptural reason for divorce, i.e., "for the cause of fornication" (Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:3-9). Certainly then, without this scriptural reason, there can be no divorce. This does not mean, however, that God expects one to live in a life-threatening situation. Anyone whose life is in danger has a scriptural right to appeal to law for "protection" (Romans 13:1-6). In some cases "protection" may possibly necessitate separate living arrangements until the danger has passed. Nevertheless, such a necessity in no way constitutes a divorce; neither does it relieve either of the parties of their responsibilities to the other, and certainly it does not justify unscriptural relationships outside the marriage.

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QUESTION: A man divorces his wife for unscriptural reasons and marries a woman from another place who is already married (her first husband knows nothing of it). The woman becomes a Christian. The man divorces her and is finally reconciled to his first wife. Is he right to do that?

ANSWER: God did not join the man and the second woman together (Matthew 19:6-9). This arrangement was clearly adulterous. Therefore, both participants needed to truly repent and return to their first mates. A question left to ponder is: Did the man truly repent or did he return to his first wife simply because the second woman became a “Christian” and rejected him? The action of this man in returning to his first wife is scripturally correct, but to be right with God he must also be sorrowfully penitent for his ungodliness! Another question for consideration is: Did the second woman become a “Christian” while living impenitently in the adulterous situation? If so, her baptism was invalid, because true scriptural repentance must precede scriptural baptism. In other words, the second woman did not become a New Testament Christian unless, prior to her baptism, she first repented of (sorrowfully turned away from) her adultery!

QUESTION: Can one scripturally marry the divorced wife of a polygamist?

ANSWER: Polygamy (plural marriages) is sin! God has ordained from the beginning that marriage is between only two people, one man and one woman, until separated by death (Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 7:1-3). When a man and woman are scripturally married and other people enter that relationship, all of those who are actively involved do so without the blessing of God. All who knowingly participate in such a marriage are in sin as long as it continues. The above passages demand that those others who have entered that relationship be excluded from it, and that all who have participated come to repentance. Whether or not the divorced wife (of the first marriage) can be remarried must be determined by scripture. If the wife divorced the husband because of his adulterous relationship with the other women, then she is free to marry again. However, if she divorced him for any other reason, she would not be free to remarry. Though the wife may be the innocent one, if her husband divorces her for his own reasons, she still does not have the right of remarriage (Matthew 19:3-12). She does, however, have the right to remarry her husband if, at the time of remarriage, they, otherwise, have a scriptural right to do so.

Hopefully, the first marriage in the relationship under discussion was entered according to biblical teaching. It is certain that God did not approve the following “marriages,” though perhaps approved by local and state government. This is to say that though God may have joined the first wife and the husband together (Matthew 19:6), He certainly did not join the following wives to this one husband! All of the following marriages are, therefore, nothing more than adulterous relationships, which must be dissolved and repented of, if those involved are to become heirs to the kingdom of God (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

God's commandment that a divorced person cannot marry another is directed only to those whom “God hath joined together” and whom “man has put asunder”

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(Matthew 19:6-9). In other words, this commandment does not apply to those involved in adulterous relationships or “marriages” in which God had no part in the “joining together.” Therefore, a person involved in an unscriptural physical union, with or without state approval, (whether as married or unmarried) and who, with penitent action, severs that relationship to the pleasing of God, he or she may marry another, if both, otherwise, have a scriptural to marry.

QUESTION: If one divorces and remarries without scriptural authority (that is, for the cause of fornication) can that person continue in fellowship with the church because he or she happens to attend services regularly or he or she has more money than most others?

ANSWER: No! The person you describe is committing adultery and the one he or she is living with is committing adultery (Matthew 19:9)! No matter how often (or how long) one may attend services; no matter how much money one may have (or how much one may give), that person is living in sin (Colossians 3:5-7), and will continue to do so, until he or she repents. This involves being sorry for the sin committed; getting out of the ungodly relationship; confessing the sin before God and the brethren; and praying for forgiveness (Acts 8:22). The one who caused the divorce needs to return to his or her first mate, if the first mate is willing to forgive! If not, this person can no longer scripturally remarry, but must remain single! If the person refuses to repent, after every attempt is made to win his or her soul again, it is commanded of God that fellowship of the brethren be withdrawn, so that the guilty one's soul might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (I Corinthians 5).

QUESTION: If a Christian man divorces his wife and impregnates a second woman, should the church stop him from doing church duties?

ANSWER: If the Christian man divorced his wife for any cause other than fornication on her part, he has sinned! He also sinned, having committed fornication, when he impregnated the second woman. This man needs to respond as shown in the above answer. If he refuses to respond scripturally, he also needs to be disciplined; that is, fellowship needs to be taken from him. Until he responds according to God's Word, he should not be involved in any way with the congregation he has shamed! To permit such would be to bring even greater shame to the church and the Lord who died for him (Hebrews 10:26-29). If he scripturally repents, he is to be restored to full fellowship (II Corinthians 2:6-8; Ephesians 4:32).

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QUESTION: If a Christian man divorces his wife and impregnates a second woman, can he continue with the second woman in order to keep her and the child from suffering?

ANSWER: No! The man (and the woman) would be continuing in adultery! Paul says in Galatians 5:19-21, that those who do “such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” It appears that the idea of “keeping the woman and the child from suffering” is just an attempt to make sin beautiful! If this man is truly concerned about the woman, he will sever (cut off) the relationship with her, lest she (and he) live an eternity suffering in hell! That this one cannot scripturally continue with the woman, however, does not mean that the sinner has no responsibility to the woman and the child he fathered! Indeed, he does! In I Timothy 5:8, we learn that one who does not provide for his own “hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel!”

QUESTION: If the situation described in the above question is not solved after a long time, and if the divorced man continues with the impregnated woman, but wants to continue worshipping, should the local church just forget about it?

ANSWER: No! If the church “just forgets about it,” they would, thereby, be sinning (being in danger of judgment), because they would be violating God’s Word that commands that it not be forgotten, but rather that it must be dealt with (I Corinthians 5)! Remember always: I Corinthians 5 is not merely a suggestion. It is a commandment to which we must all be obedient! It is a way given of God so that souls can be saved!

QUESTION: Can a married couple (previously faithful) who now lives together, but has no marriage certificate of any sort, separate, remarry each other, confess sin publicly, and be accepted by the local church?

ANSWER: If the man and woman are not scripturally and legally married they are not living in a God ordained marriage, but are in a sinful relationship! They, indeed, need to sever the relationship, repent of their wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of their hearts may be forgiven (Acts 8:22). At this point, they should be accepted in full fellowship as brother and sister in Christ, since they will have done what God demands. If each is then scripturally free to marry, and do so, then they should be accepted as husband and wife!

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QUESTION: Some argue that since a person can confess, be baptized and receive a baptismal certificate (which shows one is married to Christ), that they can, likewise, confess sexual sin publicly and receive a marriage certificate that will sanctify their relationship. Is this true?

ANSWER: No! This is not true. The comparison in the question is neither accurate nor complete! A baptismal certificate is nothing but a piece of paper that witnesses to the fact of one's baptism. A marriage certificate is nothing but a piece of paper that witnesses to the fact of a legal marriage (not necessarily scriptural) between a man and a woman. The baptismal certificate does not sanctify the sinner, nor does the marriage certificate sanctify the marriage. Before one is married to Christ at baptism, he must first repent of his sins. This means he must, in godly sorrow, turn away from those sins; he must get out of them; he must leave them behind! This includes sexual sin! A marriage certificate cannot be granted with the approval of God, or His church, to any persons who continue in adulterous marriages / relationships. Solely confessing a sexual sin does not sanctify it! Just as surely, a certificate does not sanctify it! The only way for a Christian to get rid of his sin is not only to admit he has sinned, but to, as well, scripturally repent (stop doing it) and pray God (Acts 8:22). A thousand admissions of sin; a thousand certificates would do nothing to set aside an unscriptural marriage / relationship!

In considering the many issues of marriage, divorce, and remarriage that are plaguing the Lord's church today, it is well to remember that God has ordained that there be one husband and one wife for life; that marriage can only be terminated by death (Romans 7:1-3) or in the case, and for the cause, of fornication. The innocent party (the one who has remained pure and not contributed in anyway to their mate's sin) may (with God's approval) divorce and marry another. However, the innocent party may choose to be forgiving (upon their mate's repentance) and continue in the marriage with God's approval.

Know for sure that what God has joined together man cannot scripturally put asunder (Matthew 19:6)! Though man may try to dissolve marriages for reasons other than death or fornication; though man may announce that a divorce for other reasons is granted; though husband and wife may agree to a divorce for other reasons, the marriage remains intact before God, because man can never scripturally separate that which God has joined together!

Just as sure is the fact that man cannot scripturally join together what God does not join together! Any joining together of man and woman, in which God is not a participant, results in an adulterous, sinful relationship! When Christians look the other way and refuse to deal with these relationships according to the will of God, they become partakers of their evil deeds (II John 9)!

SITUATION: A man and woman are married. Neither are Christians. The man obeys the gospel and, because of this, the woman asks for a divorce. No adultery has taken place at this point. An agreement is reached to enter a trial

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period wherein neither would marry and attempts at reconciliation would be made. During the trial period the woman commits adultery. The divorce takes place and the man remarries.

The questions:

1. Does God approve of a divorce without Bible reason?
2. Does He approve of the six weeks that Lawyers sometimes give?
3. Is the man committing adultery in his second marriage?

The answers:

1. No! Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:9. "except (if, and only if) it be for the cause of fornication."
2. There is one reason given in God's Word whereby a scripturally married couple may forego the sexual responsibility that each has to the other, i.e., for spiritual reasons: "for a time that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer" (I Corinthians 7:5). The reason for not going beyond this is that one may, in any other case or for any other reason, be tempted by Satan to sin, as may be the instance in the situation at hand.
3. Matthew 19:9. "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery . . ."

There are some questions of vital concern to the man in question:

(First): Did he truly divorce his wife for the "cause" of fornication? Was he totally the innocent party or did he some way contribute to his wife's infidelity? If the man in no way contributed to his wife's sin and divorced her for the specific "cause" of her fornication, then (and only then) would he be free to marry another. However, he could only marry another who had not been married before, or one who had been previously married and who had divorced her first husband for the "cause" of fornication, she being totally innocent and a non-contributor to his unfaithfulness, otherwise the second marriage would be adulterous.

(Second): If the man in question did not truly divorce his wife for the "cause" of fornication or if he in some way contributed to his wife's unfaithfulness, he would not be free to remarry another. If he did marry another under this condition, he would be an adulterer, and she whom he married an adulteress, as long as they remained in the second marriage! The scriptural choices under this second condition are: (a) remain single or (b) be reconciled to the first partner.

QUESTION: I have a habit of committing fornication, and although I know it is wrong, I can't seem to stop. What can I do?

ANSWER: "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife" (I Corinthians 7:2). Please also read I Corinthians 6:15-20; Colossians 3:1-6; Philippians 4:8.

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QUESTION: If one has devoted his life to Christ, and is living in the spirit, and not the flesh, is he wrong if he doesn't marry? Is it wrong for him to serve as an elder? Why?

ANSWER: One does not have to marry in order to be a faithful Christian. It is clear that Paul was not married and that some of the apostles were. Apparently, the Lord's brothers were also married (I Corinthians 9:5). In I Corinthians 7:8, Paul was speaking about a time when great distress (vs.26) was being placed upon Christians. He wrote, "I say therefore to the unmarried and the widows, it is good for them (during this period) to remain even as I (unmarried). But if they cannot contain (control their desires) let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn." The matter of one marrying or not marrying then is a matter of personal opinion with careful consideration toward one's ability to do so without experiencing unlawful desires which could lead to fornication. That one is not commanded to marry or remain single is clear from this particular chapter. However, it is also clear from Scripture that none may impose their opinion on another, that is, none are permitted to command another to marry or remain single (I Timothy 4:1-5). Those who do so have departed from the faith!

A man cannot become an elder who is not scripturally married, however. In the list of qualifications given by God (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9) an elder must be the husband of one wife! These passages forever exclude the single man from becoming an elder! It is worthy of note that in the qualifications given for deacons in I Timothy 3:8-13, they, too, must be married!

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SABBATARIANISM

QUESTION: Where in the Bible does it teach that the SDA (Seventh Day Adventist) is the right church?

ANSWER: The Bible does not teach that the SDA is the right church! Clearly this religious organization does not have its foundation in the Bible, since it did not come into existence until the middle 1800's under the misguided leadership of a Mr. Miller. This man was proven to be a false prophet when he predicted that the end of the world would occur in 1843/1844. Upon the failure of his prophecies, Mr. Miller disappeared from the religious scene.

After adding some doctrines to Mr. Miller's teachings, Elder James White, and his wife Ellen, became the leaders of this movement. It was formally recognized in Battle Creek, Michigan (USA) as the SDA Church in 1863. Ellen Miller made the claim that she had a vision in which she went to heaven! While in heaven she claims to have been shown the Ten Commandments and that she saw a bright halo around the fourth commandment. She guessed from this that keeping the Sabbath Day was then necessary for all people. This, of course, directly contradicts the Bible, which clearly teaches that we are no longer under any part of the Old Testament Law (Romans 7:1-7; II Corinthians 2:1-18; Galatians 3:24-25; Ephesians 2:13-16; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 7:12 & 8:7). As well, the Bible is clear that Christians are to worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Revelation 1:10).

Seventh Day Adventists also forbid the eating of certain foods, a doctrine that violates I Timothy 4:1-5! They also deny the biblical doctrine of eternal punishment (Matthew 3:12 & 25:46; Revelation 14:11). Many other anti-scriptural positions are held and taught by this man made organization. It is interesting that the SDA picks and uses only certain Old Testament laws. Why do they not burn incense and offer animal sacrifices? Who gives these people the right of selection? Certainly not the Bible! Note carefully the inspired words of Paul in Galatians 5:4: "Christ is become no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law (Old Testament); ye are fallen from grace."

Jesus Christ established the church of the Bible (Matthew 16:18), not Ellen G. White! The church of the Bible was established in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4 & 8), not in Battle Creek, Michigan! The church of the Bible was established in 30/33 AD (Acts 2:1), not in 1863 AD! The church of the Bible is designated "churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16), not the "SDA!" To which church then should one belong?

There were multitudes of Christians in the church of the Bible (both living and dead) during the many centuries before Ellen G. White made her ungodly claims. Obviously then, there was never a need for anything other than the gospel to save sinners (Romans 1:16). Peter proclaimed in the first century that mankind (long before Ellen G. White lived) had already been given "all things that pertain

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unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). In the same Gospel we continue today to have "all things that pertain into life and godliness" without Ellen G. White! If God has already given "all things" necessary to life and godliness, what need does any have of Mrs. White, or any other false teacher for that matter (Matthew 15:3,6,9,13,14)? To adopt any teaching or practice beyond that which the apostles taught is to invite the condemnation of God (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19).

QUESTION: The SDA teaches that the fourth beast of Daniel 7:23-25 is Pope Paul of the Roman Catholic Church. Is this true?

ANSWER: No! It is not true! In verse twenty-three of this chapter it says that the "fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth". In Daniel 2:36-45, Daniel is interpreting King Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2:31-35). Daniel speaks of four kingdoms, the first of which King Nebuchadnezzar is the head (vs.37). This was the Babylonian kingdom! Three other world kingdoms were to come into existence afterwards (vss.39-40). Daniel 5:28 tells us that the second kingdom that came into existence was the Medo-Persian. We learn from history that the third kingdom was the Macedonian kingdom; the fourth kingdom was the Roman Empire under the Caesar's. Daniel tells us in verse forty-four, that during the days of this fourth kingdom that "the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." This prophecy was of the church of Christ and had its fulfillment during the days of the Roman Empire in Acts, the second chapter.

The fourth kingdom designated by the fourth beast in Daniel 7:23-25 is the same kingdom to which reference is made in Daniel 2:36-45. In both places the fourth kingdom (which is the fourth beast) means the Roman Empire, not Pope Paul!

The foolish SDA doctrine that those who keep the first day of the week are under the influence of the "fourth beast" declares their woeful ignorance of God's Word!

QUESTION: The SDA teaches that the "abomination of desolation" of Matthew 24:15 and the "beast" of Revelation 13:1-18 also have reference to Pope Paul and that he will soon go to Jerusalem to exercise his power. Is this true?

ANSWER: No! The "abomination of desolation" and the "beast" in Revelation thirteen have reference solely to the Roman Empire, just as in the book of Daniel. Through Matthew 24:36, Jesus is foretelling of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman Empire. Notice that the events foretold by Christ in these verses were to happen during the lifetime (generation) of the people who were alive at that time. All of this came to pass in 70AD, over nineteen hundred years ago. From Matthew 24:36 through Matthew 25:46, Jesus is discussing the end of the world and the final Judgment.

