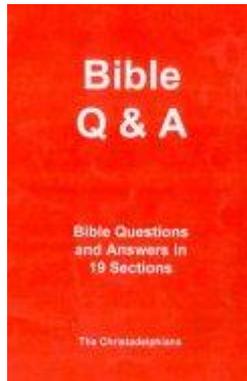


Bible Q & A



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About This Booklet

The only way to become a true Christian is to believe and be baptized into Christ. (See Galatians 3:27). The basis for baptism is individual repentance, and faith in God and his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But before we can be baptized we must also understand the teaching of the Bible and believe it. (See Acts 8:12). This booklet is to help you do this.

Each section contains one or more numbered (1, 2, 3) questions. And each question has lettered (a, b, c) model answers. The answers are NOT multiple choice or alternative - ALL the answers given are possible, and the more answers the student can give the better.

How to Use This Booklet

Don't rush

Do not try to rush your study of the Bible. Many people need to study the Bible for at least a year or two before they understand it well enough to make a commitment which will affect the rest of their life. If you have already been studying the Bible for a long time, you may be able to work through this booklet within a few months.

Make the effort

Work hard at your Bible study. It is worth making a big effort, because eternal life is a big prize. Be prepared to spend at least half an hour a day $\hat{\circ}$ every day $\hat{\circ}$ reading the Bible and thinking about what you have read.

 Take one question at a time

Read the question and the answer. Then turn up the Bible passages quoted in the answer. If you are sure that you understand these, and that you agree with the answer, then you can turn to the next question.

 Ask if you do not understand

Perhaps you will not understand some of the Bible passages, or perhaps you will not agree with some of the answers given. If so, please ask your Christadelphian Bible teacher about them. He or she is always ready to help you.

 Study with a friend

If possible, try to study the Bible in company with other people. You will be able to help each other, and will make faster progress that way.

 Read Your Bible daily

As well as working through this booklet, you should read one or more chapters of the Bible each day. The best way to do this is by following a daily program of readings such as given in other booklets; *The Bible Companion* or *Calendar* (all the Bible in 1 year, with the New Testament read twice), or in simplified version *The Bible Reading Planner*. You can obtain a copy of either from any Christadelphian meeting place or from the publishers of this booklet.

A Warning

You may wonder whether you ought to learn off by heart the questions and answers in this booklet. This is not necessary, or even recommended. The important thing is to remember the ideas taught in the Bible, not the exact words in which they are expressed in this booklet.

If you find it helpful to learn the questions and answers by heart, then do so. But make sure that you really understand and believe the things you have learnt. God wants believers, not people just repeating things they do not understand.

In the days of the apostles it was normal for believers to "make a good confession in front of many witnesses" (1 Timothy 6:12). Therefore before you are baptized into Christ you should be able to answer some questions, to show that you believe the teaching of the Bible and want to obey it. These questions will NOT be exactly the same as the questions in this booklet. You will not be able to answer them unless you have really understood the teaching of this booklet.

So our advice to those who decide to learn off by heart the questions and answers in this booklet is this: be quite sure that you know what they mean.

1. The Bible

1-1. Why is the Bible a special book?

- a. It is the only book that gives us true knowledge about God, the Lord Jesus Christ and salvation. (See Hebrews 1:1-2; Psalm 138:2; 2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:160).

- b. It has been written by men who were guided by the Holy Spirit of God. (See 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Peter 1:11; Hebrews 1:1-2).
- c. It promises eternal life to all who believe and obey its teaching. (See John 17:3; Romans 2:7; 2 Peter 1:11).

1-2. How can we best understand the Bible's message?

- a. To understand and believe its message, we need to read the Bible regularly and with a prayer for God's blessing. (See 1 Timothy 4:13; Psalm 119:103-105; Jeremiah 15:16; Jeremiah 9:24).
- b. The Bible itself is its best interpreter. Some parts of the Bible help us to understand other parts. (See Luke 24:25-27; 1 Corinthians 2:13).

2. God

2-1. What does the Bible teach about God?

- a. He is the only true God. (See Isaiah 44:8; Isaiah 45:5; Exodus 20:3; Ephesians 4:6).
- b. God is Spirit. (See John 4:24).
- c. God is the Creator of all things. (See Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 45:18).
- d. God controls all things. God knows all things, even our thoughts. (See Isaiah 45:7; Psalm 139:1-12).
- e. God is one, not three. (See Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Malachi 2:10; Mark 12:29).
- f. God is holy and true. (See Exodus 15:11; Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 19:9).
- g. God is kind and merciful. (See Exodus 34:6; Romans 2:4; Psalm 103:8-14).
- h. God is just and will reward the good and punish the wicked. (See Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 145:20; Romans 1:18).
- i. God has a plan for the future of the earth, and the human race. (See Numbers 14:21; Isaiah 45:18; Revelation 21:1-4).
- j. God is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. (See Matthew 3:17; Luke 1:31-35; Hebrews 1:2-5; 1 Peter 1:3).

3. Man

3-1. How was mankind made?

- a. Man was created "in the image of God". The first man was formed by God from the dust of the ground. God breathed life into him and he became a living creature. (See Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:7).

3-2. Does the Bible support the theory that man evolved from animals?

- a. No. The Bible condemns this theory by revealing that God created the first man, Adam, and the first woman, Eve; and that all other men and women are descended from them. (See Genesis 1:27; Genesis 3:20; Matthew 19:4; Romans 5:12).

