

# ANSWERS TO NEW CHRISTIANS QUESTIONS

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By Bryan Johnson



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**QUESTIONS**

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Dear Friend,

When we invite the Lord Jesus Christ into our lives, we do this as an act of faith. We do not have all the answers to the questions we have about life. If we wanted to have all the answers to the questions of life before we invited the Lord Jesus into our lives, we would never do so, and miss the greatest experience of life.... salvation in Jesus Christ.

Peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ is not obtained through knowledge and education but by receiving God's free gift through faith. However, God does not intend us to use this as an excuse to remain ignorant of God's Word and of the truths of life. In 1 Peter 3 v 15 we read;

"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason for the hope that is in you with humility and godly reverence."

This booklet has been prepared to help young Christians find answers to their questions, as well as those that searching friends ask. Remember though, that a person who has all the answers does not necessarily have eternal life. Always be a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ and what He has done in your life, not just a source of information.

To receive the most help possible from this booklet, study it prayerfully looking up the Bible references. In prayer, ask the Holy Spirit to give you understanding of God's Word for it is the Holy Spirit that makes the Word of God come alive in our being.

Keep this booklet in your Bible so that it is available for use when you are sharing your faith in Christ. If you do not have a Bible, access the 'New Living Translation' through the internet by searching on those words. The Bible is the greatest Book ever compiled and read by more people around the world than any other book. At the back of this booklet there is an Alphabetical Subject Index.

Inside the back two pages is a Soul-winner's guide to help you lead your friends to faith in Christ using Bible verses.

May the Lord Jesus Christ bless you abundantly with a personal, intimate relationship with himself.

"...For it is God that works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.... that you may know Him and the power of His resurrection." (Philippians 2 v 13 and 3 v 10).

Yours in His amazing Love,

**Bryan A Johnson.**

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# A. IN THE BEGINNING

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## 1. *How was the earth formed?*

The Bible tells us that, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”(Genesis 1 v 1). The earth was created.

The power that created the earth was the Word of God. God spoke the Word, and the earth came into existence. In Hebrews 11 v 3 we read, “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.”

God has the power to create substance and matter from nothing by the command of His Word. The Bible records in Psalm 24 v 1 & 2, “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.

## 2. *Why did God create mankind?*

It seems that mankind has been a constant problem to God! In Genesis 1 v 26 the Bible records that during the period of creation, God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, in Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” God created man for the purpose of ruling the earth, being fruitful and replenishing the earth so that man would be preeminent in the earth.

Furthermore God created man to show forth His glory, (Isaiah 43 v 7), and to give Him pleasure (Rev 4 v 11) but nothing that He has created has been in vain (Isaiah 45 v 18).

God has had problems with mankind because mankind chose to go their own way, ignoring God and committing sin (Read Genesis 2). Sin disabled mankind from fulfilling the purpose that God had created them for. As a result of disobedience, mankind has paid the penalty of sin which is death (Romans 6 v 23).

But God provided an answer to this problem of disobedience in the relationship between God and man (John 3 v 16). “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.” The

Church (true believers) has been given the wonderful privilege of spreading the good news of God’s answer to the problem between mankind and God (Matthew 28 v 19 & 20).

## 3. *Since God knows everything, why did He not create Adam and Eve so they could not sin?*

God’s omniscient (all knowing) power was not limited because He gave to Adam and Eve the freedom of choice. As God created mankind in His own image (Genesis 1 v 26) He gave mankind the ability to think, reason, and make choices, even as He has those abilities.

If mankind had been created without the ability to choose they would have been a very limited creatures, and unable to fulfil their created purpose. Mankind would never be able to express love and adoration to God if they were a creatures without the ability to choose.

The fact that mankind chose to sin is their responsibility. To accuse the Creator of a design fault because mankind exercised their freewill and chose to sin is not reasonable or logical. Mankind suffers because of their disobedience (Romans 3 v 23 & Romans 7 v 19 - 20). Unlike mankind, God will never sin. His integrity and holiness is perfect.

## 4. *Is it fair to punish all mankind because the first man disobeyed God?*

God’s purpose with mankind is to bless them (Genesis 1 v 28) but Satan has always sought to bring mankind under a curse. Sin, is disobedience, and it brings a curse on mankind (Romans 6 v 23). Adam sinned and disobeyed God’s commandment as a result of yielding to Satan’s temptation. The result was that the earth was cursed and the heart of Adam knew sin and the consequences of disobedience (Genes 3 v 17). As a result of this action, the heart of mankind became wicked and the things that come out of the heart of mankind defiled mankind (Matthew 15 v 18 - 19).

As mankind has reproduced, their children have also reproduced in them evil hearts. Just as an apple tree bears apples so does a person with an evil heart produce children with a disobedient heart.

God, seeing mankind’s dilemma as a result of their sin, has provided the remedy for mankind so that they can be free from the curse of sin. The Lord Jesus Christ, God’s Son who did not sin came to earth, and died on the cross to pay the penalty of sin on our behalf. He also gives to those who will confess their sin and believe in what He has done for each one of us, a new heart and attitude. “You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you” (Romans 8 v 9). This is God’s remedy for mankind’s problem of sin’s curse.

## B. ABOUT SALVATION AND BECOMING A CHRISTIAN

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### 5. *How can I know that I am a Christian?*

A Christian is a person who has received salvation through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation comes through faith, and faith through hearing or studying the Word of God.

The Word of God says: “But the righteousness that is by faith says: ‘Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ (to bring Christ down) or Who will descend into the deep?’” (to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? “The Word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the Word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ‘For it is with your heart that you believe, and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess, and are saved’”(Romans 10 v 6 - 10).

Faith to believe in Christ is hindered by our sin, but “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness,” that is our wrong actions and attitudes (1 John 1 v 9).

The Bible also says that if we love other Christians, it proves that we have been delivered from hell and given eternal life.

“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Hebrews 11 v 6).

You can know without a doubt that you are a Christian if by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have confessed your sin, and turned from your sinful ways to God: trusting your life to Him, and you love Christians, the members of God’s family.

### 6. *Can we accept Christ and not let our parents know?*

To accept the Lord Jesus Christ through faith to be Saviour and Lord of our lives means that our whole lives are changed. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”(2 Corinthians 5 v 17). As a result of the change in a person’s life, by accepting Christ, it would be impossible to hide this fact from parents. To do so would be to deny Christ’s power in your life.

The Bible also says, “For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved”(Romans 10 v 10).

Christ has commanded us all to be witnesses (Acts 1 v 8), to all whom we meet, and to be ready always to give an answer to every person that asks you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear (1 Peter 3 v 15).

In prayer, ask God to give you such a love for your parents that you will want to share with them the only hope of eternal life, salvation in Jesus Christ.

### 7. *How can we know whether Christ really accepts us?*

The Bible, God’s Word says in Ephesians 2 v 13, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.”

Jesus Christ has purchased your life by shedding His blood and giving His life. After paying such a high price for you, do you think He is going to reject you? Of course not! “In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will to the praise of his glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves” (Ephesians 1 v 5 - 6).

Jesus also prayed for people who would become believers in the future before he completed his mission on earth (John 17 v 20 -24).

### 8. *If a person becomes a Christian, can that person change to another religion?*

By becoming a Christian we do not lose our ability to make decisions or choices. Even though Adam walked and talked with God every evening in the Garden of Eden, he chose to disobey God and do evil.

Christ told a parable, recorded in Matthew 13 v 44 - 46 and said that “the Kingdom of God is like a man who having found a pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.” The Christian is like this man. Once he has experienced the great joy of being a Christian and knowing that there is salvation and eternal life in no other than Christ (John 14 v 6), he gives his life totally to Christ and desires to serve no other person or religion. No other religion could satisfy his heart.

Furthermore, God has commanded “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20 v 3). A person who changes to another religion after becoming a Christian is deceived and we should pray with fasting for them.

### 9. *If we confess our sins to the Lord Jesus Christ, will He forgive us, so how do we know that our sins are forgiven?*

In 1 John 1 v 9 God gives to us the wonderful promise that “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” This is a promise that God has made. God never breaks a promise because He is faithful, true and just to fulfil all His promises (Isaiah 45 v 21).

Now through faith in God’s Word, believe God’s promise, confess your sins to Christ, and you have the assurance that you are forgiven and cleansed.

### **10. What about friends who are not Christians?**

What will they think and say? Your friends will have many different opinions about your decision to follow Christ. Some will hate you, others will grow cold towards you, and yet others will admire and respect you.

Jesus said, “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5 v 11 - 12).

Do not be hurt or offended by these things. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him”(Colossians 3 v 16 - 17). In all the things Christ suffered, He was never hurt. He did not allow bitterness to take root in His Spirit. Therefore be in Christ a new creature, dead to your old nature and alive to Christ who dwells in you by the Holy Spirit. Do not evaluate Christians by what the world thinks about them. Refer to 2 Corinthians 5 v 14 - 17.

## **c. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

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### **11. What are the steps to help a new Christian grow in Christ?**

The Bible clearly teaches that the Christian life is one of growth and development. 2 Peter 3 v 18 exhorts us to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” Refer also to Hebrews 6 v 1 - 2.

Christ is not only expecting growth in the things we do in Him, but also in what we are becoming in Him. Three attitudes that will greatly assist a new Christian to grow in Christ are; obedience, being teachable, and willingness; (2 Corinthians 10 v 5b, Psalm 32 v 8 - 9; Psalm 110 v 3).

God is at work within you helping you to want to obey Him and then helping you to do what he wants (Philippians 2 v 13). The following is a list of things Christ intends for you to experience as you grow in Him;

- Baptism by immersion in water (Matt 28 v 19)
  - Developing your prayer life, discerning and listening to God’s voice (1 Thessalonians 5 v 17 - 18)
  - Reading God’s Word each day (Psalm 119 v 11)
  - Seeking fellowship with other Christians (Acts 2 v 42)
  - Breaking of bread (Communion) (Acts 2 v 42)
  - Giving to God’s work (1Cor 16 v 1 - 2)
  - Receiving the Holy Spirit’s power (Acts 19 v 6)
  - Desiring earnestly the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12 v 31)
  - Desiring to develop the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5 v 22)
  - Sharing Christ with others, especially non-Christians (Acts 1 v 8)
  - Doing good works especially for the poor (Matt 5 v 16)
  - Serving the Lord with joy and gladness (Psalm 100 v 2)
  - Working hard and cheerfully (Col 3 v 23)
  - Praise, thankfulness and worship to the Lord (Psalm 149)
- This list is by no means complete, but serves to help us grow in Christ and be fruitful members of His Kingdom.

### **12. Should a Christian be baptised in water?**

When Jesus came to be baptised by John the Baptist, He said to John “Please baptise Me for I must do all that is right in My Father’s sight”... a paraphrase of Matthew 3 v 15. And so John baptised Jesus in the river Jordan. Later in His earthly ministry, Jesus commissioned His disciples with the following command in Matthew 28 v 19 “Go and make disciples in all nations baptising them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach these disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.”

The disciples went forth to fulfil the commandment they had received. In Acts 2 v 38 Peter’s message on the day of Pentecost was; “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

Jesus has commanded us to be baptised and to preach baptism.

What further instruction should a Christian need? Let us be obedient to Jesus’ command and be baptised.