In Revelation thirteen, John is discussing the great persecution by the Roman Empire being brought upon Christian at that time (after the destruction of Jerusalem) and which would continue into the future. This could not have

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reference to Pope Paul, or any other Pope, since the first Pope, as we know him today, was not seated until 606AD. Since there was no Pope at the time of the writing of the book of Revelation (about 96AD), nor was there any for the next five hundred years, the suggestion that reference in this passage is to him is without scripture or logic!

QUESTION: Does Deuteronomy 29:1 teach the Adventist idea of two old laws?

ANSWER: No! The SDA falsely concludes from this passage that there is a Law of God (Ten Commandments- still in effect) and there was a Law of Moses (ceremonial law-taken out of the way). In this passage, the “words of the covenant” and “the covenant which He made with them in Horeb” made up the “Old Covenant,” which has been done away with in its totality, having been replaced by the “New Covenant” (Hebrews 8:6-13)!

The Bible does not recognize the distinction between “laws” as concocted by the Adventists. For example: In Nehemiah 8:1, Ezra the scribe read from the “Book of the Law of Moses.” In Nehemiah 8:18, we see that from which he read was also called the “Book of the law of God.” Luke as well refers to the “Law of Moses” as the “law of the Lord” (Luke 2:22-23). Clearly, the Adventists are in conflict with God’s Word on the matter!

QUESTION: Does the New Testament clearly state that Christians are no longer under the Ten Commandments?

ANSWER: Yes! In addition to those passages mentioned heretofore, Paul says in Romans chapter seven, that Christians are “dead to the law” (vs.4) and that they are “delivered (discharged) from the law” (vs.6). In verse seven, he tells us that the law we are “dead to” and “delivered from” is the law that says, “Thou shalt not covet!” The law that says, “Thou shalt not covet” clearly refers to the Ten Commandments! In fact, “Thou shalt not covet is the tenth Commandment (Exodus 20:17)!

QUESTION: Were the Ten Commandments reinstated under the New Testament?

ANSWER: No! Neither the “Ten Commandment Law,” nor any other “Law” was reinstated under the New Testament. The New Testament is a totally “new” law, having replaced totally the “old” law! It is true that the New Testament encompasses and includes the moral principles inherent in “nine” of the “ten” Commandments. However, these principles are applicable to Christians today because they are a part of the New Testament; not because they were a part of the Old Testament! It is very significant that the fourth of the Ten Commandments, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,” is strikingly omitted from the New Testament!

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QUESTION: What caused the Sabbath to change from the last day of the week to the first day of the week?

ANSWER: This so-called “change” has occurred only in the mind and vocabulary of man. It is not biblical to refer to the first day of the week as “the Sabbath.” People today, under the New Testament, are not directed or authorized to keep the seventh day, but, rather, are directed to worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2). Keeping of the seventh day (the Sabbath) was a part of the Old Testament Law, which was done away with in Christ (II Corinthians 3; Galatians 3:16-19; Ephesians 2:13-14; Hebrews 7:12; Hebrews 8:7). Christians cannot observe any part of the Old Law (including the Sabbath), because to do so is to fall from grace (Galatians 5:4)! Neither may they permit any man to judge them in respect of the Sabbath days (Colossians 2:16).

QUESTION: Why is it not allowable to work on the Sabbath as some teach?

ANSWER: The reason that Israel, under the Old Law, was not to work on the Sabbath (the seventh day of the week, i.e., Saturday) is given in Exodus 20:8-11. We today are no longer under any part of that Old Law, but rather all from the cross until the end of time have been, are, and will be, answerable only to the New Testament. (Please read Romans 7:1-7; II Corinthians 3:1-18; Galatians 3:24-25; Ephesians 2:13-16; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 7:12 & 8:7).

The Bible is clear that Christians are to worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Revelation 1:10; Colossians 2:16).

QUESTION: Should Christians pray on the seventh day (Saturday)?

ANSWER: Christians are to pray consistently (I Thessalonians 5:17), which would include the seventh day. Note that the saved in Acts 2:42 “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” In the model prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), Jesus taught us to say, “Give us this day our daily bread.” Surely, Christ and His followers prayed without ceasing every day!

QUESTION: Does Hebrews 4:10 teach that we are to keep the Sabbath Day, because God rested on the seventh day?

ANSWER: No! The “rest” promised to the people of God (vss.8-10) has reference to the eternal rest (heaven) and not to the seventh day of the week. As God rested from His labor after the creation, faithful Christians too shall rest, according to His promise, after their labors are over.

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QUESTION: Some say we are to worship on Sundays; some say Saturday. I believe we are to assemble for worship every day of our lives and that we cannot forsake the assembling on Sundays or any other day. Would you please clarify this for me?

ANSWER: Your desire to assemble for worship to God every day is commendable. However, we need to be careful not to bind things where the Bible has not bound. That the saints are to assemble to worship God on Sunday, the first day of the week, is clearly set forth in Acts 20:7 and I Corinthians 16:1-2. On this day only are we to partake of the Lord's Supper and contribute as God has prospered us. The other acts of worship (teaching, singing and praying), which occur on the Lord's Day, may, as well, be engaged in on other days of the week. The frequency of such worship assemblies may scripturally vary from congregation to congregation, depending upon many local factors, such as: the spiritual needs of a congregation; the proximity of members to a place of assembly; transportation issues; the necessity of individual employment to financially support self, family, and the work of the local congregation, etc. A wise eldership or the faithful men of the congregation, if no eldership exists, will consider all such factors before selecting times and dates of assembly. To insist that all members of a congregation must assemble for public assembly each and every day of the week, under any and all conditions, is to go beyond that which is written (I Corinthians 4:6; Revelation 22:18-19).

QUESTION: What is the understanding of Colossians 2:16?

ANSWER: Most of what Paul wrote to the various churches was to warn Christians not to go back under the Old Testament; not be brought in bondage again to it (Galatians 5:1-4); not to accept the binding of the old law of circumcision (Galatians 5:6; Galatians 6:15); and not to allow Judaizing Teachers to insist that Christians keep the Holy Days (including the Sabbaths) of the Old Testament. This is precisely his argument and directive in Colossians 2:16. Note carefully the context of the passage by reference to Colossians 2:14!

QUESTION: Mark 1:21 and Luke 4:31 talk of Jesus going into the synagogues and teaching on the Sabbath Day. If the first day was a commanded day , why didn't He encourage them to assemble on that day?

ANSWER: Jesus lived under the Old Testament and kept its laws perfectly, including worshipping on the Sabbath. The New Testament, under which Christians worship on the first day, did not come into effect until the Old Testament (including Sabbath keeping) was taken out of the way at the cross and death of Christ (Colossians 2:14-16)!

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QUESTION: Acts 17:2 and Acts 18:4 says that Paul went into the synagogues on the Sabbath Day for the purpose of worshipping. This was after Jesus' ascension. Why did Paul not encourage people from worshipping on the Sabbath?

ANSWER: To say that these verses teach that Paul entered the synagogues for the purpose of worshipping is to read something into these passages that is not there. The reasons for Paul going into the synagogues is clearly stated, i.e., (1) that's where the Jews were to whom he wanted to preach and (2) he wanted to preach Christ (New Testament) to them.

Paul encourages people of all time and for all time since the cross to worship on the first day of the week by his example (Acts 20:7) and by commandment (I Corinthians 16:1-2). Some questions need to be asked. Why did these inspired men on a missionary journey wait for seven days (Acts 20:6) to meet and commune on the first day (Acts 20:7) if that was not the appointed day? Why did they not simply abide six days and worship on the Sabbath if that was the appointed today? Why did the apostle Paul direct the Corinthian Christians to lay by in store on the first day of the week if the seventh day was the appointed day of assembling? It is interesting to note that in the original Greek the word "kata" is used (verse two), which means "every" first day of the week. Can any suggest that the early Christians engaged in all items of worship except "giving" on Saturday, and then reassembled on the first day for the purpose of engaging in that particular act of worship? Surely not. But why the first day? Because that was the day on which our Lord conquered death by His resurrection and it was the day that He established His church in which we worship Him!

Not only does the Bible show that we are to meet on the first day, but it is interesting to note that such was the practice on the basis of secular history. In the writings of Justin Martyr (100 A.D. – 167 A.D.) who was a pupil of Polycarp who, in turn, was a pupil of the apostle John, we can read these words: "On Sunday a meeting is held of all who live in the cities and villages, and a section is read from the memoirs of the Apostles and the writings of the Prophets, as long as time permits. When the reading is finished the president, in a discourse, gives the admonition and exhortation to imitate these noble things. After this we all rise and offer a common prayer. At the close of the prayer, as we have before described, bread and wine and thanks for them according to his ability . . ." The writing goes on to talk about the distribution of the bread and wine to the homes of the sick and about the contribution. Clearly then, both the Bible and secular history evidences the fact that worship of the New Testament church was on the first day and not the seventh!

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DENOMINATIONALISM/OTHER RELIGIONS

QUESTION: What is the meaning of denominationalism and denomination?

ANSWER: Denominationalism refers to a dividing into denominations. To denominate is to separate a part from the whole; to assign a different name! The word denomination then properly refers to the various religious sects in the world today, such as, Baptist, Pentecostal, Methodist, etc. These divisions are sinful, being contrary to the word of God (See John 17:20-23; I Corinthians 1:10-13; I Corinthians 3:1-4). Christ built only one church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:18, 24); the church of Christ (Romans 16:16)!

QUESTION: Is it right to discriminate against others churches? Would this not violate Matthew 7:1?

ANSWER: To discriminate means: "To recognize as being different." The reason for recognizing the differences in the denominational churches is because of the significant fact that they are clearly different, not only from each other, but from the church as described in the word of God. The man-made differences between the denominations and the church of Christ are the reasons "why" they are referred to by man as denominations! Since they are man-made, it is clear they are not of God. If they are not of God, it would be sinful to say they are by describing them as "God-approved Christian Churches." If they are unlike, in any way, the church as described in His Word, they can be neither God-approved or Christian! Therefore, since God in His Word obviously discriminates (recognizes the differences), we, too, must discriminate (recognize the differences). People gaining membership in denominational organizations (churches other than the church of Christ) are not in the God-approved church. Since they have not been saved by translation into the kingdom of His dear Son (Colossians 1:13), they, despite their denominational membership, remain in, and are of, the world. Christ "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us (members of His church; not the denominations) from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Galatians 1:4). Discrimination toward this world and worldly denominations, with love (Matthew 19:19) and honor (I Peter 2:17) toward all men, is, therefore, consistent with the will of God! For these reasons, Christians are obligated to oppose denominationalism!

Matthew 7:1-5 is often taken out of context to say that God forbids all kinds of judging and we, therefore, cannot teach against the doctrines and commandments of men (denominations). This is neither biblical nor true! This passage simply commands us not to judge unrighteously. In fact, verses fifteen through twenty tell us "beware of false prophets" and that we "shall know them by their fruits." This kind of "judging" then is approved of by God! It is the kind of judgment Christians are commanded to do in John 7:24: "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment."

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QUESTION: If it is proper to condemn denominational names, it would follow that it is also proper to condemn the names of the books of the Bible! Should we not call them Book No.1, Book No.2, etc.?

ANSWER: The statement is not sound! Why would it be proper to assign different numbers (which provide no description whatever) to each of the books and improper to assign different titles that scripturally denote the author or recipients of the various books?

Denominational names are condemned by Christ and His followers because they are unscriptural (robbing Christ of the glory and honor due only Him, e.g., Lutheran Church, Catholic Church, New Apostles, Baptist Church, Methodist Church, Mormon Church) and because they foster division (John 17:20-23; I Corinthians 1:10-13; I Corinthians 3:3-4).

QUESTION: What Christian denomination are you affiliated with?

ANSWER: We are not associated with a denomination, but, rather, having been obedient to the terms of entry as outlined in the Bible, we have, thereby, become members of the church of the Bible, called in Romans 16:16 the church of Christ. The Bible stands against division (denominationalism). Please read John 17:21; I Corinthians 1:10-13; Ephesians 4:4-6; Matthew 7:13-14 and 21-27.

QUESTION: What do the scriptures teach about the “rapture”?

ANSWER: There is nothing in God’s word about the rapture! It is that part of the false doctrine of “premillennialism” which teaches that Christ is going to come two more times; that between these comings, the church will go “somewhere” to spend seven years with Him (the rapture), while those remaining on earth will be going through a period of great tribulation. This doctrine has no basis in God’s word and will be rejected by the faithful Christian!

QUESTION: Should we believe in the “rapture?”

ANSWER: No! Undoubtedly there are those whose religious focus seems always to be directed toward the end of time. As well, there are many false doctrines about this matter being promoted throughout the religious world today. Primarily they revolve around the unscriptural theory of “Premillennialism.” Some false teachings included in this theory are: the rapture; the great tribulation; two (sometimes three) resurrections; and Christ returning to reign over the earth for a thousand years. None of this is biblical and certainly cannot be helpful! Many of these false prophets have repeatedly tried to predict the time of Christ’s return. All have failed and will continue to do so. Jesus said in Matthew 24:36, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.” It is folly to speculate about these matters. However, we do need to be aware of the truth that He will return someday to judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:30-31). Therefore, we are told in Matthew 24:44, “be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” To be “ready” means to

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be living a faithful Christian now, and at the time of His coming! Our focus then in this life ought to be on our faithful service in His church, the church of Christ! Undue anxiousness about the “end of time” will then leave us and, indeed, we will learn to look forward to that great day with joyous anticipation.

Perhaps it would help to list the events that will occur at His second coming:

1. All the dead (good and bad) will be resurrected (John 5:28-29).
2. All (good and bad) will be judged (II Corinthians 5:10).
3. The righteous will go to heaven, the wicked will go to hell (Matthew 25:31-46).
4. The earth will be destroyed by fire (II Peter 3:10).

The faithful Christian will fear none of these things!

QUESTION: Should we believe in purgatory?

ANSWER: Purgatory is not a biblical doctrine! It is a false doctrine which says that Catholics, who are too good to go to hell and too bad to go to heaven, go into an intermediate place (purgatory) in order to be purged from their sins to become fit for heaven!

The Bible teaches that “it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). There is no second chance! Luke 16:26 teaches that there is a great gulf fixed, so that none can travel from one place to the other after death!

QUESTION: Is there any scripture that says Priests and Nuns should not marry?

ANSWER: It is obvious to all that the Catholic Church forbids their Priests and Nuns to marry. That forbidding to marry is wrong can clearly be seen in I Timothy 4:1-3. Those who do so are those who have departed from the faith (vs.1)! Nonetheless, one may make a personal decision not to marry, provided that he or she does not succumb to the temptations that often befall a single person (I Corinthians 7:8-9). The apostle Paul is an example of one who chose not to marry! But this same apostle tells us in I Corinthians 7:1, “to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” So we see that a decision to marry, or not to marry, is a choice that each person has to make and, further, that the decision should be made only with careful consideration to biblical principles. The sin of religious people and organizations relative to marriage (and many other issues) is that they make laws where God has not legislated. In other words, they proclaim a gospel that is different from the New Testament. These are to be accursed (Galatians 1:6-9)!

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QUESTION: What does it mean when the Bible says, “we are saved by grace through faith?”

ANSWER: The passage referred to is Ephesians 2:8. This verse says that the way of redemption (“grace”) has been provided by God. It has appeared unto all men (Titus 2:11), but clearly all men will not accept it (Matthew 7:13-14). However, when men do accept God’s grace through faithful obedience to the prescribed terms of pardon (Romans 10:17), the result is salvation (Titus 3:5).

QUESTION: What do you understand scripturally about the millennial (1000-year) reign of Christ on this earth?

ANSWER: There is no basis in scripture for this false doctrine. Those who teach such try unsuccessfully to find support in the last phrase of Revelation 20:4, “and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” However, this symbolic passage does not remotely refer to a one thousand-year reign of Christ. Nor is there mention made of a reign of any kind on this earth! The “reigning” in this verse refers only to the reign of the disembodied “souls who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and the word of God.” In today’s language, we might say that John Doe “lived and reigned” with the King of England for “ten years.” We would understand the “ten years” as referring to the duration of John Doe’s reign. It would not tell us how long the King of England reigned! The same principle holds true in Revelation 20:4. It is also interesting to note that our Lord has already been reigning for almost two thousand years (I Timothy 6:15-16).

QUESTION: If the Holy Spirit is one and is truth, why are there so many Protestant denominations all believing they know the truth?

ANSWER: The question needs to include the Catholic Church, which also claims to “know the truth.” The statement in the question (the Holy Spirit is not divided and is truth) is without doubt accurate and scriptural (I Corinthians 1:10; John 16:13; John 17:17), thus showing clearly that, because each of these teach and practice doctrines different from the others, all of them cannot have the truth. Such would be sensibly impossible! Since each is different, it follows logically that, at best, only one of them could have the truth; perhaps none of them! Jesus said, “Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth” (John 17:17)! It must then follow that only those people who practice in their lives and worship what God’s Word teaches can scripturally be called His church and His people.

