

# Goodnews Christian Ministry

## Selected Questions From Our Readers 1999

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Goodnews Christian Ministry  
<http://goodnewspirit.com>

January 18, 1999

### Question:

I am of German descent, and I can't seem to find which of the twelve tribes Germany falls under. Can you help me?

C.

### Answer:

The Jews form one of the tribes of Israel. The others, especially the ten tribes lost at the time of the Judean schism have been so completely assimilated (genetically) into the balance of the human race that it would be impossible I believe to assign tribes to national races in existence at this time.

This was done by God on purpose, so that we could understand that the entire human race is now equally eligible for God's salvation, which is spiritual, not genetic.

The Jews were looking for a genetic salvation and Jesus told them that God had no intention of delivering salvation to humanity in that way. It had to come through faith in Jesus Christ, and in obedience to the Word He spoke to them.

January 19, 1999

**Question:**

Could you tell me why the 12 tribes of Israel mentioned Revelations chapter 7 did not include the tribe of Dan, and why is it that the tribe of Joseph is included instead of the tribe of Ephraim?

GT

**Answer:**

This is a very interesting question. Unfortunately we have no idea. When Ephraim and Manasseh replaced Joseph, 13 tribes would have resulted. In order to keep the established number at 12, the tribe of Levi was removed from land-owning status and became the tribe of the priesthood of Israel. That is the classic biblical chronology of Israel's tribes.

In the passage of scripture to which you refer, salvation (the sealing of the 12,000) is extended to the tribe of Levi. The tribe of Dan is left out of the chronology completely and so is the tribe of Ephraim, although his name is replaced by that of his father, Joseph, who, himself produced no tribes in his own name. A very perplexing chronology, indeed!

And since it is contained in a deeply symbolic section of prophecy, one would expect it to have a hidden meaning of some kind.

Fortunately, Jesus has offered salvation to far more than just the 12 tribes of Israel. The entire human race was extended God's offer of Grace. In other symbolism in the Bible, Ephraim has been shown to describe the pagans, attached to the tribes of Israel at a later date. Ephraim's father, Joseph, in prophecy has replicated the role of Jesus, sold by his brothers into slavery in a foreign country, and there, taking control of the graineries (the food supply), which he offers to his brothers, saving them from famine. The food supply, of course, is the Gospel (the Word of God). Babylon (Rome) converted to Christianity and dictated that Christianity be the paramount religion of the entire empire, making the Gospel of Christ the grainery of the world.

The tribe of Dan was unable to develop a foothold in the land first given them in the lottery of Moses (loosely, the Gaza Strip). They were driven out by the Philistines and had to re-establish themselves in the farthest northern boundary of Israel.

January 30, 1999

**Of Interest:**

Today we received the following message on our e-mail, forwarded from one of our readers after it had been forwarded to her.

"On behalf of an anonymous client, The Smith Agency in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., recently launched an advertising campaign promoting messages from God.

Billboards with the messages "from God" are visible from all major highways and avenues throughout Broward County, including I-95 and the Florida Turnpike. In addition, the messages are on 100 bus sides and in 200 interiors of Broward County Transit buses."

Here's a list of the 17 messages....

1. Let's meet at my house Sunday before the game.....God
2. C'mon over and bring the kids....God
3. What part of "Thou shalt not..." didn't you understand...God
4. We need to talk....God
5. Keep using my name in vain and I'll make rush hour last longer.....God
6. Loved the wedding, invite me to the marriage.....God
7. That "love thy neighbor" thing ....I meant it.....God
8. I love you...I love you...I love you.....God
9. Will the road you're on get you to my place???....God
10. Follow me.....God
11. Big bang theory. You've got to be kidding...God
12. My way is the highway.....God
13. Need directions?.....God

14. You think it's hot here????.....God
15. Tell the kids I love them.....God
16. Need a marriage counselor? I'm available....God
17. Have you read my #1 best seller? There will be a test!.....God

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January 29, 1999

**Question:**

My question is about the Beast, and false prophet. The more I read about Hitler, the more it seems that this section of revelations was about him, but if not then why would such an evil man and his history not be a part of Bible prophecy? Most say that the Beast and false prophet are of the future, but is that part of prophecy fulfilled?

