10 Basic Questions

for Christians

Questions and Answers on Salvation, the Kingdom,
and the Return of Jesus Christ

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Contents

Introduction ii

1. Is man a two-part being or a three-part being? 1
2. What does someone have to do to be “saved”? 10
3. Can a person lose their salvation? 14
4. What are “works” and how do they fit in with the salvation message? 17
5. What is the kingdom of heaven? What is the kingdom of God? 22
6. Who is Satan? Why does he battle against us? 32
7. What is the Judgment Seat of Christ? 36
8. What is the inheritance? What is the reward? How do you get them? 40
9. Why do we need to know the warnings regarding the first generation of Israel? Esau? Balaam? 47
10. Why is Jesus coming back? 61

Introduction

These ten questions are the place to start. Each one takes up something every Christian ought to be able to answer from Scripture, and each answer builds on the ones before it, so they're meant to be read in order.

The series begins with man himself. Scripture describes him as spirit, soul, and body (1 Thess. 5:23), and the word of God divides between soul and spirit (Heb. 4:12). Without that distinction, the rest of what Scripture says about salvation won't come into focus. From there the questions move to what a person must do to be saved (Acts 16:30-31), whether that salvation can be lost (Rom. 11:29), and where works fit in (Eph. 2:8-10; James 2:17). The middle questions turn to the kingdom of heaven, to Satan and why he battles against us, and to the Judgment Seat of Christ, where every Christian will appear (2 Cor. 5:10). The last three take up the inheritance and the reward, the warnings God recorded about those who went before us (1 Cor. 10:11), and why Jesus is coming back (Rev. 22:12).

A single thread runs through all ten. The salvation of the spirit is past and finished. It's received by believing in the death and shed blood of Jesus, God's own provision (John 1:29; Eph. 2:8-9), and once God has passed that judgment, it's never overturned. The *salvation of the soul* is a present and future matter. It's tied to how a Christian lives now and to the coming kingdom of Christ, and it will be decided at His Judgment Seat (1 Pet. 1:9; Heb. 10:39). Keep those two apart and passages that seem to contradict each other begin to fit together. Run them together and the warnings of Scripture either frighten believers about a standing they can't lose or get explained away altogether.

Each answer quotes Scripture at length, because the point is for you to see what the text says for yourself (Acts 17:11). Read slowly, look up the references, and let each answer prepare you for the next, for God teaches His Word this way:

> Isaiah 28:10
> For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little.

QUESTION 1

Is man a two-part being or a three-part being?

One of the foundational teachings of Scripture concerning *man's inward being* is erroneously taught throughout Christendom today, causing mass confusion when it comes to "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:13). Man is a *triune* being; he is comprised of **three** parts*:* spirit, soul, and body. He is not simply a body with a soul, as many believe, nor only body and spirit. Let's look at how clearly Scripture makes this point.

Starting at the very beginning of Scripture, God says this just prior to the creation of man –

> Genesis 1:26
> Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion…"

Man is created after the image and likeness of God. He is *patterned after God*, and God speaks of Himself here in the *plural* form, "*Our* image…*Our* likeness." The Hebrew word used here for God is 'Elohiym,' which literally means *two or more* gods. (It is no small matter that God chose to mention this about Himself in the direct context of man's creation.) The Scriptures clearly teach that there are not two or more *separate* Gods, but One God consisting of *three* separate parts; this is what we think of as the Trinity—

> 1 John 5:7
> For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and <u>these three are one.</u>

> John 1:1-3, 14
> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and <u>the Word was God</u>. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 3 All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 14 And <u>the Word became flesh</u> and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

> 1 Corinthians 8:6
> …yet for us there is <u>one God</u>, the Father, of whom are all things…

> John 10:30
> (Jesus speaking) "I and the Father are <u>one</u>."

> John 17:22 "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as <u>We are one</u>…"

Matthew 28:19
"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit…"

John 4:24
God is Spirit…

And elsewhere we read a very clear, concise verse by Paul to the church at Thessalonica where he uses **three** *distinctly different words* when describing his desire to see each individual person be "completely sanctified" and "preserved blameless" at Jesus' return—

1 Thessalonians 5:23
Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit [Greek word 'pneuma'] and soul [Greek word 'psuche'] and body [Greek word 'soma'] be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Spirit, *soul*, and *body*. And another similar, specific distinction is mentioned in the Book of Hebrews—

Hebrews 4:12
For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul ['psuche'] and spirit ['pneuma'], and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The word of God pierces and divides *soul* and *spirit* (two separate yet interconnected things), in the same manner as *joints* from *marrow* (two separate yet interconnected things). Soul and spirit both have to do with the inward man, the invisible parts of man, as this division by the word of God concerns the discerning of the *thoughts and intents of the heart.*

As we practice learning knowledge and gaining understanding "precept upon precept, here a little, there a little" (as described in Isaiah 28:9-10), let's see how Scripture presents the details of Jesus' death on the cross –

Luke 23:46
And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit ['pneuma']." Having said this, He breathed His last.

Acts 2:22-31
[Peter speaking] "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know- 23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

> 25 For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. 27 For You will not leave my soul ['psuche'] in Hades [many times translated erroneously as "hell"], nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'
>
> 29 Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul ['psuche'] was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption."
>
> Luke 23:52-53
> This man went to Pilate and asked for the body ['soma'] of Jesus. 53 Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before.

Jesus was not only *fully God* but He was also *fully man.* Luke records that Jesus commits His ***spirit*** into the hands of the Father just before He breathes His last breath. In the Book of Acts Peter speaks to the people of Israel concerning this man Jesus whom they crucified, and verse 22 shows us that Peter is clearly speaking about Jesus of Nazareth. In speaking of Jesus' death and resurrection, Peter uses David's own words from Psalm 16 (recorded nearly 1,000 years prior) in order to show the people that the patriarch David was *not talking about himself* but about the Christ when he wrote the psalm.[1] Peter was trying to convince the nation of Israel that their Messiah *did* come and the man Jesus was indeed the One they had been waiting for. Peter says that David *prophesied* that God's Holy One, the Christ – the Promised Descendant of David Who would sit on David's throne forever (the Son of David AND the Son of God, 2 Sam. 7:12-16)—WOULD DIE, but **He would not be held by death**. *His soul would not be left in Hades;* His soul would GO to Hades, but not LEFT in Hades. The Christ, the Promised One, would be resurrected.[2]

And lastly we see in Luke's account that Jesus's ***body*** was put into a tomb.

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[1]The word 'Christ' is from a Greek word ('christos') meaning "anointed"; in Hebrew the word for "anointed" is 'mashiyach,' translated in English as "Messiah." Jesus being the Christ (the Messiah) simply means that He is The Anointed One that the nation of Israel was waiting for. Upon seeing the phrase "Jesus the Anointed One," we should be asking ourselves, "Anointed to do what?" And further Bible study would be needed.

[2]The Greek word 'Hades' – and its counterpart in the Hebrew 'Sheol' – are often translated into English as "hell." This is incredibly misleading and confusing. Hades and Sheol are used many ways, most often to denote "the grave," conveying the thought that the person who is mentioned as going there is *physically dead*, i.e. they no longer are alive in bodily form on the earth. These words have nothing to do with "forever and ever torment" for the "unsaved" (which is the popular, but erroneous, definition of "hell"). Hades and Sheol are always used in connection with one's "soul" going there upon death, as differentiated from one's "spirit." We will continue to expound on this distinction between soul and spirit as we move along in the study.

After Jesus' death, **but prior to His resurrection**, His *spirit* went to the Father, His *soul* went into Hades, and His *body* went into the tomb. That makes the man Jesus a *three-part being,* consisting of the same three parts mentioned by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

Now let's add more to the picture by briefly exploring the concepts of *life* and *death* (in the manner of "line upon line, here a little, there a little") as we refine our understanding of their definitions, specifically how Scripture presents it.

In a purely physical, secular sense, the words *life* and *death* are simple enough to understand: if one has *life*, he or she is breathing, their heart is pumping blood throughout their body, and their brain is active; if one does not have *life* then that person is *dead* – they are not breathing, the heart is not pumping blood through their body, and the brain is not active. *Life* in the secular sense simply means a person physically exists on this earth; *death* means they no longer do.

Most Christians/members of the church would agree with that explanation of life and death, yet they further believe that there is indeed some sort of life after death pertaining to the inner man (spirit/soul). Most of the church today can offer an explanation concerning this life after death, but often it comes across as a somewhat nebulous union between man and God in Heaven, a relationship that stretches throughout eternity.

The Scriptures present these antonymous words (life vs. death) in a much more complex way, yet in a very *clear* way. The world's simple view we just defined is indeed seen in God's Word (the impact on the physical body as we know it), but God moves beyond this simple view to express the terms life and death in a **spiritual and soulical** sense as well (that which impacts the *inward* parts of man). The intricacies of this concept can only be understood if you first understand the triune nature of man – spirit, soul, and body.

In Genesis 1:2–2:3 we read about God creating *life*; that is, He created living creatures. First He created the animals in the waters and the birds in the sky. He then created the animals on the earth. In the sixth day God created man (and woman, details given in Gen. 2:7-25) in order to rule over all the earth. He then pronounced all that He had made as being "very good" (Gen. 1:31). There is, however, a difference between the creation of the animals and the creation of man. First, the animals—

> Genesis 1:20
> Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living [Hebrew word 'chay'] creatures [Hebrew word 'nephesh'], and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens."
>
> Genesis 1:21
> So God created great sea creatures, and every living ['chay'] thing ['nephesh'] that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

> Genesis 1:24
> Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living ['chay'] creature ['nephesh'] according to its kind: cattle and creeping things and beast of the earth, each according to their kind"; and it was so.
>
> Genesis 1:30
> Also, to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life ['chay' 'nephesh'], I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so.

And then man—

> Genesis 2:7
> Then the Lord God formed man of the dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath [Hebrew word 'nashamah'] of life ['chay']; and man became a living being ['chay' 'nephesh'].

The Hebrew word for "living" (adjective) and "life" (noun) is 'chay.' In the preceding passages from Genesis we see the word 'chay' used in conjunction with the word 'nephesh' in all accounts. When 'chay' and 'naphash'/'nephesh' are used together, they indicate a living, breathing, *physically alive* creature/being.

The animals/creatures are described as simply 'chay nephesh,' "living beings" when they are created. But with the creation of man, we see something <u>additional</u>. God breathes into man's nostrils the 'nashamah' of life, which means the "breath" of life (can also be translated as "spirit of life"). It is only after man receives this "breath/spirit of life" that he becomes a "living being."

Notably, the Hebrew word 'nephesh' is also the word translated as *soul* throughout the Old Testament Scriptures. This is similar in the case of the Greek word 'psuche'; it is translated as both "life" and "soul" interchangeably (Matt. 16:24-26 is one such example).