### **13.** *Is it true that in baptism one must be totally immersed into water?*

The Greek word “baptizo” is the word used in the New Testament books for baptism. The literal meaning of this Greek word is “to consecrate by putting into.” Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist in the river Jordan by being immersed into the water as recorded in Matthew 3 v 15.

The Apostle John, a disciple of Jesus built a Basilica in Selcuk, Turkey where he baptised thousands of new believers by immersion. The baptistry remains in the remains of the Basilica today.

The act of baptism for the believer, not only has spiritual significance through obedience to Christ's command, but also has a symbolic meaning.

Being lowered into the water and completely immersed; then being raised up again, is a wonderful picture of the believer's experience in Christ, as the believer dies to their old ways; is buried with Christ and washed clean; and then rises to new life in Christ (Romans 6 v 4).

New Testament baptism is baptism by immersion because in baptism we see how our old evil nature died with Christ, and then we come up out of death with Him into a new life, because we trust the Word of the mighty God who raised Christ from the dead (Read Colossians 2 v 12).

### **14.** *The Lord Jesus was baptised in the Holy Spirit when He was baptised in the Jordan by John. Can a Christian expect this to happen too?*

John the Baptist testified at the baptism of Jesus, that at the time God sent him to baptise and preach repentance, God told him that when he saw the Holy Spirit descending and resting upon someone, then he would know he was the one who would baptise with the Holy Spirit. Read John 1 v 33.

Jesus Christ is the one who has come to baptise with the Holy Spirit (Luke 24 v 49). He instructed his disciples in Acts 1 v 5; “For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” On the day of Pentecost, the disciples received the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Read Acts 2 v 1- 4). Later on other believers received the baptism in the Holy Spirit too. (Acts 10 v 44 - 48 and Acts 19 v 5 – 7). We should expect to receive this mighty baptism to powerfully testify about Christ and spread the good news. (Acts 1 v 8).

Furthermore, we are not only to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but we are also to teach it according to Christ's command to us in Matthew 28 v 18-20, “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Receive all of God's empowerment for a victorious, powerful Christian life. Ask in faith, believing the Lord Jesus to give you the gift of the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Read Luke 11 v 13 & Ephesians 5 v 18).

### **15.** *What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?*

The baptism in the Holy Spirit, is an endowment of power to equip the believer to victoriously proclaim Christ and serve the Lord (Acts 1 v 4 - 5).

Following Christ's resurrection, He appeared unto the disciples many times. In John 20 v 19 - 23 it is recorded that Jesus breathed on the disciples and said to them “‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’ And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.’ Through this experience of receiving the breath of the Spirit, the disciples were born again. At another of these meetings, He told the disciples not to leave Jerusalem until they had received the promise of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1 v 4 - 5, “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Later on He spoke to the disciples about this matter, and said; “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Read Acts 1 v 8 & Luke 24 v 49)

Now these things about which Jesus spoke were fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2 v 1 - 4).

Peter explained this event to the great crowd present; “Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: ‘Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and

daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men, and women I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ ‘Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. David said about him: ‘I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.’ ‘Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, ‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’ ‘Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.’ ‘When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2 v 17 - 39).

This age in which we live is the time of grace, the last period before Christ returns and to all who believe in Christ in this time, is available the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Two further incidents of believers being baptised in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues and prophesying are recorded in Acts. Read Acts 10 v 44 – 48, and Acts 19 v 5 - 7.

## **16. *Is prayer necessary?***

Prayer is the most meaningful way the Christian uses to communicate with God. God desires a deep personal relationship with us and this is developed through a prayerful life that not only converses with God, but also waits, listens discerns and knows His voice too.

The believer is commanded to pray (1 Thessalonians 5 v 17,18) “pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

It is God’s intention that through prayer the believer will receive many blessings. Some of these blessing are:

- To receive strength; 1 Chronicles 16 v 11
- To receive the answer to our needs; Matthew 7 v 7; Acts 4 v 31
- Ability to resist temptation; Matthew 26 v 41
- To be full of joy; John 16 v 24
- Rejoicing in answers to prayer; Psalm 91 v 15
- Increasing faith Mark; 11 v 24
- Knowledge of God’s ways; Deuteronomy 10 v 12 - 13

Furthermore the Bible instructs us to be persistent in prayer (Luke 18 v 1 - 8), whole hearted (Jeremiah 29 v 13), with a right attitude towards God (James 5 v 16), remembering to pray for fellow believers (Ephesians 6 v 18 - 20), that the will of God may be done in the earth (Matthew 6 v 10).

Every Christian should have a time to pray and should make prayer part of their daily activities. Prayer is conversing with God.

## **17. *How do we know that our prayers are answered? Will God answer all my prayers?***

Jesus said to His disciples concerning answers to prayer: “Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. “I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” If you only have faith in God and really believe without a doubt, you can pray for anything and you have it. But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive you your sins too” (Mark 11 v 22 - 25).

In Psalm 91 v 14 - 16 the Lord says, “Because he loves me,”

says the LORD, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation. Because you love Me, I will rescue you; I will make you great because you trust in My Name. When you call on Me, I will answer, I will be with you in trouble and rescue you and honour you. I will satisfy you with a full life and give you salvation.”

These are the two pre-requisites of answered prayer; love for God, and a right relationship with God (holiness).

And in John 15 v 7 Jesus gave this wonderful promise to His disciples; “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other.”

Sometimes we do not receive answers to prayer. Causes can be;

- Sin in the heart; Isaiah 59 v 2
- Disobedience to God’s command; Deuteronomy 1 v 45
- Instability of desire; James 1 v 6 -7
- Desires of self-indulgence; James 4 v 3
- Request not according to God’s will; 2 Samuel 12 v 15 – 23, and 2 Corinthians 12 v 8 - 9

### **18.** *What does it mean “To pray in the Spirit?”*

When we pray and intercede before our Heavenly Father, we need to pray according to the will and purposes of God for our praying to be effective. “Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. We need to be led by the Spirit of God in prayer, for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (Romans 8 v 14).

In Ephesians 6 v 18 Paul exhorts the Ephesian Christians “to pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit and be on guard to pray with all perseverance for your fellow believers in Christ.”

This “praying in the Spirit”, is made possible through faith. “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit

intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will” (Romans 8 v 26 – 27). Paul experienced this type of prayer and instructed the Corinthian Church in its function and operation. This is found in 1 Corinthians 14 v 12 - 16; “If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. Well then, what shall I do, I will do both. I will pray in unknown tongues and I will pray with the understanding.... I thank God I speak in tongues privately more than any of you, but in public worship, I speak so that people can understand me and be helped.”

But praying in the Spirit is not always prayer in an unknown language. 2 Samuel 7 v 27 refers to the time when King David was praying, he found it in his heart to pray for the building of the temple to the Lord because the Lord revealed unto him that this was God’s will.

The key to “praying in the Spirit”, is faith. Faith allows God to instruct the believer what to pray for or to pray through the believer as a yielded vessel to His will and purposes. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11 v 6).

### **19.** *What is the significance of Bible Reading?*

The Bible is the Word of God revealed to mankind. It is God speaking to mankind. To read it is to allow God to speak to you. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to produce divine life in us (Hebrews 4 v 12 & Luke 11 v 28).

Store God’s Word in your heart and you will receive the following benefits;

- Keep you from sin; Psalm 119 v 11
- Give you direction in life; Psalm 119 v 105
- Make you wise and give you joy; Psalm 19 v 8
- Reveal to you that Jesus is the Son of God and in Him is eternal life; John 20 v 31
- Teach us patience and give encouragement; Romans 15 v 4
- Give us examples of how God deals with man; 1 Corinthians 10 v 11

The New Testament Christians searched the scriptures daily (Acts 17 v 2) and so should we also. We should have a systematic programme of reading through the Bible. Even reading four chapters a day, it will take a year to read through the Bible. It is also important for new Christians to study a passage of the New Testament each day, so that the Holy Spirit can instruct you in how to live the Christian life.

In Matthew 22 v 29 Jesus spoke to the Jewish religious leaders and said, “Your error is caused by your ignorance of the scriptures and of God’s power.”

Finally, Paul wrote to Timothy to encourage him in the study of

the scriptures; “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of God” (2 Timothy 2 v 15).

## **20.** *Who comprises the true Church?*

How do we know what is the true Church? The church is not a building or an incorporation! It is a living organism of people who are born again by the Spirit of God and Christ's love into a Living Temple. This is the Body of Christ, the true church. (Acts 20 v 28; Col. 1 v 17- 24)

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (Eph 4 v 15 & 16).

The Church comprises the citizens of the Kingdom of God here on earth. Jesus Christ, Who is the head of the Church stated that no man can enter the Kingdom except he be born again (John 3 v 3). “Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.” “But the time is coming and now is when the true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. God is a Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth (John 4 v 23 - 24).”

The word used in the New Testament for Church is the Greek word “ekklesia”, which, literally translated means “called out ones”. Members of the true Church are those who have separated themselves from the world, the flesh, the devil and idols (2 Corinthians 6 v 17 - 18).

## **21.** *Why are there so many denominations in Christianity?*

It is clear from the New Testament that the Churches of that time were known by the name of the city in which they dwelt (Philippians 1 v 1; 1 Corinthians 1 v 2b).

However, after the third century A.D. the spiritual life of the Church gradually declined until the Middle Ages. From that time onward God has initiated the restoration and revelation of biblical truth to the Church by moving in the hearts of godly men and women. People such as Calvin, Luther, Wycliffe, Bullinger, Hooper, Booth, John and Charles Wesley, the Anna Baptists, Count von Zinzendorf and the Moravians, Madame Guyon, the Evan Roberts, the Jefferies, Smith Wigglesworth, and Mother Theresa and many others all experienced a revelation of biblical

truth in a unique way compared to the understanding of the established Church of the day.

To be true to their revelation from God these people all found it necessary to break out of the ecclesiastical order of the day to give expression to this belief. Most of these movements created denominations.

Throughout history mankind has sought to remember special encounters with God by building monuments, temples, tabernacles or giving special names to the place where it occurred. (Genesis 35 v 14, 15; 2 Samuel 18 v 18) Future generations have often lost sight of the purpose and experience of godly people from previous generations.

God's purpose and plan in the lives of true believers is to prepare them for the return of Christ (2 Peter 3 v 14 - 15; Eph 5 v 25 - 27). He is returning for a glorious Church. The movement of God's Spirit in preparation for Christ's return will challenge historic movements to move with His Spirit in order to embrace all of God's purposes and truths.

Let us be those who are zealous for Christ's return and will challenge those in our denominations to live a Christ-centred life through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **22.** *Is regular church attendance important?*

One of the evidences of a person's salvation is the desire they have to worship and praise God and their love for other Christians. Attending Church enables the believer to do both of these things.

The New Testament believers met together constantly and shared everything with each other. They worshipped together regularly at the Temple each day, met in groups in their homes for communion, and shared their meals with great joy and thankfulness, praising God. The whole city was favourable to them and each day God added to them all who were being saved (Acts 2 v 44 - 47).

Paul wrote to the Hebrew Christians and said; “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10 v 25).

Jesus attended the synagogue every Sabbath day and read the scriptures (Luke 4 v 16).

