

# BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

*And Interesting Facts About the Holy Word of God*

BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE, INC.

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ISSUE 2

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### *From the President's Desk,*

I want to take a moment and simply say thank you to all our ministry partners who champion the ministry and mission of *Berean Bible Institute*. Your support through prayer, financial means, and sharing the ministry of BBI with others is such a blessing. We continue to be amazed at how God is working through the ministry of the *Berean Bible Institute*.

As we press forward, I am excited about our new online courses that are beginning on March 14th. These courses include **108 Romans**, **106 Basic Bible Doctrines II**, **218 Ministry Leadership**, **116 Biblical Worldview**, and **202 Christian Education I**. Our deadline for enrollment was March 3rd, but if you want a challenge and a blessing I would encourage you to watch our website, facebook page, and mailings for announcements for when our next schedule of online courses is announced. Then, I ask you to prayerfully consider choosing a course in order to apply to reap the benefit of the time spent studying God's Word in these classes and interacting with fellow believers. Each of our online courses meets with an instructor once a week for an hour and forty-five minutes; additional course work is assigned to be completed outside of class.

We have also set a date for our **Berean Bible Institute Open House**. On Thursday, April 28th from 5 PM to 8 PM we invite you to join us for fellowship, refreshments, and a tour of our new building. As you may recall, on April 1st of last year we completed the purchase of our new facility. Throughout this past year, we have been working on a host of projects to get our building ready to hold an open house in order to be able to celebrate with our friends and partners.

Regarding our facility projects, we currently only have a couple of projects left to be finished on our list.

Our last main item is to purchase and install three exterior doors to our building. We estimate this will cost BBI approximately \$2,500.00, and I praise the Lord for those who have given and continue to give to help us complete this project.

Someone has wisely said that success is a journey and not a destination, and I would have to agree. While we work on the various projects and offer many different courses, we know that God is using BBI **now**, and that pastors, missionaries, and Christian leaders are being trained for the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and the proclamation of the gospel of the grace of God given to and through the Apostle Paul.

We praise the Lord that you are partnering with BBI on this journey, and please know how much we are blessed by all of you.

Thank you for standing with *Berean Bible Institute*,

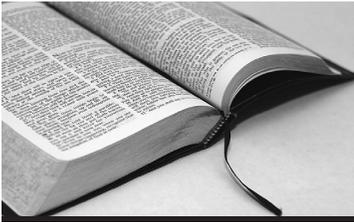
Dr. Robert E. Nix,  
President

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**QUESTION:** Could you please explain Luke 21:36: "Watch and pray...that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things"? I have heard some teach that believers in Jesus will still be here on earth during part of the Tribulation. What is your view?

**ANSWER:** Luke 21:36: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

The context of this verse is indeed the Tribulation. The disciples asked Jesus earlier in the chapter (vs. 7) to expand upon when "these things" (the Tribulation period, cf. Matt. 24:1-3) would take place. Jesus,



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referring to this time as *“the end”* (vs. 9) and *“the days of vengeance”* (vs. 22), continues to prepare them for the signs that would be given during this period: wars throughout the world, earthquakes, famines, diseases, and unique signs in the sky (vv. 10-11). We can read more details regarding these events in the book of Revelation, which gives information on this time called *“the end.”* As you read through Jesus’ response to the disciples’ question, notice that He is not telling them that they are going to be delivered from this time, but to prepare to faithfully endure the difficulties (vs. 20) of this time. These people would face harsh persecution (vs. 12) and persuasive false teachers (vs. 8) and betrayal by family members (vs. 16); actually, they would *“be hated of all for [Christ’s] name sake”* (vs. 17). Adding proof to the fact that Jesus is preparing His disciples to experience this time is that He refers to the sign of the armies surrounding Jerusalem (vs. 20). When this happens, they are to flee for the hills (vs. 21). Then, more signs are given as this *“great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people”* (vs. 23) is increased. These are not the hostility and disasters we experience today; the events being commented on in Luke 21 will be much worse and caused directly by God (Matt. 24:21-22). There will be slaughter, defeat, and destruction of Jerusalem (vs. 24). The city of Jerusalem is the focus because this time of Tribulation is focused on discerning between the believers and the pretenders in the nation of Israel. For this reason, Jeremiah was inspired to call this period *“the time of Jacob’s trouble”* (30:7 cf. Dan. 12:1). Israel is the focus during this time because Jesus is preparing his audience for the culmination of the prophesied kingdom program given to Israel. Then, Jesus’ information given in Luke 21 arrives at the end of this troubled time. He speaks of signs in outer space (sun, moon, stars) and turmoil on the earth (vs. 25) and then the world will see the Son of man arriving on earth (vs. 27) to set foot upon the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4; Acts 1:11-12).