Many falsely claim that the Bible promotes denominationalism, because, according to them, men today cannot understand the scriptures alike! They foolishly charge God with giving us a book that we cannot understand. Paul speaks to the contrary in Ephesians 3:3, saying that when we read the mystery of Christ (the Bible) we may understand it! Jesus said in John 17:17 that God’s Word is truth. In John 8:32, He said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Denominational confusion then does not come from God or His Word (I Corinthians 14:33). In fact, the Bible clearly condemns denominationalism (John 17:20-23; I Corinthians 1:10-14).

Compiled by David Amos for Truth for the World

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Denominations usually originate with the presupposed doctrines and commandments of men that result in vain (empty) worship (Matthew 15:3, 6, 9). Many often attempt to force God's Word into what they want the Bible to say or what they have been taught from childhood. The differences and confusion in religion today come from man's own desires and ideas: his own manuals; his creeds; his church laws, e.g., the Catholic Catechism, Baptist Manual, Methodist Manual of Discipline, Presbyterian confession of Faith, Book of Mormon, Rules of Faith and Practice, Church Bylaws, etc.

Only one thing can erase the differences and confusion in the religious world today and that is the rejection of the commandments of men while at the same time receiving with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save our souls (James 1:21); the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25). Jesus said in John 12:48 that His words will judge us. The creeds that we have mentioned above (and others like them) will not stand in Judgment Day; nor will they who follow them!

QUESTION: Would you tell me more about the Anglican Church?

ANSWER: The Anglican Church developed from the Church of England, which had its beginning in about 1539. The Anglicans primarily include the Church of England, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Episcopal Church in the United States. They do not believe that the Bible is the sole authority in all religious matters, but rely heavily upon the Book of Common Prayer, tradition, and logic as relates to perceived "current" social needs. As a result, their theology is ever changing. There is little difference between Anglican and Catholic doctrines, traditions and worship formalities. The primary difference is that Catholics look to the Pope of Rome as their head, while the Queen of England is designated as the head of the Anglican community, with the Archbishop of Canterbury being the highest ranking spiritual leader. This group is, perhaps, the most liberal of all religious bodies today, even to the acceptance and ordination of homosexuals as priests within their fellowship! Because the Anglicans have little, if any, resemblance to the church of the New Testament, its teachings will be carefully avoided by the faithful child of God!

QUESTION: Do all different churches (denominations) make up the church of Christ?

ANSWER: No! In Ephesians 4:4, the Bible says that there is only "one body." In Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18, 24, we learn that the "body" is the church. Therefore, if there is only "one body," there is clearly only one church. This church is the church of the Bible and is the only church that is of divine origin. All others are of men and will eventually fail (Psalms 127:1; Matthew 15:13). Neither is there salvation to be found in any of them (Acts 4:12).

Different groups cannot walk together except they be agreed (Amos 3:3). Additionally, God's people are to be of the same mind and in the same judgment (1 Corinthians 1:10). Since clearly and certainly, there are great differences and

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disagreements between today's denominations, it only follows that the thinking that all of these make up the church of Christ has absolutely no foundation in His Word, and that it is impossible for them to walk together in one body!

The only church in which one can be saved is called in the Bible the "church of Christ" (Romans 16:16). It is the church that Christ promised to build (Matthew 16:18); the church that He died to build (Acts 20:28); and the church to which immersed believers were added on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:47). It is that body of believers, called out from this world, who look only to the word of God for their worship practices and conduct of life. It is the church of Christ!

QUESTION: Can the Christadelphians be called Christians?

ANSWER: Not scripturally! This organization was begun in 1848 by John Thomas. They hold many doctrines contrary to God's Word and cannot, therefore, be referred to as "true" Christians. For example: They deny the biblical doctrine of three persons in the Godhead, teaching that the Holy Spirit is not a person (John 14:26), but an influence; they teach the false doctrine of Premillennialism (the kingdom has already been established- Mark 9:1; Colossians 1:13); that man is totally mortal (I Thessalonians 5:23); that only "believers" become immortal; that there is no eternal hell; that the unbeliever will simply be destroyed at the end of time (Matthew 25:41-46)!

Christadelphians simply constitute another denomination, all of which have their roots in the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9, 13, 14)!

QUESTION: Must we pass through the great tribulation described by Jesus in Matthew 24:21? I ask this because Jesus said the tribulation must come before He returns in Matthew 24:29-30.

ANSWER: No! This passage is dealing with the symbolic coming of Jesus in the destruction of Jerusalem, which was fulfilled in the year 70AD. Notice carefully in verse thirty-four of this chapter what Jesus said: "Verily, I say unto you, this generation will not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled." Everything before this verse was fulfilled during the lives of the people who lived during that generation! Jesus then begins a discussion of His second coming in verse thirty-six, continuing through verse forty-six of chapter twenty-five.

Sometimes, because of the use of symbols in verses twenty-nine through thirty-one, there is a tendency by some to assign this language to Christ's second coming. However, Isaiah used this same language in Chapter 13:6-11 to describe the symbolic coming of the day of the Lord at the destruction of Babylon. Just as the language of Isaiah does not refer to Christ's second coming, similarly, neither does the language of Matthew 24:29-33. Christ's language here deals with the destruction of Jerusalem, just as Isaiah's language dealt with the destruction of Babylon. The Jews of the first century, being familiar with Old Testament writings, would have readily understood the symbolism used by Christ in this particular passage. It is recommended that beside reading Isaiah, chapter

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thirteen about the prophecies concerning the destruction of Babylon, that chapters seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen also be reviewed to consider the language used in those prophecies concerning the destruction of Damascus, Ethiopia, and Egypt, respectively.

QUESTION: What is the “Tribulation Period?”

ANSWER: The so-called Tribulation Period is a false doctrine within a larger false doctrine known as Premillennialism. This man-developed theory says that Jesus failed in His first attempt to establish His kingdom. They teach that when Jesus comes the second time He will accomplish what He failed to do the first time; that He will reign over an earthly kingdom for a thousand-year period from a literal throne in the city of Jerusalem. Immediately before this, they claim there will be a seven-year period, divided into two three and one-half year periods; the first called “The Tribulation;” the second called “The Great Tribulation.” They also falsely teach that immediately before the seven-year period that Christ will come to “rapture” the faithful, both the living and the dead; take them into the clouds so that they might escape these tribulations. After the seven-years, He is to return again to rule for a thousand years, following which is to be a supposed second resurrection, and then the “The Great White Throne Judgment.”

This doctrine is totally false! It is based upon the false premise that Christ failed to establish His kingdom when He was here the first time. If it can scripturally be shown that Christ did, in fact, set up His kingdom, then it will have been shown that the entire doctrine of Premillennialism is false!

Throughout the Bible we read about the establishment of the kingdom. In Daniel 2:28-45, he prophesied that the kingdom would be established in the days of the fourth world kingdom from that time, that is, the Roman Empire. In verse forty-four, he tells us that once the kingdom was set up, it would never be destroyed. It was in the days of the Roman Empire (Luke 3:1) that John the Immerser began preaching, “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mark 1:14-15). Later in Matthew 16:13-19, Jesus said, “I will build my church” (vs.18), which He also called the kingdom of heaven (vs.19). It is highly significant that the Son of God said, “I will!” He did not say perhaps or maybe! He said, “I will build my church.” In Mark 9:1, He said, “Verily I say unto you, that there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.” When Jesus, after His resurrection, ascended back to the Father, He was given “dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall never be destroyed” (Daniel 7:13-14).

Ten days after Christ ascended, Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) proclaimed that He had been raised up to be enthroned (vs.30) at the right hand of God (vs.34), and had been made both Lord and Christ (vs.36). The prophecies and promises of the coming kingdom were all fulfilled in a mighty way and, on

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this great day, Peter used the keys to the kingdom promised to him by Jesus (Matthew 16:19) to open wide it's door. He presented the terms of entry, and for the first time men and women were ushered in as citizens of the kingdom that would never be destroyed. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). From this time on, references to the kingdom in the Bible prove it to be in existence. (See Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9).

Nowhere in all of God's Word was it promised that Christ would return a second time in order to establish an earthly kingdom. The truth is that the establishment of an earthly kingdom was never the intent of our Lord. In John 18:36, He told Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." The Pharisees too believed in an earthly kingdom and demanded to know of Jesus when it should come. Jesus responded to them, and to any today who so believe, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, lo here! or lo, there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is among you" (Luke 17:20-21). The Jews wanted to make Jesus a king of an earthly kingdom, but He departed from them (John 6:15). It is clear then, that Jesus came to establish a spiritual kingdom. He did not fail! In John 17:4, He said, "I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished (accomplished) the work which thou gavest me to do."

Since it has been shown that Jesus did not fail; that the kingdom of God was fully established some two thousand years ago, Premillennialism and all of its sub-theories are evidently utterly and totally false! Those who continue to proclaim such are false teachers and should be marked and avoided (Romans 16:17-18).

QUESTION: What are some beliefs of Lutherans?

ANSWER: They falsely teach that man is saved by "faith alone" without works of obedience (James 2:24); that forgiveness of sins is imparted at the partaking of the Lord's supper, while the Bible teaches that it is a memorial (I Corinthians 11:24-26); that infants are to be baptized because of inherited sin (Ezekiel 18:20); that one may be sprinkled/poured as a substitute for scripturally authorized baptism, i.e., immersion/burial (Acts 8:35-39; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12). This religious organization is unscriptural in both practice and name (Acts 11:26; Romans 16:16), having been established by the man, Martin Luther, in the 16th century.

QUESTION: What are some beliefs of the Animists?

ANSWER: This group superstitiously believes that everything has, or contains, a spirit(s) and that these spirits are in control of all that happens; that when a person dies his or her spirit may inhabit inanimate objects, animals, or other persons. The Bible in contrast teaches that when a person dies there is an immediate departure of the soul (Ecclesiastes 12:7; Hebrews 9:27; Luke 16:19-31).

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QUESTION: What are some beliefs of the Calvinists?

ANSWER: They falsely teach that all are born with sin inherited from Adam, which they call Total Hereditary Depravity (See Ezekiel 18:20); that it has been predetermined by God exactly who and how many are to be saved; that the number cannot be changed; that if one is elected to salvation, he or she can do nothing to be lost; that if one had been elected to be lost, he or she can do nothing to be saved. (See this foolishness clearly refuted in Matthew 11:28-30 and Revelation 22:17).

QUESTION: Is the teaching of Catholicism about celibacy scripturally accurate?

ANSWER: No! "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication let every man have his own wife . . ." (I Corinthians 7:2). "Marriage is honourable in all . . ." (Hebrews 13:4). Those who forbid to marry are those who have departed from the faith (I Timothy 4:1-4)!

QUESTION: Why do most people not honor Mary, since God Himself honored her?

ANSWER: Certainly we are to honor those to whom honor is due (Romans 13:7). Therefore Mary is to be honored, as are all, but neither she nor any beyond that which is scripturally due. In Luke 1:47, we read, "all generations shall call me (Mary) blessed." But in Luke 11:27-28, we learn that those who hear the word of God and keep it (Christians) are more blessed than she! The scriptures do not make Mary deity; neither do they teach that any should pray to, or through, Mary. There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus (I Timothy 2:5).

The perpetual virginity of Mary (Matthew 1:24-25; Matthew 13:55-56), her bodily assumption into heaven, her elevation to the position of mediator between God and man are false teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church. They are not to be found in scripture and are, therefore, sinful additions to what God would have us believe (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19).

QUESTION: Are the Mormons like the Baptists and the Catholics?

ANSWER: They are alike only in that they all three groups teach false and heretical doctrines. However, there are great differences in their doctrines, and of all the foolish theologies in this world, the Mormons are certainly second to none. This group was begun in 1830 by Joe Smith, a man who was a troublemaker and an eccentric treasure hunter. Mormons teach that all men, if they become Mormons, can become just like God, eventually ruling over their own planet somewhere out in the universe. They teach that God is a physical being with many physical wives engaged in the practice of sex producing the souls that inhabit our earthly bodies. They teach that marriages contracted on earth will continue in heaven (Matthew 22:30). They have created their own Bible on the

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basis of a fictional story written by an American by the name of Solomon Spaulding. This alleged "Testament" is filled with errors of all kinds, i.e., geographic, historic, scientific, and theological. Literally thousands of correctional changes have been made over the years, but many such errors still remain. Much more could be said about this cult, but this should suffice to warn of its dangers.

QUESTION: What effect does certain food and drink, i.e., tea, coffee, pork, etc., have on a person in relation to Christian life? Will one be kept out of heaven because of food?

ANSWER: Many false religions today impose food restrictions on their members. Those who so do have departed from the faith (II Timothy 4:1-3). Verse four of this same chapter reads, "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." Note also Colossians 2:16, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or drink, . . ."

QUESTION: Is it true that the Islamic religion arose through the family of Ishmael?

ANSWER: Ishmael lived about 2000 years before Christ. Most agree that Abraham was the progenitor of the Arabic race through him. Muhammad, an Arab, was born about 2570 years later and during the A.D. 600's began the Islamic religion.

QUESTION: Is Allah of the Koran different from the God of the Bible?

ANSWER: Yes! There is but "one" God; the God of the Bible (Isaiah 43:10-11; Isaiah 44: 6; Isaiah 45:21; Ephesians 4:6). The differences between God and Allah (?) become very evident as we compare God's Bible with Allah's (?) Koran.

1. The Bible teaches that the one God consists of three personalities; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19-20). The Koran teaches that Allah is God and Mohammed is his prophet.
2. The Bible teaches that grace through obedient faith saves us (Ephesians 2:8-10 & James 2:24). The Koran teaches that salvation is wholly by works.
3. The Bible is truth (John 17:17). The Koran teaches that it is all and final truth. Both cannot be right!
4. The Bible says that God tempts no man (James 1:13). The Koran teaches that Allah leads people astray.
5. The Bible teaches that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16). The Koran denies that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God.
6. The Bible teaches that Christ did no sin (I Peter 2:22). The prophet of Allah admitted he was a sinner.
7. The Bible teaches that Christ was crucified for our sins (Acts 2:23 & Philippians 2:8). The Koran says that Jesus was not crucified.

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We could note many other differences, but these should be enough to show that Allah is not the God of the Bible! That there is no salvation in Allah (?), his prophet, or his book (the Koran) is made clear by the inspired Peter as he speaks of Jesus in Acts 4:12; "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

QUESTION: What will happen to Moslems when Jesus comes?

ANSWER: Only those who believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God and who are faithfully obedient to His teachings will be saved on judgment day! All others will be lost eternally! See John 8:24; John 12:48.

QUESTION: Are all Moslems going to hell?

ANSWER: That there is no salvation in the Koran, or it's prophet, is made clear by the inspired Peter as he speaks of Jesus in Acts 4:12; "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

QUESTION: What are mystics all about in black magic as per African wizards?

ANSWER: These people and their followers are involved in sinful practices. Such, according to the will of God, must be avoided. The so-called magic practiced by these "wizards" is said to be an abomination before Him (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). Those who continue to reject Him by their involvement in these things will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21), but will eventually be lost eternally in hell (Revelation 21:8).

QUESTION: What are some teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses?

ANSWER: This organization, previously known by many names, had it's beginning in the late 1800's under the direction of one Charles Taze Russell. He died in 1916 after falsely prophesying that Jesus was to return in 1914. Joseph "Judge" Rutherford then became head of the group. He, too, immediately began to falsely prophesy about Christ's return; this time He was to come in 1925 (Matthew 24:36). After a period of doctrinal development, accompanied by much false teaching and prophesying (which has become a trademark of the WatchTower people), they officially, in the early 1930's, adopted the name of "Jehovah's Witnesses."

This organization blindly rejects the biblical doctrine of the "Trinity;" the "Godhead" (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20). They reject Christ as God (John 1:1-3) and contend that He is a created being (Micah 5:2). They falsely teach that the kingdom of Christ was established in 1914 (Mark 9:1); that man does not possess a spirit or soul (Matthew 10:28; I Thessalonians 5:23); that there is no hell (Matthew 25:41, 46); and that the earth will not be destroyed at the second coming, but (according to their vain and foolish imaginations) will be renovated

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as a home for faithful JW's who are not quite good enough to be among a select 144,000 (maximum number) chosen to inherit heaven!

There are many other false doctrines taught by this group, but these should suffice to show that it is of men and not of God.

QUESTION: On the basis of Matthew 5:5, the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that we will be on the earth forever. Is this true?

ANSWER: No! The phrase "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" has absolutely nothing to do with how long the earth will stand. It simply means that the "meek" (those who humbly accept the teachings of Christ) will inherit great blessings. The word translated "earth" here would have been more appropriately translated "land." Thus, the reading would be "for they shall inherit the land." Since one of the greatest blessings to Jewish people was that they "inherited the land" of Canaan, this phrase came to denote any great blessing that might be forthcoming. So it is in Matthew 5:5!