Thank You for any Response; W.A.W.

**Answer:**

We have presented a detailed discussion of Hitler's position with respect to Bible prophecy in our online book, "The Last Days of Babylon". It is contained in Chapter 17, titled, "[The Beast of Berlin](#)".

The Book of Revelation reveals that the beast has 7 heads. The sixth is considered by most biblical scholars to be Nero. Very little is said about the seventh head except that his reign will be short. It seems certain that Adolph Hitler was the seventh head of the beast.

It is the 8th head, a reincarnation of one of the previous seven who will fulfill the future prophecies concerning the beast of the End, and it is this 8th head about whom most of the end-time prophecies of scripture are based.

Hitler looks very much like this beast because he is cut from the same cloth. But we feel that Hitler is the seventh head, not the eighth.

February 6, 1999

**Question:**

I have read and re-read some of the questions asked by persons, knowing that inevitably their questions or concerns might parallel some of my own.

One question's answer was very interesting to me, about Job & the Leviathan- and Jonah & the big fish, and finally Jesus preaching in 'paradise'. I guess the problem I have is your 365 days, and the analogy of days to hours, as spent (bodily) in the tomb...I believe with all my heart that when scripture says three days and nights - it literally means that.

My basis for thinking this way...is that in that week there were two Sabbaths. One on Thursday (Wed. eve to Thurs. eve)- the yearly Passover - definitely a 'Shabbat' or Holy day. And then on Saturday (Fri. eve. to Sat. eve.), the weekly Shabbat.

If Jesus was crucified on Wednesday and quickly laid to rest before the sabbath (Passover) - then late Saturday He could have rose (back) into glory, and be gone by the time Mary & Mary went to the empty tomb, early on the first day of the week.

'Early' in Hebrew time doesn't mean before the rooster crows - it means early into the first 'day'. That can easily mean after 6 - 6:30pm Saturday evening. In Hebrew 'time', after the Sabbath would technically be the start of the new day/week.

Even if they hadn't arrived until 'Sunday' morning, ('Roman time') - He still could have been gone hours before.

If three days & three nights doesn't hold true, what else is 'iffy' or 'about'? We are agreed your three days in the belly of the 'whale' (fish) meant three days; we are agreed three days in Job means three days. I realize a lot of Bible storys came to us through or by use of symbols...but to me, three means three.

I have found that for some Bible students, John's Roman time useage and that of the other three Gospel writers (being Hebrew) has indeed hampered understanding of the true harmony of those four wonderful books. I've also had Mormons use this one instance for saying "How errant the 'translations' are!"...

Please, let me know what you or your colleagues think about this matter.

**Answer:**

The Church teaches that Jesus was crucified on Friday and raised back to life in the early

morning hours of Sunday. He died, according to scripture, after 3 PM and was laid to rest before sundown Friday, the official start of the Passover, when it would have been illegal to intern bodies in the tomb. We were struck with the close relationship between the hours that separated His burial and his resurrection (36-37) with the number of days in a year (365), and wrote of that in a previous response to a letter we received. As you suggested in your letter, our interest in this relationship was not well thought out, and we should have left it unstated.

Even though this web site is dedicated to the study of the symbolic aspects of scripture, it is certain that the Bible will be fulfilled literally as well. Like a double-edged sword, God has made it clear that He intends to fulfil both the symbolic elements of prophecy as well as the literal statements in which they are contained. The symbolism is there only to add depth, not to undo the literal statements. Any time the two seem to clash it is because there are different aspects to the prophecy. In other words, the prophecy contains added elements deeper than those outwardly visible.

In the biblical statement that Jesus would be in the belly of the earth for three days and three nights, symbolism is certainly evident, but a literal fulfillment is absolutely necessary so that scripture be fulfilled completely. Even so, we are not the judges or jurors to which God must answer in fulfilling the Bible's statements. The Chief Priests and scribes of the Sanhedrin of Jesus' time made many pronouncements about how biblical prophecy needed to be fulfilled in order to please their own interpretation of scripture, but Jesus, on many occasions did not follow those prescriptions. Instead, God had Jesus do it another way. Because the members of the Sanhedrin were so determined that it should be done their way instead, they refused to listen to Jesus. They had set themselves up as the judges and jurors of God's methods. That turned out to be a fatal mistake.