Attend a Church where Christ is worshipped, praised and exalted and Christians' love one another, and the scriptures are taught, and you will grow spiritually. Make this a matter of earnest prayer.

### **23.** *Should a Christian become a church member?*

Following salvation and water baptism, prayerfully ask God's guidance about which Church you should attend and become identified with. Remember, a church is a local expression of part of the Body of Christ (the family of God). As a member of the family, you will want to be identified with the family and involved in the growth and life of the family members (Romans 8 v 15; Hebrews 2 v 11 - 13, Ephesians 5 v 23).

In Colossians 2 v 19 we read that "the Head, (Christ) from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow." This teaches us that as the body is knit together and committed one to another, each member of the body can experience the growth that God intends for the whole body.

In the New Testament Church, we read that the new believers linked themselves with the Church as soon as they were saved and baptised (Acts 2 v 41; Acts 2 v 47).

### **24.** *To which church should a Christian give his tithes?*

The Bible instructs all believers to pay tithes and give offerings; "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."

Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 16 v 1 - 3); "Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem." In 2 Corinthians 8 v 1-5 we read that the Churches in Macedonia, which were experiencing much trouble and hard times, took up an abundant offering for the suffering saints in Jerusalem, but only after giving themselves afresh to the Lord for whatever God might direct them to do.

The principle which appears from scripture appears to be; tithes are given to the Church where you are a member and receive your spiritual food, nourishment and pastoral care for the support of the ministry of that Church.

Offerings are to be given to other areas where there are needy saints and as the Lord directs, but these will be usually collected through the local Church. Jesus taught his disciples "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with

the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Luke 6 v 38).

### **25.** *What does it mean to keep the Sabbath Day holy?*

In creation, God set an example for mankind that for one in every seven days, mankind should rest from normal work and that the seventh day should be holy (Genesis 2 v 1- 3).

When God gave the Ten Commandments to the Children of Israel (Exodus 20 v 8 -11) He instructed them to work six days only, and to rest from work on the seventh day.

But when Jesus came to earth, He rebuked the Pharisees, because they had made the Sabbath day a hardship to the people by their teaching. Jesus said to them: "The Sabbath was made for man, (by resting) not man for the Sabbath. "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath"(Mark 2 v 27 – 28).

The early New Testament Church met on the Sabbath in the Synagogue, but as time passed and they were continually in conflict with the Jewish leaders, they commenced meeting for worship on the first day of the week (Acts 13 v 14 - 15; Acts 13 v 44 - 52; Acts 20 v 7; 1 Corinthians 16 v 2). This also identified the new Christians with Christ's resurrection which was on the first day of the week (Mark 16 v 2). For Christians the setting aside of one day a week to meet together to worship God and fellowship with other Christians has become the New Testament fulfilment of the Old Testament pattern. In Christ, all things become new (2 Corinthians 5 v 17).

### **26.** *Should a Christian drink intoxicating drinks and use narcotics?*

Drunkenness and drug addition are very prominent in the world today, and their consumption is promoted by major world financial and political powers because of the significant amount of revenue the sale of liquor creates. The people of the world are not only under commercial pressures to consume intoxicating drink and drugs, but Satan is also doing all he can to ensnare people in this wickedness.

By these means, Satan is trying to destroy people's lives. In 1 Peter 5 v 8 - 9 we are instructed, "Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your Christian brothers and sisters all over the world are going through the same kind of suffering you are."

God has made mankind in a unique way so that in order to resist temptation, they must have control of their mind and

heart. Satan is actively promoting such things as narcotics and intoxicating drink because when a person is under the influence of these substances, they lose their will power.

In Proverbs 25 v 28 we read, "A person without self-control is like a city with broken-down walls." Such a city is not able to resist the attacks of an enemy. And so it is with mankind. With their ability to choose deadened by alcohol and drugs, they are unable to resist Satan and are open to all manner of evil powers invading their life.

Proverbs 20 v 1 says, "Wine produces mockers; alcohol leads to brawls. Those led astray by drink cannot be wise." Paul instructed the Galatian Christians... "When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarrelling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God." Refer to Galatians 5 v 19 - 21. For further reading refer to Romans 13 v 13; Ephesians 5 v 18; Proverbs 23 v 20; Proverbs 23 v 29 - 31; 1 Corinthians 6 v 19.

Finally, let us abstain from all such destructive things, for "There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death" (Proverbs 16 v 25).

## **27. Should a Christian use tobacco?**

"Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living" (Romans 6 v 16 - 18).

The Bible teaches that Christians should subdue all lusts and desires of the body, and that the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us should control our thoughts and deeds. In 1 Peter 4 v 1 - 5 we read that even if our body suffers pain, in order to subdue its passions and desires we should endure this with God's help so that we will not spend the rest of our lives chasing after evil desires, but will have the strength to do the will of God. Let the Spirit of Christ rule in your hearts.

Smoking is also damaging to our health and the Bible instructs us to take care of our bodies, for they are the temple of the Holy Spirit which we should not defile (1 Corinthians 3 v 16 - 17).

"Jesus Christ took our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you

are healed. (1 Peter 2 v 24). There is deliverance from every habit of sin in Jesus Christ.

## **28. Should Christians attend places of worldly amusement?**

Many forms of worldly entertainment have an adverse effect on a Christian's spiritual life and defile the conscience. They present temptation to the Christian and should be avoided.

Clubs, theatres, bars, discos, casino's, rock music concerts etc, are not consistent with the fruit of the Holy Spirit but identify with the works of the flesh as described in Galatians 5 v 19 - 26. The Christian has no part in these things. A Christian should be careful what T.V. programmes they watch and take care to be selective in the music they listen too.

Be careful to refresh yourself physically and mentally with wholesome recreation on a regular basis so that your body and mind will have the capability to do all that God wants to do in you and through you. Keep your recreation in this perspective, and it will assist you to be effective in God's work.

In 1 Corinthians 5 v 11 Paul advised his disciples not to have anything to do with Christians who were sexually immoral, greedy, idolators, slanderers, drunkards, or swindlers. He stated that we should not even eat with such people.

## **29. What happens if a new Christian does something wrong?**

God understands and knows the need of mankind, and He has provided some wonderful promises for the Christian to give encouragement and help when we are discouraged by our mistakes.

First, He forgives us and cleanses us if we confess our mistakes to Him 1 John 1 v 9.

He has promised to supply the answer to all our needs according to the riches that are in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4 v 19).

Jesus Christ the Son of God is our High Priest who has gone to heaven itself to help us; "So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most" (Hebrews 4 v 14 - 16).

Finally, "for every child of God defeats this evil world and we achieve this victory through our faith. And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is

the Son of God”(1 John 5 v 4 - 5). God is faithful and He will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able to stand (1Corinthians 10 v 13).

### **30.** *How do you help a Christian who has backslidden?*

“Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other’s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.”(Galatians 6 v 1 - 3).

We are also to pray in faith; with fasting if God instructs you; “Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results”(James 5 v 15 - 16).

2 Peter 1 v 1 - 10 instructs us about the things we should do that will ensure we never fall. Minister this passage of scripture to your backslidden brother or sister. Expect God to do a miracle in their life.

### **31.** *What if a Christian becomes depressed and discouraged?*

King David often became depressed and discouraged, but he had learned a wonderful way of dealing with his feelings at such a time: Psalm 42 v 11, “Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and my God!”

Praise and worship of God is the most rapid exit from depression and discouragement. Praise Him for all the wonderful blessings He has given you in the past. Make a list of what he has done for you. Thank Him for each blessing. Praise Him for what He is going to do in the future.

David also wrote in Psalm 37 v 23 - 24: “The LORD directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the LORD holds them by the hand.”

Paul and Silas had every reason to be depressed and discouraged when they were cast into prison in Acts 16 v 23 - 26, but they prayed and sang praises to God, and so God worked a miracle for their release and the jailor was converted, with his household.

The Apostle Paul faced many hardships, trials and persecution. He wrote a marvellous passage of scripture to help us when we are facing hardship. Romans 5 v 1 - 5 instructs us “to rejoice when we run into problems and trials, for we know they are good for us, they help us learn to be patient, and this develops strength of character and that gives us confident hope. This hope will not disappoint us.”

Remember, God is with you. Allow Him to speak to you through His word; cry out to Him in prayer, praise Him with a favourite hymn or chorus.

Finally, depression may have a physical cause as a result of some sickness in your body, and you should seek medical advice and prayer for healing if it persists.

### **32.** *What is sanctification?*

The word sanctification means being “set apart” unto God. It involves holiness, cleansing and purification.

From the time you are born again into the Kingdom of God, the Holy Spirit works in your life to sanctify your life for God’s purposes. Every action that you do and experience after salvation that draws you closer to God and makes you more Christ-like, is part of the work of sanctification in your life.

For us to experience sanctification, we need to yield to the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives so through the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ “we will be a vessel of honour, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work (NASB)”(2 Timothy 2 v 21; Romans 15 v 16; 1 Corinthians 1 v 30).

## **D. DEVELOPING STRONG FAITH**

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### **33.** *What is saving faith?*

Jesus said, “And I the Messiah came to save the lost” (Matt 18 v 11). Jesus is also recorded in John 12 v 47 as saying “for I came to save the world and not to judge it”. God is concerned for all his creation, and wants everyone to come to the knowledge of His saving grace. “Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law”(Romans 3 v 28). Faith pleases God, and we have all been given faith even if it is as small as a mustard seed. Paul said in Galatians 2 v 19, “For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So I died to the law—I stopped trying to meet all its requirements—so that I might live for God”. “So faith comes from hearing that is, hearing the Good News about Christ” (Romans 10 v 17).

### **34.** *How do I grow in faith?*

Jesus' disciples asked Jesus the same question one day. Read Luke 17 v 5 – 6 for the amazing answer He gave them. "The disciples said to the Lord, "Show us how to increase our faith. The Lord answered, "If you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'May you be uprooted and thrown into the sea,' and it would obey you!"

"And it is impossible to please God without faith, anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him" (Hebrews 11 v 6). "So faith comes from hearing that is, hearing the Good News about Christ"(Romans 10 v 17). This Good News will feed your faith and help it grow. It is important to read the Bible, particularly the stories of the life of Christ in the four gospels. It is also important to pray and talk to God about every aspect of your life. Pray for the needs of others as well. God will answer your prayers and this will help you grow in faith. Jesus taught His disciples about faith in Matthew 21 v 21 - 22 "Then Jesus told them, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and don't doubt, you can do things like this and much more. You can even say to this mountain, 'May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and it will happen. You can pray for anything, and if you have faith, you will receive it."

### **35.** *How can my faith become strong?*

The Apostle Paul encouraged us to grow in our faith by allowing our faith to be tested. We read about this testing process in Romans 5 verses 1 - 5. Like most things in life we can only know how genuine they are when we use them. "Our righteousness in Christ has been made possible through faith in His promises. Because of our faith in God's promises he has brought us into a place of highest privilege, where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to actually becoming all that God has in mind for us to be. Place your faith and trust in Christ each time you face a test or trial and you will grow in faith. The exercise and practice of our faith pleases God.

