

BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

And Interesting Facts About the Holy Word of God

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ISSUE 7

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From the President's Desk,

I recently saw a cartoon where a couple of children were shown getting excited when they heard the sound of the ice cream truck driving through their neighborhood only to see the sign on the side of the truck say "Liver and Onions" instead of ice cream. Someone commented that this is what an ice cream truck looks like in the year 2020. I am sure some of you can relate to this scene, I know I can. This year started with plans being made, events being scheduled, a thriving economy, and the anticipation of good things to come, only to have our plans come to a screeching halt from an attack by an unseen enemy.

While all of this is true, we are not left to go it alone in these uncertain and difficult times. We must remember it is God who reigns sovereign and supreme over all the earth. And while we acknowledge God as our Creator and Sustainer, He has also left us a Book to read showing how to know Him personally and trust Him daily through difficult times. The Bible is God's revealed truth to us chronicling His dealings with His creation, His people (the nation of Israel), and His Church, the Body of Christ. It is written about key individuals and groups navigating life in a sin-cursed world who, facing extremely difficult situations, were called to put their trust in a God who is omnipresent (everywhere), omniscient (all-knowing), omnipotent (all-powerful, and immutable (does not change). Furthermore, God's attitude toward His children has always been one of compassion and desiring the very best for them.

Several verses come to mind as we consider our current situation and our need to fix our gaze upon

God and His Word. The first verse declares that the Scriptures are inspired or "God-breathed" (II Tim. 3:16,17). These "God-breathed" words come from the mind of God through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and were written by men moved by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:20,21). They are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that all who read and obey will be equipped to do good works honoring to God. Another reason to read, and trust God's Word is that it shows where to step and the path to take. It illuminates our steps as a lamp and lights our paths as we live (Psa. 119:105).

So please don't try to navigate these uncertain and difficult times alone. Look to God and His Word to see how others have handled difficult times and how He wants us to live through the trials we face.

Rejoicing in the Lord,

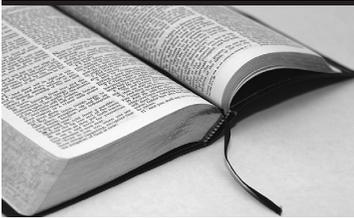
Dr. Robert E. Nix
President, *Berean Bible Institute*

QUESTION: What is the connection between the Feast of Dedication and Hanukkah? I know what the Feast of Dedication is, but what is Hanukkah and its connection?

ANSWER: The Feast of Dedication, also referred to as the Feast of Lights, and Hanukkah are one and the same thing with Hanukkah being the equivalent Hebrew term for Dedication.

Besides the prescribed feasts that were mandated by the Law long before Israel's captivity, the Jews added two more after their return, Hanukkah and

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." II Timothy 3:16



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Purim. Hanukkah celebrated the cleansing of the Temple and its rededication to the service of the Lord after it had been defiled by an evil Syrian king named Antiochus Epiphanes.

The Feast of Purim, the Hebrew term for lots, commemorates the failure of the wicked Haman's plot to exterminate the Jewish people and confiscate their property (see the book of Esther). This feast is called Purim (Lots) because Haman cast lots to determine when he would carry out his evil plot against the Jews.

QUESTION: You got it wrong again. In your "Bible Answers to Bible Questions" of November 2019, you say that we don't need the cross today, but only faith. Christ said to everybody: "And he that taketh not his cross, and follow after Me, is not worthy of Me" (Matt. 10:38). He also said: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me" (Matt. 16:24). Who are you to say otherwise?

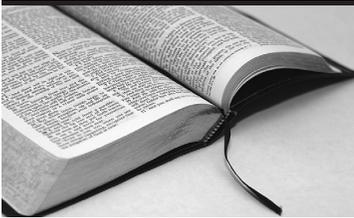
ANSWER: I will answer the last part of your question first. You ask me "who are you to say otherwise?" in regard to my Bible answer about believers taking up their cross in order to follow Jesus. That is a good question and I can only say that I am nobody of any importance or authority. I am simply a sinner who has been saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who "died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (see I Cor. 15:1-4; Gal. 2:20). The Lord Jesus Christ saved me over thirty-nine years ago and since then I have labored the best I could to make known the Lord Jesus Christ and His saving grace to a sin-cursed world of lost sinners. Any success I may have had through the years cannot be credited to me or my abilities, but is the work of God's grace in spite of me and my many weaknesses and inabilities. In reality, I have failed my Savior often, but He has never failed me. He saved me once and for all time and He has never "unsaved" me, or "unloved" me, or rejected me, no, not for one iota of a second. God does not owe any human being anything other than the wages of sin that we all deserve. God's holy nature demands that all sin must be paid for,

therefore all who die in their sins must suffer His holy wrath (Rom. 1:18). On the other hand, all who are justified by faith in Jesus Christ are at peace with God and are saved from His wrath (Rom. 5:1, 8-10).