Fully 99% of all Christians (virtually every Christian church on earth, now or in the past) believe Jesus was crucified on Friday and rose to life on Sunday. To believe otherwise is to be part of an extreme minority. To teach otherwise would constitute heresy. Jesus taught that what we bind on earth would be bound in heaven. This situation constitutes one of those bound circumstances. We cannot bring two separate instances of Sabbath or Passover into the equation at this late date.

At least ten prophecies in Christ's Gospel dealing with this subject agree with the time-frame evident in the bound scenario, i.e., that Jesus would rise on the third day. He died on Friday and was raised to life very early on Sunday.

A literal problem exists in only a single quotation, that of Matthew 12:39-40, which specifies that Jesus be in the heart of the earth for three days *and three nights*. We cannot change the day of His crucifixion, Friday, without defying scripture and committing heresy. Nor can we change the day of His resurrection, Sunday, for the same reason. Therefore, it is evident that a situation exists in this quotation which God is going to fulfill in a literal way not readily evident to us now.

He will do it, of course. But we cannot be the judge or jury of His way. We already know that an easily movable time line exists which separates one day from another and have shown that this time-line, unknown to those who lived at the time of Christ could easily have followed God, the Alpha and Omega of time, moving with Him as He changed positions on earth (see Ezekiel 10:18-32). If we, in our limited knowledge have discovered this much, then we must understand that God has additional capacities that are far greater than our current knowledge comprehends.

But just dealing with what we do know, had God moved His position from the Mount of Olives to Mount Zion in the moments before He resurrected Christ, and then moved back again, all the days and nights would be accounted for. This sounds like science fiction, but it is a fact that people on earth have had to live with ever since they discovered that the earth was round. What is Sunday in America is Monday in Japan. That is not science fiction, that is a fact. The same time difference would occur wherever the date-line were placed and the day difference would follow wherever the line was moved to, even if that movement occurred only for a few seconds or for a few hours.

One thing we cannot do, of course, is define a new set of days and nights for Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. These have been fixed by the Holy Spirit in scripture. And ratified by the Church. So they are bound now, both on earth and in heaven.

Another aspect of this prophecy involves Jonah. 'For as Jonah was, so will the Son of Man be'. We really do not know much about Jonah's condition inside the whale except what the passages in the Old Testament of scripture say about it. Of most importance is the statement that during his time in the whale, Jonah went down into the countries underneath the earth, to the peoples of the past (Jonah 2:7). We know from Peter's letter that Jesus did this as well (in the spirit), where, as Peter says, Jesus preached to the spirits that were imprisoned there (1 Peter 3:18-22) . So there is much in this prophecy that is symbolic and much that cannot be pinned down in precise literal terms. Since it is tied to the prophecy of Jonah, there are real question marks, but more importantly, there is momentous symbolism. The 'sea' is there; the 'Abyss'; the belly of Sheol; the 'seaweed' wrapped around his head like a crown of thorns; the absence of God; the forfeit of grace inherent in not giving up earthly 'idols'; the countries underneath the earth; the people of the past still alive, but held in an abyssal containment. Fascinating symbolic elements that reappear all through the prophecies of scripture like repeating melodies; and here, proven to involve Jesus directly. And all of it inexorably tied to the three days which lay between Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. Three days which are precisely repeated in thousand-year increments defining mankind's relationship with God through Jesus on earth: "Wash and clean for two days and on the third day, see God". And all of this, the only 'sign' which mankind (this evil generation) will be given concerning God (Matt.12:40).

It seems all to be tied together in a gigantic metaphor which is particularly compelling now because we stand today at the very threshold of the third millennium. The 'third day' is

almost upon us.