### **36.** *What is dead faith?*

Dead faith occurs when we believe in someone, something or some system that does not have the power to respond or does not love us enough to bother to listen or grant us our requests. Idols do not have power to love us and answer our prayers. Most idol worshippers have to spend their time appeasing the needs of the idol. Idols usually demand things from their followers. They are made from the creation rather than being the Creator. In Hebrews 9 v 14 it states "Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we

can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins."

### **37.** *What is the relationship between faith and miracles?*

Jesus taught us that our faith is not necessarily essential to perform miracles. He raised Lazarus, a man who had been dead for four days. Lazarus was dead so he had no faith. Refer to John 11 v 1 – 45. Jesus referred to some people who have little faith like a mustard seed; read Matt 17 v 20. In Luke 7 v 9 Jesus commended a Roman Captain for having great faith. This Captain believed his servant boy back home at his house would be healed based on Jesus distant command, without having to see the evidence; read Luke 7 v 1 – 10. Bartimaeus was a blind man who shouted out to Jesus. Jesus asked him what he wanted. He said he wanted to see. Jesus said to him, "your faith has healed you." Peter had little faith but he walked on water; read Matt 14 v 25 – 34. Whatever faith we have, when we give it to God he can perform a miracle. This is a principle that God wants us to use throughout our life. Whether we have the widow's last coin or great faith like the Roman Captain, when we give all we have to God he will do something miraculous with it. After all, He is the God of creation. He spoke the Word and the worlds came into being. However, there are times when God does a miracle we do not expect just because of His amazing grace, demonstrating His power so we will glorify Him.

### **38.** *Why does faith please God?*

Faith is an expression of trust between people in a loving relationship. God strongly desires a meaningful relationship with everyone. For that relationship to be meaningful we must place our trust in God. This faith pleases God and he diligently rewards those who sincerely seek Him and place their faith and trust in Him. "And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him" (Hebrews 11 v 6). What is faith? "Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation." God blessed these men and women of faith in the Bible. Faith in God also gives us a worldview, and an explanation for how the world came about and its purpose. This helps us live God's way. By faith we believe what He has told us through His Word, we act upon it, and that pleases God.

### 39. *Why do Christians fast?*

“And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and dishevelled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth that is the only reward they will ever get. But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you”(Matt 6 v 16 – 18). We conclude from this passage that fasting is between God and the person fasting. You do not fast to impress anyone. The act of fasting requires self-denial and it helps us subdue fleshly desires and discipline our bodies. Fasting is also a way we can show God that we are serious about a breakthrough in the matter we are fasting about. In Matt 17 v 21 Jesus taught his disciples that there were certain demonic powers that would not be dislodged and dethroned without fasting. An elderly prophetess, Anna spent her days in the Temple worshipping, praying and often fasting. She had the privilege of prophesying that Mary’s child was the Messiah and Saviour Israel had been hoping for. Read about this in Luke 2 v 36 – 40. Increased spiritual power and greater sensitivity to the Holy Spirit is associated with fasting. Therefore a Christian can regularly fast, as they seek greater power from God. However, Christians with medical conditions must seek advice from their doctors before fasting. Fasting can help detoxify the body of harmful elements. Some people increase their spiritual hunger and discipline their bodies by fasting regularly. In Acts 13 verses 2 - 3 we read about the leaders of the Church at Antioch, “One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Dedicate Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them.” So after more fasting and prayer, the men laid their hands on them and sent them on their way.” It seems that God requires fasting at the time we hold presbyteries for the setting apart of leaders in the Church of Jesus Christ. This concept of fasting at times of presbytery or appointing leaders was also recorded in Acts 14 verse 23.

## **E. GROWING IN GODLY CHARACTER**

### 40. *What is the difference between a follower and a disciple of Christ?*

A follower of Jesus Christ can be simply that, one who follows. A follower does not necessarily seek to obey Christ or accept the message Jesus preached. They may be attracted to the message but not ready to commit themselves to be a servant of Christ. A disciple is one who is committed to the Lordship of

Christ in their life. The disciple is one who seeks a relationship with Christ that leads them to become disciplined, to obey the teachings of Christ, live in the power of the Holy Spirit, and make disciples of others who will also make disciples of others. Disciple-making was Jesus strategy to spread the gospel of the Kingdom of God throughout the whole earth. It is inherently a transformational multiplication strategy so the good news of the Kingdom of God will reach everyone on earth. Jesus last command to his disciples is found in Matthew 28 v 19 – 20, “Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” The people carrying the good news to the nations need to represent Jesus Christ by being like Him.

That is why He invites us to be His disciples. Disciples are people who are seeking to live like Christ, multiply His Kingdom, and live disciplined lives to obey His commands under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

### 41. *Why is it important to develop godly character as a Christian?*

Jesus Christ did not die on the cross to enable us to become Christians for one week or one month or one year. He died that we may live with Him for eternity. We were born again into the Kingdom of God for a lifetime of effective service as a disciple of Christ. To last the distance of a lifetime we need to have a good foundation. The Apostles, Paul, Peter and John taught that leaders in the Church should be leaders because of their godly character. Paul taught us in 1 Tim 3 v 1- 16 that deacons, elders, pastors and bishops should all be persons selected because of their godly character. The list of character attributes is contained in this passage of scripture and it is synonymous with the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians Chapter 5 v 22. In contrast Paul reminds us what the lusts or works of the flesh are in Galatians 5 v 15 – 21, and he concludes that people who live this way “shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Paul warns Timothy about how difficult it will be to live as a Christian in the last days. Read 2 Timothy chapter 3 verses 1 – 17. Cooperating with the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives will produce the fruit of the Spirit and that will develop godly character in us. We need the pure and unconditional love of Christ as the motive for our ministry for Christ, to His Body, and to the world. The Spirit produces this fruit in us. Jesus taught us in John 15 that He is the Vine and we are the branches. The Father is the Gardener. He inspects the branches for fruit and cuts off the unfruitful branches. Verse 4 -5 states “Remain in me, and I will remain in you, for a branch

cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”

#### **42.** *What is integrity and how do I attain it?*

Integrity is present when a person has the qualities of faithfulness, trustworthiness, honesty, reliability, truthfulness and self-control. The teachings of the Bible especially those of Jesus Christ and the early Apostles, Paul, James, Peter and John teach us a lot about integrity.

Paul said “There are three things that remain – faith, hope and love – the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13 v 13). Trust is based on love. If we do not love one another we will not trust one another. A person of integrity will love others unconditionally.

1 Timothy 3 v 2 says that elders, if they are married must be husbands who are faithful to one wife. This standard indicates that the husband is a man of integrity. In Ephesians 4 verses 14 – 16 Paul states that we indicate our maturity in Christ when “we lovingly follow the truth, living truly – and so become more and more in every way like Christ who is the head of His body, the Church.” Loving the truth is an indication of integrity.

James taught in James 3 verse 2 “If anyone can control his tongue, it proves that he has perfect control over himself in every other way.” Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1 verses 3 – 8 “For you know him better, he will give you, through his great power everything you need to live a truly good life: he even shares his own glory and his own goodness with us! And by that same mighty power he has given us all the other rich and wonderful blessings he promised; for instance the promise to save us from the lust and rottenness around us, and to give us his own character. But to obtain these gifts, you need more faith; you must also work hard to be good, and even that is not enough, For then you must learn to know God better, and discover what he wants you to do. Next learn to put aside your own desires so that you will become patient and godly, gladly letting God have his way with you. This will make possible the next step, which is for you to enjoy other people, and like them, for you will grow to love them deeply. The more you go on in this way, the more you will grow and become spiritually strong and become fruitful and useful to our Lord Jesus Christ.” These are the steps we can take to be people of integrity. People of integrity can be trusted and may become great leaders. Proverbs 11 v 3 states; “The integrity of the upright will guide them.”

King David who wrote Psalm 15, gives the reason why it is important to be a person of integrity and then he gives us eight principles that will guide us to be people of integrity; “Who may

worship in your sanctuary, LORD? Who may enter your presence on your holy hill? (or who may enter His presence?); Those who lead blameless lives (people of integrity) and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts; Those who refuse to gossip or harm their neighbours or speak evil of their friends; Those who despise flagrant sinners, and honour the faithful followers of the LORD, and keep their promises even when it hurts; Those who lend money without charging interest, and who cannot be bribed to lie about the innocent. Such people will stand firm forever.”

#### **43.** *How does a person become a deacon?*

Deacons must be the same sort of good steady people as pastors (elders) as in Pauls’ writings to Timothy in 1 Timothy 3 verses 1 - 7. In addition to that “they must not be heavy drinkers and must not be greedy for money. They must be earnest, wholehearted followers of Christ who is the hidden Source of their faith. Before they are asked to be deacons they should be given other jobs in the Church as a test of their character and ability, and if they do well, then they may be chosen as deacons.” In the RSV version of the Bible 1 Timothy 3 verse 11 it states that “women likewise should be deacons who are serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things.”

So a deacon is chosen for their character qualifications and faithful service in the Church. A deacon is worthy to be an elder/pastor when they show by the faithful way they pastor and shepherd the flock of God that they are ready for the office of an elder/pastor. Read 1 Timothy 3 verse 13.

#### **44.** *What are the qualifications of an elder?*

In 1 Timothy chapter 3 verses 1 - 7 we read the list of qualifications of an elder or pastor. This is a trustworthy saying: “If someone aspires to be an elder, he desires an honourable position.” So an elder must be a person whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money. He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God’s church? An elder must not be a new believer, because he might become proud, and the devil would cause him to fall. Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not be disgraced and fall into the devil’s trap.” The Bible teaches that when a husband and wife are married the two become one. Read Genesis 2 verse 24; Matthew 19 verse 5; Mark 10 verse 8;

Ephesians 5 verse 31; and 1 Corinthians 7 verse 39. This Biblical teaching on oneness implies that a wife shares the office of the husband in ministry and vice versa. We are made in the image of God and share the oneness of His nature.

## **F. WHAT'S THE KINGDOM OF GOD?**

### **45. *How do you enter the Kingdom of God?***

A Jewish religious leader called Nicodemus a Pharisee asked this question of Jesus in secret one night. Jesus' gives the answer. In John chapter 3 verses 3 - 21 "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." "What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?" Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit." "How are these things possible?" Nicodemus asked. Jesus replied, "You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don't understand these things? I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won't believe our testimony. But if you don't believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven. And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. All who do evil hate the light, and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants."

To be born again we repent of our sin or self-centred way of living, and ask Jesus Christ into our heart/spirit so we are born again spiritually and the Holy Spirit comes into our heart/spirit

and makes us a new person. In 2 Corinthians 5 verses 17 - 21 we read; "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ."

The disciples experienced this new birth, or being born again, in the upper room after the resurrection of Jesus. This is recorded in John 20 v 19 - 22. Jesus breathed on the disciples and said "receive the Holy Spirit".

### **46. *Can we see the Kingdom of God?***

In Luke 17 v 20 Jesus taught his disciples that the Kingdom of God is an invisible kingdom. He said that the Kingdom of God is not ushered in by visible signs. "You won't be able to say, 'Here it is' or 'Its over there!' For the kingdom of God is among you."