In the creation account of both man and the animals, *soul* is mentioned in connection with the life of the *physical being*, the physical body. There is a reason for this and further on in Scripture God tells us specifically the relationship between the soul and the body (called "flesh" in many cases) –

> Leviticus 17:11a
> 11 For the life ['nephesh'] of the flesh is in the blood…

We can also translate this as—

> "**For the <u>soul</u> of the flesh is in the blood…"**

The word "flesh" is used in a dual manner in Scripture. Many times, including in the preceding verse, the word "flesh" is referencing the physical, organic body which all animals and all men have when they are born into this world. Other times the word "flesh" is used to reference the

sin nature of man, that which is associated with our first birth (the "old man" that still exists after we become initially "saved," Rom. 6:6, Eph. 4:22, Col. 3:9). Context would dictate which is being referred to (though one can see how intricately connected they are: the earthly physical *flesh* is always going to have a *fleshly* sin nature connected to this world as long as the curse remains). This particular verse explains to us a most important concept concerning the relationship between the soul and the body – *the soul/life of the physical earthly body is found in the blood.* Since all physical bodies of flesh have blood running through them, all bodies of flesh *have a soul* and the soul is the "life," *or animating force*, of the body. *Because of this relationship* the soul and the body are inextricably linked. (This is an important concept, so please make sure you grasp it.)

With the creation of man we saw that God *breathed* life into him. God gave him the "breath of life" which caused man to become a *living being*. The animals were also called *living* [creatures] yet they did not have the breath of God. Clearly, "the breath of life" which emanates from God Himself indicates something other than the animation of the organic body. The Scriptures plainly teach that when it comes to *mankind*, he/she must have the breath of God, *in addition to* the soul and the body, in order to be a "living being."

This brings us back to the triune nature of man. The animals were created soul and body, but man was created soul and body *and* spirit/breath.[3] Again we see that man is a three-part being – spirit, soul, and body.

So man was **alive**, all three parts, in the beginning when he was created. Man was a perfect creation without sin. An important question to ask at this point is, "Was man *immortal* when he was created?" Some think that the tree of *life* was present in the Garden for the purpose of imparting immortality (tree of "life" needed to sustain *physical life* of the body) to man, but can that be true? If the tree of life was in the Garden for that purpose, then we would need to presuppose that man, in his perfectly created state, was created with the capacity of physical, organic death. But that cannot be true, and the following passages will help explain why –

> Genesis 2:15-17
> Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it **you shall surely die.**"

This is a clear command from the Lord about what Adam and the woman could and could not do. God gave an expressed consequence for disobedience—*death*. We later get commentary on this event and why the consequence was given –

[3]The English words "breath" and "spirit" are interchangeable, translated from the same word, 'nashamah' (as well as 'ruwach') in Hebrew and 'pneuma' in Greek.

> Romans 6:23a
> For the wages of sin is death…
>
> Romans 5:12
> Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin…

God's command to Adam gave a clear recompense: if you sin (disobey), you will die. The converse would be true as well: *if you do not sin, you will not die*. So before Adam and the woman partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and thereby sinned, they *could not*, in their perfect state, *experience death, <u>any type of death</u>, either physically or spiritually or soulically.* They had not sinned; therefore, death had not entered the world.

But shortly after their creation, the man and the woman both disobeyed God, they *sinned* –

> Genesis 3:6
> So the woman saw that the tree [of the knowledge of good and evil] was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

Because Adam and the woman disobeyed God, they died *the very day that they sinned* (Gen. 2:17). But they didn't physically keel over and stop breathing *that day*. So, then, *what is death*? And how did it affect Adam and the woman? Let's read further –

> Genesis 3:7
> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

Adam and the woman's bodies were still alive; they still possessed physical, natural life. Obviously death as a wage of sin does not mean *immediately ceasing to physically exist*. To find out what it does mean, let's keep reading –

> Genesis 3:8-10
> And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

Immediately after Adam and the woman partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, *on that very same day,* we see <u>a separation</u> between man and God. God called to Adam and said, "Where are you?" Obviously God is omniscient and knew where Adam and the woman were; the meaning and subtext here is that *God cannot see them*. And with man hiding himself from God for fear of being seen "naked," we can understand this as simply a *picture* of separation between man and God. Death is the consequence of sin, and sin cannot be looked upon by God for He is

holy; therefore, God separates the sinful man from Himself. This separation is what is meant by the word *death*.

This death sentence that was given to Adam and the woman had far reaching ramifications, for it was not only they who received the consequence –

> Romans 5:12, 14
> Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned…14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

> Ephesians 2:1-2
> And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.

We can notice something very interesting when Adam's son Seth is born –

> Genesis 5:1-3
> This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. 2 He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created. 3 And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.

Seth is born in *Adam's image and likeness*. Because of the initial transgression of the woman and Adam, death entered into the world and was passed on to everyone born of a man and a woman from then on (save One, Jesus, the One born to *a virgin*—the sin nature passes through *the man*). Therefore every person born to a man and a woman is born *dead,* separated from God. So how did death really affect man? Was it just their bodies, now destined to "return to the ground from which [they] came" (Gen. 3:19)? Was it their soul that died, since it is the life force of the body? Or was it their spirit, which connects man to God, setting him apart from the beasts of the field? The details of this verse we looked at earlier sheds more light on the subject –

> 1 Thessalonians 5:23
> Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you [literally "make you holy"] completely; and may your whole [literally "entire"] spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Greek word for "completely" is 'holoteles' which comes from the words 'holos' and 'telos.' 'Holos' means "whole" or "all" and 'telos' means "end." Additionally, the sentence structure of this verse is written in such a way in the Greek that the word "whole" should actually appear before each of man's parts listed: spirit, soul, and body. Therefore this verse is more literally written as –

1 Thessalonians 5:23
Now may the God of peace Himself make your whole being holy at the end; and may your entire spirit, your entire soul, and your entire body be preserved complete and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is saying that everyone needs to be *wholly and entirely* sanctified – ALL THREE PARTS: spirit, soul and body. Man is currently *not holy, not sanctified* because all three parts of man were affected by death. So even though when we are born into this world we are alive *in the physical sense*, our spirit *and* soul *and* body are considered *dead, separated from God*. More accurately, the spirit is "dead," the soul is "corrupted," and not only does the body begin to decay, but it lacks a significant attribute necessary to be reunited with God, in His likeness and image—*glory*.

Simply put, "death" is separation from God; "life" (which is the opposite of "death") is fellowship and togetherness with God. And since death affects all three parts of man, all three parts of man must be dealt with in respect to *life.* Which is just another way of saying **all three parts of man must be saved from death.**

QUESTION 2

What does someone have to do to be "saved"?

This would seem to be the most basic of questions poised to the Christian. But rather unfortunately, the answers to this question actually vary dramatically. While some would say that in order to be saved one needs to merely believe in Jesus (quoting Acts 16:30-31), others would adamantly say that the Scriptures clearly present the need for one to believe *and be baptized* in order to be saved (using Mark 16:6). A Calvinist may say that a person truly possesses salvation *only if* that person's lifestyle reflects a faithful, Spirit-led life; ergo, a person wouldn't actually know that they were indeed saved until the final day when (or if) they were granted eternal life based on their works. And on the opposite side of the spectrum, an Arminiast may categorically adhere to the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith, but only with the added caveat that said person could possibly, potentially lose that salvation through a sinful, unrepentant lifestyle.

So then, who would be right? One of the above? None of the above? Whichever one you feel like believing, based on your current mood? Seriously, how does one filter through the countless *contradictory* opinions on the subject? (A subject, mind you, that is the absolute *crux* of the Christian faith.)

While most evangelicals would say that you just need to look to the Scriptures to find the answers, I postulate that *almost all Bible teachers say the same thing as they each promote opposing views*. Therefore, if everyone is using the Bible to back up their beliefs, and most have disparate viewpoints, then how can the Bible be supporting everybody's ideology? The answer is… *it isn't.*

There is a right way to view Scripture, and *there is a wrong to view the very same passages and verses*. Didn't the enemy of our soul initiate his deception to mankind by using God's very own words against man? And didn't this very same enemy again use God's own words to suit his own purposes as he attempted to deceive Jesus into giving in to his will and not the Father's? And in that instance, what transpired but a battle of what *indeed* God had said? And wasn't the outcome decided not only by what God had said, but *what God actually meant by what He said*? You see, on one hand we see Satan flinging God's Words around to suit his own purposes; on the other hand we see the Son of God wielding the Scriptures *in accordance with the will of God*, and not according to His own will. Herein lies the distinction.

The Scriptures reveal the will of God *through and through*, and it is God's intent, *and pleasure*, to make His will known to man. According to Amos 3:7, we can be sure that "the Lord God does *nothing* unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets." Can we know what God is doing and will still yet do? *Absolutely*. How will we know? *By reading the prophets*. And who are the prophets? Every single contributor to the Old Testament, up to and including the Chief Prophet, Jesus the Christ. (The New Testament is simply a retelling of everything that God had already said, unveiling that which was veiled in the Old Testament through the lens of Jesus' death and resurrection.) And by reading the prophets we must begin with the first prophet, Moses, and begin where he begins…at the beginning, in Genesis. And we must continue from

there, book by book, *in order*, so that we can see how God lays out His truth. Then, and only then, can we come into the New Testament where we meet Jesus (whose name literally means, "God saves") and truly understand anything about what God is trying to tell us through Him.

So before we answer the question "What does someone have to do to become saved?," let's make a simple observation about the question. What does the word "saved" even mean? Within Christianity, the words "saved" or "salvation" usually have *only one* connotation, that being "a deliverance from an eternity in hell." But within the pages of the Scriptures, one cannot view the word so narrowly. There is nothing intrinsically taught within the definition of the word "salvation" (or its variants) *other than* its literal meaning, which is simply "to be delivered, freed, or rescued." So the question one must ask when presented with some grammatical variant of the term 'salvation' is, *who* needs saving *and why*, and *from what* does that person need to be saved?

For instance, the Old Testament portrays the nation of Israel as being saved (Deut. 33:29; Jude 1:5), then *still needing* salvation (Is. 35:4), *getting* salvation (I Chron. 11:14; I Sam. 14:23), and *still yet to receive* salvation (Zech. 8:13; Rom. 9:27). The New Testament presents the Christian as *having already been* saved (Eph. 2:8) and *possessing* salvation (Jude 1:3), *in the process of being* saved (I Cor. 1:18), and *still yet to be* saved (Rom. 5:9-10). How does a person make sense of all that? Obviously there is something more to the picture of salvation than simply a one-time event of being "saved" and therefore being granted a deliverance from an eternity in hell.

So let's clarify exactly what this question is asking. The term "saved" can mean any number of things, such as saved from hell, saved from sin, saved from *sinning*, saved from the influences of the world and our enemies, etc. Since most of Christianity understands the term "saved" to mean *being a Christian* and being spared an eternity separated from God, let's answer that basic question. How does someone become a Christian? After all, it should be the most simplest of concepts, shouldn't it?

And indeed it is.

According to Paul in Ephesians 2:1-10 –

> 1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.
>
> 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

> 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

And from Paul in Romans 5:10-12, 15-16—

> 10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. 12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—
>
> 15 But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. 16 And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification.
>
> 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

From these two passages one can see:

- Everyone is born *dead* in trespasses and sins because of the entrance of death that came by the one man, Adam, through his sin. This death was passed on to *everyone*.
- We (the Church, the body of Christ, those we're calling "Christians") have been reconciled back to God and given life through the death of Jesus.