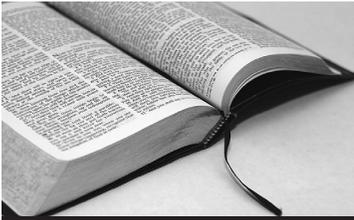
It is in this context that we find Luke 21:36. Jesus had just prepared His disciples to be able to recognize the signs of the coming tribulation, encouraging them to be faithful to Him throughout the persecution in order that they may stand before Him when He returns to earth once again. Those

that *“watch and pray”* will *“escape”* to *“stand before the Son of man”* when He returns to earth to set up the promised, prophesied kingdom. This is not the Rapture; it is endurance through the Tribulation.

It is important to recognize that these instructions were not given to us as the Body of Christ. The Church, the Body of Christ, was still hidden in the mind of God when Jesus was speaking to the disciples here. Since this time, something has interrupted these events foretold by Jesus in Luke 21:36. Something unprophesied and unknown. The Apostle Paul declares that the Lord had entrusted a secret program to him to make known to the world. *“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery”* (Eph. 3:2-3). He also declares in the same chapter that this information was *“not made known”* in other ages (vs. 5); it was *“unsearchable”* (vs. 8); and this program was *“hid in God”* (vs. 9).

In order to offer this program of complete, secure salvation by faith alone in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, Israel and her program with earthly kingdom promises was set aside for a season until God is finished with His Grace program for the Gentiles. As Romans 11:25 states, *“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”* Since Israel has been set aside for the duration of the Dispensation of Grace, *“salvation is come unto the Gentiles”* (Rom. 11:11).

This also means that the information regarding the Tribulation Jesus gave to His disciples in Luke 21 regarding the end of prophecy was paused as well. Those instructions to *“watch and pray”* in order to *“stand before the Son of man”* await a future day when the Dispensation of Grace comes to a close and God turns back to finishing His promises to Israel as recorded in the Old Testament and Gospels. Just like the Dispensation of Grace had a unique beginning, so it will have a unique ending. Paul recorded, *“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”* (I Cor. 15:51-52). These verses speak of a special



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resurrection and rapture for the Body of Christ (the group of believers in the Age of Grace) that will take place BEFORE the events in Luke 21.

We will not stand before the Son of Man because we have watched and prayed, but because we have trusted in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ to be saved by grace. Yes, we should watch and pray, but not to be enabled to stand before Christ, but because we have an appointment to be delivered from God's wrath that will be poured out on earth during the Tribulation (I Thess. 5:9).

The answer to the question is that Luke 21:36 was written to people under a different arrangement with God. It was not written for our obedience today. We are told today that we are saved (from Hell, sin, and the Tribulation) the moment we place our faith in the fact that Jesus Christ died for our sins on the cross, was buried in a tomb, and arose three days later (Rom. 3:24; 4:5; I Cor. 15:3-4). When God is finished with His program of Grace, the believers belonging to the Body of Christ will depart. Then God will return to the events mentioned in Luke 21, and those believers will need to "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

**QUESTION: I know the KJV makes a distinction between "Grecian" and "Greek." Is there also a distinction between "Greek" and Gentile"? Is there truth to the claim that Paul's pre-prison ministry was to Jews and Greeks and that Gentiles were not addressed until his prison epistles?**

**ANSWER:** The word translated "Grecians" is *Hellenistes* (Ἑλληνιστῆς; Acts 6:1; 9:29; 11:20) and is used of Israelites that had immersed themselves in Greek culture and spoke the language. There are a few words translated "Greek/Greeks" in the Bible, including *Hellenis* (Ἑλληνίς, a female Greek, e.g. Mark 7:26; Acts 17:12), *Hellenikos* (Ἑλληνικός, the Greek language, e.g., Luke 23:38), and *Hellenisti* (Ἑλληνιστί; e.g., John 19:20). By far, the one most used is the word *Hellen* (Ἑλλην e.g., John 12:20; Acts 14:1; 17:4, etc.), specifically pointing to people who resided in Hellas (a.k.a. Greece).

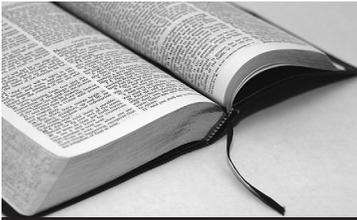
As you can see, both from the English transliteration and the Greek symbols, all of the words are very

similar and come from the same family, referring to Gentile Greeks or, in the case of *Hellenistes*, Greek Jews.