In the first part of your question, you accuse me of saying: "today we don't need the cross, but only faith," I can see how someone might get that out of my answer if they fail to rightly divide God's Word as we are instructed to do (II Tim. 2:15), and neglect to diligently search the Scriptures as the noble Bereans did "daily whether those things were so" when Paul preached to the Jews in Berea (Acts 17:10-11). The point I was making is not that we do not need the cross today, but that "taking up one's cross" in the sense that the Lord Jesus meant it, which He used as a metaphor, is not a requirement for salvation in the present Dispensation of Grace we are living in. But, this is only a temporary situation as in the future, after the Body of Christ has been caught up and removed from the earth in what is popularly known as the Rapture (see I Thess. 4:14-18), the Dispensation of Grace will come to an end and the Gospel of the Kingdom will be reinstated as the Tribulation begins. The seven years of Tribulation will serve as a prelude to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory and His righteous rule of the Kingdom of God on earth for one thousand years (see Rev. 5:1-6:1-2 ff; 19:11-20:4). I want to note here that the *Berean Bible Institute* stands for and teaches according to a mid-Acts dispensational understanding of the Word of God. All articles and answers found in the BBI Bulletin reflect and promote that position.

The importance of the cross today rests in the fact that Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, took up His cross so that we do not have to take up ours. Those who die in their sins can only pay the penalty for their own sins, which is both an everlasting physical and spiritual death. That is, they will be raised in a resurrection of condemnation and separated from God forever in the torments of the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10-15), while believers will be raised in a resurrection of eternal glory (Dan. 12:2; Phil. 3:20-21).

I want to make it clear here that I believe that the cross of Jesus Christ is all important to the Gospel of the Grace of God because it is only through His



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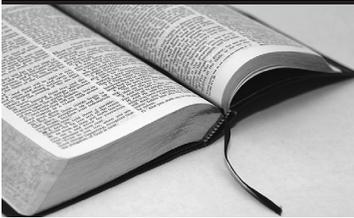
cross that a lost sinner can be saved. Sinful human beings, as we all are, cannot deliver themselves from the bonds of death because it is what they deserve. That is, their sin has earned them everlasting condemnation. But the Lord Jesus Christ, the sinless, Holy, and perfectly righteous Son of God, had no sin debt to pay, thus death could not hold Him (Acts 2:24) and He rose from the dead in victory over sin and its wages, which is everlasting death. Because these things are true, the Son is free to impute His righteousness to those who trust in Him and His finished work on the cross completely apart from any works of man. In turn, this allows the Father to declare them just in His sight and give them the gift of eternal life without violating His own absolutely righteous and immutable nature "...that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26; see Rom. 3:20-26; 5:1-2). Salvation does not come to those who take up their cross, but rather it comes only to those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and what He did for us on His cross. All who believe "have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7). "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God...For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:18, 21; see I Cor. 1:18-2:5).

QUESTION: What exactly is "Dispensationalism" and is it truly "Biblical"?

ANSWER: In his letter to the church at Ephesus, the Apostle Paul wrote the following; "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for ye Gentiles, if you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward" (Eph. 3:1-2). The word translated dispensation in the King James Bible is rendered "administration" or "stewardship" in other translations, but the basic meaning remains the same, that of the management of affairs. In the Biblical sense, it has to do with what God requires of man to be saved. For instance, under the Law given to Israel through Moses, circumcision and the offering of blood sacrifices were required of the Jews. But, under the Dispensation of Grace we are living in

today, neither Jews nor Gentiles are to be circumcised or offer blood sacrifices to be saved. We are, as lost sinners, to simply believe the truth that Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, and after three days arose from the dead in complete victory over sin and death that we might be saved through His blood and one day be raised with Him (see Rom. 3:23-25; 5:8-11; I Cor. 1:18, 21; 15: 1-4, 50-58).