The Jehovah's Witnesses also misapply the phrase "new heavens and new earth" in this way. They say that this phrase teaches that the earth will be rebuilt and we will live here forever. But God's Word teaches differently! In II Peter 3:10, we find that the "heavens and earth, which are now, are by the same word (God's Word) kept in store, reserved unto fire . . ." In this same verse, Peter tells us that these heavens and earth will pass away. Then, in verse thirteen, he says that Christians are not to forget the Lord's promise of the "new heavens and the new earth."

Man could not live without the atmosphere (heavens) that helps provide the air that we breathe and the earth that provides our food. He could not be sustained without either. So, in this passage, Peter simply says that Jesus has promised us a new place, where we will be sustained eternally, after the old passes away. Symbolically, he calls it a "new heavens and new earth" as compared with the old! It is that place referred to in John 14:1-3, where Jesus promised, "I go to prepare a place for you." This place is the "new heavens and the new earth." It is the future abode of the faithful Christian, following Judgment!

QUESTION: My brother is a Jehovah's Witness who says that Mark 12:25 is applicable only to the people who were there at that time. Is this true?

ANSWER: No! Your brother is attempting to avoid the truth in favor of a foolish man-made doctrine developed by an irrational religious cult! He is in reality saying that God is a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34); that God will prohibit some from having wives in heaven, but He is going to allow the Jehovah's witnesses to keep their wives! This is absurd! Jesus is speaking of the general resurrection of the dead (vs.23; John 5:28-29); of all the dead! As relates to marriage, all that rise will be "as the angels, which are in heaven." Since the angels "neither marry, nor are given in marriage," such will be the case with all that rise!

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QUESTION: In Revelation 21:1-2, what is the significance of the “New Jerusalem” coming down from heaven?

ANSWER: First, the passage does not say that the “New Jerusalem” came down to this earth! We should not read this into the passage. Remember that John was writing in signs (Revelation 1:1), or symbolic language. This passage simply teaches that the New Jerusalem originated in heaven with God! It does not teach that the “new heavens and new earth” will be physically located on a renovated planet! Those who teach such are in error!

QUESTION: Who were the 144,000? Does not the Bible teach that these will be with God in heaven, while the “great multitude” will inherit, and live on, a renovated Earth?

ANSWER: The first part of the question is answered for us in Revelation 14:4. The 144,000 were those who were spiritually pure, redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb. Similar language was used of those who made up the “great multitude” of chapter seven, i.e., they were clothed with white robes (spiritually pure), having washed them, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (vss.9-14). These two groups make up one group that includes all of those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, which would also include those who lived under the first Testament (Hebrews 9:15).

As to the second part of the question, the Bible nowhere teaches a renovated Earth. II Peter 3:10-12 tells us clearly that the material of which the heavens are made will “melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” The original Greek word for “burned up” carries with it the idea of totally burned up. There is no hint of a reworking or a renovation of this Earth! Such an idea was developed solely in the vain imaginations of apostate man! The Scripture plainly teaches that at the conclusion of all things both the 144,000 and “the great multitude” will dwell together in precisely the same place. (In fact the 144,000 are a part of the great multitude!) Notice carefully the following: The 144,000 in Revelation 14:3 are said to be “before the throne.” Also, in verse five, we find this same group to be “before the throne.” In Revelation 7:9, the “great multitude” is also said to be “before the throne.” Both groups are to be found before the throne! They are in exactly the same place! Nonetheless, where is the throne to be found? Is it to be found on the Earth? No! In Revelation 7:15, we learn that the throne is in His temple, and in Revelation 11:19, we find that the temple is in heaven! Revelation 4:2 also states that the throne is in heaven! The only conclusion that can be drawn is that both groups (the 144,000 and the “great multitude”) are in exactly the same place, i.e., both are found, as a single group, before the throne, which is in the temple, which is in heaven! The allegation by the Jehovah’s Witnesses that a renovated Earth is needed for the “great multitude” is very clearly negated and rendered foolish by the Word of God!

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QUESTION: Specifically, who are the 144,000 of The Revelation? Is the number literal or symbolic?

ANSWER: The apostle John wrote the book in signs (chptr.1, vs.1), by inspiration, to the seven churches of Asia, warning them (Christians of that time and place) of the persecutions that would be placed upon them by the Roman Empire. The main thrust of the book, however, is to encourage these Christians by assuring them that they would eventually overcome these things by remaining faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10); and that they would, thereby, gain the final victory through Jesus Christ.

Some hold that the 144,000 symbolically represents only the Jews who lived before Christ under the Old Testament. That faithful Jews of that time, as well as we, were cleansed by the blood of Christ in His death cannot be denied (Hebrews 9:15). However, since John is writing specifically to Christians, it appears more likely that he in the subject passages is referring primarily and symbolically to Christian Jews of the twelve tribes scattered abroad (James 1:1), and the "Hebrews" to whom Paul wrote. This, of course, would not exclude Jews who lived under the Old Testament from this number, but certainly it should not be limited to them! In chapter seven (vss.1-8), John assigns the equal number of 12,000 (showing the impartial nature of God) to each of the twelve tribes. In verse nine he sees a great multitude, consisting "of all nations, and kindreds, and people." Undoubtedly the "all" in this verse is to include the "Jews" of the 144,000. "All" of these were said to be arrayed in white robes; had come out of the great tribulation; and been washed in the blood of the Lamb (vss. 9-17). In chapter fourteen, verse seven, we learn that these (the 144,000) were those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth;" that they "were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits (James 1:18) unto God and to the Lamb." It seems clear that the reference is specifically to Christians; those who followed Christ, but at the same time is broad enough to include "all" who have been washed in the blood, including those under Moses' Law!

The context also shows without doubt that the number of 144,000 is symbolic. For example: none would argue that the four angels, four corners, four winds, sea, tree, seal of the living God, and foreheads were literal (chptr.7, vss.1-3). Neither would any insist that the 144,000 were all men and literal virgins (chptr.14, vs.4). Why would any then insist that the 144,000 be taken literally, unless to support a false doctrine? Surely, all of these matters are to be taken as symbols, including the 144,000!

QUESTION: When did the Pentecostal movement start? Did it start in the USA as some say?

ANSWER: The modern Pentecostal movement had it's beginning in the USA in the early 1800's with a man by the name of Charles Finney. That it had it's beginning more than 1800 years after Christ's church was established (on Pentecost Day of Acts, chapter two) is clear evidence that (1) it is not the church of the Bible; (2) since people were saved before it's establishment, it follows that

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being a Pentecostal is not necessary to salvation; and (3) since salvation is only in the church of the Bible, there can be no salvation in the Pentecostal church! Further, the false teaching that Holy Spirit baptism and the “gifts” are for today are without scriptural support, proving their falsity!

QUESTION: Where does the Bible teach that Christ is the mighty God and the eternal Father?

ANSWER: Isaiah 9:6.

QUESTION: Where does the Bible teach that Christ was God in the flesh?

ANSWER: John 1:1; John 1:14; Philippians 2:5-8.

QUESTION: In John 1:1-3, does it mean Christ is God or a god? Is this passage mistranslated when it says, “the Word was God?”

ANSWER: The passage teaches that Christ is God! The Jehovah’s Witnesses mistranslate the passage in the New World Translation, which says, “the word was a god.” There is no scholar or scholarly translation that holds as do the Jehovah’s Witnesses. They have wrested the Scriptures to their own destruction (II Peter 3:16). It is a fact that of the five members of the New World Translation Committee, only one had any college education at all. This one had only two years at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio. Additionally, none of the five could even read Hebrew or Greek. One of these (R.W. Franz) admitted such under trial in Scotland on November 24, 1954. Clearly, these men were not qualified to translate Scripture. It is no wonder then that their ungodly translation is filled with error from beginning to end and is good for nothing save fuel for the fire!

QUESTION: Is Satan ever called “God” in the Scriptures?

ANSWER: In II Corinthians 4:4 he is referred to as the “god” of this world!

QUESTION: What is the battle of Armageddon?

ANSWER: Armageddon is mentioned in Revelation 16:16. As most things in The Revelation, the term is symbolic and has no reference to a literal, physical war to occur between the forces of Christ and the forces of Satan. Such an idea is totally false, having its roots in the foolishness of Premillennialism.

Armageddon has reference to Megiddo, a large valley in which many historic battles were fought by the Israelites. Because of these many battles, the word “Armageddon” came to be used very much as we use the word “Waterloo” today. When using the word “waterloo,” we often have reference to some defeat, either in our lives or that of others. In similar fashion, “Armageddon” came to represent various types of “struggles.” In Revelation 16:16, it has direct reference to the spiritual struggle between Christians of that day and the evil with which they were confronted. Though indirectly, it also has reference, similarly, to Christians today!

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SIN

QUESTION: What is sin?

ANSWER: Sin is a transgression (breaking or violation) of the law (I John 3:4). All unrighteousness is sin (I John 5:17). To know to do good and not do it is sin (James 4:17). When one conducts himself so that he violates the Word of God, he sins. It may be a deed done, or it may be something left undone.

Sin causes spiritual death (Ephesians 2:1), which is separation from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). It must be removed in order for the sinner to be (saved) reconciled to God (II Corinthians 5:20). Christ shed His blood in order that our sins might be (removed) washed away (Revelation 1:5). Many passages tell us what we must do in order to be washed in His blood! See Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; I Peter 3:21.

QUESTION: Can someone who is born again still sin?

ANSWER: Yes! In writing to Christians, the apostle John wrote, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8). There are those who have interpreted I John 3:9 to contradict what was said in the first chapter. This passage in the King James Version says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." This passage with consideration to the original language reads, "Whosoever is born of God doth not (keep on) commit(ing) sin, for his seed (God's Word - Luke 8:11) remaineth in him: and he cannot (continue to live in) sin, because he is born of God." Thus, we see the harmony and agreement between the first and third chapters of I John!

QUESTION: Does God forgive the worst type of sin - child molesting?

ANSWER: God can and will forgive any sin of which one truly repents! Jesus said in Matthew 12:31, "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men . . ." He has even forgiven those who murdered His only begotten Son (Acts 2:36-41). Beyond this, He has made a covenant with the penitent obedient, "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10:16-22).

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QUESTION: The Bible teaches that a child does not inherit the sin of it's parents (Ezekiel 18: 20). In other places it seems like the Bible teaches that God does punish a child for the sin of the parents. Which is right?

ANSWER: In Ezekiel 18:20, it is clear that a person dies spiritually (is separated from God - Isaiah 59:1-2) for their own sins. This means that the son will not die spiritually because of the father's sin; nor will the father die spiritually because of the son's sin. This, however, does not mean that the son will not experience the effect of his father's sin. Often this is the case. For example, a father may spend all of his living on alcoholic beverages rather than buying food for his children. The father is guilty of sin! Though the children are not guilty of the father's sin, they certainly suffer as a result of his sin. It is, therefore, the father of the children (not God) who causes the suffering, because he has violated God's laws by using alcohol and by not providing for his family. The suffering of the children then is a natural result of the father's sin. This is the meaning of such phrases as "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" found in Exodus 20:5 and 34:7.

QUESTION: Is masturbation sin?

ANSWER: Masturbation is a stimulation of the sexual organs. Such stimulation, whether personal or reciprocal, as a prelude to sexual intercourse between a husband and his wife would not be considered sin. However, such stimulation for the purposes of self-gratification invariably stems from, and includes, immoral thoughts. This would, indeed, be sinful! The following passages of scripture are violated in this activity: Proverbs 4:23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life;" Proverbs 23:7, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he;" Matthew 5:28, "But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart;" Matthew 15:19, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies;" Philippians 4:7-8, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just; whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." The temptation to engage in the subject activity can be thwarted by obedience to this scripture!

Remember too, I Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tempted above that ye are able to bear; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." God has clearly provided a way of escape from this sinful activity: I Corinthians 7:2, "Nevertheless to avoid fornications, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." There is also an applicable principle in I Corinthians 7:9, "But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn."

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QUESTION: In light of Genesis 1:27; 9:7 (Be ye fruitful and multiply), is it right to use contraceptives and family planning?

ANSWER: We ought not to read more into these passages than was intended. Given the fact that at the time these words were spoken to the first couple and to Noah and his sons, there were two people and eight people, respectively, in the whole earth. God is simply commanding them to populate the earth. Certainly, He is not commanding all couples everywhere for all time to produce the maximum number of children within their physical capabilities, as some Catholics have been led to believe. There is no prohibition in these passages, or anywhere else in the Bible, against birth control. Conversely, in I Timothy 5:8, it is clearly implied that our families should be no larger than the number for which we are capable of providing. If one unwisely permits his family to become so large that he cannot make proper provisions “for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” Surely, then, included in this implication we can see and understand the principle of family planning. Nonetheless, that family planning is not to include abstinence, at least for extended periods, is made clear by the reason given in I Corinthians 7:1-5, i.e., to avoid fornication! Exclusive of abstinence, the remaining alternatives to having more children than those for which we can provide are: sexual relations only during the female’s non-fertile period, withdrawal by the male, or the use of contraceptives. Some (the Catholic Church) would hold that the first of these remaining alternatives is scriptural; the others are not. However, there is no basis for such theology, since it can be logically and sensibly concluded that each of these alternatives is indicative of birth control and family planning. It can also be correctly noted that none of them are legislated against in the Word of God! We must conclude then, since we are not permitted to have more children than the number for which we can provide and we are not permitted long periods of abstention, that one of the remaining alternatives must be selected. There is no other choice! That selection is not to be mandated by any, but is to be made by each married couple!

QUESTION: Is it sinful to drink alcohol and use tobacco?

ANSWER: Yes! Please read Proverbs 23:29-35; Isaiah 5:11; Habakkuk 4:2; I Corinthians 6:9-11; and Galatians 5:19-21. In addition to the clear teaching of these passages, also consider the fact that the partaking of alcoholic beverages (in any amount) lowers one’s resistance to temptation and, further, that those who do so, very often yield to all sorts of ungodly sins. How can one who drinks alcohol pray (as all have been commanded to do) that they will not be led into temptation (Matthew 6:13)? To do so would be to make a mockery of God and His word! The apostle Paul in I Corinthians 6:19 states that, as Christians, we are not our own; that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, belonging to Him! It follows then that to introduce any substance of harm (such as drugs, alcohol or tobacco) into that which houses the Holy Spirit would be inappropriate. As well, such activity in one’s body certainly does not glorify God and would, therefore, be a violation of I Corinthians 6:20.

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QUESTION: Is it good to stay with sinners? I stay with my brothers who use abusive language and go to prostitutes. What can I do? Can I stay with them?

ANSWER: It is very important that we always try to convert those with whom we have to do in this life. However, this failing, we need to be acutely aware that any situation in which we find ourselves, which would cause us to compromise our Christianity in any way is wrong and must be avoided. Paul said, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial (Satan)? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Corinthians 6:14-18).

QUESTION: Why do we fall into temptation?

ANSWER: John tells us that "all that is in this world, is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." So, as long as we are in this world, we will be tempted by these things. This does not mean, however, that we must fall into sin as a result of these temptations. James says (1:12-15), "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Jesus Himself "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15), but when tempted by the devil in Matthew, chapter four, Jesus overcame it by use of the Word of God. You and I can do the same today as we live according to the Bible, looking for the fulfillment of it's precious promises!

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QUESTION: Is it sinful to be cremated?

ANSWER: There is nothing in the Bible that teaches that cremation is wrong or sinful. Clearly, after death we will return to dust (Genesis 3:19). Whether we return to dust under normal conditions or through the chosen accelerated process of cremation matters not at all. Many have not chosen to be cremated, but have been nonetheless consumed by fire! Some have died at sea and been devoured by fish and other creatures! Some have been devoured by wild land animals! No matter how our bodies are disposed of at death, God will reunite the elements that now make up our bodies with our spirits at the resurrection on the day of judgment (John 5:28-29; I Corinthians 15; II Corinthians 5:1-4).

QUESTION: Where will those who mock Jesus be in eternity?

ANSWER: Those who mock Jesus obviously reject Him through their mockery. All who reject Christ in disobedience to His gospel will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

QUESTION: Should a Christian dance socially?

ANSWER: No! In Galatians 5:19-21, we find listed the “works of the flesh.” Those who engage in any of these will not inherit the kingdom of God (vs.21). One of the “works of the flesh” is described as “lasciviousness” (vs.19). This word is defined as: an expression of lust; tending to excite lustful desires; unchaste handling of males and females; and indecent bodily movements. Surely, these definitions are vividly descriptive of the “social” dance. Those who engage in such cannot inherit the kingdom of God!

QUESTION: Should a Christian play music like “disco” and “blues?”

ANSWER: Music is not wrong of itself. However, if that music is so composed (whether through the “beat” or the “words”) to cause one to have impure thoughts and feelings, then it is sinful and must be avoided (Galatians 5:19-21; Philippians 4:8)!

QUESTION: I owe people money, but I am not able to pay it back. What should I do?