The word translated "Gentiles," to quote the famous philosopher and gatekeeper of Oz: "Well, that's a horse of a different color." The Greek word used in the New Testament is *ethnos* (ἔθνος). There are a few outliers to this rule. *Hellen* is twice translated "Gentiles" in John 7:35 and once each in Rom. 3:9; I Cor. 10:20; I Cor 12:13. I suppose the three times *Hellen* appears in Paul's earlier epistles may have led to the teaching you are referring to in the question. But, should this lead us to conclude that Paul did not go to all nations in his early prison epistles? Let's see if it passes the Scripture test.

In Acts chapter 13, before Paul wrote any of his letters, he gives a long sermon in front of a mixed audience of Jews and Gentiles. At the end, a declaration is made and a response is recorded. "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:47-48). These are not just Greeks in this passage, and we cannot limit it to just the *Hellen*. Paul is declaring his ministry to people of all nations, and people from all nations believed before Paul wrote any of the epistles we have in our Bible. Acts 14:27 talks about how God "had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles." In Acts 15:3, Paul and his team was "declaring the conversion of the Gentiles." Nothing in the early record of Paul's ministry before prison would indicate that he was only sent to the Jews and Greeks.

What about his pre-prison epistles? What evidence do they hold for us? Romans is plain to whom Paul had been reaching out. He wanted to visit Rome so that he "might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles" (1:13). He declares, "That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith." And, through Israel's "fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles" (11:11). Listen to this: "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am



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*the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office*" (Rom. 11:13). Paul was a minister to the Gentiles in the pre-prison letter to the Romans. Take the time to read Romans 15:16-18.

Even with its two uses of *Hellenes* in I Corinthians, Paul is still writing to Gentiles who have been called to live in a new way that is different from other Gentiles. Note I Corinthians 12:2 that they *"were Gentiles carried away unto these dumb idols."* Their physical identity as Gentiles didn't change, their spiritual identity in Christ is what changed.

Another of Paul's earlier epistles is the book of Galatians. We can read his statement that he *"went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles"* (2:2). We also read *"that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."*

First Thessalonians declares that some were *"forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved"* (2:16). Paul was not just speaking to Jews and Greeks at this time, he was the apostle to all nations.

Nothing in the Acts record of Paul's journeys or his pre-prison epistles would lead us to believe he was only limited to ministering to some Gentiles. When he was sent out from Antioch, he was sent to all Gentiles with the Gospel of the Grace of God. While there are certainly some transitional things Paul did in his early ministry (Jew first, sign gifts, water baptism), there was no restriction in his audience when Paul was commissioned to the nations.

**QUESTION: If Paul recognized the believers in Jerusalem as saints (Rom. 15:25) and if water baptism was performed for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38), why is the Kingdom believer told to practice being obedient to the truth (John 20:31) and to observe all things Christ commanded them (Matt. 28:20)?**

**ANSWER:** There exist differences of understanding among Grace believers regarding the specifics of the salvation of the New Testament Kingdom believers after the cross (e.g., salvation after a trial period, individual salvation versus corporate salvation, salvation when Christ returns, instant salvation similar to those of us under Grace, Lordship salvation). Recognizing this, it would take us more than the space we have in the BABQ to deal with salvation under the Kingdom program.

The simplest answer to your question is this: Even though redemption is fully provided in Jesus Christ, God asked the Kingdom believers to express their faith in certain ways (e.g., obedient to truth, observe what Christ commanded, bear fruit, forgive others). We wrestle with this topic because it seems foreign to us who acknowledge the Grace program revealed to and through the Apostle Paul, and, additionally, we have an aversion to seeing these non-Pauline scriptures misunderstood, misapplied, and abused.

While some of you may think I gave a quick politician's answer, I ultimately included this question to remind us to let the Word of God speak and have the final say, to be open to correction and reproof. We should always be checking our conclusions and understandings with the inspired Scriptures, and we must always be prepared for Divine truth to have the final say. We are so used to being a saint under Grace, which includes a moment-of-faith salvation and eternal sealing by the Holy Spirit, that it is often difficult for some to abstain from taking their blessings under Grace and applying them to the post-cross Kingdom saints. Contrariwise, we also need to be careful to allow the Kingdom saints to have the blessings that God gave to them even when they sound too much like those of the Mystery program. Our goal is not to under-divide the Word of Truth or to over-divide the Word of Truth; our desire is to make sure we always rightly divide the Word of Truth.

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