Jesus did describe in Luke 21 v 5 - 36 certain events that would take place at the time the Kingdom of God would be near. The Apostle Paul testified about the Kingdom of God in Romans 14 v 17. He wrote "For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." We conclude that the Kingdom of God is the rule and reign of Christ's Spirit in the life of a believer. His presence in us dethrones the self-centred power in our spirit and invites the Holy Spirit to rule and reign over our lives. The government of this invisible Kingdom extends its influence on earth through its citizens being surrendered to the Spirit's dominion in us. We see the kingdom of God manifest in the life actions of disciples' of Christ.

### **47. *What is the evidence that the Kingdom of God exists?***

The evidence that the Kingdom of God exists is found in the transformed lives of the disciples' of Christ.

When they pray and the power of God is released in miracles and healings we know that the Kingdom of God is present. The Kingdom of God is manifest in a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, Romans 14 v 17. The constraint of evil and darkness through prayer, believers' power over demons, and healing the sick are evidences of the existence of the Kingdom of God.

#### **48.** *What is the difference between preaching the gospel and proclaiming the Kingdom of God?*

Preaching the gospel is proclaiming the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ by trusting in His atoning work on the cross, paying the penalty of our sins. The gospel of the Kingdom of God is the good news that Christ's Kingdom has the power to reign over all other kingdoms, and it will manifest that power in an ultimate way one day in the future at the return of Christ. The Kingdom of God refers to the government of Christ and its relationship to all other kingdoms. Once a person accepts Christ into their life they can then live under the rule and reign of the Kingdom of God. Matthew 24 v 14 instructs us that this gospel of the Kingdom must be proclaimed to all ethnic people groups before Christ will come again. God's justice demands the completeness of this proclamation to all peoples before the day of Judgement. This great task requires many workers (Matthew 9 v 35) and we are invited to be one of those workers. The proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom challenges opposing powers and results in signs and wonders as recorded in Matthew 4 v 23 - 25.

#### **49.** *Will the Kingdom of God replace the Government of my nation?*

The Kingdom of God will not replace the Government of your nation until the time that Jesus Christ returns to the earth in the power of His glorious might. In Revelation 11 v 15 it states; "The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdoms of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever. And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying:

"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great, and for destroying those who destroy the earth."

The further unfolding drama of end-time events is also recorded in Revelation 17 v 12 - 14; 17; "The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called chosen and faithful followers...."

v 17; "For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God's words are fulfilled."

Finally in Ephesians 1 v 18 - 23 Paul gives us a glimpse of the scope of Christ's power and authority; "I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way."

## **G. WHAT ABOUT GOVERNMENTS AND THOSE IN AUTHORITY?**

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#### **50.** *Should I obey my Government and its laws?*

God's people obey those in authority unless they are choosing or being forced to do evil. The prophet John gives us insight into the work of evil and good in nations and leadership in Revelation 11 v 15. "The whole world has now become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever. The twenty-four elders sitting on their thrones before God fell with their faces to the ground and worshiped him. And they said, "We give thanks to you, Lord God, the Almighty, the one who is and who always was, for now you have assumed your great power and have begun to reign. The nations were filled with wrath, but now the time of your wrath has come. It is time to judge the dead and reward your servants the prophets, as well as your holy people, and all who fear your name, from the least to the greatest. It is time to destroy all who have caused destruction on the earth." This is a reference to people who disobeyed authorities and brought havoc to the earth.

Paul instructed Timothy to "pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity"(1 Tim 2 v 2). From the wisdom of King Solomon we learn, "When the godly are in authority, the people rejoice, but when the wicked are in power, they groan" (Proverbs 29 v 2).

In Romans 13 Paul instructs the Roman Christians to be in subjection to the governing authorities, because they are

established by God. Resisting authority opposes the ordinance of God. Rulers are not feared by those who do good. Pay taxes and customs duties to those who whom it is due. Acts 5 v 29 records that Peter and the apostles had to obey God rather than man, when the authorities opposed what God was doing in Jerusalem. From this we conclude that Christians should obey those in authority unless they pass laws that directly contradict God's commandments. It is permissible for Christians participate in civil disobedience.

### **51.** *Are Christians meant to respect authority?*

Peter teaches that people who do not respect authority have an evil heart. 2 Peter 2 v 10 – 11 states; “God is especially hard on those who follow their own twisted sexual desire, and who despise authority. These people are proud and arrogant, daring even to scoff at supernatural beings without so much as trembling. But the angels, who are far greater in power and strength, do not dare to bring from the Lord a charge of blasphemy against those supernatural beings.” If we do not respect those in authority, we will not receive respect when we become leaders and people with authority. Disrespect for authority leads to anarchy, a state of chaos in society. It is very difficult to develop Christian community where there is an absence of love and trust. Respect for all members of a community is essential for a loving caring community to function. Paul writes to Timothy concerning deacons; “A deacon must be faithful to his wife, and he must manage his children and household well. Those who do well as deacons will be rewarded with respect from others, and will have increased confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 3 v 12 - 13)”

### **52.** *Jesus taught radical ideas; should we be rebels?*

Some of Jesus radical ideas and actions were; love your neighbour as yourself, when someone hits you turn the other cheek, care for the Samaritans, (despised and marginalised people), heal the lepers (outcasts), show hospitality and pay the cost of care for total strangers, heal the invading army captain's servant, go the second mile, lend money for no return, don't judge others, the kingdom of God gives honour to those who are the least on earth. Jesus turned water into wine, He inspected fig trees for fruit and cursed the unfruitful tree, He stilled a storm, He encouraged Peter to walk on water, railed against religious leaders whose hearts were hard and cold. He also fed 5,000 with one boy's lunch box.

Most of the kingdoms of this earth are ruled by dominating evil influences and people motivated by self interest. Jesus taught

that his Kingdom had the opposite values of these dominating, controlling earthly kingdoms. His Kingdom seeks freedom and liberty and it is counter-revolutionary to earthly kingdoms. They operate through domination, the abuse power, and seek control. In that sense we could say that Christians, as disciples of Jesus Christ, are called to dethrone the powers of evil kingdoms of domination, through discernment, spiritual power, resistance, and advocacy, (not military power), to set the captives free, and pray that His kingdom would come on earth as it is in heaven.

### **53.** *Is democracy a Christian form of Government?*

Democracy is a system of government that seeks to grant every adult the right to vote and participate in the electoral process. Essentially it welcomes freedom, and thrives on trust and truth. The candidates standing for election must speak truthfully about their intentions should they be elected. The electors must truthfully seek the best candidates and vote for them. The people administering the election process must carry out their duties honestly and fairly. The result of this process should be a government that seeks true freedom for the people of the nation from corruption, evil, and anarchy. Righteousness exalts a nation. Democracy without a commitment to the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) will be a curse to the nation. If the Ten Commandments are the basis of the laws of a democratic nation then people will enjoy freedom from fear. Systems cannot be Christians. A Christian is a person who has a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. A Government cannot be a Christian unless all its members are Christians. However if the majority of the elected representatives of a Government are Christians then it might be said that this Government advocates freedom and follows Christian principles.

## **H. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT MULTICULTURALISM?**

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### **54.** *Will I lose my ethnic identity now I have become a Christian?*

God created diversity in creation. All the species God created have countless variations. This diversity was intended to bring glory to God by demonstrating his remarkable intelligence and unlimited variety. All races of the world have their own language and in that language they have a unique name for the Supreme Creator God. The Chinese have 'Shangti'(..), the Arabs 'Allah', and Maori 'Io'. These cultures also have their flood stories

and other epochs that relate closely to the stories of the Old Testament. God has been at work in peoples of all races since creation and the events surrounding Babel. Babel recorded in Genesis 11 tells of the epoch of people being scattered all over the earth with their own unique language and anthropological distinctions. When Jesus gave his disciples the final command in Matthew 28 v 18 - 20 he specifically mentioned the task of taking the gospel of the kingdom of God to all ethnic people groups. In Matthew 24 v 14 Jesus states that “this gospel about the kingdom will be preached in the whole world to every ethnic people so they will hear it and then the end will come”. Jesus expresses His Father’s concern that every ethnic people group will receive the good news. The Book of Revelation 21 v 24 - 27 gives us a prophetic view of the Heavenly City filled with people from all ethnic people groups. The picture here would not enable the prophet John to distinguish all the ethnic people groups if they had lost their ethnicity. We conclude that they retain their identity.

All ethnic people groups who become Christians have the responsibility to discern their cultural traditions and cleanse them of evil practices. This is the work of repentance and faith. It must be a work of the Holy Spirit within the leaders of the Church in a culture and not imposed by people of another culture. Genuine repentance is an act of the will and comes from the heart of the person convicted of the need to repent and not someone else.

### **55. *Why did God create so many races?***

At the time of the Tower of Babel ...Genesis 11 v 1 - 9; “At one time all the people of the world spoke the same language and used the same words. As the people migrated to the east, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia and settled there. They began saying to each other, “Let’s make bricks and harden them with fire.” (In this region bricks were used instead of stone, and tar was used for mortar.) Then they said, “Come, let’s build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world.” But the LORD came down to look at the city and the tower the people were building. “Look!” he said. “The people are united, and they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them! Come, let’s go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won’t be able to understand each other.”

In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city. That is why the city was called Babel, because that is where the LORD confused the people with different languages. In this way he scattered them all over the world.”

God scattered the human race so it could no longer unite in rebellion against God’s plan to redeem mankind. God is certain that when there are so many races, at least some of those races will be humble, and seek the Lord and He will be their God, and they will be a redemptive testimony about himself in the earth. God created so many races to ensure that his kingdom mission purpose will be carried out by some races on earth. Those races will take the Good News to the others before Jesus the Messiah returns to earth.

### **56. *Isn’t Jesus a Jewish God; so how can he be my God?***

It is true that Jesus was born into the Palestinian culture. He grew up as a Jewish young man fully instructed in wisdom of the Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament), the Psalms, and the wisdom of King Solomon (Proverbs). He would have been conversant with the history of the formation of the nation of Israel. His disciples were Jewish men.

In early times God chose Abraham to form a new nation called Israel. Abraham left the City of Ur of the Chaldean people because they practiced idol worship and Abraham wanted to form a new nation where the people would worship only the True Supreme Creator God, Yahweh. God promised Abraham that the Messiah would become one of his descendants (Read Hebrews 7). God could only incarnate his only Son, Jesus into one race of people on earth. He chose Israel because of his promise to Abraham. Jesus frequently reminded his disciples that although he was born into the nation of Israel his disciples were commanded to take the good news – gospel to all the ethnic people groups of the world. God was not partial in his desire to bless mankind. He took a special interest in ministering to the Samaritans. He wanted to bless all the races of the earth. (Refer to Matt 28 v 18 – 20; Matt 24 v 14; Rev 21 v 22 - 27). God as revealed in the Bible is the God of all races of people and He is the Supreme Creator God. Whatever the name of the Supreme Creator God is in your language then that is the name of God for your people. God will unite us all one day in his heaven after Jesus returns to the earth.