3-3. How does the Bible explain the fact that all men die?

- a. Adam rebelled against God. As his punishment he was sentenced to death by God. This curse of death has been passed down from Adam to us, because we are descendants of

Adam, and through him, we are naturally rebellious against God. (See Genesis 3:1-19; Romans 3:9-10; Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21-23; Romans 5:12).

3-4. What is sin?

- a. Every time we break one of God's commandments, we sin. It is still sin, even if we do not realize that we are sinning. (See 1 John 3:4; Leviticus 4:21).

3-5. Why do people die?

- a. Death came as the punishment of sin. (See Genesis 2:11; Romans 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4).

3-6. What happens to people when they die?

- a. When people die they cease to exist. Dead people are not able to think, or do anything, or feel anything. They are unconscious, as if in a deep dreamless sleep. (See Psalm 6:5; Psalm 49:12, 14, 20; Psalm 146:3-4; Ecclesiastes 9:5-6; John 11:11-14).

3-7. Will my soul live on after my body has died?

- a. No. The Bible does not mention an "immortal soul". It uses the word "soul" for anything alive - man, animal, bird, fish, insect. The Bible teaches that souls can die and will die. "Living creature" in Genesis 1:21 and 1:24 are the same words as "Living soul" in Genesis 2:7. The same word is used again in Numbers 6:6 where "dead person" is "dead soul" in the original text. (See Numbers 31:28; Ezekiel 18:4, 20; Psalm 89:48).

3-8. Is there any hope at all for us beyond this present life?

- a. Yes, but only in Jesus Christ. He has overcome both sin and death. When he comes again to the earth, the dead will be raised and judged. Those who have been faithful to him will be blessed with eternal life in his Kingdom. (See Timothy 1:10; 1 Corinthians 15:21-23; Daniel 12:2-3; John 5:28-29; Matthew 25:31-34).

(You will find more about Man in Section 12.)

4. Hell

4-1. What is Hell?

- a. The word "hell" in the New Testament of the English Bible covers two different words in the original text: Hades and Gehenna. In many Asian Bibles these two words are translated more accurately than in the English Bible. These two "hells" exist at different times: Hades exists only until the return of Christ, Gehenna will only exist after his return (compare Hades in Revelation 1:8 and Gehenna in Luke 12:5).

4-2. What is Hades?

- a. In most of the passages where the word "hell" occurs in English, the original is "Hades" which is just another name for the grave. It is used for rendering the Old Testament word for the grave "Sheol" when quoted in the New Testament. There is no knowledge or activity in

"Hades" or "Sheol", the grave. (See Ecclesiastes 9:5,10, Ezekiel 32:27-29; Matthew 11:23; 16:18).

4-3. Who goes to Hades?

Everyone, good or bad, to sleep till the resurrection. When Jesus was buried he was laid in "hell" (Hades), and when he was raised from the dead he came out of "hell" (Hades). (See Acts 2:27-31).

4-4. What is "Hell fire"?

- a. The New Testament was first written in Greek; and the Greek word that the Lord Jesus used when he spoke of "hell fire" is "fire of Gehenna" (See Matthew 10:28; James 3:6).

4-5. What is Gehenna?

- a. This is actually the name of a place on earth. The Valley of Hinnom or Gehenna is a real place on the south-west side of Jerusalem. In the Old Testament the Israelites sacrificed their children in the fire there (Jeremiah 32:35). In later times it was where Jerusalem's rubbish was destroyed by fires that never went out. Consequently in the New Testament it is used to represent the fire in which the wicked will be destroyed as completely and as permanently as the fires of Gehenna destroy the rubbish of Jerusalem. When the Lord Jesus used the word "Gehenna", he was using a kind of parable, but it is also not impossible that the judgement fire of the last day described in Old and New Testaments will literally take place in the valley of Gehenna. (See Isaiah 66:24 quoted in Mark 9:44, 46, 48; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)

5. Jesus Christ - The Saviour

5-1. Who is Jesus Christ?

- a. Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God. He had no human father, but was conceived when the power of God, called the Holy Spirit, worked a miracle on his mother, who was a virgin. (See Luke 1:32, 35; Matthew 1:20-25; Matthew 3:17; John 1:49; John 10:36).
- b. He was, nevertheless, a human being who grew up, hungered, thirsted, wept, suffered and died like other human beings. (See Hebrews 2:11; Luke 2:52; Isaiah 53:3; John 11:35; John 19:33).

5-2 What was the work of Jesus, the Son of God?

- a. To reveal his Father, Almighty God, to the world in a way that men could understand. (See John 1:1, 8; John 12:45; John 14:9; John 17:6, 26).
- b. To show the glorious qualities of his Father - holiness, righteousness and love. (See John 1:14-41; Romans 3:24-26).
- c. To show to men the full meaning of Christian service and obedience. (See Luke 22:42; John 5:30; 8:29).
- d. To preach the gospel. (See Luke 4:18; 9:6; and 20:1).
- e. To die for us. (See John 10:11, 15; Acts 2:23).
- f. To bring us back to God. (See Ephesians 2:16; Romans 5:10; John 14:6).

5-3. How can the Lord Jesus bring us back to God?