Probably the greatest problem people have today in Bible study is the failure to "rightly divide" God's Word even though we are instructed to do so. If Bible students, especially those who teach others, are going to have God's approval of their efforts in studying the Scriptures, it is necessary that they divide it correctly. Our instructions are to "*study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth*" (II Tim. 2:15). In other words, we are to recognize the fact that the Bible is not just a religious book that we can randomly pick and choose from for personal application as if it was all written to, about, and for us today. Rather, it was written at different times to different people living in different places for different reasons. For instance, God told Noah to build an ark, a large vessel in which Noah and his family took refuge to survive the worldwide flood that God brought on the earth at that time (Gen. 6:1-8:22; I Pet. 3:20). This is not to be confused with the "much smaller" ark of bulrushes Moses' mother put her three month old son in and hid him near the bank of the Nile River to save him from being murdered by the Egyptians (Ex. 1:1-10). A third ark is the one built to keep the stone tablets in that God had written the Ten Commandments on (Ex. 25:16). Thus it became known as the "*Ark of the Covenant*" (Num. 10:33) or the "*Ark of the Testimony*" (Ex. 25:16, 22). While each of these arks are relevant to our overall understanding of the Bible and God's plans for the ages and the redemption of mankind, we have no reason to follow any of these examples. The situation for each case was unique to their time and place in history. Today we are to understand that the entire human race is condemned because all have sinned (Rom. 3:26) and the only avenue to escape God's righteous judgment is through faith in Jesus Christ who delivers all who believe from God's wrath (see Rom. 5:1-9).



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QUESTION: How did the Urim and the Thummin in the Ephod provide answers?

ANSWER: The Urim and the Thummin are mysterious objects that seem to have been kept in the breastplate worn by the High Priest. The words themselves mean “light” and “perfection” causing many to think that they were gemstones of some kind. The idea is plausible, but it is not certain.

As far as how the Urim and the Thummin provided answers, we are not told. Nevertheless, that has not kept Bible students from speculating about them and several theories have been offered. As I have not found an answer to your question in the Bible, I must plead ignorance and say I do not know. I may come across the answer in God’s Word at a later time, but for now I will not speculate on that for which I can find no biblical basis to do so. But, I will say that we can be confident that it is not some magic formula or the practice of some divination ritual or other that somehow empowered whoever has the Urim and Thummin to receive messages from God. Rather, I think it prudent that we think of it as a response of God to an act of faith similar to the offering of sacrifices and the practice of rituals by Israel under the Law. Those who kept the ordinances of the Law by faith did so because they believed God and trusted Him to do what He said He would do. Those who did so trusting in their own ability to manipulate the Urim and Thummin to provide answers to their questions, did so out of pride. Note carefully that when David told Abiathar the priest to bring the ephod (which we believe contained the Urim and the Thummin) and inquired whether or not the men of Keilah would deliver him and his men over to Saul, David did not ask his question of the Urim and the Thummin and the Urim and the Thummin did not provide him with an answer. It was the Lord God Almighty of Israel Himself that David addressed his question to and who also answered him (see I Sam. 23:7-13). It seems that the presence of the

ephod in which the Urim and Thummin were kept were incidental to the High Priesthood of Israel, a position that Abiathar was heir to as fourth in the descent from Eli. Abiathar brought the ephod with him when he fled for his life from King Saul when he attempted to destroy his hereditary line of the priesthood (see I Sam. 22).

INTERESTING BIBLE FACTS

C. I. Scofield (1843-1921)

Cyrus Ingerson Scofield is best known as the editor of the Scofield Reference Bible that reflects the Dispensational method of interpretation in its notes. The first edition appeared in 1909 and was revised for republication in 1917. It has undergone several revisions since then and various editions are still in print today.

COMMON SAYINGS FROM THE BIBLE

“The Kiss of Death”

The origin of this saying is the kiss that Judas gave Jesus Christ the night He was arrested (Matt. 26:48-49). Judas, having agreed to betray the Lord Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, led an armed band to apprehend Him in the Garden of Gethsemane late at night. As a prearranged sign, he told them: *“Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.”* His kiss led to the Lord being unlawfully arrested and tried and finally put to death the next day. In modern usage, it is generally used in respect to something that leaves a stigma by association that results in a negative consequence. Such as, the candidate’s support for an unpopular bill was the kiss of death for his campaign. The custom of the Mafia to kiss someone as a sign they had been marked for death is also thought to have had its origin in Judas’ kiss of betrayal.

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