So exactly how is this done? Ephesians 2:8 tells us that we received this free gift (that which is spoken of in Romans 5:15 as well) by God's grace, that we were *saved*—i.e. *made alive*—by His grace *through* our faith. Our faith in what? Our faith (which literally means "belief") in the death of Jesus. It is as Paul says in I Corinthians 5:7, that Jesus Christ *our Passover* has been sacrificed for us. And if you know anything about the Old Testament (which you should), you'll know that referencing the passover lambs would bring to mind the death and shed blood of an unblemished, sacrificial, substitutionary animal that died in place of those under the judgment of death – the death of the first-born.

Simply put, Jesus died in our stead. He paid the price *for us.* We were born into death and Jesus died to free us from that curse. The death that we all owe is simply *the wage* (or *recompense*) given to us for the sin passed on to all through Adam (Rom. 6:23, "the wages of sin is death..."). And since we were all born dead (which simply means separated from God), the death of Jesus on our behalf *gives us life* (which simply means fellowship with God); Jesus' death pays that debt that we owe. And all we have to do to be saved by grace is to *believe,* that is *have faith* in the Provision God has given us: the Perfect Passover Lamb, Jesus the Christ. It is summed up most succinctly in Acts –

Acts 16:30-31
30… and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household."

Do you believe that Jesus died for your sins? Do you believe that Jesus paid the price for you on that cross at Calvary? Do you accept this Provision on your behalf? *Then you have been saved, by grace, through your faith.* And that's it. You now have life and fellowship with God. And we can know for certain that this *free gift* can never be lost, given back, or taken back by God because –

Romans 11:29
…for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Isn't God awesome?!

QUESTION 3

Can a person lose their salvation?

This question is just as important as the last question we answered concerning how a person is initially saved (*saved from an eternal separation from God*). We Christians should be absolutely confident in our righteous standing before God in Christ and I do not believe that God would leave such a vital aspect of redemption unclear. If there was ever an option that we could somehow lose that precious gift of salvation that the Lord gives, or if we could never know if we really received it or not, then our lives would be chaotic and uncertain at best.

Scripture clearly shows that our initial salvation cannot either be given back or taken away. Remember that Scripture teaches us that each individual is born *dead in trespasses in sins*, thereby separated from God (Eph. 2:1-10, Rom. 6:23a), and all that a person needs to do in order to receive *life* and be separated no more is to believe in the provision of death and shed blood that God has given as a substitutionary sacrifice (Acts 16:30). For all of us living on this side of the events on the Cross at Calvary, our provision is the Perfect Lamb of God, Jesus Christ our Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7b). From the moment we believe in His death as a substitute for our own, we are *saved*, we are *born again*. This is what Paul is referencing in Romans 5 and Ephesians 2:8 when he speaks of the [free] *gift* given by God in/through Jesus Christ.

Paul also says in Romans 11:29 that the "gifts and calling of God are irrevocable." That word 'irrevocable' is actually the same word as "repent"; meaning, God won't *repent* – He won't c*hange His mind* – concerning His gifts or His calling, as it pertains to man. So we can be quite certain that God won't change His mind concerning His bestowing on us the gift of life and salvation unto eternity... *even if we act in a manner completely ungodly and unrighteous*. How can we really know this? By understanding exactly what occurs when we are born again and receive that initial salvation.

Since we are born *dead*, i.e. separated from God, we must have *life* breathed into us if we are to ever have fellowship with God – we must be *justified* (which means 'made righteous,' the same idea behind being given life). Our sins must be dealt with (Rom. 6:23). And the way they are dealt with is that the death and shed blood of God's Provision not only takes our sins away (as if they never happened), but His Provision pays the debt that we owed because of the sins (John 1:29; I Tim. 2:5-6; Col. 2:14). All of the sins we ever committed, right up to the moment of our initial faith in Jesus, are taken away – they are *passed over* (as in the events of Passover – God sees the blood and He passes over). The sentence of death that we each owe to God is paid on our behalf; God *passes a judgment* accepting that substitutionary sacrifice on our behalf (check Rom. 5:16, the root meaning of the word "justification" is "judgment"), and, in essence, *the firstborn has died* (Exodus chapters 11 and 12), *sparing us*.

The key point here is that at the moment we 'appropriate the blood,' so to speak (believe in Jesus), a judgment has been made, by God, regarding the payment owed Him. We no longer owe it because Jesus paid it for us. And since a judgment has passed…*it will not be overturned*. God passes the judgment and it is perfect.

However, even though our sins up until the point of initial salvation have been taken away, our *sin nature remains,* and we will still sin (1 John 1:8). Our behaviors and lifestyle choices, once we have been saved, have no bearing upon our initial salvation. *No bearing at all*. The gift of God will not be revoked. *However*, there will be an accountability and judgment of God's people if they choose to sin and follow after the flesh rather than follow the Spirit, because clearly, we should know better (1 Cor. 2:10-3:3, Rom. 6:11-13, Rom. 8:12-14, 2 Cor. 5:10).

> 2 Corinthians 5:10
> For we [the church, meaning all Christians making up the body of Christ] must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

> 1 Corinthians 3:11-15
> For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, **he will receive a reward**. 15 If anyone's work is burned, **he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire**.

> Galatians 6:7
> Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

> Matthew 16:24-27
> Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life [Greek 'psuche, literally "soul"] will lose it, but whoever loses his life [Greek 'psuche,' literally "soul"] for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 **For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to is works**.

You get to choose how you live as a Christian, and I get to choose how I live as a Christian. And God will recompense each one of us *according to the choices we make.*

To think that anyone can determine whether or not a person is truly *saved* based simply on their actions is not only arrogant, but it is unscriptural. Additionally, to think that a saved person can behave in any manner they choose without incurring a judgment and punishment by God is not only unscriptural, but it is truly naïve.

So why don't the "churches" today teach this? There are many reasons, but primarily the error stems from the fact that most believe that man is only a two-part being, rather than a three-part being. Knowing and understanding the three parts of man—spirit, soul, and body—is *crucial* in understanding our final judgment. And knowing and understanding terms like "salvation" and "inheritance" and "the kingdom of heaven" are key *to being prepared for that final judgment.*

For just as our initial salvation—that which impacts our spirit—carries with it a judgment that cannot be overturned, our *future salvation*—that which impacts our soul—will carry with it a judgment as well. That judgment, which occurs at the Judgment Seat of Christ upon Jesus' return, will be <u>according to our works</u> and will be in relation to our **soul**, whether we lost our **soul** now, or not. Because if we have lost our soul now [died to self and lived to God], we will indeed pick it up again in the kingdom which is to come. If we have not lost our soul now [not died to self and not lived to God], then we will lose it in the kingdom which is to come.

> 1 Peter 1:3-9 [writing to the Church]
> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has <u>begotten us again</u> ["by grace you have been saved"] to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
>
> 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the <u>genuineness of your faith</u>, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, <u>may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ</u>, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 **receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls<u>.</u>**
>
> Hebrew 10:35-39 [writing to the Church]
> Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 "For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him" [quote from Habakkuk 2:3-4] 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, **but of those who believe to the saving of the soul**.

Please continue on with the 10 basic questions to read more about this.

QUESTION 4

What are “works” and how do they fit in with the salvation message?

This continues from the previous 3 Questions, so make sure you’ve read those before you read on.

The main thing to have in place when discussing how “works” fit in with the salvation message is the fact that man is three-part being, not a two-part being. He is *spirit* and *soul* and *body*. When man initially believes in Jesus and is “saved,” this impacts his inner spirit, which is *made alive*—it is saved from death. From that point onward, he/she has the ability to understand spiritual matters (1 Cor. 2:1-16), though at the same time he/she possesses a corrupted soul/sin nature; he/she then has free will and can choose whether to follow the Spirit or follow the flesh, to die to the “I will” and live according to “God wills.” Initial salvation can never be lost or given back and it pertains to the ages unto the ages (what we think of as “forever”), *following* the coming age of the kingdom of Christ. (You will learn more about this in the following Questions.)

Initial salvation *pertaining to the spirit* is a past aspect of salvation. Salvation *pertaining to our soul* is a present and future aspect of salvation—we are in the process of “being saved” as we work out our salvation in fear and trembling (Phlp 2:12), and we hope to be yet saved (*future*, Rom. 5:9), receiving the goal of our faith, the salvation of our soul (1 Pet. 1:3-9). This present aspect affects the future salvation (lose your life/soul now to pick it up again later, Matt. 16:24-27) and has to do with entrance into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus (a kingdom which lasts 1,000 years).

This particular question about “works” tends to be at the forefront of a lot of the differing Christian beliefs out there, and is usually presented as something that Scripture contradicts itself on (which it never does). The following passages cause a lot of contention—

> James 2:14-26
> What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. 18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble! 20 **But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?**
>
> 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed

God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. 25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

And then compare it to what Paul writes to the church at Rome—

Romans 3:27-4:9
Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. 29 Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, 30 since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. 31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

4:1 What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. 5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, 6 just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: 7 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; 8 blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin." 9 Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.

These two passages do not contradict each other. God is NOT the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). So let's break these down a bit to see clearly what they are saying, starting with a review/clarification of what we've seen so far:

Being "justified" or made "just" ("just" and "righteous" are the same word in Greek and Hebrew) simply means "to be made to conform to God's standard of '*right*.'" It means that we, as sinful creatures, need to be made "righteous/just" in order to stand in God's sight, for He is holy. (For more information on this, please read "The Word of the Kingdom" study, Part II pages 16-23.)

God is the only One who can impart righteousness to/on a person (another way of saying "justify" someone). Man cannot, in any way, make himself "righteous."

Just as salvation and life need to be realized relative to each part of man's being—spirit, soul and body —justification needs to be realized to each part as well. These are all similar words that pertain to the fact that man is born separated from God due to sin, continues to be separated from God (in his fellowship with God, not his standing) if/when he continues in his sin, and will be separated from God if sin is not dealt with. Sin results in death, which means *separation from*

God. We need to be saved from death/saved from sin, given life, and made righteous in order to be fully redeemed and stand in God's presence. PAST, PRESENT, and FUTURE.

That doesn't mean there are three courtrooms. Scripture shows us *two* judgments. The first is the moment a man believes: his spirit is made alive, and he is made righteous before God on the ground of Christ's blood alone. That verdict is never reopened (Rom. 3:24-26; 11:29). The second is at the Judgment Seat of Christ, where soul and body are judged together on what was done in the body (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Thess. 5:23). In between is the walk. When a Christian sins, it doesn't touch his standing; it breaks his fellowship with God (Isa. 59:2). He agrees with God about it, and he is forgiven and cleansed by the blood that is already on the mercy seat, applied by our High Priest (1 John 1:9; Heb. 7:25). No new judgment is convened. He is counted righteous along the way.