- a. We are like children who have run away from their father. We are separated from God by our sins. The Lord Jesus is able to bring us back to God by his perfect life and his willing death. Because he was born of Mary, Jesus was human, but because he was also born by the power of the Holy Spirit, he is the Son of God. (See Hebrews 2:14; Hebrews 2:17-18).
- b. He was, therefore, both God's representative to us and our representative before God. The Bible calls him the "mediator" (this word means "middleman"), between God and men. Being a man, our Lord was tempted like us; but unlike us he always triumphed over sin. He obeyed the will of God in everything, and especially in enduring crucifixion and death as a sacrifice for our sin. (See 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:15-16)
- c. When we truly believe in this work of Christ, and show this by baptism (see Section 18), God forgives us our sins and accepts us as His children. (2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 8:2-4).

6. Jesus Christ - His Resurrection

6-1. After the Lord Jesus died, what happened to him?

- a. He was buried, but on the third day God raised him bodily from the dead, to live for ever. (See Matthew 27:57-60; Matthew 28:1-7; Luke 24:39, Acts 2:30-32, 3:15; 4:10, 5:30-31; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15: 3,4 and 20; Revelation 1:18).

6-2. Why did this happen?

- a. Because he was sinless, he did not earn death - "the wages of sin", as the Bible calls it. So God raised him from the dead. (See Romans 6:23; Acts 2:24; Philippians 2:8)
- b. By raising the Lord Jesus from the dead, God showed all how He will reward all those who truly follow Jesus. If we put our faith in Christ and if we try very hard to obey and follow him, we, too, shall be raised from the dead at the last day (see also Section 12). (See 1 Corinthians 15:21-23; 2 Corinthians 4:14).

7. Jesus Christ - His Ascension

7-1. Why did the Lord Jesus go to heaven?

- a. Forty days after his resurrection from the dead, the Lord Jesus was raised up to the presence of God in heaven. God made him far greater than any other man, greater than any of the angels - the second greatest Being in the whole universe, next to God Himself. (See Hebrews 1:3-4; Philippians 2:9-10; Revelation 5:12-13).
- b. Jesus Christ is now the only true Priest of God, for whose sake our prayers to God are heard. He also prays to God for us. (See Romans 8:34; Hebrews 4:14-15; Hebrews 7:24-27).

8. Jesus Christ - His Return to Earth

8.1 How do we know that Jesus Christ will come back to the earth?

- a. God promised it in the Old Testament. (See Psalm 110:1-2; Daniel 7:13-14).
- b. The Lord Jesus promised his disciples that he would return. (See Matthew 16:27; Revelation 22:12).
- c. The angels of God promised the disciples that Jesus would come again in the same way he ascended. (See Acts 1:11).
- d. The Apostles taught the return of Christ. (See Acts 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16).

8-2. When will he come?

- a. No one knows the hour or the day. (Mark 13:32). But Jesus will come at God's appointed time; in the near future. (See Acts 17:31; Romans 2:6,16).

8-3. Are there any signs that Jesus's return may be near?

- a. The Jews have returned to the land of Israel, and Jerusalem is no longer under the rule of Gentiles. (Luke 21:24).
- b. There is trouble, fear and wickedness in the world on a massive scale. (Luke 21:25-26). (See also Matthew 24: 36-41; 2 Timothy 3:1-4; Ezekiel 37:21-28).
- c. A hundred years ago there was no nation of Israel. The land of Israel was then a Turkish colony. Many Arabs lived there, but only a few thousand Jews. Today, Israel is a strong nation, with nearly three million Jewish inhabitants. This is a very clear sign that the Kingdom of God is near. (See Jeremiah 30:3, 21-24; Ezekiel 36:24-28, 37:21-28).

9. Jesus Christ - The Future King

9.1 Was Jesus Christ born to be King?

- a. Yes. Jesus was born "King of the Jews" On trial before Pilate, he claimed that he was a king, and when he died, the title over his head said "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews". He will be King of kings. (See Matthew 2:2; John 18:37; John 19:19; Psalm 72:11; Revelation 19:16).

9.2 When will Jesus begin to reign over the Jews?

- a. When he comes again. (See Matthew 19:28; Luke 19:11-12, 15).

9.3 Where will Jesus Christ reign?

- a. He will sit on David's throne in Jerusalem. (See Luke 1:32; Isaiah 9:6-7; Matthew 5:35; Zechariah 6:12-13).

9.4 Will Jesus Christ rule only over the Jews?

- a. No. Israel will be the first nation he rules over, but he will rule over every nation in the world. (See Jeremiah 23:5-6; Psalm 72:8; Isaiah 2:34; Zechariah 14:9).

10. The Kingdom of God

10.1 Has God ever had a Kingdom on earth before?

- a. Yes. The kingdom of Israel was called the kingdom of the Lord. When the Lord Jesus comes back he will set up this Israelitish kingdom again, but the coming Kingdom of God will be a far, far better kingdom than the ancient kingdom of Israel. (See 1 Chronicles 28:5; 2 Chronicles 13:8; Ezekiel 21:25-27; Luke 1:32-33).

10.2 Who will live in God's Kingdom?

- a. If we believe God's promises and obey Him, the Lord Jesus will make us immortal when he comes again. Then we shall help Jesus to rule his Kingdom. Many ordinary flesh-and-blood human beings will survive the troubles on earth in the last days, and they will also live in God's Kingdom. The immortal rulers will teach them God's ways. (See Matthew 19:27-29; Luke 19:15-19; Revelation 5:10; Revelation 20:6; Isaiah 65:20-22; Zechariah 14:16-18).