The same three days and nights can be seen in another way as well. Scripture tells us that the earth was in the middle of a long night when Jesus first appeared, born in Bethlehem. "When peaceful silence lay over all, and night had run the half of her swift course, down from the heavens, from the royal throne, leapt your all-powerful Word" (Wis.18:14-15). The night into which Jesus leapt was the darkness that occurred after the people had abandoned the direction of God through Moses, the 'first day'. Perhaps even more likely, it was the darkness that followed Satan's corruption of creation in the beginning. Adam and Eve ended the daylight of creation very quickly when they defied God and ate the forbidden fruit. The rest is certain: With Christ's birth in Bethlehem, daylight returned to the earth. But crucifixion quickly ended it. "That day I will make the sun go down at noon, and darken the earth in broad daylight...I will make it a mourning like the mourning for an only son -- as long as it lasts it will be like a day of bitterness." (Amos 8:9-10, Ez.32:7-8). Jesus was laid in the tomb. Night covered the earth again. Then came His resurrection. The daylight had suddenly returned. It would not last forever, however. Jesus warned the people: "Work while you still have the day, night is coming when no one can work". (Jn.9:4). That night, the third, is still ahead of us. It is the time of tribulation soon to come and end God's offer of reconciliation. Three nights, three days. And then, in flash, the Second Coming of Christ.

This is the sign that is to be given to the world. The only sign it will get. Three days and three nights.

You are correct, this is a very significant prophecy and its literal terms should be deeply underlined.

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February 10, 1999

**Question:**

(Condensed) The Bible teaches that there is only one God. Where did the idea of the Trinity come from? Isn't it a formulation added by the Pope in the fourth century? And, isn't it true that he dictated that everyone had to believe in it or be put to death as a heretic? The phrase in the New Testament about praying in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost have been removed from the Bible I use because they are clearly later additions and were not truly stated by Christ. There is only ONE God, and I do not believe that there are three persons in Him. Would you please comment on this? RN

**Answer:**

It is common for Latter Day Saints to teach that the New Testament is true only in parts, but untrue in other parts. It is this teaching, more than any other, that the rest of the Christian Church uses to define Mormons as heretics. There are over a billion Christians in the world today and almost every one of them believe that the Bible is absolute and cannot be changed; either added to or detracted from. The same number believe in the doctrine of the Trinity -- a doctrine that tells us is that Jesus is God.

We, at this ministry agree with the Church that the New Testament is absolute, has been architected by the Holy Spirit, and that Satan had no say or power in its construction. While it is true that the Old Testament contained certain errors that Jesus pointed out, no such error is contained in the Word of Christ. We agree with the rest of the Church, therefore, that it is heresy to remove any words contained in God's bound testimony.

Jesus told His disciples, "What you bind on earth will be bound in heaven." That statement means that the early church was given full power over what heaven would define as absolute. The Gospel of Christ is most certainly covered by this directive.

Questions continue to this day about the Old Testament. But, since Jesus told His disciples it was necessary according to God that He fulfill all that was written in the Old Testament about Him, we feel that the same directive covered the Old Testament as well and that is why we usually quote from the Greek version (the version used by the Apostles and the early Church) which contains some books Martin Luther decided much later to remove.

The Old Testament is not an important issue to salvation, though. It is Christ and Christ alone that defines eternal life. Martin Luther left the New Testament intact.

On the doctrine of the Trinity:

Most elements of the doctrine of the Trinity were first stated by the eastern Church at the [Council of Nicea](#) in 325 A.D. Nicea was located in ancient Bithynia in Asia Minor near the southern border of the Black Sea. It was from this Council that the Nicene Creed was issued to amplify issues not clear in the Apostle's Creed, and to bring the entire Christian Church together under a single declaration of belief.

A second eastern Council was held in Constantinople in 381 A.D. to add to the Nicene Creed a statement defining belief in the Holy Spirit.

In response to the Nestorian refusal to accept the two natures of Christ as defined at Nicea, a final definitive version of the doctrine of the Trinity was defined by the eastern Church at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. This Council was also held in Asia Minor, again in Bithynia.

None of these Church councils were held in Rome or anywhere near Italy. Of the 600 bishops attending the Council of Chalcedon, almost all were eastern.

Jesus told His disciples, "I still have many things to say to you but they would be too much for you now. But when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth, since he will not be speaking as from himself but will say only what he has learnt; and he will tell you of the things to come. He will glorify me, since all he tells you will be taken from what is mine. Everything the Father has is mine; that is why I said: All he tells you will be taken from what is mine." (John 16:12-15).