So let's review the passage from James:

- Faith simply means belief (same word, to "have faith in" simply means "to believe in"). James says "faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead [it's there, but it does nothing, like a body without breath, v. 26]." James says it elsewhere this way, "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22).
- Faith/belief (no works involved) is necessary for initial salvation (Acts 16:30-31). Faith is also necessary every single day afterwards, for God requires us to believe in His Word and obey His Word; He expects us to live by faith, "The just shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:3-4).
- Everyday faith/belief is necessary to receive the goal of our faith, which is *the salvation of our soul* (life in the kingdom age), 1 Peter 1:1-9, Hebrews 10:36-11:3.
- So James is telling us that our everyday FAITH/BELIEF means nothing if we do not have actions that back up our beliefs. If we do not **act** according to what we **believe**, then our faith is useless; *it means nothing*.
- If we, like Abraham, ACT on our beliefs, then we will be justified accordingly (presently and yet future), as Abraham was/will be. Our FAITH/BELIEF is made *perfect* (literally "complete") through obedient acts that are done according to what we believe God has said.
- Faith/belief can NEVER be apart from what God has said.
- Abraham believed in what God had said *so fully* (regarding God telling him that the promises would come through his son, Isaac) that Abraham was willing to *kill* Isaac, knowing wholeheartedly that God would still fulfill his promises, even if it meant bringing Isaac back from the dead (Heb. 11:17-19). 100% belief with NO doubt whatsoever.
- Faithful acts can only be done through the power of God's Spirit, never by the power of our own flesh and will.
- This is why God justifies us (present and future) based on faithful obedience. He's the One we've let work in us.
- The justification that comes by works done in faith is declared at the Judgment Seat of Christ; it is NOT referencing initial justification/salvation, that which only requires belief/faith.

Now on to what Paul says:

- The context in Paul's letter is about deeds of the law (apart from faith) versus faith (specifically circumcision, since that was a point of contention between the Jews and Gentiles in the newly created church.) Paul is not talking about faith *with works* and faith *without works* as James talks about.
- Paul and James use the same verse from Genesis 15:6, "And he [Abraham] believed the Lord and He [God] accounted it to him for righteousness." James uses it relative to Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac, which occurred in Gen. 22:1-18. Paul uses it relative to its context in Gen. 15, when Abraham believed that God would deliver on his promises concerning the land and a reward (which he knew would be through his descendants), even though he was childless and both he and Sarai were too old to have children themselves. Same verse, different applications. And Gen. 15:6 is not the moment Abraham was first saved; he had already left Ur by faith years before (Heb. 11:8). It's the first time Scripture writes down believing and righteousness accounted together.
- Paul is contending with Jewish men in the church who've kept the Law all their life (and wanted the Gentile believers to keep it too), telling them that they no longer need to go through all of the physical demonstrations of keeping the Mosaic Law; Jesus' death and resurrection has made them unnecessary (not that they were *never* necessary).
- These Jewish men were already God's people before they ever heard of Jesus—redeemed, each one having come under the blood of the Passover lamb by believing God (Exod. 12:13). Believing that Jesus was that Lamb and their Messiah didn't give them a second first-salvation; it made them eligible for the heavenly inheritance being offered to their nation. The Gentiles, on the other hand, had been "without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12), and believing brought them from death to life. Two different starting points, but both came the same way, by faith (Rom. 3:22).
- This he makes even more clear because the Gentiles now are partakers of the same heavenly inheritance that the nation of Israel was offered; they aren't under the Law, yet are still righteous through faith.
- The thrust of Paul's passage is that Abraham was not made righteous by works of the Law (specifically circumcision) because that came afterwards (his belief was accounted for righteousness in Gen. 15:6 when he was between 75-85 years old, and the sign of circumcision was given when he was 99 years old, Gen. 17:10, 24). Clearly Abraham did not have to perform ceremonial physical acts of obedience in order to be seen as "righteous" in God's eyes. Abraham just believed what God had said. And that belief, that FAITH, was accounted to him as righteousness.
- In like manner, the Jews who had believed in Jesus no longer needed to do the physical work of the Mosaic Law because they were now rendered useless. They needed to understand that NOW they simply need to continue to *believe* in order to be righteous.
- Paul does describe the verdict God hands down the moment a man believes (Rom. 3:21-26), but he describes it to people who already have it, to settle the argument over the Law. And his point holds all the way through: the deeds of the Law are never what God counts as righteousness—not when a man first believes, and not in the righteous way of living once he's first believed (Rom. 4:12).

- Righteousness is accounted to the one who believes in (*has faith in*) the fact that God Himself justifies the ungodly by forgiving our lawless deeds and covers our sin (see 1 John 1:8-10). Deeds of the Law do not do it. God does it and will do it based on faith. (This is true of the past aspect of salvation, and it's just as true of the present aspect of salvation—*day by day by day*.)
- Paul is not saying works aren't necessary, nor is he saying works don't have a place with faith. He's contrasting faithless works of the Law with FAITH WITHOUT THE LAW.

Acts of obedience are "works." These can be, *and most usually are*, inward acts that are not visible to those around us. "Works" are submitting to the Word of God (God's will, not yours), having your heart cleansed from within, getting all thoughts and actions under the leading of the Spirit and submitting to God's will in all things.

Sometimes "works" are visible to others. Charity, kindness, truth telling, being merciful and forgiving, and we could go on and on.

"Works" can be summed up as follows:

Our works have no place in initial salvation; Jesus did the work on the cross, we believe, we are saved/made righteous (relative to our spirit).
Consequent to that event, as we journey through this life:

Works (of the Law) without faith are not accepted by God.

Faith without WORKS BASED ON FAITH is *useless* (no reward, no approval).

Faith with WORKS BASED ON FAITH is righteousness and leads to the salvation of the soul.

QUESTION 5

What is the kingdom of heaven? What is the kingdom of God?

In the widest scope of things, the *whole universe* is God's Kingdom. God is THE Supreme Ruler and there is nothing and no one that is higher than or apart from His sphere of rule. But that isn't what is meant by the phrases "the kingdom of heaven" (which should be literally translated as "the kingdom of the heavens") and "the kingdom of God." We need to define these specific phrases as they are used by the New Testament writers, starting with the Gospel books and Jesus' message during His first advent (a message that began with John the Baptist, and was further preached by the apostles after Jesus' death and resurrection). The message was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven/kingdom of God is at hand," also called elsewhere "the gospel (literally "good news") of the kingdom."

Our purpose here is not to go into a lengthy study, but rather a simple starter to define said "kingdom" and show that Scripture presents this kingdom as a *literal* kingdom (not a *figurative* one), and states clearly that it is not now, but **yet future**. (For an in-depth study of this topic, see "The Word of the Kingdom" Bible study on the Bible Studies page.)

First and foremost, "the kingdom of the heavens" and the "kingdom of God" does not in any way have **anything** to do with an "unsaved" person's *conversion* (their "initial salvation" if you will) in order to become a Christian. (For more information on that topic, see "10 Basic Questions for Christians" on our website.)

The Gospels books (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) are all recordings of the same historic time period covering Jesus' earthly ministry, His death and His ressurrection; however, they each have slightly different structures and sometimes record different events—as well as varying details about the same events—depending on which elements they want the focus on. Therefore, many times we'll see 2, 3, or all 4 of the Gospel books tell the *same story* but with different details. *When we see this* it's important to compare them because **together** they'll give a fuller picture of the story they're telling. Here's an example in which Mark and Matthew are saying the exact same thing only using different iterations of phrasing:

> Mark 4:10-11
> But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable.
> 11 And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables..."
>
> Matthew 13:10-11
> And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" 11 He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

We can see in these two passages from two separate Gospel books *the same thing being said*, just different terminologies used. “The kingdom of [the] heaven[s]” and “the kingdom of God” are referencing the same thing.

The following verses from the same Gospel are another example where we can see the two terms being used synonymously: ONE kingdom in which entrance is difficult (for a rich man, in this case)—

> Matthew 19:23-24
> And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Jesus’ message was concerning **the good news** about a kingdom that was “at hand,” and repentance from His people was a necessary precursor to it’s establishment. His message was a *very real offer* of a kingdom, a kingdom in which <u>entrance</u> was the focal point. This “kingdom” (of heaven/of God, same thing being referenced) was the crux of Jesus’ ministry.

And Jesus Himself is the declared King of this kingdom—

> Matthew 2:2
> Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

> Luke 23:2-3
> And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King." 3 Then Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" He answered him and said, "It is as you say."

Jesus, the One born King of the Jews, came to His people with the offer of a kingdom, a kingdom in which their repentance was required in order to establish it. We know He was not received but was instead crucified, and even to His death He maintained He was King.

So then, what is this kingdom of heaven/God that Jesus was offering?

This needs some unpacking, so let’s first establish the <u>purpose</u> for the kingdom. In order to understand this, we must see man’s created purpose and his subsequent need for redemption in relation to this stated purpose. It will tie everything together.

> Genesis 1:26-28
> Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them <u>have dominion</u> [literally “rule”] over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female

He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion [literally “rule”] over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Psalm 8: 3-8
When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, 4 what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? 5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; you have put all things under his feet, 7 All sheep and oxen-even the beasts of the field, 8 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas. 9 O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth!

1 Corinthians 15:22
For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

Romans 5:18-19
Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

1 Thessalonians 5:23
Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved **blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Hebrews 2:5-10
For He has not put **the world to come** (Greek noun ‘oikoumene,’ meaning “the inhabited world”), of which we speak, in subjection to angels. 6 But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him? 7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. 8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet" [quote of Psalm 8:3-6]. For in that He [God] put all in subjection under him [man], He [God] left nothing that is not put under him [man]. But now we do not yet see all things put under him [man]. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. 10 For it was fitting for Him [Jesus], for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Romans 8:16-19
The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, **if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together**. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

Man[kind] was created to rule, <u>but we do not yet see man ruling over all things</u>. Mankind is not currently ruling because sin entered in and man is now in need of redemption, a redemption (complete sanctification of all <u>3</u> parts, *spirit & soul & body*) that will be fully effected when Jesus returns. Man will one day rule in his redeemed state (redemption brought about solely by the work of God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit), with the Son of Man/the Son of God, thereby bringing forth God's intended purpose for him. The Kingdom is the stage in which Christ, with redeemed man as his joint heir, rules over the earth in order to reconcile all things (both in relation to the death, the curse on the earth, and the curse on man).

Note specifically Hebrews 2:5, "He did not subject to angels the inhabited world to come." Who did He subject the inhabited world to come to, if not angels? *Man*. And since man is a literal being, with a literal created purpose to rule, which will one day literally come true in the literal inhabited world to come, **this coming kingdom is literal also**.

Let's read more about the "kingdom"as it continued to be progressively revealed throughout the Old Testament, up unto Jesus' appearance with His message concerning it—

2 Samuel 7: 10-14a,16 [the prophet Nathan speaking the words of the Lord to David]
"Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, 11 since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house. 12 When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and <u>I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.</u> 14 "I will be his Father, and he shall be My son.... 16 "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever."