10.3 What will life be like in the Kingdom of God?

- a. The flesh-and-blood people on the earth will cultivate the land and their work will be enjoyable and prosperous. They will worship the true God and keep His commandments. God will give them happiness and heal their illnesses. War and hatred will be forbidden. After a long time there will be a final resurrection and judgment. The faithful will be made immortal. (See Isaiah 2:34; Isaiah 11:1-9; Isaiah 35; Psalm 72; 1 Corinthians 15:24, 28; Revelation 20:12-18; 21:4).

10.4 Is God's Kingdom being formed now?

- a. The kingdoms of this world will not become the Kingdom of God until Jesus returns to earth. (See Daniel 2:44; Daniel 7:27; Revelation 11:15-18). But God still rules over Creation and the affairs of the nations (See Psalm 104:1 and Daniel 4:17).
- b. Throughout the ages he has been calling out men and women to belong to the Royal House of the coming Kingdom. (See Acts 15:14; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6). Such people must accept, believe and obey the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and by baptism submit to God and to Christ Jesus as Lord. Thereafter they must sanctify Christ as Lord in their hearts. (See 1 Peter 3:15 RV). In this way the nucleus of the Kingdom of God is being formed in readiness for the day of Christ's coming.

11. The Gospel and the Promises

11-1. What is the Gospel?

- a. "Gospel" is an old English word meaning "good news". It is the good news about the Kingdom of God, and how we can find salvation in that Kingdom. (See Luke 8:1 Mark 1:14; Matthew 4:17 and 23; Romans 1:16).

11-2. Was Jesus the first to preach the Gospel?

- a. No. The gospel was preached to Abraham, who lived about 2,000 years before Jesus Christ. (See Galatians 3:8).
- b. The gospel is "the promise made to the fathers". (Acts 13:32).

11-3. What did God promise Abraham?

- a. He gave him the good news of the Gospel. (See Galatians 3:8).
- b. He said Abraham would be father of a great nation, of many peoples and of kings., and would be a source of great blessing. (See Genesis 12:2; 13:16; 17:4, 6).
- c. He promised that all nations would be blessed in Abraham and his seed. (See Genesis 12:3; 22:17-18).
- d. He made a covenant with Abraham whereby he will inherit the land of Canaan for ever by resurrection from the dead. (See Genesis 13:14-17; 15:7, 12, 17; 17:8; Acts 7:5; Mark 12:26-27; Hebrews 1 1:8-9, 39, 40).

- e. He promised that Abraham's seed (Christ) would inherit the land of Canaan and be king over all his enemies. (See Genesis 12:7; 22:17; Galatians 3:8, 16, 29).
- f. The promises were renewed to Abraham's son, Isaac, and his grandson, Jacob. (See Genesis 26:2-4; 28:13-14).

11-4 What did God promise King David?

- a. That he would have a remarkable descendant whose father would be God. (See 2 Samuel 7:12-15; 1 Chronicles 17:11-12).
- b. That God's covenant with David would be established in this descendant, who is Christ, (Acts 2:30), who would rule on David's throne (Psalm 89:28, 34-36; 132:11).
- c. That Christ would also be a righteous saviour (2 Samuel 23:3-5)
- d. That the Royal House of David would be God's house and with Christ would establish a house of worship in Zion (1 Chronicles 17:10, 12, 16; Psalm 132:2-3. See also Isaiah 2:2-3).

11-5. Are there any other promises in the Bible?

- a. Yes. The first promise related to Christ is the promise of a seed to Eve who would triumph over the seed of the serpent; sin (Genesis 3:15; Psalm 91:13; Luke 10:19).
- b. There is also the promise God made to Noah, never to destroy the world again (Genesis 8:21; 9:9-17).
- c. And the promise to Phinehas (Numbers 25:13).
- d. Jesus also made promises to his disciples (Matthew 19:28), to the thief (Luke 23:43), and to others.
- e. Finally, the promises also apply to us. (Ephesians 3:6; Hebrews 10:36; 11:39-40; Revelation 2:7)

12. Resurrection, Judgment and Eternal Life

12-1. What does the Bible mean by Resurrection?

- a. Dead people coming to life again, as the Lord Jesus did when he rose from the dead. (See Revelation 1:5; Colossians 1:18; Acts 26:23; 1 Corinthians 15:20).

12-2. When will the resurrection take place?

- a. When the Lord Jesus comes back to the earth. (See 1 Thessalonians 4:16; John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:23).

12-3. Will those who come out of the grave be judged?

- a. Yes. We must all appear before Christ, the great Judge of all. He will decide who are worthy of everlasting life and who are unworthy. (See Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Peter 4:6; Daniel 12:2; Revelation 20:11-15).

12-4. Will everyone who has ever lived be raised from the dead and judged by Jesus Christ?

- a. It is God's right to raise whoever he will, but the Bible says only that "many who sleep in the dust will rise" (Daniel 12:2) and also that some "will not rise" (Isaiah 26:14; 43:17). It seems that those who have never learned about God will not be raised simply to be

destroyed, while those that have heard about God and know that they should obey Christ will. (See John 12:48; Deuteronomy 18:18-19; Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 2:12).

12-5. What will happen to those who are not raised from the dead?