ANSWER: Certainly, the Bible is clear that we are to pay our debts (Romans 13:8). When we do not, the result is sin, of which we must repent, if we would be right with God. The situation that causes you to say you are “not able to pay it back” needs to be discussed with those whom you owe to work out possible arrangements whereby the debt could be satisfied. If you do not have the money to give your creditors as agreed, perhaps you could make arrangements to do so over an extended period. Possibly the payback could come through the surrendering of personal belongings, or physical labor in exchange for the debt.

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All avenues for satisfying your debts must be pursued, because true repentance will always involve restoration when restoration is possible. There are cases in which restoration following repentance cannot be made. For example, in the taking of life, one may be truly penitent, but certainly life cannot be restored. However, such instances are extremely rare.

QUESTION: When a person is diseased does it mean he has sinned?

ANSWER: No! Please study Luke 13: 1-5. Here, Jesus said. that these particular Galileans did not suffer persecution because of their sins. In John 9:1-3, the man was born blind, but not because he or his parents had sinned. Disease may come as a consequence of sin (cancer from the use of tobacco; venereal disease from illicit sex), but not as a penalty of sin. The penalty for sin is separation from God and eternal loss, a penalty that can only be avoided through obedience to God. The consequences of sin cannot be avoided, but will remain to be experienced!

QUESTION: (A) Is it true that God has put aside certain people who no longer trust Him? (B) If so, does God direct these people to speak certain things about His kingdom?

ANSWER: (A) Yes! It is true. Read carefully Romans 1:18-32. Here we read about some who completely abandoned god. They refused to glorify Him, becoming vain in their imaginations (vs.21). They turned from Him to idols (vs.23) and became unclean through the lusts of their own hearts (vs.24). They changed His truth into a lie (vs.25). They engaged in unlawful and disgusting sexual activities (vss. 26-27). They refused to retain Him in their knowledge (vs.28). They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness (vss.29-32). Upon their total abandonment of God, we learn that He gave them up (vss.24-26). In verse twenty-eight, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, i.e., a mind void of judgment!

(B) God does not direct those He has given up to speak things about His kingdom. In fact, God does not directly tell anyone what to do or say today! All directions from God today come only through His Word, the Bible. In Hebrews 1:2, we learn that God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." This excludes everyone else, since only the words of Christ, as contained in the Bible, will judge us in the last day (John 12:48). The Gospel is His power unto salvation (Romans 1:16)! It alone can make one perfect or complete (II Timothy 3:16). No man can add to it, neither can any take away from it (Revelation 22:18-19). Any man today claiming that God (or any heavenly being) talks to him directly is either untruthful or experiencing mental problems.

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QUESTION: What do you understand about the division of sins?

ANSWER: I am uncertain as to the thrust of the question. Sin, however, is a transgression of the law (I John 3:4) and if one fails to repent (Acts 17:30-31) of one sin, he is guilty of all (James 2:8-13). Man seemingly always attempts to make one sin worse than another. Although this may be true as we consider the consequences of sin in this life, the sin of taking a brother to law (I Corinthians 6:1-8) is just as eternally damning as murder (Galatians 5:19-21), unless the sinner repents. As well, the sin of murder is just as forgivable by God (II Samuel 12:13) as the sin of willfully forsaking the assembly of the saints! Until haughty man, himself a sinner, learns to forgive others as does God, neither can he be forgiven (Ephesians 4:32).

QUESTION: How will people be able to support their families if, when becoming Christians, they must leave sinful businesses, such as, beer brewing, dealing in stolen goods, prostitution, etc.?

ANSWER: It is clear from God's Word that any who would become a Christian must first repent of all sin in which they have been engaged (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31). This means they must get out of the sin. No matter what it is, they must leave it behind! Certainly, at times, there are difficulties involved, but each individual must deal as best he can with his own situation, while putting his trust in God that He will do what He says! Speaking of the necessities of this life (food and clothing), Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all of these things will be added unto you." David, by inspiration, said in Psalms 37:25, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor His seed begging bread." There is no doubt that if we do our part (II Thessalonians 3:10), God will do His! We can stand on His promises, because His promises never fail (Titus 1:2; I Peter 1:3-4)!

QUESTION: What does the Bible teach about destructive devices that we are truly ashamed of, but can't seem to give up? (Smoking, drinking, cussing, etc.)

ANSWER: Friend, you need to realize that you have already taken a giant step in overcoming these vices! You have come to know that these things are against the will of God; that they are destructive to both body and soul. In fact you state that you are ashamed of being involved with them. Many people never recover from these things simply because they refuse to accept what you have already come to realize!

These things are often very hard to give up, because of the pleasure that can be experienced by doing them. The Bible tells us that there is pleasure in sin. In Hebrews 11:24-26, the writer says this about Moses: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures

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of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of reward.” What Moses did sets a great example for us today! He considered and compared the pleasures of sin in this life with the reward that would be is, if he would only be faithful to his God. The same must have been true of Abraham, because it is said of him in verse ten, that “he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” What really helps us then to overcome these things is to compare the long-term value of spiritual matters with the short-term value of physical matters! Are cigarettes, booze, and cursing to be chosen above an eternity in that city whose builder and maker is God? The choice becomes even more significant when we consider eternity if we make the wrong choice! Now the choice becomes an eternity in a beautiful place called heaven versus cigarettes, booze, cursing, poor health, and an eternity of punishment!

As you continue to study God’s Word; as you accept His will, your faith will deepen (Romans 10:17) and your resolve to overcome these things will be strengthened. Let me encourage you to fight with all of your being! James said in chapter four, verse eight, “resist the devil and he will flee from you.” Listen to what the apostle Paul to the children of God in Corinth: “There hath no temptation taken you but such is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tempted above that ye are able to bear, but will with the temptation make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (I Corinthians 10:13). Many faithful people have fought and won the battle that you face! You can do it, too! You have our prayers!

QUESTION: Is it wrong to play pool?

ANSWER: Pool playing of itself is not sinful. Many times, however, pool tables are located in places where a person could not go without compromising his or her Christianity (II Corinthians 6:14-18). This, of course, would be sinful. As well, to use this or any other game as a means of gambling would be wrong. All gambling is sin (including lotteries, raffles, and religiously sponsored bingo games)! It is addictive and has often destroyed loving relationships and homes (I Timothy 5:8). It is also indicative of one without Christian character and principles, whose covetous intent it is to get something for which he has not labored at the expense of others (Genesis 3:19; Acts 20:34-35; Ephesians 4:28; Ephesians 5:3).

QUESTION: Is it a sin for a seventeen-year-old boy to have a girl friend?

ANSWER: As long as the boy and the girl conduct themselves as Christians at all times, both in public and private places, it is not sinful. Both should understand, however, that “petting” or any other illicit activity designed to incite or satisfy unlawful lusts is wrong (Galatians 5:19-23; Philippians 4:8)! Christians are to at all times to be found “pure in heart” (Matthew 5:8)!

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QUESTION: If a brother is disfellowshipped should he be allowed to place membership in other congregations without repentance? What should the attitude of other congregations be toward him?

ANSWER: If a person has been scripturally disfellowshipped, the action and attitude of all Christians everywhere toward this one should be identical. The action described in Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 5:9-11; II Thessalonians 3:6-14; and Titus 3:10 is applicable to, and binding upon all! The attitude described in I Corinthians 5:5-8 and II Thessalonians 3:15 is applicable to, and binding upon all!

Those whose actions and attitudes differ from those defined in the above passages (no matter the congregation) need to be called to repentance. Upon refusal to do so, they too become subjects for scriptural church discipline!

QUESTION: Is it right for a Christian to watch television or listen to the radio?

ANSWER: It is not sinful to watch television and listen to the radio provided that the time spent is not excessive and what is watched and heard is not sinful. Does it cause you to have evil thoughts; to focus on evil things rather than that which is good? If so, it is wrong and should not be engaged in (Philippians 4:8). As well, faithful Christians will be careful how they use their time (Ephesians 5:15-16).

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GENERAL BIBLICALLY RELATED TOPICS

QUESTION: Is it scriptural to celebrate Christmas and Easter?

ANSWER: The word "Christmas" is not found in the Bible, neither was it celebrated by the early church. The first observance of the birth of Christ occurred late in the second century. About two hundred years later, religious people agreed on the date of December 25 as the day on which they would celebrate His birth. The word Christmas, however, was not used until much later, probably in the eleventh century. The word is of Catholic origin and comes from two words: Christ's + Mass.

Easter was originally a heathen spring festival in honor of Estra, the Teutonic goddess of light and spring. The name "Easter" was transferred during the eighth century by the Anglo-Saxons to a non-scriptural festival designed by man to celebrate the resurrection of Christ.

Because there is no command to celebrate Christmas and Easter as religious holy days, it would obviously be sinful to do so! The word Christmas is never used in the Bible. The word Easter is found in the King James translation in Acts 12:4, but is recognized by all as being in error. The New King James and the American Standard Versions show the original word to be correctly translated as "Passover." The early church celebrated neither Christmas nor Easter.

To observe and bind either of these days (or any other day) as a religious holy day would clearly violate scripture and, therefore, be sinful. To some, however, these days have lost their original religious significance and are only understood to be times when family and friends come together to enjoy each other's company. To participate in this way would not be sinful.

QUESTION: Do we know when Jesus was born?

ANSWER: No one knows the precise date of Jesus' birth! Some believe that His birth occurred during the warmer months of the year, since the shepherds to whom the angel appeared were abiding in the field, tending their flock by night (Luke 2:8). Since all agree that the originator of the Christian calendar was in error by three years, it does appear likely then that Christ was born in the spring or early summer of 4BC. Knowing the date of His birth, however, is not of great significance to Christians. Otherwise, we would have been told of it in God's Word.

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QUESTION: Should Christians fast today?

ANSWER: Those who lived under the Old Testament were commanded to fast at certain times and under certain conditions (Leviticus 16:29-34; Numbers 30:13-16). It is also true that they fasted voluntarily (II Samuel 12:16; I Kings 19:8). Jesus, living under the Old Testament, kept it perfectly, being without sin (I Peter 2:22). He also fasted voluntarily (Matthew 4:2).

There is no commandment in the New Testament for Christians to engage in public fasting. Indeed, Jesus told the Pharisees not to fast publicly, but rather to do so privately, avoiding the praise of men (Matthew 6:16-18). Jesus also said that after His return to heaven His disciples would then fast (Matthew 9:14-15). Clearly then, Jesus not only fasted as our example, but, as well, authorizes His followers to do the same today.

The purpose of fasting is to strengthen us during periods of great trials in our lives; to help us through times of deep sorrow (Matthew 9:14-15). It is also a means by which we can more readily change our focus from earthly things to spiritual matters, thus making our service to God, including our prayer lives, more meaningful and effective.

Specific times and occasions have not been given as to when we should fast. They are decisions to be made by each individual. It follows, too, that one person's decisions in these matters are not to be bound, or forced, upon another.

QUESTION: What is the best way to let your friend know that you have committed sin?

ANSWER: If a Christian has sinned in a public way and has repented his or her confession needs to be as public as the sin. This type of confession may be expediently dealt with when the congregation is assembled. If one has sinned privately, the requirement is simply to repent and pray God (I John 1:9). How to deal with matters of personal trespass is clearly presented in Matthew 18:15-20. Certainly, all confessions of sin should be made with remorsefulness and humility, whether private or public.

QUESTION: Is there any biblical reason to decorate church buildings today?

ANSWER: I understand the question to have reference to decorations used during such holidays as Christmas.

Since the Bible does not authorize the religious observance of any holiday, there would similarly be no biblical authorization to decorate a worship service meeting place in order to recognize such. Recognition of holidays does not reflect religious significance to the Christian and should, therefore, be restricted to non-religious settings.

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QUESTION: Why does the Bible not indicate all of the disciple's activities?

ANSWER: In what God has provided, He "hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). If all has been provided, then nothing more is needed! We must be careful not to be overly concerned about that which has not been revealed, lest it takes our focus from that which has been revealed. There clearly are some secret things that belong only to the Lord our God (Deuteronomy 29:29).

QUESTION: Some of our brethren use words such as liberalism, conservatism, anti(ism), millennial, and premillennialism. What do these words mean?

ANSWER: These words often mean different things to different people, depending upon in which category they place themselves. For example, a person who believes he is a "liberal" will often refer to one who is "conservative" as an "anti," while an "anti" will often refer to a "conservative" as a "liberal." However, generally speaking, a "liberal" is one who ignores the authority of Scripture by loosening (undoing) those things that God has bound (enjoined) upon us. For example: they loosen (undo) God's commands to sing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16) by using instrumental music in worship instead of (or in addition to) vocal music. This amounts to changing the gospel of Christ, which is sinful (Galatians 1:6-9)! An "anti" is one who does the opposite, i.e., he binds (enjoins) things upon others which God has not bound (enjoined). For example: some of these demand the use of only one cup (the same cup) by everyone in the congregation when partaking of the fruit of the vine, while forbidding the use of multiple cups. This too, changes (perverts) the gospel that Paul preached!

The word "conservative", as applied to an individual, describes one who "preserves established institutions and methods, and one who resists and opposes any changes to these" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary). When the word "conservative" is used in this way it may scripturally apply to one who is walking in the light of God's Word (I John 1:7), and one who earnestly contends for the established institutions and methods set forth therein, i.e., the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

The word "premillennialism" is defined as follows: "pre" means "before;" "millennial" means "a thousand years;" "ism" refers to a system of belief. This particular system of belief holds that Christ will return "before" the establishment of His Kingdom, over which He will physically and literally reign for "a thousand years." Since the Kingdom was established on the first Pentecost Day after the death of Christ (Acts 2), this premillennial doctrine, therefore, is entirely false and has no foundation in the Word of God. Because it derives from the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9), it must be totally rejected by the faithful child of God!

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QUESTION: How can one identify those who promote various “isms”?

ANSWER: Each must diligently study God's Word (II Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 5:12-14) and then by using His Word, try/test the “spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (I John 4:1). Very often (and for many reasons) men learn to rely upon what other men say and teach. The Holy Spirit tells us that it is less than noble to do so! Each of us must search the scriptures daily to determine whether the things we hear and are taught are so (Acts 17:11). All that is not of God must then be rejected in view of the coming Judgment (John 12:48).

QUESTION: What is the meaning of 606AD and 33AD?

ANSWER: AD comes from the first letters of the two Latin words anno domini. These words mean “in the year of our Lord.” 606AD means 606 years after the year in which our Lord was born! This is the year during which the Catholic Church, as we know it today, came into existence. 33AD, likewise, means 33 years after the year in which our Lord was born! This is the year during which many believe the church of Christ was established on the day of Pentecost.

If the letters BC were to appear after 606 or 33 (606BC; 33BC), it would mean 606 years or 33 years “before Christ” was born.

QUESTION: Does 33AD mean 50 days after Christ's death or does it mean 33 years after Christ's death?

ANSWER: It means neither! AD is not an abbreviation for “after death.” AD is an abbreviation for two Latin words anno domini. These words mean “in the year of our Lord” or “in the year since the birth of Christ”. 33AD means 33 years since the birth of Christ! 1996AD means 1,996 years since the birth of Christ.

QUESTION: What do the numbers 4, 7, 12, 14, and 40 signify?

ANSWER: The numbers 14 and 40 are to be taken literally, specifying, generally, periods of time. Other numbers, as well, may often be taken literally, except when the context demands a figurative interpretation. In such instances, the following may usually be signified:

- No. 1 = Unity
- No. 2 = Confirmation (witnessing)
- No. 3 = God number (Godhead/Trinity)
- No. 4 = Earth (four winds/four corners)
- No. 5 = Short, definite period of time
- No. 6 = Sinister (devil)
- No. 7 = Completion/perfection
- No.10 = Human completion
- No.12 = Organized religion

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QUESTION: Will all pagans go to hell?

ANSWER: Jesus said in John 8:24, "Except (if and only if) ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." In II Thessalonians 1:7-9, Paul said that Christ will take vengeance, in flaming fire, on those who obey not the gospel of Christ, and that they will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

QUESTION: Which book in the Bible does not mention the name of God?

ANSWER: Esther and Song of Solomon!

QUESTION: What was the original name of the apostle called Barnabas?

ANSWER: Barnabas was not an apostle in the sense that Paul and the twelve were. The word "apostle" literally means "one sent out." It is in this sense that Barnabas is referred to as an apostle in Acts 14:14. In Acts 4:36, we see him identified by the name Joses and surnamed Barnabas (The son of consolation) by the apostles.

QUESTION: What man's name has the same meaning as Jesus?

ANSWER: The names Jesus and Joshua are identical in the Greek language.

QUESTION: Is it good for Christians to be soldiers?

ANSWER: A man can be a soldier and remain a faithful Christian! Some have thought otherwise on the basis of the sixth commandment which says, "Thou shall not kill." This commandment had to do, however, with the individual and did not apply to governments. It was simply a prohibition against premeditated murder. Every man has the right of self-protection and self-defense (Exodus 22:2), as the protector of home and family. The same principle would be true in defense of one's homeland. However, to engage in any capacity in wars of hatred and conquest for purposes of territorial expansion, liquidation of peoples, and/or confiscation of another's wealth is wrong. In such activities a Christian may not engage, though he may be so directed by his government. God's Law in this case supersedes government law. When such occurs, we are to obey God, rather than man (Acts 5:29)!