Notice the literalness of these prophetic statements. Paying attention to this in accordance with David's throne (which was a literal throne), you can see why Jesus is called "the son of David." This is also one of the places we find Jesus' right to be called "the Son of God."
Many people try to take the prophecies from the earlier verses and attribute them only to Solomon (especially in light of verse 14b which says "If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men."). While that is certainly one application of the prophecy, you'll notice that David understood it to be the *distant* future—

2 Samuel 7: 18-19
Then King David went in and sat before the LORD; and he said: "Who am I, O Lord GOD? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far? 19 And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord GOD; and You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come [literally "afar off"].

Plus the New Testament quotes 2 Samuel 7:14-16 in Hebrews 1:5, directly connecting it to Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ (as well as connecting it to Psalm 2:7, which connects it to Acts 13:33).

Additional prophecies surrounding Israel's Promised King and His kingdom can be found in Isaiah—

> Isaiah 9:6-7
> For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Continuing with prophecies concerning a coming "son," Isaiah makes a similar proclamation as Samuel about this One they were to be expecting. He states the literalness of David's throne, and so we must take the rest of his statements as literal as well: a literal son born, with a literal government to rest on His shoulder ("rest on His shoulder" is a Hebrew idiom, just as in English, symbolizing acceptance of a burden or responsibility, which does not need to be taken literal), while He sits on David's literal throne over a literal kingdom, upholding it with literal justice and righteousness.

Another place we read about this same Promised Son of David and His kingdom is in Luke—

> Luke 1:30-33
> And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end."

Notice the repetition here? A son born to receive a kingdom that will have no end, a kingdom that emanates from the throne of David, a son both of David and of the Most High. And here we have more information concerning the literalness of His entrance into the world (which was literally fulfilled).

There is no Scriptural evidence that allows one to take the literalness of some of the things mentioned in a list, but not the others.

This promised kingdom is also mentioned in the Book of Daniel with some detail, particularly that the Kingdom of Christ would come after a future war waged against the saints by an exceedingly dreadful beast (the Antichrist) who is the head of a kingdom which must be destroyed prior to the Coming Kingdom. The following passage from Daniel is cross-referenced with the Book of Revelation (text in blue) in order to see the fulfilment of said prophecies occurring in the Book of

Revelation, a book almost exclusively about the end of this age and the future coming kingdom of Jesus Christ:

> Daniel 7: 13-14,18-27
> I (Daniel) kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man was coming and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. 14 And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.
>
> 18 "But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all the ages to come." 19 Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast [from the vision told in Daniel 7:1-12], which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its claws of bronze, and which devoured, crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet, 20 and the meaning of the ten horns that were on its head (Revelation 13:1 "And he stood on the sand of the seashore. And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems [literally 'crowns'], and on his heads were blasphemous names."), and the other horn which came up, and before which three of them fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts, and which was larger in appearance than its associates.
>
> 21 I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them 22 until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom. 23 Thus he ["one of those who were standing by"] said; "The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms, and it will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. 24 As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. 25 And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time [three and a half years] (Revelation 13:5-7 "And there was given to him (the beast from Rev.13:1) a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months [three and a half years] was given to him. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.").
>
> 26 But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated, and destroyed forever. 27 Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the

Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him."

Simply put, this last kingdom in which the one like a Son of Man, the Ancient of Days, has dominion over will not ever be destroyed. Very similar to that which we already read in the other prophecies. *It is literal through and through*. **And still yet future**.

Another place to read about the timing of this literal Promised Kingdom of the Son of David, the Son of God, is again in Luke. I've done some cross-referencing here as well, in order to show the events in their proper timeline—

Luke 19:11-27
And while they were listening to these things, he went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. 12 He said therefore,

"A certain nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return. 13 And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business with this until I come back.' 14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' (John 19:15, "They therefore cried out, 'Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!' Pilate said to them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but Caesar.'")

15 And it came about that when he returned after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him in order that he might know what business they had done (2 Cor. 5:10 "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."). 16 And the first appeared, saying, 'Master, your mina has made ten minas more.' 17 And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, be in authority over ten cities (Daniel 7:27b "Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One).' 18 And the second came, saying, 'Your mina, master, has made five minas.' 19 And he said to him also, 'And you are to be over five cities.' 20 And another came, saying, 'Master, behold your mina, which I kept put away in a handkerchief; 21 for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down, and reap what you did not sow.' 22 He said to him, 'By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down, and reaping what I did not sow? 23 Then why did you not put the money in the bank, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?' 24 And he said to the bystanders, 'Take the mina away from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas' (Galatians 6:7 "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap").

> 25 And they said to him, ‘Master, he has ten minas already.’ 26 ‘I tell you, that to everyone who has shall more be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. 27 But these enemies of mine who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence.’”

Jesus has gone away *to receive a kingdom*, and when He returns with His kingdom, He will judge His servants according to the work they've done while He was away. For those who've done well, their reward is a position of rulership. For those who have not done well, a negative recompense is due. *A literal future kingdom* to be shared with men found faithful at His return. ***In the Book of Revelation we can also see the transfer of the current kingdom of the world to the Lord Jesus, a kingdom currently being ruled over by Satan and his fallen angels—***

> Revelation 11:15
> "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

Compare with the following verses and commentary—

> Luke 11:18a
> "And if Satan also is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?"

> Luke 4:5-8
> Then the devil, taking Him [Jesus] up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. 7 Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours." 8 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

Satan has a kingdom. And notice that Jesus does not tell Satan that the kingdoms of the world are not his to give.

More descriptions of who's currently in ruling—

> 2 Corinthians 4:4
> …in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving…

> John 14:30
> "I [Jesus] will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me…"

Satan is the current ruler of this world system, the god of this world. He's currently ruling from the heavens over this earth (Eph. 6:12, Col. 1:16, 20), and Jesus' kingdom OF THE HEAVENS will be instituted only when Jesus returns and wrests it out from under Satan's control. And when this happens, the kingdom of heaven/God begins with Jesus and man ruling from the heavens. As told in Revelation (which is a record of future events)—

Revelation 11:17
[the twenty-four elders] saying, “We give Thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast, because Thou hast taken Thy great power and hast *begun to reign*.”

Revelation 12:10 (KJV)
“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven (after Satan is cast out of heaven), ‘Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for (literally “because”) the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.’”

And recorded elsewhere as well—

2 Timothy 4:1 (KJV)
I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom...

Matthew 25:31-34
“But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, *then* He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’”

The kingdom of heaven comes at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
One last place we’ll look in order to make clear that this coming kingdom—the kingdom of heaven which Jesus was offering entrance into during His earthly ministry (a message the apostles continued after Jesus ascended)—is <u>literal</u> and is <u>yet future</u> is in the letter to the church at Corinth:

I Corinthians 15:41-54
There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 45 And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

It is almost impossible, especially in light of the above Scriptures, to place the kingdom of heaven *in which Jesus rules with man* in this present time, here and now, <u>nor to see it figuratively.</u>

The system of rulership currently in effect is the kingdom of Satan ruling over all the earth, from the heavens. The kingdom of heaven/kingdom of God which Jesus speaks about is the coming kingdom in which Jesus ousts Satan from his throne and takes His rightful place as King.

<u>This coming kingdom of heaven—and entrance into it— is not only the topic of the parables, but it is the central topic of all Scripture.</u>

QUESTION 6

Who is Satan? Why does he battle against us?

His identity is made clear –

> Revelation 12:9
> And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world…

Satan is the devil, and he is the serpent who has been here since the beginning in Genesis; he was the source of the deception and temptation that led the woman, and then Adam, to sin—

> Genesis 3:1-6
> Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" 4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

And the devil is powerful, lest we forget –

> Luke 4:5-6
> And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish."

He is the owner and ruler of all the kingdoms of the world, for they have been given to him (for a time). He is the ruler and god of this world –

> 1 John 5:19
> We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

> Acts 26:18
> …to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.

> John 14:30
> [Jesus speaking] "I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me…

2 Corinthians 4:3-4
And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

His agenda is contrary to God's agenda, for God created man to rule in Satan's stead –

Hebrews 2:5-10
For He has not put **the world to come** (Greek noun 'oikoumene,' meaning "the inhabited world"), <u>of which we speak</u>, in subjection to angels. 6 But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him? 7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. 8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet" [quote of Psalm 8:3-6]. For in that He [God] put all in subjection under him [man], He [God] left nothing that is not put under him [man]. <u>But now we do not yet see all things put under him [man]</u>. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. 10 For it was fitting for Him [Jesus], for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

And so we Christians battle against Satan and his angels who dwell in the heavenlies –

Ephesians 6:11-12
Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

And the battle is over positions in a kingdom –

Romans 8:16-19
The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.
Revelation 3:20-21
20 [Jesus speaking to the church] "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me. 21 He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

Ephesians 3:8-11
8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, 9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; 10 in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. 11 This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord…

Satan seeks to stop this administration change from happening, for if he can stop the many "sons" being "brought to glory" he believes that he can keep them from ascending the throne as fellow heirs with the Son of Man and Son of God (Jesus), and by doing so he can retain his throne. Therefore, he is fierce in his determination to overcome those who would be overcomers –

1 Peter 5:6-10
Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you. 8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. 10 And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

But Satan has already been judged, and his sentence is clear and foreordained–

John 12:31
[Jesus speaking] "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out."

Revelation 20:1-10 [depicting a scene yet future, when Jesus returns]
And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

7 And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, 8 and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Ezekiel 28:12-19 (KJV – most accurate tense usage)
Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. 13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. 14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. 16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. 18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. 19 All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

(For a more detailed look at Satan and his current position, his past fall, and his future demise, please read the Bible study titled “The Word of the Kingdom” on our Bible Studies page, specifically Part VI on pages 45-51.)

QUESTION 7

What is the Judgment Seat of Christ?

The Judgment Seat of Christ is the place where a just recompense is doled out -

> 2 Corinthians 5:10-11
> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 11 Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.
>
> Romans 14:10
> But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.

- It is clearly something that "we" all must appear before. The "we" is referring to Christians, for Paul is including himself in the group.
- Romans supports this, for the context dictates that it is regarding us and our "brothers" (fellow Christians).
- We will all be judged by God.
- The Judgment is based on our works.
- All Christians will be recompensed (which means "given what is owed") for their works, *either good or bad*.
- This event should make us fearful of the Lord, which in itself makes us think that the outcome is not guaranteed to be favorable.

This event is future –

> Revelation 22:12
> "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."

- This is Jesus speaking, contextually at His return, which is yet future.
- For additional reference, see information regarding the "reward" and the "inheritance."

> Matthew 16:24-27
> Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life [Greek 'psuche,' literally "soul"] will lose it, but whoever loses his life [Greek 'psuche,' literally "soul"] for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul [Greek 'psuche,' literally "soul"]? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul [Greek 'psuche,' literally "soul"]? 27 For the Son of Man will come

in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

- This judgment and recompense is clearly shown to be future, when the Son of Man returns.
- Jesus speaks this to His disciples, including them in the context.

This event, the Son of Man returning and passing judgment, occurs at the end of this age –

Matthew 13:39-41
… and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. 40 Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send forth [future tense] His angels, and they will gather out [future tense] of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit [Greek present tense, literally "who are committing"] lawlessness…

- This age ends with a harvest, where sorting occurs.
- The sorting is to rid "those who are committing lawlessness" out of the "Son of Man's" kingdom.
- Christians can *be committing* "lawlessness" (referring to a continual type of lifestyle, not referring to our sins which we ask forgive for and are cleansed from) even after they're saved.