- a. They will never rise from their graves, but will remain dead for ever. (See Psalm 49:20; Proverbs 21:16; Isaiah 26:14; 43:17).

12-6. What will happen to those who are alive at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ?

- a. Those who have to face judgment will be gathered by the angels to meet Christ, like those who have just been raised from the dead. The angels will gather believers via the air, but the air is not the final destination, as the judgment will take place on earth, and the kingdom will also be established on earth. (See I Corinthians 15:51; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Matthew 25:31-32).

12-7. What will happen to those whom the Lord Jesus accepts at the Judgement?

- a. They will be given everlasting Life, which they will spend upon the earth, in Christ's kingdom. (See Daniel 12:3; Matthew 25:20, 21, 34; Daniel 7:27; Revelation 5:10; Matthew 5:5).

12-8. Does the Bible promise the faithful Christians will go to heaven?

- a. No. As we have just seen, the Bible promises that faithful followers of Jesus will live for ever on earth. The Bible also says that nobody has gone to heaven, except Jesus. (See Psalm 115:16; Acts 2:34; John 3:13).

Note: A few Bible passages are sometimes thought to teach that Christians are promised eternal life in heaven. But they can all be shown to agree with the teaching of the rest of the Bible. For example, "my Father's house", of John 14:2 is not in heaven. God's house is the temple, as John 2:16 shows. The greatest of all temples is a spiritual temple, and the believers are living stones in that great house that is still being built (See 1 Peter 2:5). God's house is therefore on earth, and because of this the Lord Jesus says (in the next verse - John 14:3), "I will come again and receive you unto myself".

12-9. What will be the fate of those whom the Lord Jesus rejects?

- a. They will hear Christ condemning them. They will see the righteous going into Christ's Kingdom, while they themselves are shut out. Finally they will receive everlasting death - the "second death" of Revelation 2:11 and Revelation 20:14, from which there will be no awakening. (See Luke 13:28; Matthew 22:13; Matthew 25:46; Psalm 145:20).

12-10. Why do some passages say that those who are rejected by Jesus Christ will be cast into a lake of fire?

- a. Revelation 20:14 tells us that the lake of fire is the same as the second death. Men use fire to destroy rubbish. In the Bible, God speaks of fire in a kind of parable, to show that those whom He finds worthless will be completely destroyed. (See Psalm 37:20; Psalm 68:2; Matthew 3:12; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). (See also Section 4 on Gehenna).

13. The Holy Spirit

13-1. What is the Holy Spirit?

- a. The word "spirit" originally means breath, or wind. The Holy Spirit, sometimes "the Spirit of God", is a way of describing God's power. (The term "the Holy Ghost" is only found in the King James Bible - The spirit is not a ghost).
- b. By His Spirit God made the world. By His Spirit God caused Jesus to be born. By His Spirit God caused the prophets and apostles to write the Scriptures. By His Spirit God is everywhere, and knows all that we do, think and say. By His Spirit God will raise the dead to life again when the Lord Jesus comes.
- c. This Spirit-power of God is often called "Holy" when it is applied to God's special work of producing Holy Scriptures and holy people. (See Luke 1:35; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Genesis 1:2; Job 33:4; Psalm 104:30; Jeremiah 32:17; 2 Peter 1:21; Psalm 139:1-14; Romans 8:11; Acts 7:5 1).
- d. In much of the New Testament the word spirit is used in a figurative sense in the battle between flesh and spirit . These are just terms for the new man in Christ, and the old man in Adam. (See Romans 8:5-7; Ephesians 4:20-24).

13-2. What are the gifts of the Spirit?

- a. The gifts of the Spirit are special powers that God gave some of His servants in, and immediately after, the days of the apostles. By means of these powers, selected men were able to speak and to write the words of God, and to perform other miracles. The gifts of the Spirit included apostle ship, prophecy, healing and "speaking in tongues". (That is to say, they were able to speak other languages without having to learn them.) These gifts helped the church in a period of exceptional difficulty. In two ways the gifts made it possible for the gospel to be widely preached. Firstly, the early Christian preachers were able to proclaim the gospel boldly and powerfully in many different languages. Secondly, they were able to confirm their message with great miracles. The gifts also enabled the New Testament to be written, and the Christian church to be firmly established. (See Acts 2:1 -17; Joel 2:28-29; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Romans 15:18-19).
- b. In Old Testament times Moses, Elijah, Elisha and others possessed similar powers. Paul taught that the time would come when these gifts of the Spirit would be taken away. This happened when the Christian church was established, and the New Testament fully written. That is why nobody possesses these gifts today. When the Lord Jesus returns to the earth God's servants will once more be given the gifts of the Spirit. (See Psalm 105:26-27; 2 Kings 2:9-15; 1 Corinthians 13:8-11; Hebrews 6:4-5).

13-3. How should we regard people who claim to work miracles and to speak "in tongues" today?

- a. The Bible provides a test for such people in Deuteronomy 13:1-3. By this test it does not matter if their miracles are genuine or not, the issue is $\text{do they speak correctly about God or not?}$ If not then, as Deuteronomy 13:3 says, God may have sent them to test you.
- b. Comparing the teachings of such people with Bible it appears that they are false teachers who do not work by the power of God. Sometimes they are deliberate deceivers, though more often they are themselves deceived. They are like the false prophets and magicians who claimed to be able to work miracles in the days of Moses, the Lord Jesus and the apostles. (See Exodus 7:11, 12,22; Luke 11:19; Acts 8:9-1 1; Matthew 24:24)
- c. Medical investigators repeatedly show that the healings of most healers are small scale and temporary, if not outright deception. Likewise linguists can show by analysis of tapes that the tongues are no language, just repeated gibberish in the native language of the speaker.