### **57. *Can I retain my culture and still be a Christian?***

Yes, Jesus was a Jew, Paul was a Roman, and a Jew – dual citizenship by reason of his parents nationality. All people groups who become Christians have the responsibility to discern their cultural traditions and cleanse them of evil practices. This is the work of repentance and faith. It must be a work of the Holy Spirit within the leaders of the Church in a culture and not imposed by people of another culture. Genuine repentance is an act of the will and comes from the heart of the person convicted of

the need to repent and not from someone else. All cultures have good and bad traits. The Holy Spirit working in the life of the Christian enhances the good aspects of a culture and cleanses or redeems the evil aspects of that culture. The Apostle Paul was killing Christians as Saul the Jew, before He encountered Christ on the road to Damascus. Soon after his conversion he was meeting with the Christians, and learning from their experience of Christ in their lives. (Read Acts 9 v 31)

An example of a cultural practice that would not need to be changed after a person becomes a Christian would be generosity and hospitality (Read 1 Timothy 3 v 2). A practice that would need redemption would be head-hunting. A group of animistic head hunters became Christians and they decided to do 'head-hunting' for Christ by preaching the good news to their neighbouring tribes, and winning them to Christ. These neighbouring tribes were surprised that they were not being beheaded any longer.

## I. GOD

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### 58. *Since God created man, who created God?*

God was not created; He is eternal. In Revelation 1 v 11, God said about Himself: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last."

In Isaiah one of the names of God is the Everlasting Father; Isaiah 9 v 6 and verse 7 states that "of the increase of His government there shall be no end."

"Before anything else existed, there was Christ with God. He has always been alive and is Himself God. He created everything there is – nothing exists that He did not make. Eternal life is in Him, and this life gives light to all mankind. His life is the light that shines through the darkness – and the darkness can never extinguish it" (John 1 v 1 - 5).

### 59. *Why do people believe in so many gods?*

"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. Although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for

the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen" (Romans 1 v 19 - 24).

In Isaiah 46 the Bible records the actions of those who worship idols, which never answer prayer, but are mere creations of man's hands. Then in verse 9, God confronts these idolaters with the revelation of who He is: "For I am God – I only – and there is no other like Me....listen to me you stubborn evil men. For I am offering you deliverance, not in the distant future but right now, I am ready to save you."

Worship of idols and gods is the foolishness of man's wisdom. That is why there are so many gods worshipped by man.

### 60. *God created all things, and all things were very good. Since God has such great power, why does He not destroy Satan so this world can be pure forever?*

God is planning and preparing to destroy Satan. In Revelation 20 v 1 - 2, we read that Satan will be bound for 1000 years while the Believers rule the earth for 1000 years under the Lordship of Christ. Then at the end of this time Satan is loosed again only to be once again defeated by God and cast into the lake of fire where he will be tormented day and night forever.

You may ask; why is Satan not destroyed now? The reason is this; God has not yet finished His purposes with mankind. In Revelation 12 v 10 - 12 we read that God is preparing a people (the Believers) who will make an open show of the devil's works and overcome him by the Blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. Also, God is going to allow the devil to be loosed on the earth to execute judgement upon those who work evil. This will be to them a recompense for their evil deeds.

Let us do the work of God in preparation of these coming great days of God's power:

- Resist the devil and he will flee from you; (James 4 v 7)
- Thanks be to God who gives us the victory; (1 Corinthians 15 v 57)
- The weapons of our warfare are mighty through God; (2 Corinthians 10 v 4 - 5)
- He that overcomes is he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God; (1 John 5 v 4)

### 61. *How can I know there is a God?*

In Romans 1 and 2 we are told that there are two things which

conclusively testify to mankind about the true and living God and leave mankind without excuse.

CREATION, that is the visible things that are in the world and clearly seen, testify to the existence of the Creator God (Romans 1 v 20).

CONSCIENCE, that is, the instinctive way in which each person knows that there is a law of right and wrong written in their heart, even though they may not have read God's word (Romans 2 v 14 – 15).

But to the person who has heard the gospel, the good news about God's love for mankind through Jesus Christ, the best way to know God is to "Taste and see." "Taste and see that the Lord is good; for blessed is the man that trusts in Him"(Psalm 34 v 8).

Simply take a step of faith, trusting that God is real, and ask (through prayer) God to reveal Himself to you. Ask Him to open the eyes of your understanding so that you may be enlightened concerning the truth (Ephesians 1 v 18).

Then read the Gospel of John and God will reveal His love to you from His Word. This miracle of His grace will help you to know God.

## **62.** *Since God is love and all powerful, why did He have to send His only son Jesus Christ to die for us?*

All sin has an accompanying penalty. "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6 v 23) and all mankind has sinned and is under the penalty of death.

Therefore, if man was to be freed from that penalty, the penalty had to be paid. Jesus Christ, God's Son, was the provision of God to pay the penalty of sin for man. He was sinless, and did not deserve death. Therefore by dying in our place He was able to pay our penalty on our behalf. "Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone stray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53 v 4 - 6).

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2 v 8 - 9).

God's love is not weak in fact it is the most powerful aspect of God's nature. Satan's weakness is his pride and selfishness. God's strength is His humility and everlasting love.

## **63.** *Who is the Holy Spirit?*

The Holy Spirit is God. He is also one of the three persons of the Godhead. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; these three are one" (1 John 5 v 7 K.J.V.) (Deut 6 v 4)

The three persons of the God head are distinguishable personalities, inseparable, eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. They agree as one, purpose and minister as one, and yet they each have distinct functions. This is demonstrated clearly at the baptism of Jesus Christ recorded in Matthew 3 v 16, 17.

"After his baptism as soon as Jesus came up out of the water the heavens were opened unto him and he saw the Spirit of God coming down in the form of a dove.

And a voice (the Father's) from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son and I am wonderfully pleased with him".

As Christians we are to be in relationship and fellowship with all three persons of the Godhead. This is clearly shown in our commission in Matt 28 v 19 & 20.

"Therefore go and make disciples of Christ in all the nations baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

The Holy Spirit has many functions to fulfil. Jesus taught that the Holy Spirit would always glorify Christ. "When the Holy Spirit, who is truth comes he shall guide you into all truth for he will not be presenting his own ideas but will impart to you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. He shall praise me and bring me great honour by showing you my glory" (John 16 v 13-14).

Other functions of the Holy Spirit are to;

- Convict of Sin; John 16 v 8
- Bring to life mortal men; 1 Peter 3 v 18
- Give ministries; 2 Corinthians 3 v 6
- Teach and reveal the Word of God; 2 Peter 1 v 21; John 16 v 13
- Give the water of life; Rev 22 v 17.
- A Counsellor; John 14 v 15 - 21
- Dwell in the believers; John 14 v 17.
- Empower for Service; Acts 1 v 8
- Overcome evil spirits; Matt 12 v 28; John 4 v 30
- Help us to pray; Romans 8 v 26
- Control the movements of believers; Acts 10 v 19 - 20
- Direct in the selection of Christian leaders; Acts 13 v 2

- Choose the mission fields of operation; Acts 16 v 6
- Give assurance of Sonship; Romans 8 v 16.
- Be filled with the Holy Spirit; Eph 5 v 18

#### **64. *What or who is the Trinity?***

The term Trinity is not specifically used in scripture but is clearly implied in its teaching. From Genesis to Revelation God is revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 1 John 5 v 7 clearly states this revelation of God's essence.

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one" (K.J.V.)

The biblical term for this unity of the three divine persons is Godhead, and is used in Acts 17 v 29; Romans 1 v 20; Colossians 2 v 9.

The term Trinity has been used since early Church times to denote the unique nature of the Godhead. 'Tri' denotes the three persons of God and unity denoting God's oneness. So the term Trinity was derived from Tri-unity. The term Trinity is reference to God himself. He is one; He is three; distinguishable yet inseparable; one in operation; three in manifestation. The Father is God; Jesus Christ is God; the Holy Spirit is God.

The early Church fathers faced with the heresies of Unitarianism and Tri-theism compiled the Athanasian Creed in 356 A.D. It states;

THE ATHANASIAN CREED 356 A.D. The True Christian Faith is this, that we worship One God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance.

For there is One Person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Ghost.

But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son of the Holy Ghost, is all One, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, such is the Holy Ghost.

The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

The Father Eternal, the Son Eternal, the Holy Ghost Eternal. And yet there are not three Eternals (of infinities) nor three uncreated nor three Incomprehensibles, but One Eternal and One Incomprehensible.

So, likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty and the Holy Ghost Almighty; and yet there are not three Almighties, but One Almighty or Omnipotent.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God, yet there are not three Gods but One God.

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God or Lord; so we are forbidden by the Christian faith to say, that there be three God's or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten.

The Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son; neither made, nor created, not begotten, nor proceeding.

So there is One Father, not three Fathers; and there is One Son, not three Sons; and there is One Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.

And in this Trinity, none is afore or after the Other, none is first and last, none is greater or less than another; but the whole Three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal; So that all things, as aforesaid; The UNITY IN TRINITY, and the TRINITY IN UNITY is to be worshipped."

#### **65. *Why does the Bible call God Father?***

The Bible reveals God as a being who wants to have a relationship with his creation. He cares for his creation and made provision for it even before mankind was born. God shows all the attributes of a loving caring Father of all of his children. His fatherly heart expresses essential pastoral care and provision for all his children.

Romans 8 v 15 – 17 we read "The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory."

#### **66. *Can I expect God to meet my needs?***

God is your Heavenly Father and you can expect him to provide the needs of your life, spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally. "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 'Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!' So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets"(Matthew 7 v 7 – 11).

## **67.** *Aren't all religions the same?*

No, most religions are fundamentally different and the differences cannot be reconciled. People who advocate that there is unity in religions are deceived, and only have a superficial knowledge of religious teachings. Do not listen to them. For example one major religion denies the deity, sonship and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul said that if Christ had not been raised from the dead then our faith is in vain and he would be a most miserable man. Refer to 1 Corinthians 15 v 20.

The Bible advocates in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 6 v 4 the worship of only One Supreme Creator God and he is jealous of the worship of any other God and forbids it. Another major world religion advocates a plethora of gods and the devotee has to choose the right god for the right occasion. The Bible teaches us that we have 'One' advocate between man and God and that is Jesus Christ. Such clearly opposing teachings cannot be reconciled in a way that we can advocate the unity of religions.

Even the fundamental idea that religion is man's pursuit of salvation and entry into heaven through a god is not consistently advocated in religions. Another major world religion does not have a Saviour and does not have an eternal heaven. The Bible teaches that its revelation has not been created by man trying to make up a god concept, but it is the Supreme Creator God revealing himself to mankind and offering the unmerited gift of free salvation to anyone who humbles themselves and accepts this gift and revelation of God. Many religions require mankind to earn merit towards salvation or species elevation commonly known as reincarnation. The Bible teaches that salvation is a free gift provided by God's sacrificial gift of His Son. We do not earn this by merit.

## **68.** *Does it matter which religion you believe in?*

It is absolutely vital that you know the truth and the truth will set you free from lies and false revelations. Christianity is exclusive in its revelation of God's plan of salvation. Unless you accept Jesus Christ as the Saviour of your sins you cannot be saved and go to heaven. The alternative is hell a place of everlasting torment. The choice between two destinations is so dramatically different that only a fool would not accept the free gift of salvation and heaven through Jesus Christ. The Psalmist King David said in Psalm 14 verse 1 'Only fools say in their hearts, "There is no God."'

Jesus spoke of two paths in life in Matthew 7 v 14 - 20. "But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. 'Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn

bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.'"

The same fruit test can be applied to religions and the devotees of religions. By their fruit you shall know them.