This judgment and recompense, to Christians, will be both GOOD and BAD –

Romans 2:1-8
Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. 2 But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. 3 And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who "will render to each one according to his deeds": 7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness--indignation and wrath,Judgment will be based on works

- Context shows Paul is talking to the church, *redeemed* individuals.
- There is a positive recompense, and a negative recompense.
- The negative recompense is reserved for the stubborn and unrepentant, and this brings on the wrath of God.
- The positive recompense for good works (persevering, repentant heart, doing good, seeking glory and honor) is "eternal life."

- You NEED TO KNOW what “eternal life” really means if it is spoken of as a reward! (Read the Bible study “Word of the Kingdom” on our Bible Studies page, in particular Part XI, pages 82-89.)

Let’s look at a parable the Jesus gives in response to those who “supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately”—

> Luke 19:11-27
> Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. 12 Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. 13 So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' 14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' 15 And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.”
>
> 16 "Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' 17 And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' 18 And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' 19 Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' 20 Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. 21 For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' 22 And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. 23 Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' 24 And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.'
>
> 25 (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.') 26 For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 27 But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.'"

- Parables are always portraying some veiled truth that is *unveiled*/opened up only with spiritual eyes and ears, which only come with a softened heart and a willing spirit. Jesus Himself said that His parables concern “the *mysteries*” of the kingdom of God/heaven.
- This parable pictures a judgment concerning the kingdom of God. (Read #5 of the “10 Basic Questions for Christians” on the same-named page to understand what is meant by this phrase.)

- This judgment occurs when the "nobleman" returns, picturing Jesus, <u>after</u> receiving for himself a kingdom.
- The judgment is reserved only for his servants. All of his servants are there (signified by the #10), and there is no distinction made in their status – they are all servants. (A servant is a *redeemed* person, one who has willingly put themselves under the Master.)
- Their recompense is based on what they **did** with what they were given by their Master (not based on what they did with what they had irrespective of Him).
- The rewards for faithfulness with the goods concerns *rulership*.
- The one who did not produce anything was not given mercy; rather, he was judged relative to his own words and attitude towards the Master, and his recompense was NOT positive. He lost everything and was called an "enemy" of God.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14
13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. 14 For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

- The coming judgment concerning "every act," whether good or evil, should cause us to "fear God" and "keep His commandments."

Finally, the Judgment Seat of Christ, yet future, is seen vividly in Chapters 2 and 3 in the Book of Revelation. (We know this is yet future because John was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," meaning "the day of the Lord," the Second Coming of Christ.) In this passage of Scripture we can clearly see Christ as Judge in the midst of the churches (Rev. 1:13-20, *girded about the chest* as a judge would be), symbolizing the entire Church in that future day (2:1). Jesus makes proclamations and determinations concerning the works that these individual Christians did, and doles out rewards in relation to *overcoming;* the rewards all have to do with positions of rulership within His Kingdom.

QUESTION 8

What is the inheritance? What is the reward? How do you get them?

To begin, let's look closely at the words "inheritance" and "reward" and see what Scripture teaches us—

> Colossians 3:23-25
> Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. 25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

The inheritance is a *reward* that is to be given to the Christian who does their "work" heartily for the Lord. (The letters in the New Testament were all written to the church [distinguished only by their location], and the "church" is the body of Christ, **redeemed** individuals.)

The reward [of the inheritance] is a literal future reward—

> Revelation 22:12
> "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

The reward is future (the Book of Revelation is depicting the future "day of the Lord" when Jesus returns), and concerns the just recompense that Jesus will dole out to every man "according to what he has done."

This is exactly the same thing we see in 2 Corinthians 5:10—

> 2 Corinthians 5:10
> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

(See #7 of the 10 Basic Questions for Christians on the page of the same name to learn more about the Judgment Seat of Christ.)

Peter mentions the "inheritance" in his letter to the church—

> 1 Peter 1:3-4
> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you…

The inheritance is in heaven, reserved for us (the Christian).

What exactly is the inheritance, which is a reward?

> 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
> 9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

The inheritance, which is a reward based on works, which will be given when Jesus comes back, is the kingdom of God (you need to know exactly what the "kingdom of God" is; see Question #5 of the 10 Basic Questions for Christians on the page of the same name).

But *specifically* the inheritance is not the kingdom itself *per se* (though that is one facet of it, as "inheritance" = "land," as seen in 'type' in the Old Testament, Lev. 20:24), but in particular –

> Ephesians 5:5
> For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

The inheritance is in the kingdom – specifically *positions* within that kingdom. (This now relies on you knowing what man's created purpose is, again refer to Question #5 as above.)

> Revelation 3:21
> "He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

Overcoming and producing "works" all earn the Christian a reward. The reward is an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ when He returns. Specifically, positions of rulership in that kingdom.

One thing to know and/or remember when understanding the term "inheritance": Inheritance is a **family term**. One must be in the family to be eligible to receive an inheritance. From the Old Testament we can clearly see that the inheritance to be given to God's people concerned a literal land, and positions within a kingdom in that literal land.

The kingdom of heaven, which we will inherit/have an inheritance in is a literal place – a literal land.

Let's take a look at another facet of "the inheritance" –

> Matthew 19:29
> "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit eternal life. Mark 10:17; Luke 10:25, 18:18)

Mark 10:17
Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

Luke 10:25
And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

"Eternal life" is also talked about as being *inherited*. This is NOT a *separate* inheritance, but rather *another way to describe our inheritance*, which is a reward.

Understanding the word "eternal" [as translated in the Scriptures] is the key!

The word that is translated as the adjective "eternal" in the English translations of the New Testament is the Greek word, 'aionios.' The first thing that we need to understand about this word is that it is an adjective form of the Greek noun, 'aion,' translated as "age." In order to understand the Scriptural definition of "eternal" we need to first define the noun form of this word. An example of why this is an effective way to understand an adjective which has been made from a noun can be seen in the words rock (noun) and rocky (adjective). We can understand what rocky means by defining what a rock is. So as we go from the noun form of the word to the adjective form, we can see that the definition of the word does not change; only its grammatical usage does.

An "age" in Scripture is always a period of time *with a beginning and an end*. The word "age" does not contain within itself any indication of *how much* time, just that it is a period of time. For example, this "age" we are currently in is called an "evil" age (singular), because it encompasses mankind in his sinful state—which had a beginning (Gen. 1:2) and will have an end (Rev. 22:12), and will last 6,000 years (for details on that please read "The Word of the Kingdom Bible study, Part X pages 73-81). Scripture also presents the coming kingdom as another *age* that comes after this current age, and it specifically tells us it will last 1,000 years in Rev. 20:1-10 (with a beginning, Rev. 12:10, and an end, 1 Cor. 15:24-26, Rev. 21:1-8).

Therefore, when using the noun "age" as an adjective relative to the noun "life," the correct translation of "*aionios life*' is "**age-lasting life**," or "**life for the age**," NOT the misleading English phrase "eternal life."

(I highly suggest you read the Bible study titled "The Word of the Kingdom" on our Bible Studies page. It goes into great detail, using many Scripture verses, to explain this. In particular, Part XI pages 82-89.
Take notice of this next verse –

Luke 18:29-30
And He said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who shall not

receive many times as much at this time and in the age [‘aion’] to come, eternal [‘aionios’] life.”

Knowing what the “age to come” is crucial here, for once you know *that* (the “age to come” is the kingdom, See Question #5), you'll see that the overcomer (Luke 18:29-30) gets "eternal”/’aionios’ life ***FOR THAT AGE***. Most significantly, it is the one who is already redeemed who inherits “aionios” life in that age to come. “Eternal [age-lasting] life” is a reward for the Christian, based on works.

The phrase “eternal life” is not referencing initial salvation; it is a reward, based on works.

INHERITANCE = KINGDOM = REWARD = AGE-LASTING LIFE

Let’s make sure to eradicate any confusion over this. Most Christians today believe that the phrase “eternal life” as found in Scripture means *to be with the Lord forever and ever, never to be separated*, and believing in Jesus as your Savior is all it takes to receive that. (There are different facets to this, but there’s no need to go over all of that here.) When a person first believes in Jesus as their Savior and is “born again,” **YES** they receive *life* (life just means “togetherness with God,” death means “separation from God) unto the ages, but that is NOT called “eternal life.” The ancient Greeks and Hebrews did not have a concept of *time unending*—they had a concept of age upon age upon age, or ages unto ages, but never *infinity* or *eternal* as our English/Western minds conceive of it.

Once a person believes that Jesus died for their sins, they are given spiritual life. This is LIFE relative to the spirit that can never, ever be lost or given back. But this is relative to the *ages* AFTER the coming kingdom age, because participation in the kingdom is a *reward*.

After initial salvation a person’s soul remains corrupted. This is why we constantly have to deny ourselves, die to our flesh, and work out our salvation [of the soul] with fear and trembling (Philp. 2:12). The soul is *saved* (*or not*, Matt. 16:24-27) at the Judgment Seat of Christ. If a person has done what is necessary they will receive life in the kingdom = “eternal”/AGE-LASTING life. If a person has not done what is necessary, they will not receive/inherit LIFE FOR THE KINGDOM AGE. They will experience separation/death FOR THAT AGE.

Let’s go over this again.

- The inheritance is the reward; the reward IS the inheritance. (Col. 3:24)
- The inheritance is the kingdom. (1 Cor. 6:9)
- The inheritance is IN the kingdom. (Eph. 5:5)
- The prior two bullet points can be understood as inheriting positions of RULERSHIP within the kingdom. (Gen. 1:26, 28; Heb. 2:5-8)
- The inheritance is reserved in heaven (1 Pet. 1:3-4) for those who have already been born again (specifically the kingdom of the heavens).
- The inheritance is CONDITIONAL, so the reward is also CONDITIONAL.
- Receiving the inheritance is future. (Rev. 22:12; 1 Pet. 1:3-9)

Therefore it is fair to say that one can substitute the word “reward” for “inheritance” in every instance in the New Testament and still maintain the accuracy of the verse and context.

For further Scripture references regarding the clear teaching of the Lord that those who are ALREADY REDEEMED will receive a reward (or not) for their work, we can see the following—

> 2 Corinthians 5:10
> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.
>
> Romans 14:10-12
> But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

- Christians will stand before the Lord and have to give account of, *and be judged on*, the works they have done in this body. And from the Lord they will receive a just recompense according to these works.

> Revelation 22:12
> "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

- The reward is future.
- The reward is based on works.

> 1 Corinthians 3:11-15
> For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

- Again you see that CHRISTIANS will either receive a reward for their work (built on the foundation of Jesus Christ), or they will receive a loss based on their works (built on the foundation of Jesus Christ).
- And this reward, or loss, will be determined at the coming of “the day” (referencing the day of the Lord, the Seventh Day, the end of this age).

More detail concerning this reward is given by the Lord Himself—

Luke 19:11-27
Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. 12 Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. 13 So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' 14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' 15 And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading."