And if they are real, where are the miracles that the apostles could do with the Holy Spirit gifts such as raising the dead?

13-4. Is God's Holy Spirit active today?

- a. Yes. God's Spirit is always active (Psalm 139:7-10). For the salvation of men and women it is powerfully active in His word, the Bible, which is spirit and life (John 6:63). When God's word is mixed with faith in the heart of the believer, it becomes the incorruptible seed which brings forth with God's abundant blessing, a new birth by baptism. (See 1 Peter 1:23-25; 1 Peter 2:1-3).
- b. By this means we enter into the life of the Spirit. Thereby we have access to God by prayer through Jesus Christ and find strength for daily living and obedience to the commands of God. (See Hebrews 2:18 and Hebrews 4:16 with Romans 8:26-28). God has promised that He will never leave us or forsake us. (See Hebrews 13:5-6).

14. Angels

14-1. What are Angels?

- a. Angels are God's immortal messengers. Angels protected Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Angels warned Lot of God's judgments on Sodom. An Angel gave God's Law to Moses. Angels announced the birth of the Lord Jesus to the shepherds. Unseen angels look after God's servants today. Angels will help the Lord Jesus when he comes to judge. (See Luke 20:36; Psalm 103:20; Acts 7:38; Genesis 19:1; Luke 2:9; Psalm 34:7; Matthew 18:10; Luke 22:43; Matthew 24:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10).

15. Sin, Satan, and the Devil

15-1. What is Sin?

- a. We sin when we disobey God's law. (See 1 John 3:4).

15-2. Who tempts us to sin?

- a. Temptation to sin comes out of our own minds and bodies; we are tempted by our own "human nature". The apostle Paul called this the "law of sin" in his body. Sometimes other human beings persuade us to give in to the sinful desires of our own nature. (See James 1:14-15; Mark 7:21-23; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 7:18-25; Romans 5:12; Proverbs 1:10).

15-3. What is the devil?

- a. The devil is a kind of parable of the wickedness of human nature. Unchanged human nature is displeasing to God. He shows this by calling it "the devil". Wicked men are also sometimes called "the devil". (See John 6:70; John 8:44; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 2:10).

15-4. What happens if we give in to the wicked desires of our human nature, and so live sinful lives?

- a. We shall die. That is why the Bible says that the devil (human nature) has "the power of death". (See Romans 6:23; Hebrews 2:14).

15-5. What did the Lord Jesus Christ do to the devil?

- a. The Bible says that the Lord Jesus destroyed the devil when he died. This proves that the devil cannot be a great evil monster, who is alive today.
- b. Our Lord had a human nature just like us, and he was tempted to sin just as we are. This means that the Lord Jesus had to struggle against "the devil" (his own natural desires) just as we do. But, unlike us, the Lord won every struggle; never once did he give in to temptation, and so "the devil" was defeated. Since Jesus Christ rose from the dead he has had an immortal body and no longer faces temptation. For him, human nature ("the devil") has been destroyed and is dead. (See Hebrews 2:14; Hebrews 4:15; Romans 6:6-10; 1 John 3:8).

15-6. What does "Satan" mean?

- a. It is a Hebrew word meaning "the enemy" (the Old Testament was written in Hebrew). Sometimes it is translated "enemy" or "opponent", or (in the King James translation) "adversary", and sometimes it is used as a name. Peter opposed the Lord Jesus, so Jesus said to Him: "Get thee behind me, Satan".

Human nature is God's greatest enemy (and ours too!), so the New Testament calls it "Satan" in many places. Wicked men are also referred to as "Satan", in some verses. (See Acts 5:34; 1 Thessalonians 2:18; Matthew 16:23; 1 Timothy 1:20).

Note: There are a few Bible passages that are commonly interpreted as teaching a supernatural devil, but in every case this is due to careless reading. For example, "Lucifer" of Isaiah 14:12 is not a wicked angel. He is the king of Babylon, a very wicked, cruel and proud man. Read the whole passage, starting from verse 4. Likewise, the "anointed cherub" of Ezekiel 28:14 is not a wicked angel. It is the king of Tyre - verse 12 says so.

16. Demons and Unclean Spirits

16-1. What are demons and unclean spirits?

- a. In the Bible, illnesses - especially mental illnesses - are called "devils", or "demons", or "evil spirits", or "unclean spirits". When the people were healed the illness - "unclean spirit" - was said to be "cast out". Sometimes an "unclean spirit" means "wickedness" (See 1 Samuel 16:14; Matthew 8:16-17; Matthew 12:22).

16-2. Many people believe that "evil spirits" are invisible living beings. Should a Christian believe this?

- a. No. Some churches teach this pagan belief, but it is not true. The Bible does not teach it. The Bible says that God is the Master of His own universe. There are no living spirit beings except God, the Lord Jesus, and God's angels. The angels do God's will perfectly, so they can neither sin nor die. As we have already seen, the devil, Satan, and evil spirits are used in the Bible as a kind of parable. They represent sinful human nature, and illness, which is a consequence of our sinful state. (See Isaiah 45:5-7; Jeremiah 10:5; Amos 3:6; Matthew 6:10).