QUESTION: Is it good for Christians to be "footballers."

ANSWER: A Christian may engage in sports activities without sinning, unless that activity or fellowship causes him to compromise his Christianity in any way. One should not become so involved in sports or anything else to the degree that he or she takes away from their Christian responsibilities, either in time or effort.

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QUESTION: What is a brute?

ANSWER: This word describes an animal without power to reason. For this reason it is sometimes applied to men who are irrational, unthinking or stupid. It is often said of a cruel or coarse person who sometimes exhibits the characteristics of a beast of the field.

QUESTION: When a person dies, does his spirit stay in the grave or does it go to heaven (Ecclesiastes 12:7)?

ANSWER: When a person dies, the spirit goes neither to the grave or heaven! It goes by God's direction to Hades (one of the words translated as "hell" in the King James Bible), which denotes the "place of disembodied spirits." This is where Lazarus and the rich man of Luke sixteen went upon their deaths. (This is also where Christ and the "thief on the cross" went when they died. Christ did not ascend to the Father and heaven until forty days after His resurrection - John 17:20 & Acts 1:3. In Acts 2:34, we learn that David is still not ascended into the heavens, because he, too, remains in Hades). Lazarus was carried by angels into the part of Hades referred to as paradise or Abraham's bosom, while the rich man awoke in the part of Hades referred to as a place of torments! Each of these will remain where they are until the general resurrection of the dead (John 5:28-29). The same is true of David and the "thief on the cross." In the resurrection, their spirits (and all the dead) will leave the Hadean world and rejoin their changed bodies (I Corinthians 15:51) to stand before Christ in judgment (II Corinthians 5:10). The righteous (those obedient to Christ) will then go to Heaven (Matthew 25:24). The unrighteous (the disobedient) shall be cast into the lake of eternal fire and brimstone (Matthew 25:41 & Revelation 20:14-15)!

QUESTION: Are there male and female devils?

ANSWER: The Bible always refers to the devil and demons by use of masculine nouns and pronouns. For example; Mark 3:22; John 8:44; John 12:31; Mark 5:9-10.

QUESTION: In the first lesson of the correspondence course it says that the Bible has a theme, a plot, a conflict, a climax, and a conclusion. What does this mean?

ANSWER: In the lesson where these words are found the writer is showing that the Bible consists of sixty-six books written over a period of 1600 years by about forty different authors. When all of these were put together (by direction of the Holy Spirit) it made up one complete and thorough volume, the inspired Word of God. Each of these books was necessary to reveal the total will of God to us. If one of them were missing, we would have an incomplete volume and Bible. Further, it was necessary that all of the sixty-six be included to reveal all the characteristics of a well-written, complete book; that is, a theme, a plot, a conflict, a climax, and a conclusion. The "theme" of the Bible is God's plan of salvation for

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man through His Son; the “plot” is Satan’s plan and activities to bring about the destruction of man; the “conflict” is the warfare between good and evil; the “climax” is seen in the establishment of the church of Christ for which He died, and wherein evil can be overcome; the “conclusion” is that the faithfully obedient follower of Christ will win the victory over this world and enjoy heaven in eternity!

QUESTION: Will the madman be saved?

ANSWER: An idiot or insane person from birth never progressing beyond the mental stage of an infant or one so young as to be incapable of understanding would fall in the category of those mentioned in Matthew 18:3. These are not lost!

If one became insane after reaching the age of accountability (thus having had at one time the mental capacity to obey the gospel of Christ) and had not been obedient, he or she shall be lost. (Roman 3:23; Mark 16:16; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

QUESTION: What is the work of a missionary (preacher/evangelist) in a foreign country?

ANSWER: The work of a preacher/evangelist is the same no matter where he may work. To learn about the work of an evangelist, it is recommended that I & II Timothy and Titus be studied diligently. However, generally their work is summed up in II Timothy 4:2, “Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season (this means to preach the Word when it’s convenient and when it’s not) reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” Just as the deacon, the evangelist also serves under the oversight elders.

QUESTION: How does one become one of your local preachers here (Africa)?

ANSWER: Before one can preach the gospel of Christ he must first become a Christian after the New Testament order. After having done that he must worship with a faithful congregation of the church of Christ and study the Bible diligently to know the work of an evangelist and to know what it is that God wants him to preach. This can be done personally or by association and study with a man who is already a faithful preacher. Although not absolutely necessary, some African men prepare to preach the gospel by attending the Zambian School of Biblical studies. This would be the recommended approach.

QUESTION: What is the significance in showing favor to a particular child as Jacob did to Joseph in our families today?

ANSWER: Each child in a family should be loved, supported and developed in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). Expressions of favoritism are often very destructive!

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QUESTION: Why was the Bible written?

ANSWER: That we might understand (Ephesians 3:2-6), believe and be saved (John 20:30-31).

QUESTION: How were the books of the Bible gathered into one volume?

ANSWER: All Scripture was given by inspiration of God (II Timothy 3:16). Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (II Peter 1:21). These inspired revelations were recorded by inspired men to reveal God's will, so that man could understand the mystery of Christ (Ephesians 3:2-5). As these inspired documents were written, they were often distributed among God's people (Colossians 4:16). The exact details of the gathering of these documents are not known. However, that these documents were assembled by man under the direction of God cannot be denied! Though the Bible was written by about forty men over a period of sixteen hundred years, it is without contradiction. It is historically, geographically, and scientifically accurate. Its prophecies are amazingly fulfilled in every detail. It is a Book of books, the message within containing "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3)!

QUESTION No.5: How is the Bible translated into the many languages today?

ANSWER: Many different groups and organizations endeavor to prepare translations today. Some do so for religious purposes, some for financial gain. As well, many different approaches are taken. The primary concern of each of us today should be whether or not a translation accurately reflects the original God-inspired words! If the words in the translation have been accurately translated, they are just as inspired as the original words! If they are not accurately translated they are not inspired, as were the originals! Inaccurate translations or commentaries about the original words do not represent Inspiration! Therefore, since they do not, they are not of God (but of men) and must be avoided under all circumstances!

QUESTION: Who is Diana, queen of heaven in Jeremiah 7:18 and Acts 19:35?

ANSWER: In both of these passages reference is to a mythological female deity worshipped by the various heathen cultures of those days in their idolatrous practices. The Greeks knew her as Diana; the Persians as Mylitta.

QUESTION: What is the difference between a preacher, priest, teacher, elder, and evangelist?

ANSWER: A priest of the New Testament is simply a Christian (I Peter 2:9). Elders are those who have been given the oversight of individual congregations (Acts 20:28; I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; I Peter 5:1-4). Teachers are generally thought of as those who teach others in either a semi-formal setting or in a formal

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classroom group setting. However, all Christians are to be teachers in the broader sense of the term (Hebrews 5:12). There is little difference between an evangelist and a preacher. Paul told Timothy to do the work of an evangelist (II Timothy 2:5); to preach the word (II Timothy 4:2); and to teach (I Timothy 4:11). Therefore, Timothy was all of these things! The term of evangelist carries with it the idea of one who preaches as he travels from place-to-place. All preachers, elders, teachers, and evangelists must be priests (Christians)! All Christians (priests) are to evangelize by teaching (Matthew 28:18-20)!

It is important to realize that the above terms are not officially assigned titles in which one may glory. They are simply descriptive terms that define the activity in which, at some particular time, a person may be engaged!

QUESTION: Where does a preacher preach? Where does a teacher teach? Where does an elder teach?

ANSWER: All preacher, teachers, elders, and, in fact, all Christians are to proclaim the gospel to every creature in all the world (Mark 16:15-16). Wherever, there is an open ear; one-on-one, formally or informally, we all are to teach. This, of course, would not soften those responsibilities individually accepted and committed to the local congregation, especially in the case of elders (I Peter 5:2).

QUESTION: Does an evangelist evangelize those already converted, or those yet unreached with the gospel?

ANSWER: Both! Timothy as an evangelist (II Timothy 4:2) was told by Paul to instruct the sinner (those who oppose themselves) that they might acknowledge the truth and recover from the snares of the devil (II Timothy 2:25-26; I Timothy 6:17). He also was told to teach the brethren (I Timothy 4:6).

QUESTION: Who are ministers? Are they servants?

ANSWER: Yes! However, most often today the term of "minister" is used to identify the "preacher," but in the Bible it is applied to all who serve. For example: Christ was a minister (Matthew 20:28)! The apostles were ministers (Romans 15:16)! Preachers are ministers (I Thessalonians 3:2; I Peter 4:11)! His followers are ministers (Mark 10:43)!

QUESTION: Why should we examine the Bible?

ANSWER: Because we are commanded to do so (II Timothy 2:15). Because it can make us complete (II Timothy 3:16). Because in it are all things that pertain unto life and godliness (II Peter 1:2-3). Because we will be judged by it (John 12:48).

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QUESTION: How old is the Bible?

ANSWER: The Old Testament in written form is about 3,500 years old. The New Testament in written form is about 2,000 years old.

QUESTION: How many ancient manuscripts of the Bible exist compared with ancient secular writings?

ANSWER: Briefly, for comparative purposes, Homer wrote his Iliad about nine hundred years before Christ. Today there are 650 manuscripts of the Iliad in existence. In contrast, there are 5,358 manuscripts (whole and fragment) of the New Testament in existence today!

QUESTION: How widely has the Bible been distributed?

ANSWER: It has been distributed into all the world in written form, and by radio and television. It has also been translated into more than 1,000 different languages.

QUESTION: How accurate is the Bible in matters of science?

ANSWER: It is completely accurate in matters of true science. However, it often disagrees with the many unproven theories of man. But, when a matter of science has been proven to be true through appropriate experimentation and observation, and if the Bible has already spoken on the matter, the Bible and Science have been shown to be in total agreement.

QUESTION: What does the Bible say about the earth and its support?

ANSWER: In Job 26:7, the Bible says that God (at the creation) hangeth the earth upon nothing and in Colossians 1:17-18, we learn that "by Him all things consist." Put together, these verses teach that the earth was created and put in place by the power of God, and by that same power it remains in place!

QUESTION: Why doesn't the Bible say anything about the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD?

ANSWER: The Bible deals at length with the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37 through 24:35; Mark 13:1-31; Luke 21:5-33). Although the year of 70AD is not specifically mentioned, Jesus said that it would occur during the generation that lived at that time (Matthew 24:34). A generation is understood to be about 40 years. Given the time when Jesus preached and was crucified (30AD to 33AD), added to the 40 years, we see a time period totally in agreement with that attested to by historians down through the ages, even those who lived during the destruction, such as Josephus!

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QUESTION: If the Bible was written after 70AD, why didn't God's people talk about it?

ANSWER: Most scholars agree that all of the books of the New Testament were in written form prior to 70AD, with the exception of the books of Jude and Revelation. Most agree, however, that Jude was written within a few years of 70AD. The book of Revelation, according to other Christian writings, was completed in the latter part of John's life, and toward the end of the reign of Domitian. His reign ended in 96AD.

QUESTION: Why is there so much suffering in the world? How can those who suffer be assured that God is with them? How can they be helped or led out of their problems?

ANSWER: Some try to blame God for the suffering that is in the world. Certainly, this is not the case, since God is love (I John 4:8) and He loves the world (John 3:16). This love was shown in the creation and by the fact that He created us with the freedom to make our own choices. The reason for suffering in the world today is because man has made the wrong choices. When we make the choice to engage in sin, we must personally suffer the consequences. Many times the consequences of sin affect others not directly involved in the sin. Though not held accountable for the sin they, nonetheless, feel and suffer the consequences of that sin. For example, a drunken father spends the family's livelihood on alcohol: the wife and children, though not guilty of the sin, will suffer because of the sin. This same principle also affects nations and peoples. There are dire consequences when God is rejected! God warned that such would be the case (Exodus 20:5-6). Clearly, the reason for much of the suffering in the world today is either because of our sins, or the sins of those who lived before us.

The only way people can be assured that God is with them is through obedient acceptance of His Word. Though we must often suffer in this life, we can, in that suffering, have the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:6-8) realizing that we are only sojourners in this world, and that we (as faithful Christians) have a future in "a city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). The greatest thing we can do for anyone is to prepare him or her for this city by teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. It goes without saying that each of us, as well, have the responsibility of providing physical relief to the suffering within our capability and in accordance with God's will (Galatians 6:10).

QUESTION: How many books are there in heaven?

ANSWER: Heaven is a spiritual place, which would exclude the possibility of physical or literal books being there. However, in a figurative sense "books" and "writing" are said to be in heaven (Exodus 32:32-33; Luke 10:20; Hebrews 12:23; Revelation 20:12). Though in some instances we read of a plurality of figurative "books" in heaven, they have not been figuratively numbered for us.

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QUESTION: I recently attended a “Ladies Day” unlike any Ladies Bible Study I have ever seen! They were handing out prizes such as cookbooks! When did “Ladies Days” begin? Are they right?

ANSWER: “Ladies Days” have been going on for many years. In some instances, they are simply days set aside for the ladies of a congregation to study the Bible; to hear scriptural presentations; and to fellowship. This of itself is not sinful.

For ladies of the church to meet in the church building for socials, baby and wedding showers, etc., during which door prizes are awarded, likewise, would not be sinful, provided that the prizes are not the result of gambling; nor purchased out of the church treasury.

These events over the years, have in some places, gotten out of hand. Periods of study and worship have been intermingled with dramatic and musical presentations followed by shouting and applause, clearly in violation of God’s Word. As well, many times “Ladies Days” have developed into a power base designed to usurp authority in violation of I Timothy 2:11-12. Not infrequently do we see men sometimes attending these events in which one or more of the ladies have assumed a leadership role. This too is wrong!

Nonetheless, “Ladies Days” are not inherently sinful! However, these events like many others may easily drift into areas that are in violation of God’s will. Certainly, every caution needs to be taken that such drifting does not occur and that ‘whatever is done in word or deed, is always done by His authority’ (Colossians 3:17).

QUESTION: Does God appoint a specific time for each of us to die?

ANSWER: No! There is no such implication in the Bible. A person may very well shorten his or her own life through abuse of the body, i.e., tobacco, alcohol, sexual permissiveness, etc., but to attribute such deaths to God by saying “it was his or her time to go” would certainly cast blame and doubt on His wisdom and goodness. In Psalms 90:10, we learn that our lives may be extended “by reason of strength.” Paul tells us (Ephesians 6:2-3) that, by honoring our parents, we “may live long upon the earth.” Surely then, since we may either shorten or lengthen our lives, God does not appoint a specific time for each to die!

QUESTION: Why did they use scrolls?

ANSWER: Books, as we know them today, had not yet been developed. Scrolls were made up of rolls of papyrus, parchments, or animal skins and wrapped around rods of wood, ivory, or bronze. It was the best way developed to that time of maintaining and storing written material and works of art. Books, as you and I know them, were first used in China about 1000 years ago and about 500 years ago in Europe.

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QUESTION: What are Cherubim?

ANSWER: They are heavenly beings and servants of God. See Exodus 25:18-20 and Ezekiel 10:1-22).

QUESTION: What does “glory” mean?

ANSWER: Glory is praise and honor given to God (Revelation 14:6). It is also, throughout the Bible, referred to as that which belongs to God, i.e., might, magnificence, splendor, and all the attributes of Deity (Exodus 16:7)! Sometimes it refers to heaven itself, and is often so used today (I Timothy 3:16).

QUESTION: Is it possible that some people will not taste of death before Judgment Day?

ANSWER: It is a certainty! Please read carefully I Thessalonians 4:13-18. Note that verse seventeen speaks of those “which are alive and remain.”

QUESTION: When a person dies, how long does it take the soul to leave the body?

ANSWER: A person does not die until the soul leaves the body! As long as the soul inhabits the body, a person is alive. When the separation of soul and body occurs, death then takes place (James 2:26).

QUESTION: What is Systematic Theology?

ANSWER: Theology is a study of God, religion, and religious beliefs. Most studies of these matters, using the Bible as a textbook, involve some sort of logical approach. A specific definition of Systematic Theology is nearly impossible since there are nearly as many definitions as there are studies. Basically, however, it can generally be defined as an approach to the study of scripture that strives to understand all of the logical and historical relationships that might exist within the context of a particular passage or passages, and then to make application of the conclusions reached to today's situations. Such study usually begins with the creation and then builds upon that foundation by progressing logically and systematically to other major categories such as the Fall of Man, the Great Flood, the Patriarchal Age, etc.

QUESTION: What is the difference between a “reverend” and a “preacher?”