16 "Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' 17 And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' 18 And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' 19 Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' 20 Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. 21 For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' 22 And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. 23 Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' 24 And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.'

25 (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.') 26 For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 27 But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.'"

- Since this is a parable, we must understand FIRST what parables are and why they were used by the Lord. See Matthew 13:10-13.

Matthew 13:10
And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" 11 And He answered and said to them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. 12 For whoever has, to him shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. 13 Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand."

- Parables are about understanding the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens; parables are for those with ears to hear.
- In the previous parable, we see a certain nobleman who leaves to get his kingdom and then return. This is Jesus, leaving the first time after His crucifixion, resurrection and 40 day ministry.

- Before the nobleman leaves, he calls his slaves in order to give them something to do business with – *produce something* – <u>for him</u>, which he will collect when he returns. All ten are HIS slaves. This is Jesus entrusting His servants, CHRISTIANS, with certain works to do, which He will expect a return on when He returns.
- The interchange between master and servant is regarding what they have done with what they were given. The rewards are doled out exactly recompense with what the servants produced. This is Jesus and His servants, at the Judgment Seat – when Jesus returns – recounting the works done while the Master/Jesus was away. The rewards that will be doled out to Christians will be exactly recompense with our works.
- The reward in the parable concerns positions of rulership. The rewards that await Christians concern positions of rulership.
- There is a NEGATIVE recompense to the servant who did not produce anything. What he has was taken away. This is what will happen to the Christian who shows up at the Judgment Seat without anything produced.

In another parable concerning the same scenario (Matt. 25:14-30), we see that not only does the servant who shows up with nothing receive a condemnation, he is also removed from the presence of the Lord –

> Matthew 25:28-30
> 28 'Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.' 29 "For to everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. 30 "<u>And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth</u>.

- The servants of the Lord can receive either rewards OR PUNISHMENT at the Judgment Seat of Christ. And the reward concerns positions of rulership with the kingdom of the heavens.
- Because of what we know concerning the kingdom of Christ – that it only lasts 1,000 years – **<u>we know that the rewards and punishments are temporary</u>**.

QUESTION 9

Why do we need to know the warnings regarding the first generation of Israel? Esau? Balaam?

As we have already seen with the past Questions on this page regarding the reward of the inheritance of the kingdom, there is something quite *real* and quite *valuable* that we Christians stand to lose if we choose to live lives of self-centered unfaithfulness and disobedience. And God has seen fit to record numerous warnings in His Word to make sure that we pay close attention to this possibility.

We'll begin by looking at the first generation of Israel out of Egypt, for there is much written on the subject of their failures and ensuing consequences –

> 1 Corinthians 9:24-10:12
> Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.
>
> 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness [referncing the first generation at Kadesh Barnea, refusing to go in to the land]. 6 Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play" [referencing the gold calf incident]. 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell [referencing Balaam and Balak]; 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.
>
> 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

- Paul likens our Christian journey on this earth to *a race*, and *a fight*, inidating clearly that being disqualified is a possibility.

- We are running in this race in order to receive a crown – signifying *victory* and *rulership.* Paul is not ashamed to say that indeed a PRIZE motivates one to TRAIN, in order to compete and finish well.
- Paul describes the need to discipline his body in order to attain this crown. He fears that even *he* could possibly get disqualified if he does not finish the race well. Therefore, we most certainly need to apply the same concerns to ourselves, for the same reasons.
- AS AN EXAMPLE concerning this possible disqualification from receiving a crown at the end of our race, Paul launches into a lengthy explanation concerning the first generation of Israel and states that their failure is an example to us, so that we do not fail in the same manner as they did.
- He says concerning the first generation:

    - DO NOT BE UNAWARE regarding their spiritual status and standing before God. They, as we, were partaking of Christ. (If at this point you still are unsure as to how the first generation could be considered "saved," you need to go back and study the first few questions in this series.)
    - BUT, even though they were a spiritually alive group, God wasn't well pleased with most of them….and so they fell shrot of their calling as a direct result of their rebellious actions.
    - Their actions are stated as being lustful and evil; they committed idolatry and sexually immorality. They tempted Christ and they complained. These are actions worthy of disqualification.

- NOTE THE WARNING: "Let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall."

- Now go back to the Old Testament and read exactly what this first generation did that God deemed to be so "evil" (Num. 13:17-14:35, Ex. 32:1-28, Num. 25:1-9). This is our handbook, so to speak, of what NOT to do. Pay close attention to NOT behave in this way, else your end will be the same as theirs (loss of inheritance in the land).

    - The first generation (all but two, Joshua and Caleb) refused to believe what God said about receiving their inheritance.
    - They (all but two) believed the words of their leaders, rather than the Word of God.
    - They (all but two) complained about wanting to go back to Egypt.
    - Concerning the idol they made in Moses' absence, they decided Moses was gone too long; it was too hard to wait for his return and instead they made something that they called "God" (literally, 'Elohim,' "that brought [them] out of the land of Egypt" Ex. 32:4) that they could visibly see and enjoy in the moment. They ate, drank, sang and played (acted child-like) around this idol, all the while thinking that they were pleasing God.
    - The "plague" that is mentioned, in which 23,000 fell *in one day*, is the time when the men of Israel joined themselves with the women of Moab (due to the actions of Balaam, which we'll be looking at next). Because of this (in direct disobedience

to what God had said concerning them staying separate from the nations) they also started to worship the idols/gods of Moab. This is adultery in God's eyes, for they joined themselves with the world. Because they refused to see the seriousness of their entwining with the world, members of the congregation were told to slay each and every one who committed this act of adultery – including the Moabite women they committed the acts with. This "plague" was stopped, but not before they lost a huge number of their congregation. This sin of idolatry was extremely serious in God's eyes and had to be stopped immediately, for if left unchecked it would have permeated throughout the camp.

The Book of Hebrews is another place where we find reference to the first generation of Israel, and a warning attached to it exhorting us to not behave in the same manner as they did, else we will receive the same recompense as they did –

Hebrews 3:5-4:11
And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, 6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. 7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.' 11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'"

12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." 16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

4:1 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come [literally, "may be seeming to come"] short of it. 2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. 3 For we who have believed [literally, "believe"] do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'" although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"; 5 and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest." 6 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of

disobedience, 7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts."

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. 10 For he who has entered [literally, “enters”] His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

- The warning begins with a reference concerning us becoming a partaker with Christ in His household (“co-heir”) IF we hold fast our confidence, and the rejoicing of our hope, <u>firm until the end</u>.
- The example of what NOT to do is given with a retelling of the failures of the first generation of Israel out of Egypt. Of them the writer states:

    - They (all but two) hardened their hearts to the voice of God.
    - They (all but two) tested and tried God.
    - They (all but two) went astray in their heart; they did not know His ways.
    - They had evil, unbelieving hearts.
    - They fell away from the living God.
    - They were hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
    - They provoked God.
    - They sinned.
    - They were disobedient.
    - They did not enter His “rest,” which was to be realized in the land, their inheritance.
    - They could not enter because of “unbelief,” literally “faithlessness.”
    - They had good news preached to them, but it did not profit them because they did not unite it with faithful obedience to what they heard (no action).

- We are then warned that we, too, will fail to enter the Sabbath Day Rest if we behave in the same manner as the first generation of Israel. The Sabbath Day Rest is the 7th Day, the Day of the Lord, the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ. (For more information on this, please read the Bible study titled, “The Word of the Kingdom” found on our Bible Studies page, particularly Part X, pages 73-81.)

- Pay close, CLOSE attention to what it is that the first generation did that so angered God. (Read the Num. 13:17-14:35 again if needed.) The congregation’s leaders were appointed with the task of going in to the land which was promised to be the inheritance of the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The leaders saw and experienced the land firsthand, and even brought back evidence of the land’s bounty to the congregation. However, the report that the majority of the leaders (10 of 12) gave to the congregation was full of *doubt* and <u>*unbelief*</u>. They stated that *even though God had said that He would defeat the enemies in the land and would deliver the land to the people,* there was **no way**

that Israel would be able to conquer the inhabitants of the land; therefore, the ten leaders swayed the group to be afraid and disbelieve what God had said. The two other leaders, Joshua and Caleb, remained faithful and confident – despite what their eyes told them – in what God had said. But the people followed the majority; they disbelieved God and His Word. They refused to do what God had said. They believed their leaders instead.

- Note, at no time did the people STOP believing in God's existence; at no time did they refuse God as their God. They, instead, refused to believe what He said concerning their inheritance, and they refused to do what He said was required in order to receive their inheritance. **This is what God views as evil and unbelieving.**

This picture of the failure of the first generation of Israel is, by far, the most serious of the warnings proclaimed in the Scriptures, for an entire generation (almost 2,000,000 by some accounts) failed just shy of the <u>goal</u> of their *redemption*. They failed after seeing firsthand God's redemption of this entire people out of Egypt; they failed after seeing visible proof of God's work on their behalf. They chose to NOT BELIEVE after being taught almost 2 years concerning God's plans, purposes and ways. They chose to believe the majority of the leaders, thinking that they were safe because they stayed with the majority, and this cost them their inheritance, *their life in the land*. This stands as a blatant picture of how easy it is to become lazy, evil, unbelieving, and disobedient, all the while thinking that you are making the right decision for God because so many others are making it with you.

Let's continue on with the warnings regarding Esau and Balaam.

The purpose of these warnings needs to be reiterated: there is something quite real and quite valuable that we stand to lose, should we not hear, understand, and HEED the warnings given to us. <u>We Christians will never lose life unto the eternal ages with the Lord</u>, but we *can* lose the reward of the inheritance of the kingdom, which is the opportunity to rule with Christ in the Coming Seventh Day, the 1,000 year reign of Christ in His kingdom.

Let's read the specific Scripture passages that contain the warnings of Esau and Balaam, and extract the details from the words themselves.

Hebrews 12:5-17
[Written to the church, *redeemed* people who make up the body of Christ.]
5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives."
7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit,

that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

12 Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. 14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: 15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; 16 lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.The primary idea in this passage, just prior to the author talking about Esau, is that every son whom the Lord receives will undergo discipline.

- The author says if you *do not* endure the chastening of the Lord, you are not regarded by God to be His son; rather, you are <u>illegitimate</u>.

- The context is NOT that God takes away your initial salvation, nor do you lose your initial salvation (life with the Lord unto the ages of the ages). If you were to keep in context ALL of the Book of Hebrews you would see that the subject matter is mankind, with Jesus, ruling the heavens and the earth in the world to come (Heb. 2:5-10), being a partaker with Christ in God's household in the world to come (Heb. 2:5, 3:6). Furthermore, the subject matter in the prior chapter has to do with having the faith which leads to the salvation of the soul, which is a future salvation to be determined at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Heb. 10:37-11:40, 1 Peter 1:1-9). (Read the other Questions in this series to get more detail on the distinction between the salvation of the spirit and the salvation of the soul.)

- Keeping with the context, the author then goes on to tell his audience that they are to pursue peace with all men, for the purpose of sanctification. They are to watch over one another and make sure that they do not become embittered with one another, so as to not come short of the grace of God.