17. The Way to Eternal Life

17-1. I want to live for ever in Christ's Kingdom. What must I do?

- a. You must believe with all your heart in the teaching of the Bible. This is only possible if you are a regular, keen reader of the Bible. Read it every day! (See 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Psalm 119:147-148).
- b. You must "repent". This means that you must be truly sorry that you are a sinner; you must want God, through Jesus Christ, to forgive your sins; and you must promise God that you will try to live a better life in the future. (See Acts 3:19).
- c. You must be baptized. (See Acts 2:38-42)
- d. You must spend the rest of your life trying to obey the commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ. (See Romans 2:7).

18. Baptism

18-1. What is baptism?

- a. Baptism involves the complete immersion of a person in water. (See Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-10; John 3:23; Acts 8:36-39).

18-2. What does baptism mean?

- a. It reminds us that Jesus was buried and rose again, and so it shows us that we can be saved through his death and resurrection. (See Romans 6:3-4).
- b. It reminds us that because we are sinners, we deserve to die (if we were kept under the water we should certainly die!). (See Romans 6:5-7).
- c. It reminds us that because God is merciful, He wants to save us from death by resurrection. Baptism is therefore a sort of "death" ô a "burial" in water ô and a sort of "resurrection". It is an acted parable. (See Colossians 2:12-13).
- d. It reminds us that, just as water washes away dirt, so God puts away the sins of those who obey Him. When we are baptized, God forgives us all the sins we have ever committed. Thus we make a fresh start as disciples of Jesus Christ. (See 1 Peter 3:21; Acts 22:16).
- e. It is the sign by which we become children of God and members of the seed of Abraham in Christ Jesus through the everlasting covenant. (See Galatians 3:26-29).

18-3. Must we be baptized?

- a. Yes. The Lord Jesus was baptized. Paul was baptized. Converts in the early church were baptized, as commanded by the Lord Jesus. Baptism is an act of obedience. We must be baptized because God commands us to be baptized. (See Matthew 3:13-17; Acts 2:37-41; Acts 22:13-16; Galatians 3:27-29; 1 Peter 3:21).

18-4. Can we be baptized before we have understood the gospel?

- a. No. We must first understand the gospel, then believe it; then, as soon as possible, be baptized. (See Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12).

18-5. Does the Bible speak of babies being baptized?

- a. No, never. Babies are not able to believe; therefore they cannot properly be baptized. (See Acts 8:12, and note the words, "when they believed", and "both men and women").

18-6. Is it right to baptize by sprinkling or pouring water on a person?

- a. No. The Lord Jesus and his disciples were dipped right under the water, and so should we be. (See Matthew 3:16; Acts 8:38-39).

19. The Christian Life

19-1. Should we keep Communion?

- a. Yes. In the Bible communion is simply called "breaking bread" (Acts 2:42). The Lord Jesus has commanded us to meet together regularly to break bread and drink wine, in memory of his sacrifice until he comes back. The bread represents his body, and the wine represents his blood. (See 1 Corinthians 11:26; John 6:53-56).
- b. When we are baptized, this is a new birth. A newborn baby needs food at regular intervals. The breaking of bread is a symbolic meal which provides us with spiritual food.
- c. In baptism our past sins are forgiven, but weak human nature cannot keep from sin. The breaking of bread service joins us again to the sacrifice of Christ and renews the forgiveness of sins.
- d. By the breaking of bread we are reminded of the vows we made at our baptism. It is a time for rededication. It reminds us that Jesus will come back.
- e. It also strengthens our fellowship with our fellow-believers. (See 1 Corinthians 11:23-29; Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; Acts 2:42,46).

19-2. Must we break bread and drink wine on any special day?

- a. No. The breaking of bread was instituted on a weekday evening. We are told to keep it "often" (1 Corinthians 11:26); but we are not told how often, or on which day. The early disciples usually kept this ceremony on "the first day of the week" - Sunday (Acts 20:7). For most people nowadays, Sunday still seems to be the most convenient day, but in some countries, (like Nepal where Saturday is the weekly holiday) another day will do.

19-3. Can the believer break bread with anyone?

- a. No. The breaking of bread, like baptism, is a reminder of Christ's death (1 Corinthians 11:26). In the next verses Paul teaches that we are "baptized by one spirit into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:13). This makes it clear that breaking of bread is dependant on understanding of Christ's death, and also for those baptized into one body. We can only share the bread (Christ's body) with those in that same body.

19-4. What other services should believers hold?

- a. The New Testament shows that the early church held meetings for preaching the gospel, and also met for studying the Bible. (Acts 2:42; 5:42; 8:25; 17:17; 18:11; 19:8-9; 20:7)

19-5. Must we keep the Sabbath day?

- a. No. The command to keep the Sabbath (Saturday) as a holy day was the fourth of the Ten Commandments. The other nine Commandments are all repeated in the New Testament, and are therefore binding on Christians. But the Lord Jesus and his apostles never taught that Christians should keep the Sabbath. The Law of Moses was abolished after Jesus Christ died. (See Exodus 20:10; Galatians 5:14; Romans 14:5; 2 Corinthians 3:3-11; Colossians 2:14).

19-6. How often should a Christian read his or her Bible?