ANSWER: The title of “reverend” is not given by God, but, rather, by men to honor men. The word “preacher,” as well, should never be used as a title, but only to describe the function of the one who preaches. In Matthew 23:1-12, Jesus condemns the use of religious titles that create respect of persons (Acts 10:34). Therefore, to use such titles in this way results in sin! In scripture, the word “reverend” is used only in reference to our God (Psalms 111:9). This word then,

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used as a title and applied to man is in violation of the three scriptures mentioned heretofore, as well as many others. There is no room for a “clergy/laity” system in the Lord’s church, because we are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26-29).

QUESTION: Some say the Bible is full of lies (contradictions). Is this true?

ANSWER: No! His word is truth (John 17:17) and it is impossible for God to lie (Titus 1:2). There are no untruths, contradictions, or inconsistencies in the Bible, in spite of the fact that about forty different inspired men wrote it over a period of one-thousand six-hundred years; one of the many proofs of its inspiration. Men have made such foolish charges from the beginning, but none have been able to provide proof of their false allegations.

QUESTION: What do most people say about the purpose of life?

ANSWER: Contrary to Christ’s command to “seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33) and Paul’s admonition to “Set your affection on things above” (Colossians 3:2), I suppose that most have adopted the thinking of the man in Luke 12:16-21 whose focus was on the material things of this life. Undoubtedly, unless repentance occurs, these will be included in the “many” of Matthew 7:13.

QUESTION: Are the Israelites God’s chosen people today?

ANSWER: No! Please refer to Romans 2:28-29; Romans 9:6-9; and Galatians 3:28-29. These passages, along with Galatians 6:16, teach that the church has become the Israel of God. Those men and women (Christians) who make up the house of God are they who are God’s chosen people, in the sense that you use it (1 Peter 2:5-9. See also Ephesians 1:3-4).

QUESTION: What grand prophecies are now being fulfilled?

ANSWER: Prophecies concerning the kingdom of God, the church of Christ! For example: 1 Corinthians 2:9, a fulfillment of Isaiah 64:4. Refer also to Ephesians 3:9-11; Ephesians 3:21, and 1 Peter 1:9-12.

QUESTION: Are we near the end of the world?

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

QUESTION: Is it wrong for a Christian to vote?

ANSWER: No! Governments are ordained by God (Romans 13:1-7). It is therefore right for Christians to participate in the selection process with regard to related biblical principles. Support for governmental activities, however, must always be limited to those matters that are not contrary to God’s will (Acts 5:29).

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QUESTION: Is it wrong for a Christian to attend festivals?

ANSWER: Some “festivals” may be right; some may be wrong! Any kind of activity that could potentially cause one to compromise his or her Christianity is to be avoided by the faithful child of God (II Corinthians 6:14-18).

QUESTION: Does God prohibit men wearing women’s garments and women wearing men’s garments? Is it a sin for a woman to wear jeans?

ANSWER: In the beginning “God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them” (Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:4). Clearly, God demands, as an eternal principle, that a definite distinction be made between man and woman. Thus in Deuteronomy 22:5, He commands the children of Israel to honor this distinction: “The women shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord.” To wear clothes of the opposite sex would be to erase the distinction between man and woman that God has demanded from the beginning. It is therefore sinful to do so!

This does not mean, however, that a woman cannot wear modest slacks or jeans that are designed appropriately for women. Certainly, there are circumstances during which these would be more modest than a skirt or dress. In fact, often skirts and dresses are worn by some that are more revealing and immodest than an appropriately designed and worn pair of jeans. The key in women’s clothing (as with men), is that they dress modestly as those professing godliness (I Timothy 2:9-10). If there were any doubt whatsoever as to the “modesty” of wearing certain “jeans” (or even other garments), regardless of the circumstances, an outer garment to assure modesty would be both wise and scriptural.

QUESTION: In the early centuries before Christianity came to Africa our ancestors prayed to idols. Will they be lost?

ANSWER: There was a time many, many years ago when all people knew about Jehovah God. Many of our ancestors rejected God and turned to idols (Romans 1:21), teaching their children to do the same thing. In so doing they changed the truth of God into a lie (Romans 1:25). “For this cause God gave them up unto their vile affections” (Romans 1:26). “And because “they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient” (Romans 1:28). Romans 1:32 says that these “are worthy of death!” It is clear then, that all who worship idols will be lost!

QUESTION: How does one become a preacher?

ANSWER: By having a desire within him that won’t permit him to do anything else and by studying and knowing that which he intends to preach, i.e., the Word of God!

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QUESTION: What is the difference between Judaism and Christianity? Can one rightly practice Judaism today?

ANSWER: Judaism today claims adherence only to the Old Testament while rejecting the New Testament and Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah. One cannot rightly practice Judaism today since God's children today are no longer under the Old Testament! The Old Testament (Judaism) was taken out of the way and replaced by the New Testament of Jesus Christ about two thousand years ago. Please read carefully the following passages: Romans 7:4-7; II Corinthians 3:13-14; Galatians 3:24-25; Ephesians 2:13-16; Hebrews 7:12 / 8:7. As well, in Colossians 2:14, we see that the handwriting of ordinances (Old Testament) was blotted out; that it was against us and contrary to us. Therefore, He took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross!

For a Christian to go back and serve the Old Testament (Judaism) is for that individual to fall from God's grace (Galatians 5:4). Certainly without Christ and His Word, the New Testament, there can be no salvation (John 12:48; Acts 4:12)!

QUESTION: Would you define the following terms: Illumination, Salvation, Restoration, Rewards, Chastening, and Sanctification? Are they related?

ANSWER: If one has been illumined by the light of God's Word, accepts it, and continues to walk in that Illumination he or she experiences Salvation from sin (I John 1:7), Restoration/Reconciliation to God (II Corinthians 5:20), and Sanctification, i.e., set apart from this world of sin (John 17:17; I Corinthians 6:11). Having thus become a child of a loving Father, one will then be Chastened by Him to become a partaker of His holiness (Hebrews 12:6-11), and to be the recipient of Rewards, according to his works (Matthew 16:27). Certainly, all of these terms are related. However, the closer kinship is between the words illumination, salvation, restoration, and sanctification, all of which are considered to be synonymous with becoming a child of God, while rewards and chastening occur subsequently.

We need to realize in chastening us that God does not send evil, suffering or sickness upon the children whom He loves, as some teach. However, neither does God protect us from the consequences of our sins, but rather permits us to be chastened thereby that we might not engage further in the sin, causing us to be partakers of His holiness (Hebrews 12:10-11).

ANSWER: The Bible had it's beginning in the mind of God (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:21). Through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, inspired men were guided into all truth (John 16:13; John 17:17). All truth as written by these inspired men makes up the gospel of Christ, or the power of God (Romans 1:16), through which "He hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). If we have been given all things that pertain unto life and godliness, it follows then, that which we have been given is complete. James 1:25 refers to the law of Christ (New Testament) as the perfect or complete law of liberty; a law

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to which none may add nor subtract (I Corinthians 4:6; Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19) without the curse of God!

When the last inspired writer of the New Testament laid aside his pen for the last time, the Bible was complete, final, and everlasting!

QUESTION: Can you make clear to me what people are saying about the earth being destroyed in the year 2000 by collision with the greatest star in heaven?

ANSWER: I don't know what these people are saying about it! I do know, however, that they don't know what they're talking about and that they are ignorant of God's Word that says, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36).

QUESTION: What is the meaning of "Alleluia?"

ANSWER: It means "Praise the Lord" or "Praise Jehovah."

QUESTION: Can people today expect to live as long as Abraham and Sarah?

ANSWER: No! Sarah was 127 years old when she died (Genesis 23:1); Abraham was 175 (Genesis 25:7). At first, people live to be very old by today's standards. The oldest man, Methuselah, lived to be 969 years of age. We can only guess why the life span of man has been reduced to today's levels. The Bible does not tell us why, but it does confirm the duration of man's life span today, the certainty of death, and the judgment to follow. "The days of our years are threescore and ten (seventy); and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years (eighty), yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Psalms 90:10). In Hebrews 9:27, "And as it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment." From these passages we can expect to live seventy or eighty years, generally. After this, each will face the Lord in judgment. For this we must be prepared! How long one lives is not really the important issue of life. How one lives while in this life is all that will matter in that great day!

QUESTION: Adam died at the age of 930 years. Why does modern man die so early? Why has his life span been reduced so much?

ANSWER: To write on this matter with total certainty, I believe is beyond the knowledge of man. However, the following two possibilities are offered: 1) The long lives of the Patriarchs may have simply been in the providential will of God to populate the Earth and/or to better preserve His truths in the family heads through whom He operated. 2) The average age of the Patriarchs decreased gradually over a long period of time, which lends support to the thought that the reduction of life span came about as a direct result of sin. Man had been placed in the garden in a perfect state. When man, because of sin, was driven from the

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garden he no longer had access to the tree of life and perfection. He, from this time, would also be forced to accept the physical effect of the sin of the world in which he lived. The disease and death that resulted from these sins would naturally then bring about a decrease in the average life span.

The two suggestions above, as reasonable as they may appear, should not be taken as biblical or historical fact. We have not been given the answer! Though it does no harm to speculate on these matters, to spend much time in so doing would certainly not be advised. It would, perhaps, be good to consider Deuteronomy 29:29, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

QUESTION: Why do people have natural hatred for others?

ANSWER: People do not have natural hatred for each other! Hatred of one another, of course, is sinful and the result of sin (Titus 3:3). The scriptures tell us that children do not have sin (Ezekiel 18:20); nor the knowledge of it (Deuteronomy 1:39). Therefore, children cannot naturally hate! Before anyone can hate, they must first learn how! This comes only after having been taught to do so, either by hateful parents or others around us. However, when we become Christians, we put away (malice) hatred (I Peter 2:1), we teach our children not to hate, and they, with us, begin living in the footsteps of the God who is love (I John 4:8).

QUESTION: There are many problems on the earth such as poverty, crime, prostitution, robbery, etc. Will the nations find a solution to these problems?

ANSWER: Some nations, having the required resources, may favorably affect one or more of these problem areas for a time. However, the reason for the existence of all of these is sin! As long as man continues in sin, the consequences of sin will continue to plague him. A casual look at the world around us shows that sin, and the problems it brings, is multiplying rapidly. Further, it will continue to multiply! "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Timothy 3:1-5). Speaking of these men in verse thirteen, Paul says, "But evil men shall wax worse and worse! This is only one of the reasons that Christians are but sojourners in this world, and that they look "for a city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10).

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QUESTION: We are not told when or where the apostles, Paul, John, and Peter died, nor where they are buried. Can you give me information on this?

ANSWER: The Bible does not provide us with this information! The wisdom of God is seen in the silence of the Scripture on this matter. For, without doubt, were all of these things known, great memorials would be built so that mankind would honor them, rather than He for whom they lived and died.

Legend tells us that Peter suffered martyrdom by crucifixion in 68AD; that Paul was executed by sword at Rome in 67AD; and that John died naturally in Ephesus in 97/98AD at about the age of one hundred years. The accuracy of these legends is questionable.

QUESTION: I have been told it takes about eighty-five years for one to really understand the Bible. Is this true?

ANSWER: The more years one spends in study generally results in greater knowledge, no matter what the subject or material being studied. All books and material, however, can be fully understood and exhausted with the exception of God's Word. It is inexhaustible! "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor?" (Romans 11:33-34).

QUESTION: My husband and I have donated our bodies to U.K. Medical center to help others. Do you find anything in the scriptures wrong with this?

ANSWER: No! The attitude that motivated your action is very commendable and is supported by many passages of scripture, e.g., Matthew 7:12; Galatians 6:10; I Peter 2:17. Often when questions of this nature arise, there is concern over what impact such action may have on our resurrection bodies. Those who wish to be cremated sometimes express the same concern. Neither medical research on our bodies, donation of organs, cremation, nor common burials will affect our resurrection bodies. In each case the body will eventually disintegrate and return to the dust (elements) from where it came (Genesis 3:19). Upon death the spirit leaves the body (James 2:26) and enters the Hadean world (Luke 16:19-31). At the resurrection, He will reassemble those separated elements (no matter where they may be) into our new bodies (II Corinthians 5:1-4). We will hear His voice (John 5:28-29) and, being joined with our new bodies, will come forth to stand before Him in judgment (II Corinthians 5:10).

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QUESTION: What Bible verses would you recommend for me concerning my failing health that has affected my marriage?

ANSWER: Many passages would be helpful to you, but some of my favorites are: Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalms 1, 4, 8, 11, 18, 23, 27, 32, 34:15-18; 40:1-3; 46; Matthew 11:28-30; John 14:1-6; Romans 8:35-39; Hebrews 10:17; Hebrews 13:5; Revelation 21:3-7; Revelation 22:14.

QUESTION: Is the New International Version too dangerous to be used in our classrooms?

ANSWER: Yes! It is filled with mortal error, i.e., it teaches and supports false doctrine that can result in loss of the soul. It does this by avoiding the English equivalent of the original Greek words. Those responsible for the book simply substituted words and phrases (sometimes in the text, at other times in the marginal readings) to propagate Calvinism, including the ungodly doctrine of salvation by faith alone! In Romans 10:9-10, they teach that one is saved simply by believing and saying, "Jesus is Lord." It uses the phrase "sinful nature" (twenty-five times) for the Greek word *sarx*, which in the King James Version is accurately translated as "flesh" (For example, see Romans 8:1). An obvious attempt to further the "fatal doctrine" of original sin. It also implies that man sins by nature; that he cannot refrain from sinning! Psalms 51:5 is a travesty in translation and clearly shows the denominational bias involved. In this place they transfer the sin of the mother to the child to promote their error!

(Time will not permit a review of the many other errors involved in the ungodly NIV. For a more in depth study of this and other versions, I would recommend contacting brother Robert Taylor who preaches for the church in Ripley, Tennessee. His work in this field is scholarly, yet easy to follow and understand).

Be cautious of those who use the argument in support of the NIV that the ASV, KJV, and NKJV also contain error. It is true that there are a few mistranslations and copyists' errors. However, these are insignificant and do not teach "fatal error."

To conclude: an eldership blunders greatly in promoting the use of any inaccurate translation either in the classroom or the pulpit. Most often it is brought in under the guise of "needing" a modern language translation. Why not use an accurate modern language translation, such as the NKJV? Why jeopardize the souls of the flock by feeding them fatal error? It makes no sense at all, unless (1) the eldership does not care enough to investigate the matter or (2) they are sympathetic toward the false doctrine taught. In either case, their right to serve is, at best, questionable!

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QUESTION: Which is the better version, the King James or the Revised Standard Version?

ANSWER: The Revised Standard Version contains error that is fatal to one's soul should it be believed. In Romans 11:20, the word only is added to teach "but you stand fast only through faith." This addition changes the Word of God (Revelation 22:18-19) and promotes the false doctrine of salvation by "Faith only" (James 2:24). The RSV also uses the pronouns "Thine" and "Thou" when referring to the Father, but "you" when referring to Jesus. This practice appears to be an attempt to cast doubt on the divinity of Christ (John 5:23). One of the more blatant intentional errors in this version is the translation of the Hebrew word "Almah" in Isaiah 7:14 as "young woman," which would cause one to believe that the passage was not in reference to Christ, as is clearly taught in Matthew 1:23. As well, the RSV contains many other errors, any one of which would provide evidence that it cannot properly be referred to as the Word of God.

The King James Version, The New King James Version, and The American Standard Version contain no fatal errors. It is therefore recommended that one of these be used in your studies.

QUESTION: There have been conflicting explanations of what a "soul" is. Please, can you tell me your version?

ANSWER: In the Old Testament Hebrew, the word for soul is "nephesh." In the New Testament Greek, the word is "psykhe" or "psuche." In both cases (Old and New Testaments) where these words appear the meaning must be determined solely on the basis of context. For example:

1. These words can refer to the total person: (Ezekiel 18:20; Acts 4:41-43; Romans 2:9; James 5:20; I Peter 3:20).
2. They can refer to the life force within the body: (Genesis 1:30; Matthew 2:20; Luke 12:22; Acts 20:10; I Corinthians 15:45; Revelation 8:9; Revelation 12:11).
3. They often refer to the immaterial, invisible part of man: (Matthew 10:28; Acts 2:25-27; Luke 21:19; I Peter 2:11; III John, verse two).
4. They are sometimes used in reference to the disembodied: (II Corinthians 5:3-4; Revelation 6:9; Revelation 20:4).

Though the spirit is the real life of the body (because it is the spirit of man that quickeneth or makes alive (John 6:63), it is also clear that man possesses both spirit and soul, both of which are apparently necessary to animate the body (Hebrews 4:12; I Thessalonians 5:23).

It is interesting to note that God who is a Spirit (John 4:24) also has a Soul (Leviticus 26:11, 30; Isaiah 1:14; Matthew 12:18; Hebrews 10:38).

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QUESTION: Where will the proceedings of Judgment take place? On the Earth or Heaven? I believe that Christ will not set foot on the Earth and that we will meet Him in the air.