- This bitterness can defile you, and he gives us the example of Esau.

It would be negligent of us to attempt to understand the warning to us (Christians) concerning Esau without first reading the account of him forfeiting his birthright in the Old Testament—

Genesis 25:29-34
Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. 30 And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore his name was called Edom. 31 But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day." 32 And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" 33 Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. 34

And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Genesis 27:38
And Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me-me also, O my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

- You'll see in verse 34 that Esau "despised his birthright." His birthright was his <u>inheritance</u> from his father, a double-portion since he was the firstborn son; he counted it as a common thing, of little or no value. He gave it up to satisfy his fleshly craving. He wanted something *now,* and he gave up his *future* for it.

Now if we go back to Hebrews, we will see this correlation:

- A Christian can be immoral and godless like Esau. (And God "hated Esau" [Rom. 9:13].)
- The correlation is that ***<u>our</u>*** birthright can be forfeited, in the same manner as Esau.
- A CHRISTIAN CAN FORFEIT THEIR BIRTHRIGHT, which is their inheritance, which is the kingdom.
- It is no coincidence that this comparison is made right after the author of Hebrews talks about taking discipline as a son.
- Esau was a FIRSTBORN son, who forfeited that right.
- Christians are called to be firstborn sons of God, and that entails running the Father's household (in the age to come, see other answers in "10 Basic Questions for Christians").
- That status of firstborn son can be given away if it is despised (meaning, *treated like a common thing*). Christians can forfeit their birthright – future positions in the kingdom of Christ – for present gratification of their flesh. Just like Esau.
- AND PLEASE NOTICE that once Esau realized what he had done, he wept to his father, asking him for that blessing of the firstborn. And Hebrews tells us that there was (and will not be) repentance (a change of mind) on the part of our Father.
- This is the STERNEST of warnings to Christians.

And now we get to Balaam. Balaam was a man that God used in a most interesting way. He is called a "soothsayer" (Josh. 13:22) and a "prophet" (2 Peter 2:16). We first read about Balaam in Numbers in relation to the first generation of Israel. He is then mentioned throughout the Bible in a negative way, and God saw fit to record several warnings for us about him. Let's read about him—

Numbers 22:4-6
So Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now this company will lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field." And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time. 5 Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying: "Look, a

people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me! 6 Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."

Balak, king of Moab, wanted Balaam to curse the people of Israel for him, so that he could defeat them and drive them out of the land. Balaam responded by telling these messengers to stay the night while he checked with God about it. Balaam asked God, and God responded—

Numbers 22:12
And God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."

Balaam smartly refused to go and sent the messengers back. However, Balak sent "more numerous and more distinguished" princes the second time with an offer of honoring Balaam "richly" if he would curse the people of Israel. Balaam went back to God a second time with the same request. And God said—

Numbers 22:20-22
And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men come to call you, rise and go with them; but only the word which I speak to you-that you shall do." 21 So Balaam rose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab. 22 Then God's anger was aroused because he went, and the Angel of the LORD took His stand in the way as an adversary against him. And he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him.

So Balaam went with the princes of Moab. The donkey started acting strangely, and Balaam reacted by hitting it and striking it. The donkey then spoke and brought attention to the angel trying to stop Balaam. Balaam asked God if he should turn around, but the angel said to go, but told him to "speak only the word which I shall tell you."

When Balaam arrived at Moab, he told Balak to buld some altars to God and offer up some sacrifices. Three times Balaam tried to curse Israel, and three times God put blessings in his mouth. Then—

Numbers 24:10
Then Balak's anger was aroused against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, and look, you have bountifully blessed them these three times!"

And then seemingly the story ends, with Balaam going his way and Balak going another. But the next thing revealed in Scripture is this—

> Numbers 25:1-3
> Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. 2 They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and **the people [Israel] ate and bowed down to their [Moab's] gods**. 3 So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel.

God's response was quick, and quite serious—

> Numbers 25:5-9
> So Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor." 6 And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 7 Now when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand; 8 and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel. 9 And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand [total deaths, 1 Cor. 10:8 states 23,000 died in one day].

Then God told Moses to take vengeance on the Midianites and kill every male, burn their cities, plunder their goods, and capture the women, children, and flocks.

What happened in Moab and Midian? What was Israel thinking, intermingling with other nations? The Lord had expressly commanded Israel not to involve themselves in any way with other nations. *This is what happened—*

> Numbers 31:5-6
> And Moses said to them: "Have you kept all the women alive? 16 Look, these women caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD."

The women, *because of the counsel of Balaam*, caused the children of Israel to sin: to intermingle with them—*going strictly against what God had said*—committing sexual immorality and worshipping other gods.

This is how Balaam got rich from Balak, the king of Moab. Because God would not allow curses to emanate from Balaam's mouth, Balaam instead instructed Balak to tell the women of Moab and Midian to seduce the men of Israel and *join themselves sexually with them,* thereby neutralizing them from being any kind of threat against their enemies. And evidently, no Israelite gave any thought to the consequences of their actions, supposing that they could act in any way they wanted with impunity. And Balaam was *rewarded richly*, by Balak, for this counsel.

Balaam's actions were so wicked that God saw fit to record several warnings about him in the New Testament. Let's start with Peter's warning—

2 Peter 2:1-22
But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; 6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; 7 and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked 8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds) -- 9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, 11 whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.

12 But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, 13 and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, 14 having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. 15 <u>They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16 but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.</u>

17 These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. 18 For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.

20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. 21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 But it has happened to them according to the

true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

Let's take this bit by bit:

- The subject of this passage is *false teachers* among the church body.
- These false teachers **secretly** bring in destructive heresies. Peter is bringing attention to them with his warnings.
- These false teachers are *redeemed*, part of the church body, because he says they "deny the Lord who bought them." They were already *bought*.
- These false teachers will blaspheme the way of truth, and *many* will follow them.
- These false teachers WILL BE JUDGED, eventually. God will not spare them, just as He did not spare the angels who sinned, the ancient evil world during Noah's time, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.
- God knows how to deliver the godly from among these false teachers, reserving these unjust false teachers for *punishment* in the day of judgment.

He goes on to describe these false teachers:

- They speak evil of things they don't understand.
- They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions *while they feast with the church body.*
- They have eyes full of adultery, always sinning, enticing unstable souls within the church body.
- They have a heart trained in covetous practices. THEY ARE ACCURSED CHILDREN. (They are children; *they are redeemed* yet disobedient and stiff-necked rebellious children, just as that first generation of Israel was.)
- They have followed the way of Balaam, who **loved the wages of unrighteousness**. They get **paid** to teach false doctrine, resulting in the downfall of many.

Peter specifically warns against those following the "way" of Balaam, and then Jude warns against these same type of false teachers following the "error" of Balaam—

> Jude 1:3-19
> 3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. 4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. 5 Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. 6 And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day. 7 Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the

same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

8 Yet in the same manner these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. 9 But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." 10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. 11 Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. 12 These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; 13 wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.

4 And about these also Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, 15 to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." 16 These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.

17 But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, 18 that they were saying to you, "In the last time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts." 19 These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.

- Jude's letter to the church was intended to be about their "common salvation," referencing their shared *initial salvation* (meaning salvation by grace through faith). But his tune quickly changes to discuss "certain men" who have crept in unnoticed, resulting in him finding it necessary to exhort his brethren to ***contend earnestly*** for the faith, meaning they need to be aware of the imminent dangers that could disqualify them in their race of the faith.
- This letter is very similar to Peter's letter; they are speaking about the same type people who have infiltrated them unknowingly.
- These "certain men" are "ungodly," and he compares them to that first generation of Israel out of Egypt. Just as God did not spare those who did not believe at Kadesh Barnea (rebellious and disobedience, yet *redeemed individuals*), in the same way these "certain men" will not escape the judgment of God.
- These false teachers are said to have gone in the way of Cain and run **greedily in the error of Balaam**.
- What was the greedy error of Balaam? He took money to teach the enemy of God's people that God's people can be overpowered and subdued by causing them to

intermingle and emulate the nations around them, thereby becoming entrenched in their sacrifices and worship, without receiving any repercussions for it.

And lastly we get to Revelation chapter 2, where John is taken "in spirit" to the actual, future "day of the Lord" in the heavens, where he views the Judgment Seat of Christ taking place. He is told by Jesus to record what he sees and hears and bring it back with him to his present day (around 68 AD), and send these letters to the corresponding mentioned churches. What is recorded in chapters 2 and 3 is the *actual scene* (still yet future for us) wherein Jesus judges His church—*every single individual of His church*—on their works of faithfulness, of lack thereof.

> Revelation 2:12-17
> 12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this: 13 'I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith, even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. 14 'But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit acts of immorality. 15 'Thus you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.
>
> 16 'Repent therefore; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. 17 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.'

- Again we see that there are false teachers among the church body who teach what Balaam taught—*putting stumbling blocks before God's people, inducing them to disobey God's commandments with immoral and idolatrous behavior*.

This presents to us another **severe warning**: we do not want to be the ones who receive those negative words from our Judge in that future day, and we certainly don't want to be on the receiving end of His *disappointment* and *chastisement*, and the corresponding loss of reward. We still have time NOW to heed these warnings, change our behavior, ask for forgiveness, and complete this race of faith *well.*

These warnings need to be heeded. Be on your guard whenever someone is teaching you about what God says; **arm yourself** with the knowledge of what God has said in His Word so that you will not be led astray.

> 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
> Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 6:7
Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

1 Corinthians 15:33
Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

DO NOT BE DECEIVED.

QUESTION 10

Why is Jesus coming back?

This should be the simplest of questions to answer, much like the question regarding how a person is initially "saved." However, most often the answer one would receive to this question wouldn't give the full scope of the purpose behind Jesus' return.

Because, in order to understand the purpose behind Jesus' Second Coming, one has to understand the purpose behind Jesus' First Coming.

And this requires an understanding of all of the previous questions asked in this series (or having read the study "The Word of the Kingdom" on our Bible study page).

Jesus is coming back to set us His 1,000-year kingdom.

Jesus is coming back to judge His Church, in order to identify the ones who have been faithfully obedient; the faithfully obedient will be the many sons brought to glory, fellow heirs with Christ.

Jesus is coming back to judge His Church, in order to identify the ones who will constitute His bride; all those who were faithfully obedient will be His bride. These are the same as those mentioned above.

Jesus is coming back to deal with the rebellious, disobedient, and adulterous nation of Israel. He will deal with them face to face, after the 7 years of the "time of Jacob's trouble," and they will finally repent and receive their Messiah.

Jesus is coming back to remove Satan and his angels from their current positions of rulership in the heavens. He and His bride (the many sons brought to glory) will take their place.

Jesus is coming back to remove the Gentile world powers on the earth, those who were directly under the sway of the ruler of this world, Satan. Jesus and His redeemed Nation of Israel will take their place.

Jesus is coming back to rule for 1,000 years, to reign until all His enemies are put under His feet. The last enemy He will destroy is death.

Jesus is coming back and will rule as the Great King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek, ruling with mercy, peace, righteousness, justice...and a rod of iron.

Revelation 22:12-13
And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. 13 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."