## **69.** *I've always prayed five times a day, should I continue to do this?*

It is commendable to pray five times a day. However, the purpose of prayer is not the quantity of prayer that we offer to God but the quality of our relationship with God as we converse with him. Ephesians 6 v 18 tells us to be "praying always with all prayer and supplication let your requests be known to God." 1 Thessalonians 5 v 17 commands us to "pray without ceasing." Paul instructed young Timothy in 1 Timothy 2 v 8; "In every place of worship, I want men to pray with holy hands lifted up to God, free from anger and controversy". Prayer is the way we develop our relationship with God, by constantly conversing with Him, so it is essential that we talk with God throughout each day. That is the beauty of our prayers emanating from a heart of gratitude to God for all His blessings.

## **70.** *In the past my prayers have been recited from memory, should I memorise Christian prayers?*

Memorising scripture is an excellent discipline. It obeys the command to hide God's word in our heart. There are many scriptures that we should memorise to help us in our spiritual growth and in defending ourselves from the attacks of the enemy. 1 John 1 v 9 will help us cleanse ourselves each day from sinful thoughts and actions. Romans 8 is a great chapter of the Bible to commit to memory because it contains essential teaching on how to walk in the Spirit of God.

The intimacy of prayer is expressed in a conversation with God and conversations are interactive. We speak to God and listen intently as He speaks back to us in our mind or spirit. Memorised prayers are not usually interactive. Memorising scripture to use in prayer is valuable. The scripture contains many promises that we can bring before the throne of grace and claim as our inheritance in God. An example of this is in Psalm 2 verse 8. "Ask of me and I will give the nations as Thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth as Thy possession"(NASB). Another example is Isaiah 40 verse 31 "Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings as eagles, they will run and not get tired, and they will walk and not become weary."(NASB). When

praying in public at a special function it can be helpful to write out the prayer and meditate on its content. Commit this prayer to memory so you can pray meaningfully on that special occasion.

**71.** *Will there be Hindu's, Buddhists and Muslims in heaven?*

Today there are many secret believers in the world. Because of intense persecution in some countries where Christians are a very small minority, believers are worshippers of Jesus while still outwardly keeping the customs of these religions. The Koran and Gitas speak of Jesus Christ and many Hindu's and Muslims have committed their lives to Christ from the limited revelation they have of Jesus from these sources. If these people have trusted in Jesus Christ as their Saviour then they will be in heaven. This is not my opinion, this is what Jesus Christ taught. In John 3 v 3 Jesus spoke to a religious man and told him that "unless he was born again he could not see the Kingdom of God" (NASB). Please also refer to Isaiah 2 v 2 - 4 to get a vision of what the Spirit of God will do in the last days among people of all religions.

## J. GREAT MEN AND OTHER RELIGIONS

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**72.** *Many great men have made noble statements. Should we also study these sayings as much as the Bible?*

It can be very profitable for us to read and study the statements of great men. Men like Charles Finney, Martin Luther, Watchman Nee, William Carey, Henry Martyn, David Livingstone all received a message from God which contributed significantly to man's understanding of God's ways. However, no man is perfect and what they have said needs to be in agreement with God's Word, if it is to be profitable for us.

Paul wrote to the Philippian Church, a guideline in this respect; (Philippians 4 v 8 - 9) "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me— put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."

It is true that the Bible was written by many different men, but no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1 v 20 - 21).

Make sure you know the scripture and do not neglect to study it carefully.

**73.** *If food has been given to idols to eat and is then given to us to eat, should we eat this food?*

"No, the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he? "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. No one should seek their own good, but the good of others. Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience. I am referring to the other person's conscience, not yours. For why is my freedom being judged by another's conscience? If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for? So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved"(1 Corinthians 10 v 20 - 31). If you have doubts about what you eat, don't eat it, because whatever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14 v 23). In Acts 15 v 13 - 20, we read that James instructed the new Gentile believers to refrain from eating meat offered to idols.

**74.** *Should we hold joss-sticks and pray to our ancestors?*

In Acts chapter 14 v 8 - 18, Paul and Barnabas rebuked the crowd who tried to worship them following the healing of a cripple.

God has commanded that we should have no other gods except Him (Exodus 20 v 3). We are to worship the Creator and not the creature (Romans 1 v 23). In Jeremiah 19 v 13 God promised to bring terrible judgement on those who burned incense upon their roofs to the gods.

God's Word speaks to those who try to follow the ways of unrighteous ancestors in 1 Peter 1 v 17 - 19; "Since you call on

a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."

In Deuteronomy 18 v 11, necromancy, consulting the dead is forbidden and those who practice it should be driven out from before the Lord.

However, we should show respect to our parents and grandparents and ancestors, not to worship them, but to honour their lives, and that fact that they are our predecessors. We bear their name and resemblance. The Bible teaches us to "honour our father and mother (which is the first commandment of promise), that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth"(Ephesians 6 v 2)

## **K. DEATH, HEAVEN AND ETERNAL LIFE**

**75.** *Does a Christian go to Heaven immediately he dies?*

Jesus promised the thief who was on the cross next to Him who repented and believed that the same day he would be with Him in Paradise (Luke 23 v 43).

Twice, Paul discussed the fact that for him to die would be great gain, for then he would be with the Lord Jesus (2 Corinthians 5 v 8; Philippians 1 v 23 - 25).

Paul spoke of the time he visited heaven, whether in the spirit or the body he did not know, but he said the things he saw were so astounding that they were beyond his ability to describe or put into words (2 Corinthians 12 v 2 - 4).

Jesus comforted His disciples on the night He was betrayed with the words: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going"(John 14 v 1 - 3).

**76.** *If a person dies without accepting Christ as Saviour, will he have another chance in the judgement?*

It is appointed unto men once to die and after that will be the

judgement of his life. He that does not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is condemned already because all have sinned and come short of God's glorious plan for our lives, but to him that believes, there is no condemnation and he will be granted a free pardon through Christ at the judgement (John 3 v 18; Romans 3 v 23; Hebrews 9 v 27;)

Because we have only one life we are to sow to ourselves righteousness, reap in mercy and break up the ground of our hearts so that we will seek the Lord, so that His righteousness will be in us (Hosea 10 v 12).

Now is the accepted time to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, now is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6 v 2).

## **L. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST**

**77.** *Will people find salvation during the Great Tribulation?*

Revelation chapter 7 verses 13-17 record; "Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore, 'they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. 'Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them,' nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; 'he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'"

This is the record of those who are saved during the great tribulation!

**78.** *How did John foresee the future as recorded in Revelation?*

John was given a vision of the end time events when he was worshipping God in the Spirit on the Lord's day. The vision was accompanied by a voice like the sound of a trumpet, which explained to him the significance of the things that he saw. He was instructed to write down the things he heard and saw.

A vision is a pictorial presentation of events which are seen with the eye but do not appear in reality before the person, only in picture form. This is recorded in Revelation 1 v 9 - 12. Other Apostles saw visions as well (Peter, James and John in Matthew 17 v 9; Paul in Acts 16 v 9).

## 79. *Will there be a second coming of Christ?*

Jesus instructed His disciples at the last supper that He would go and prepare a place in heaven for them and then He would return again and receive them unto Himself (John 14 v 1 - 3).

But of the times and the seasons, no one knows. That day of the Lord will come unexpectedly like a thief in the night (1 Thessalonians 5 v 1 - 2).

“For that day will not come until there has been a day of great rebellion against God and then that man of rebellion will be revealed, the son of hell. He will oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sits in the temple of God showing that he is God... Then shall this man of sin be revealed, the wicked who the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth and shall destroy the brightness of His coming, for he will deceive many with his great power, and signs and lying wonders”(NASB).

The Lord says in Revelation 16 v 15; “Take note, I will come unexpectedly as a thief. Blessed are all who are awaiting Me, who keep their robes in readiness and will not need to walk naked and ashamed.”

Refer also: Acts 1 v 11; Luke 21 v 27; Matthew 24 v 27; 26 v 64.

## **M. THE HOLY BIBLE – GOD’S WORD**

### 80. *How can I prove that the Bible is true?*

There are three main ways in which the truth of the Bible can be tested.

**1.** Historically accurate. History has proven that the Bible is historically accurate. For example, Mohammed Dib, a Muslim Bedouin shepherd in 1947 found “The Dead Sea Scrolls” in a crevice in the rock face at the Wadi Qumran. The texts of Isaiah amongst the scrolls was atomically tested and dated to 100 B.C. The Hebrew text contained 66 chapters, the content of which was the same as today’s text.

**2.** Prophecy fulfilled. In the Old Testament, there are 333 prophecies about the birth, life, death and resurrection, all of which were fulfilled in the life of Christ. For example, the above mentioned book of Isaiah now proved to have existed before Christ, has numerous prophecies about Christ’s life. Refer Isaiah Chapters 9,49, 50, 52, 53, 55, 61 etc.

**3.** It’s power. The Bible records God’s Word to mankind. If we as mankind take God’s word in faith and apply it to our lives, it produces a powerful result. This is also proof of its truth. Salvation is received through God’s Word (John 3 v 16); victory

is in God’s Word (James 4 v 7); Forgiveness from sins (1 John 1 v 9). But the Word of the Lord endures forever (1 Peter 1 v 25).

### 81. *Isn’t the Bible written by man?*

“Yes, all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3 v 16).

“For prophecy came not in old times by the will of man, but by holy men of God, as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1 v 21).

In Revelation 1 v 10, John wrote the testimony of what he saw in a vision while he was caught up in worship in the Holy Spirit on the Lord’s day.

The Bible is a compilation of 66 books written by 40 different authors. The 66 books represent a number of literary genres such as historical, poetic, prophetic, songs, gospels, and epistles or letters to the churches. When the Bible was compiled the result was called the Canon of Scripture. Early Church fathers studied very intently the content of each book, and agreed that the 66 books of the Bible had divine authenticity to be included in the Canon. They asserted strongly that they relied entirely on Divine inspiration to make this compilation.

### 82. *Are the historical matters in the Bible accurate?*

Yes, the Bible is historically accurate and large portions of the Bible have now been proven to be historically accurate through recent archaeological discoveries.

The following is a list of events and places substantiated by recent archaeology:

**1.** The Great Flood – traces of a catastrophic flood under the desert sands dating to about 4000 B.C.

**2.** Noah’s Ark – Fernand Navarra from France in 1955 discovered timber from the beam of a great ship embedded in solid ice on top of Mt Ararat. The timber was at least 4000 years old.

**3.** The Kingdom of Mari – A kingdom from Abraham’s time, dug up in 1933 on the banks of the Euphrates.

**4.** Lot’s wife and the judgement of Sodom – Pillars of salt at Jebel Usdum, the Dead Sea and the Great Fissure, and submerged forest in the Dead Sea.

**5.** Details of seven years of famine during Potiphar’s reign when Joseph was in Egypt.

**6.** Story in an Egyptian prince’s tomb of slave labour, plagues and a deliverer MS (Moses) found in bull-rushes.

**7.** Solomon's copper mines rediscovered. Also his horse stables unearthed at Megiddo.

**8.** The Dead Sea Scrolls – 1947 Qumran.

**There** are many more discoveries, but these are a few confirming the historic facts of scripture.

### **83.** *How can I understand the Bible?*

The Bible was written under the inspiration and instruction of the Holy Spirit (Revelation 1 v 10). It has been given so that we may understand spiritual truth and that we may know we have eternal life and believe on the Son of God (1 John 5 v 13). It has been written by the Holy Spirit's inspiration, we need His enlightenment to fully understand its meaning. The truth about God is revealed to those who worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4 v 24).