ANSWER: Certainly you are correct that Christ will not set foot on the Earth when He returns and that we will meet Him in the air (I Thessalonians 4:16-18). Neither will the “proceedings” take place in Heaven, since the righteous will not enter heaven until after the Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46). The Bible does not speak of a specific place where we will be judged! Surely, we cannot determine such on the basis of our present world and material existence, since all of this will likely have passed. The best we can know is that it will take place in the presence of the Great Judge, Jesus Christ

QUESTION: Where will Paradise be following the Judgment?

ANSWER: Since Paradise is that part of the Hadean World in which departed righteous souls are at rest awaiting the Resurrection and Judgment (Luke 16:19-31; Luke 23:43; John 20:17), after which they will enter heaven, there is no apparent need for Paradise to exist following the Judgment and our entry into Heaven. The same would be true of that part of Hades, described as a place of “torments” (Luke 16:22-23) in which departed unrighteous souls are held in reserve awaiting the final Resurrection and Judgment (I Peter 2:4).

QUESTION: Should Christians practice weddings? Should it be done in the church assembly hall?

ANSWER: Yes! In fact all who would marry (Christians and non-Christians) should practice weddings, because marriage is ordained of God (Genesis 2:18, 24; Matthew 19:3-9; I Corinthians 7:2, 9, 28, 36; I Timothy 4:3; I Timothy 5:14). As well, marriages must be performed in keeping with the laws of the land in which the participants dwell (Romans 13:1).

“Where” a marriage takes place is a matter of option! It is not unwise to marry within the church assembly hall in a ceremony that is separate and distinct from the regular worship services. However, care should always be taken in everything that we do that the activity does not reflect poorly upon Christ, His teachings, His church, or the work of the church in any way!

QUESTION: Why do those in Muslim countries not suffer from “aids” as much as those in Christian countries? Is it because Christians have refused to follow the laws of God that He has decided to bring this killer disease upon them?

ANSWER: The reason there is less “aids” in Muslim countries is that they do not engage in unlawful sexual activity as frequently as do those in other countries! Certainly however, it is true that “aids” is running rampant in many countries as a result of the refusal to follow Scriptural prohibitions against unlawful, homosexual, and adulterous sexual activity. If these illicit activities were non-

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existent, certainly there would be no epidemic of such. Nonetheless, we should not suggest that God initiated and brought the killer disease upon people, especially the innocent. He set certain laws (both spiritual and physical) in motion from the beginning. When man violates these laws, he brings consequences of his violation upon himself. So it is with the epidemic of "aids."

QUESTION: Is the Devil different from Satan and demons? Who is Lucifer?

ANSWER: Revelation 12:9 tells us that the Devil and Satan are one and the same. Demons were evil spirits in subjection to and under the direction of Satan, the Devil (Matthew 12:24-30). The fact of "demons" during the time of Christ cannot be denied (Matthew 4:24). However, we should understand that their presence at that time was for a specific purpose, i.e., in order for Christ to prove His divinity by showing His power over Satan. Jesus clearly taught in Matthew 12:22-30 that he had come to bind Satan. He mightily accomplished that deed as seen in Revelation 20:1-3. This binding of Satan and his servants resulted in their power being limited only to evil influences. Today, when the faithful child of God resists these influences in obedience to the word of God, the devil will flee from him (James 4:7). People today are not possessed by demons, as were some in the first century!

Since the third century some have applied the name of Lucifer to Satan, which is based upon the unfounded idea that the name Lucifer as found in Isaiah 14:12 refers not only to the King of Babylon, but also to the fallen angel of Luke 10:18 and Revelation 12:7-10. That reference is solely to the falling of King(dom) of Babylon can be seen not only in Isaiah 14:4, but also in Isaiah 13:6-11 in which the fall of the Babylonian rulers are clearly represented (vs.10) as heavenly bodies which were to fail! The same symbolic language is used in reference to the falling of governments with the destruction of the Roman Empire (Matthew 24:29). Lucifer, then, scripturally refers to the King of Babylon!

QUESTION: Is it okay for a Christian to be involved in politics? Can a Christian serve as a president, governor or member of a council?

ANSWER: If a man or woman can serve God in government, regardless of office, without compromising faithfulness to Christ, there would be no violation of Scripture. On the other hand, any affiliation which would cause compromise is sinful and is not, therefore, okay (II Corinthians 6:14-18). There is little doubt that very often political office tends toward personal corruption of various sorts. Because of this the discerning Christian will weigh heavily all of the factors involved before entering such areas of employment.

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QUESTION: Is it advisable for a Christian to salute or honor a national flag? If yes, explain Daniel 3:8-25.

ANSWER: Yes! There is no parallel between Daniel 3:8-25 and saluting or honoring a flag. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were not directed to salute or honor a flag. They were commanded (vss. 6 & 11) to bow down and worship the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up (vs.3). There is a great deal of difference between honor and worship! There is little doubt that Daniel and the other men honored the king by being obedient to him and being participants in governmental functions. (Daniel 2:48-49). Their disobedience came only when the king's laws were in conflict with the laws of God, as should be the case with all men (Acts 5:29). Thus, their refusal to worship.

We certainly can worship only the God of heaven (Revelation 22:9), but just as certainly we are told to "honour the king" (I Peter 2:17), to "be subject to the higher powers" (Romans 13:1), and to "render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). A salute reflects honor, not worship!

QUESTION: What about Homosexuals?

ANSWER: The Bible is clear that homosexuality in all its forms is sinful and those involved in it will not inherit the kingdom of God (Leviticus 18:22; Leviticus 20:13; Romans 1:24-28; I Corinthians 6:9-11; I Timothy 1:9-10). Yet, many homosexuals contend, through rationalization and the wresting of plain passages of scripture, that God has created them the way they are; that they have been genetically programmed by Him to righteously practice that which He condemns in all others! Such "illogic," when fully developed, demands the irrational conclusion that a "genetic" homosexual would be sinning against heaven (would be separated from God / would be fallen from grace) if he were to violate his "divine" genetic make-up by taking a wife in accordance with God's laws of marriage, i.e., "Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female . . . For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they (male and female) shall be one flesh" (Matthew 19:4-5). In other words, the faulty logic of the homosexual demands the conclusion that if a heterosexual violates his or her "divine" genetic program by engaging in a homosexual act (and sins by so doing), then it must also follow, and is true, that if a homosexual violates his or her "divine" genetic program by engaging in scriptural marital sex, he or she also sins! How foolish! And yet, how revealing!

Can the homosexual scripturally or logically suggest why a just Father would genetically program His children to engage in inappropriate sexual activity that is clearly not compatible with their God-created anatomical design? I think not! If God is to be charged with such a "genetic" program, He must also then be charged with developing a plan involving opposing and contradictory design; a plan of confusion and disorderliness; a plan wherein (His) "genetic" design is

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incompatible with the (His) “anatomical” design of man and woman! Who, but the ungodly, would so foolishly charge their Creator

(I Corinthians 14:33)?

This heretical rationalization (that genes dictate and change that which God has condemned into righteousness) has been advanced in print by many homosexual and lesbian groups: none of which can be reputably supported, scripturally, scientifically, or medically. It is interesting to note that many similar genetic studies and claims have also been advanced by worldly heterosexuals in order to justify their own involvement in adultery, divorce, thievery, drunkenness, lying, and spousal abuse! Where does it end?

Is there no such thing as sin? Does our genetic make-up absolve us of all unrighteousness? What need of such passages as Galatians five and I Corinthians 6? What need of the blood of Christ? What logic or scripture justifies the claims and sin of the homosexual, while he or she condemns the claims of the heterosexual? The truth is that both are wrong! Both are seeking imaginary loopholes in God’s Word and proposing rationalization designed to ease consciences in order to whitewash sinful activities that

satisfy unlawful lusts!

Further foolishness promoted by homosexuals holds that the Bible does not condemn the physical act itself, but only the act in connection with pagan ceremonial worship involving religious prostitution! Nowhere in scripture (nor in the original language) does God limit prohibition of homosexual conduct in anyway for any reason! The passages that explicitly condemn such, e.g., Leviticus 18; Leviticus 20; Romans 1; I Corinthians 6; et al, also catalog other kinds of sin, non sexual and sexual, i.e., fornication, adultery, incest, bestiality, etc. The rationalization of the homosexual

points to the insane conclusion that these sexual sins, as well, are only prohibited by God when engaged in during pagan religious ceremonies! What nonsense!

Some homosexuals have now further taken the position that as long as they remain true to one partner of the same sex and avoid “debauchery” as justified in other’s genetic studies, i.e., adultery (multiple partners), drunkenness, thievery, lying, etc., that they are accepted and approved of God in their practices. This is rationalization and loophole seeking to the nth degree! What perverted rationale does the homosexual use to justify his or her activity, while condemning ungodliness in others which has been allegedly justified on the same genetic basis? The truth is that all of these activities are sinful and, unless repented of, will cause the participants (whether homosexual or heterosexual) to be lost eternally! I Corinthians 6:11 presents clearly the “only” way of justification and redemption, “And such ‘were’ some of you: but ye have been washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” Acts 18:8 tell us exactly when and how these Corinthians were washed, “and many of the Corinthians hearing believed and were baptized.” It is

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highly significant that the Holy Spirit did not direct the apostle Paul to isolate the homosexual and justify his ungodliness on the basis of genetics design! The Corinthians homosexual needed washing, sanctification, and justification just as much as the Corinthians fornicator, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous, drunkard, reviler, and extortioner. Just as that washing was needed then, it is needed now! There is no difference! Certainly, we all sin and, at least, occasionally experience certain unlawful desires. Nonetheless, all (homosexuals and heterosexuals) are expected to overcome those desires, to truly repent upon fallen, and to live righteously (in accordance with His will) before Him! Pardon the expression, but whatever “hand is dealt” us in this life, we are expected to play with according to the rules. A baby may be born with alcoholic tendencies because his or her mother was a practicing alcoholic during pregnancy. This certainly does not justify drunkenness in the offspring later in life! The offspring is not justified in saying, “but I was born this way!” He or she must play the hand dealt (as unfair as it may seem to be) and overcome the desire for alcohol or be in violation of God’s will. So it is with the homosexual! No matter what speculative, causative factors are presumed to exist in either homosexual or heterosexual, and no matter what the sin) none can or will be justified upon continual violation of God’s Word. All must repent! All must be washed! God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). If homosexual practice is sin for one, it is sin for all! Whatever is required of one is required of all!

How sad it is that many practicing homosexuals have opted to forsake the truths of the Gospel of Christ to continue in their ungodliness, and then, sometimes, to turn to the denominations for approval and justification. And how easy it then becomes for such a one to further rationalize and, in turn, accept and practice the perverted wisdom and doctrines of apostate man, denying the very Lord who bought them (II Peter 2:1)! In so doing, clearly, the wisdom and will of God is rejected (I Corinthians 1:25-31).

It is true that many sins, including homosexuality, are difficult to overcome, but that it can be done and must be done is without doubt (I Corinthians 6:11). For some to overcome it may even be necessary to give serious consideration to the “principle” of celibacy in Matthew 19:12, “and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake.” But whatever is required of any to overcome (no matter what or how great the sin), it is certain and sure that God forgives (though man

may not) and that heaven will surely be worth it all!

Just as is the case with all sinners, a practicing homosexual must repent (be sorry for, and stop practicing homosexuality) and be washed in baptism in order to enter the church (Acts 2:37-47). One who begins practicing homosexuality after having become a member of the church has fallen from grace and like wise needs to repent (Acts 8:22).

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QUESTION: Is Satan a fallen angel?

ANSWER: It is true that Satan was a fallen angel. In fact he was the apparent leader of all other fallen angels who had because of pride rebelled against God. Refer to: II Peter 2:4; Jude 6; and Revelation 12:7-9.

Having fallen, it is his design to lead astray and cause to sin those who would be in a right relationship with God, thereby seeking to destroy the glory and honor that should otherwise belong to Him.

Satan's power over humans today has been restricted only to evil and ungodly influences. Those who succumb to such influences will experience the same destiny that has been prepared for Satan at the end of time (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

QUESTION: What about the "Good News Bible?" Is it a good translation?

ANSWER: No! There are very few so-called Bibles that are worse than this one. It can not even be accurately referred to as a "translation," since it does not express the English word or words that are equivalent to the Greek words found in the original. It is a paraphrase expressed in terms that reflect what it's authors believe the inspired writers meant to say. Therefore, it is not God's word, but rather has it's source in the minds of men. That this is the case is clearly indicated in the preface of the misnamed Good News Bible: "Consequently there has been no attempt to reproduce in English the parts of speech, sentence structure, word order, and grammatical devices of the original languages." Since the Bible teaches verbal (word for word) inspiration (Ephesians 3:3-4), we can only logically conclude, based on the above quote, that the Good News Bible is not, nor does it represent, the inspired Word of God. In gross error, it, among many other errors, attempts to eradicate many of the references to the "blood" of Christ (Acts 20:28; Romans 3:25; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 2:13; and others. It wrongfully changes the day of worship from the first day of the week to Saturday (Acts 20:7). It employs the use of vulgar and earthy language in Acts 8:20. It contradicts the Bible by teaching the false doctrine of salvation by faith only (Romans 1:17). These are just a few of many reasons why copies of this book should be reserved for the trash pile or, better yet, as fuel for the fire!

QUESTION: What is zeal and how does it affect our lives?

ANSWER: To have "zeal" or to be "zealous" means to be eager or earnestly enthusiastic about or toward a particular effort. Paul used the word "zeal" when speaking of Israel in Romans 10:2: "For I bear them record that they have a "zeal" of God, but not according to knowledge." In Titus 2:14, we are told that the reason Christ gave Himself for us was "that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar (different) people, "zealous" of good works. That the Christian is directed to be "zealous" (eager, enthusiastic, boiling over) about the work of Christ is here made very clear. In so doing, not only is one's

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own life positively affected (now and in eternity), but the lives of others with whom he has contact as well. The wise man, Solomon, said in Ecclesiastes 9:10, "Whatsoever" thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." In other words, when this life is over all opportunities will be gone. Therefore, with all "zeal," take advantage of every opportunity while you live! Zealousness, then, will be a characteristic of the faithful Christian in all aspects of life, i.e., family life, business life, and in the church! Without it, none of these will thrive as they ought!

QUESTION: What is the meaning of Good Friday?

ANSWER: It is a religious holiday initiated in the fourth century and "kept" by the Catholic Church and the Protestant denominations in memory of Christ's death on the cross. It is neither scriptural nor appropriate for the child of God to so do. Faithful Christians are authorized and commanded to remember the death of their Lord on the first day of every week as they partake of the elements that represent His shed blood and broken body, i.e., the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-30; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-29).

QUESTION: What of seven heavens?

ANSWER: The Jews and Moslems speak of seven heavens, but the Bible does not. Paul says he was caught up into the third heaven (II Corinthians 11:2). The third heaven clearly refers to the highest heaven where God dwells (11:4). The second heaven then would be those heavens in which are the sun, moon, and stars; the area which is often referred to as "outer space." The first heaven would include the atmosphere in which we now live up to "outer space."

QUESTION: I think we need to stay out of legalism and live in freedom. Agree?

ANSWER: How does one live in freedom? Clearly, through the gospel of Jesus Christ. By "knowing" it (John 8:32) and by "doing" it (Matthew 7:24-27). You talk about staying out of legalism and living in "freedom," as those the two were mutually exclusive. They are not! Many have ascribed a misunderstanding of "legalism" to those who are recognized as being conservative and also charge that these are being "pharisaical." The sense in which these two terms (legalist and Pharisee) are being applied today as synonyms is totally wrong. Nowhere in Scripture did Christ ever condemn a Pharisee (or anyone else for the matter) for being legal or keeping the Law. They were expected, as we, to honor and obey God's Word! The reason Christ condemned the Pharisees was because they were binding traditions and their own commandments as though they were a part of God's Law (Matthew 15:1-9; Matthew 23)! Consider the following passages: Matthew 7:21; John 12:48; John 14:15; John 15:10; Romans 1:5; Romans 6:16-18; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Galatians 6:2; James 2:24. Certainly from these and a multitude of other passages we can see the necessity of adhering to the Law/Commandments of Jesus Christ; of being law-keepers; thus being legal or

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legalist, without being Pharisaical. Biblically, then, the terms “legalist” and “Pharisee” are mutually exclusive, because the Pharisee went far beyond just being legal. It is the case then that one cannot be “free” until he or she becomes “legal,” i.e., one cannot be made free unless they are first willing to humbly and obediently submit to the Gospel of the Lord!

QUESTION: Will we know each other in heaven?

ANSWER: Yes! Many passages so indicate.

II Samuel 12:23: David said of his son who had died, “I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.”

Luke 16:19-31: In verse 23, it is clear that Lazarus was recognizable!

Matthew 17:1-6: Moses and Elijah who had been dead for many centuries were recognized on the mount of transfiguration!

I John 3:1-2: Clearly, we will see the Lord as he is!

Matthew 8:11: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will be recognizable!

There is every reason to believe that we shall know each other in heaven and none to believe that we won't!