- a. Every day, if possible. David read his Bible every morning and evening (Psalm 119:147-148). Those who are unable to read should encourage their children to read to them, or try to go to the house of a brother who can read, so that they can listen to the Bible being read. (See Acts 17:11).

19-7. What sort of life should a Christian lead?

- a. A Christian should be truthful, honest, sober, peaceful, kind, generous. (See Romans 12:1-21; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 4:20-32; 5:1-5; 6:1-9; Colossians 3:12-18).
- b. be pure, clean and holy. (1 Timothy 2:22; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).
- c. be "not given to much wine" (1 Timothy 3:3, 3:8, 5:23; Ephesians 5:18; Romans 14:20-21).
- d. be reliable and hard working (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 5:8,13; Acts 20:33-35; 1 Corinthians 9:18).
- e. keep control over his tongue (Matthew 18:15; Ephesians 5:14; James 3:3-12).

19-8. What does the Bible mean by Faith?

- a. Faith means belief in the promises of God. For example, Noah believed that God would destroy the world with a flood; he showed his belief (faith) by building the ark. A faithless man is a man who has no confidence in God; he does not believe that God will keep His promises. In his heart, such a man is calling God a liar ô one who makes promises and does not keep them.
- b. Faith is an essential part of the Christian life. If we believe that our sins can be washed away through Christ, then we shall show our faith by being baptized. If we believe that God will send the Lord Jesus to cleanse the world and fill it with holiness, then we will show our faith by preparing our hearts for his second coming and praying daily for it. It is impossible to be a Christian without showing faith. (See Hebrews 11:6-7; James 2:21-26; Galatians 3:6-9; 1 John 5:10; Ephesians 2:8).

19-9. Should a Christian pray everyday?

- a. Yes. God wants us to pray to Him regularly. Jesus gave a parable to teach that men "ought always to pray and not to faint". Christians who do not pray soon lose contact with God, The Lord Jesus sometimes spent whole nights in prayer. Prayer should be a very important part of our lives too.

Jesus Christ is our High Priest in the presence of God, and we pray to God through Christ. (See Luke 18:1; Matthew 6:5-13; Luke 6:12; James 5:16; Hebrews 10: 19-22; Romans 12:12; Acts 2:42; Revelation 5:8).

19-10. Should a Christian fight against evil men?

- a. No, never. The Lord Jesus was surrounded by evil men, who in the end murdered him. But he did not harm any of them, and we likewise must never harm anybody ô not even in self-defence. (See Luke 9:54-56; Matthew 26:51-52; Matthew 10:16; Matthew 5:38-48; Romans 12:18-21; 2 Timothy 2:24).

19-11. What should be a Christian's attitude towards the laws of the country in which he or she lives?

- a. A Christian should always obey and respect national laws because "the authorities are appointed by God" (Romans 13:1-5). A Christian should be a good, law-abiding citizen, honestly paying his taxes. (Titus 3:1, Romans 13:6-7; Luke 20:25).
- b. Nevertheless, in the very rare case that a government passes a law that goes against God's laws (for example, if we are ordered to worship idols, or to join the army) then we must "obey God rather than men". (See Acts 5:29).
- c. A Christian should not take his brother to law. (1 Corinthians 6:18).

19-12. Should a Christian take an active part in politics in order to improve his or her country?

- a. No. The Lord Jesus made no attempt to help rule his country. He resisted attempts to make him a ruler, and refused any position of power over others. The Lord knew that his Kingdom was "not of this world", and that his first duty was to preach the gospel. A Christian should carefully avoid becoming mixed up with the affairs of the world.
- b. Sometimes governments may do things that Christians cannot support — for example, going to war, or promoting gambling. Nevertheless as far as possible, a Christian should keep himself out of public affairs, and devote his energy to preaching the gospel and doing good to those in need; this was the example given by the Lord Jesus. (See John 6:15; Luke 12:14; John 18:36; 2 Timothy 2:4).

19-13. Should a Christian help others to gain political positions by voting in elections?

- a. No. By voting a man shows that he is interested in politics, and a Christian should not be interested in politics. A Christian should accept whatever rulers God allows to be appointed, and pray that God will help them rule wisely. (See Daniel 4:25; Proverbs 21:1; 1 Timothy 2:1, 2).

19-14. Are there any forms of employment that a Christian should avoid?

- a. Yes. A Christian should avoid any employment where he may have to use force against another man (such as the army or the police). He should avoid any position in which he has to swear an oath of obedience: no Christian should swear loyalty to any other man, since his loyalty is to Christ.
- b. The Christian should also avoid unchristian situations, for example working in a gambling establishment, or in an arms factory, or in a place where strong drink is sold, or in a shop that sells evil books. (See 1 Timothy 5:22; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

19-15. Does the Bible give any guidance concerning marriage?

- a. Ideally marriage should be "only in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:39).
 - b. Husbands and wives should be kind and true to each other, just as Jesus Christ is kind and true to his church. (See 1 Corinthians 11:3; 14:34-35, Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Timothy 2:8-15).
 - c. Children should be brought up in a happy home by loving parents, who will teach them to obey God. (2 Corinthians 7:14; Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20-21; 1 Timothy 5:4)
 - d. Believers are not to initiate divorce against their wives or husbands, even if the wife or husband is a non-believer. (2 Corinthians 7:10-13)
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