"Pray therefore, for the anointing of the Holy Spirit to come upon you, for if that anointing abides in you, it will teach you all things, in truth" (1 John 2 v 27).

"If any man has need of wisdom, let him ask God who gives liberally to all men"(James 1 v 5).

There are tools available to help you understand the Bible. They are a 'Concordance' and a 'Pictorial Bible Dictionary', and there are books available that give an introduction to interpreting the Bible. Titles such as "How to read the Bible for all its worth" and 'How to read the Bible book by Book' both by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart will be of great help to any reader of the Bible. These books can be purchased very cheaply from a second hand Christian bookshop or from Amazon Books through the internet.

### **84.** *How do we know that the meaning in the Bible is not altered when it was being translated?*

Those who have been responsible for the major translations of the scriptures through the centuries have fully acknowledged their Divine responsibility and have been men and women, who earnestly sought God to give wisdom and understanding under the direction and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

These translations have been studied by countless scholars, professors and students and except for a few minor points they have remained unchanged.

It is possible also, to get scripts in Greek and Hebrew and study the translation yourself with the help of a comprehensive concordance and an interlinear text. This is not to say that you will find errors, but to encourage you to discover fuller meanings to scripture passages by studying the depth of the original

language texts. This is a challenging and exciting exercise.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran in 1947 confirmed that many of the Old Testament books (e.g. Isaiah) have not changed their meaning in more than 2000 years of copying and translating.

A study of the meticulous way in which Jews copied and stored Holy Scriptures will also give any reader confidence in the historical accuracy of the Old Testament.

Finally from Isaiah 40 v 8 we read; "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God shall stand forever."

## **N. THE FUTURE**

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### **85.** *Why can some people predict what is going to happen?*

There are two manifestations of details of future events in the world today. One is from the Spirit of God – prophecy; the other is inspired by Satan – false prophecy or fortune telling.

**1.** Prophecy. Christ has placed within His body, those with the ministry of prophecy (Ephesians 4 v 11), who tell forth what God is going to do in the earth. Their prophecy always agrees with scripture and finds agreement in the hearts of those who love and worship God.

**2.** False prophecy or fortune telling. Satan is endeavouring to deceive people with signs and lying wonders and has seduced his followers into making predictions about the future. Some of these come to pass, others do not, and are lies (2 Thessalonians 2). These predictions usually oppose scriptural teaching and bring the hearers into fear and bondage. The Bible strictly forbids Christians from having any association with these practices (Deuteronomy 18 v 9 - 12).

The Holy Spirit gives believers' discernment to be able to identify the true and the false predictions. Ask the Holy Spirit and he will give you this gift.

## **O. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT MARRIAGE?**

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### **86.** *Why do Christians insist that sex comes after marriage?*

The Church is called the Bride of Christ. "One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues

came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb (Revelation 21 v 9).” “The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life (Revelation 22 v 17).”

The imagery of purity and marriage is essential to the Divine idea of God’s relationship with redeemed humanity. When Jesus Christ returns to earth he is coming for His Bride. His Bride is the redeemed community of believers who have been washed clean in the blood of Christ by appropriating the full blessing of His sacrifice on Calvary. God has used this imagery to emphasise the faithfulness of our relationship with Him. We are to worship Him alone. We must worship no other gods. In the same way intimate relations in marriage are to be a model of our relationship with God. Take time now to read 1 Corinthians chapter 7 to gain a full picture of the purity and exclusiveness of marital relations in Paul’s teaching.

In the Book of Revelation everything evil that tries to destroy the earth and its people is depicted as a whore, or prostitute, and engaged in sexual immorality with the wicked on earth. These evil, immoral people and demonic beings meet their final destruction. Please read Revelation chapters 12 and 17. God cannot allow them to continue their evil ways because of His holy and righteous kingdom is coming to reign on the earth.

Christians’ insistence on sexual purity before marriage is a picture of the Bride of Christ in her purity ready for her husband Christ at his triumphal return. The faithfulness of keeping sexual relations to one partner in marriage is a symbolic picture of our desire to worship only One God and Him alone. We will not entertain any other god before the One True God. Faithfulness to Christ who died a painful sacrificial death for us is the least we can do to respect His great sacrifice for sinners.

The Christian marriage relationship must be based on faithful intimate love and trust if it is to last. God should be the third person of the marriage and both the husband and wife are submitted to Christ and each other in faithful sacrificial love.

### **87.** *Shouldn’t we try sex before marriage to make sure we are compatible?*

This logic is similar to a parent saying to a child you must touch the hot element on the stove to know how badly heat can burn you. Keeping the covenant of sexual intimacy in marriage is essential to developing love and trust in both partners to a marriage. By abstaining from sex before marriage each partner demonstrates their reliance on Christ for self-control and heightens the partners trust in each other within the future marriage covenant. It develops a healthy respect for each other.

To have sexual relations before marriage is called fornication and the Bible strictly forbids this practice. Refer to Matthew 5 v 32 and 15 v 18 – 19. Popular culture tries to tell us that everyone is doing it so it is okay. In actual fact a significant number of people still practice fidelity before and after marriage and they enjoy the benefits of strong, faithful, loving, lifelong relationships because of the trust they experience.

### **88.** *What is unnatural sex?*

Unnatural sex is sexual intercourse using the bodies organs for a purpose that they were not created for. Bestiality or sex with animals is a typical example of this type of practice. Romans chapter 1 verses 18 to 32 lists many more unnatural sexual acts that humans have participated in that are evil. The Apostle Paul wrote that all the parts of our body are honourable and should be treated with respect.

“But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it (1 Corinthians 12 v 18 – 26)” All members of our bodies are to be used with honour and respect. This is a picture of our relationships as brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ.

### **89.** *Why get married anyway?*

Marriage is honourable (Hebrews 13 v 4), and a man leaves his mother and father and cleaves to his wife and establishes another family which in time has children and develops the joys of the full cycle of life from infancy and childhood to being grandparents. Marriage is the vital basis for committed relationships in human society and provides the security for the nurture and care of children. Marriage honours God. We are the Bride of Christ (Revelation 21 v 9).

## **90.** *What did Jesus teach about marriage and divorce?*

“It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.” Jesus said in Matthew 5 v 32. And again in Matthew 19 v 7 – 11 “Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason? Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate. Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?” Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.” The disciples said to him, “If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.” Jesus replied, “Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given.” Jesus teaching and ministry must always be interpreted in the light of his concern for the heart condition of mankind. Only those with humble hearts can enter the Kingdom of God. It also appears that our attitudes to each other in marriage are also a good barometer of our heart condition. Humility seeks to resolve conflict, offer forgiveness, and avoid divorce.

In John 4 v 1 - 30 we read the story of Jesus offering forgiveness to the Samaritan woman who had five husbands. She was living with another man who was not her husband. Her encounter with Jesus’s love and forgiving grace changed her life. The gospel is good news for everyone who is a sinner willing to repent.

## **91.** *Is it alright to have an abortion?*

Is it alright to murder someone? Exodus 20 verse 13 states ‘Do not commit murder’. If you had been aborted as a foetus you would not be reading this book. Human life begins at conception. The baby, John the Baptist was alive and jumping in his mother Elizabeth’s womb before birth and responded to the presence of Mary when she was pregnant with Jesus (Luke 2 v 39 -45). To destroy that life is to commit murder. Each life that is conceived is a person whose has the potential to fulfil God’s plan for the redemption of creation. God is the only One entitled to give and take life. Sometimes the medical profession is faced with the very

difficult dilemma of saving one life at the expense of another. This is a very serious decision and as medical people are trained to save lives they take this responsibility very seriously. No medical practitioner would want to take a life. It is against the ethics of the medical profession to terminate life except to save another life.

## **P. WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER THINGS WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND?**

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### **92.** *What about the things which we still do not understand?*

There are some things which we will never understand on this earth. However, God intends that our Christian life be a continuing and exciting learning process as we grow in the grace and knowledge of God (2 Peter 1 v 1 - 10). God will continually test you on the knowledge you have already gained in order that the knowledge you have, will be mixed with experience and you will be able to discern between right and wrong. Remember the Bible is your guide book in all things and its words will make you a strong and mature Christian (Isaiah 2 v 3).

Remember to take the things you do not understand to God in prayer and ask for His help and enlightenment.

“Always be ready to give an answer for the hope that lies within you, with meekness and godly reverence”(1 Peter 3 v 15).

## **Q. THE CHRISTIAN’S WONDERFUL GOAL!**

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### **93.** *What is the Christian’s goal?*

The Christian’s goal is Christ in us, the hope of glory. For our God wants to give each one of us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him that we may be enlightened and know what is the hope of our calling. That is, the reason God has called us and made us joint heirs with Christ.

Yes, God intends for each one of us to be conformed to the image of Christ, being changed from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord.

Let us therefore, press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, which is Christ Jesus in us. (Ephesians 1 v 18; 4 v 4; 2 Corinthians 3 v 18; Philippians 3 v 14; Colossians 1 v 27).

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## SOUL WINNERS GUIDE:

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*Helpful Scriptures when leading someone to Christ:*

### MAN'S NEED:

Proverbs 20 v 9 "Who can ever say 'I have cleansed my heart; I am sinless'?"

Romans 3 v 23 "Yes all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious ideal."

Romans 6 v 23 "For the wages of sin is death but God's free gift is eternal life."

### CHRIST - THE ANSWER:

Colossians 1 v 14 "Jesus Christ – who bought our freedom with his blood and forgave us all our sins."

John 3 v 17 "For God sent His Son into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."

### REPENT:

Isaiah 55 v 7 "Let men cast off their wicked deeds, let them banish from their minds the very thought of doing wrong! Let them turn to the Lord that he may have mercy upon them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

Acts 2 v 38 "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

### CONFESS:

1 John 1 v 9 "If we confess our sins to him, he can be depended upon to forgive us and cleanse us from every wrong."

### BELIEVE:

Romans 10 v 9-10 "For if you tell others with your own mouth that Jesus Christ is your Lord and believe in your own heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved. For it is by believing in his heart that a man becomes right with God."

### PRAY:

John 14 v 13 "You can ask God for anything using the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and He will do it for this will bring praise to the Father because of what Jesus Christ, the Son will do for you."

Ask him to Forgive you, cleanse you, empower your life by His Holy Spirit

**RECEIVE:**

John 1 v 12 “But to all who received him (Jesus Christ), he gave the right to become the children of God.”

John 8 v 36 “So if the Son sets you free, you are free indeed.”

**OBEY:**

John 15 v 9-15 “When you obey Me you remain in my love, just as I obey the Father and remain in his love.”

**Notes;****List of Churches where this booklet is available**

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**Auckland Baptist Tabernacle**

429 Queen St, Auckland, 1010. Tel. 09 377 4063

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**Oasis Community Centre**

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**Stratford Baptist Church**

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