The Spirit of God directed the Church. We do not believe as some teach, that Satan took control of the Church in the third or fourth century or in any other century. If almost every Christian Chuch believes in the Trinity, then the teaching must have come from God. If almost every Christian on earth over the past 1700 years has accepted this teaching as true then it must be the Holy Spirit driving that belief. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth.

At the time of Moses the people were supposed to meet God face to face. As the moment for this meeting drew near, thunderous events occurred that terrified the Israelites. They begged Moses to have God stop His approach and send them an 'intermediary' instead. Going to the top of the mountain in Sinai, Moses asked God about this and God agreed. That agreement is what structured the concept of a 'Messiah' into Hebrew law.

The expectation of his coming became fervent in the centuries that surrounded the time of Christ. Yet when He arrived, He did not come as an intermediary. He came as God Himself, in Person on earth. That is why today we have no need of an intermediary. When we go to Jesus, we automatically go to God. When we pray to Jesus, we automatically pray to God.

"To have seen me is to have seen the Father, so how can you say, "Let us see the Father"? (John 14:9). "Truly God is hidden with you, the God of Israel, the saviour. Those who opposed you will be disgraced and humiliated...you will never be disgraced or humiliated forever and ever." (Is.45:15-17). "God himself is our teacher" (Ps.32:8). "I rescue all who cling to me, I protect all who know my name." (Ps.91:14).. "It was neither messenger nor angel but his presence that saved them." (Is.63:9). "For I am God, not man: I am the Holy One in your midst and have no wish to destroy." (Hosea 11:9).

"He let you hear his voice out of heaven for your instruction." (Dt.4:36). "...there was only a voice." (Dt.4:12). "The Word was the true light that enlightens all men; and he was coming into the world. He was in the world that had its being through him, and the world did not know him. The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:9-14).

The key to Jesus is the Word He spoke (the Gospel He preached). "He gave them the wheat of heaven to eat." (Ps.78:24). That is the Word that created the heavens and the earth. "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, their whole array by the breath of his mouth...he spoke, and it was created; he commanded, and there it stood" (Ps.33:6-9).

"God will make his majestic voice be heard." (Is. 30:30). We find that voice on earth only in Jesus. "Jesus spoke God's own words" (John 3:34). It is in that Voice that God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are identical.

The word 'God' is a title. It is not a name. It means King -- King of all creation. God conferred that title on Jesus. "This is my king, installed by me on Zion, my holy mountain. Let me proclaim God's decree, he has told me, 'You are my son, today I have become your father.' (Ps.2:6-7). That Jesus has been made King by God is unequivocal: "Mine is not a kingdom of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my men would have fought to prevent my being surrendered to the Jews. But my kingdom is not of this kind." (Jn.18:36).

"I have made a covenant with my Chosen, I have given my servant David my sworn word: I have founded your dynasty to last forever, I have built you a throne to outlast all time." (Ps.89:3-4). "...and I shall make him my first-born, the Most High for kings on earth." (Ps.89:27). "God's oracle to you, my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand and I will make your enemies a footstool for you'. Royal dignity was yours from the day you were born, on the holy mountains, royal from the womb, from the dawn of your earliest days. God has sworn an oath which he never will retract, 'You are a priest of the order of Melchizadek, and forever. The Lord is at your right hand." (Ps.110:1-5).

"God raised this man Jesus to life, and all of us are witnesses to that. Now raised to the heights by God's right hand, he has received from the Father the Holy Spirit, who was promised, and what you see and hear is the outpouring of that Spirit. For David himself never went up to heaven; and yet these words are his: 'The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for you..' For this reason the whole House of Israel can be certain that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ." -Acts 2:29-36

The doctrine of the Trinity is not an invention of satan. It was prophesied in the Old Testament and was fulfilled in the witness of the Apostles. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one.

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March 28, 1999

**Question:**

Where did you develop the idea that when Adam and Eve sinned that God clothed them with SKIN (a.k.a human flesh). I never heard of that one before, I thought it was an intriguing thought. I always thought that God clothed them with animal skins. A

## **Answer:**

It is presented as a metaphor to show how widely our perception differs from God's own sense of reality. Paul tells us in the New Testament that God intends to re-clothe us in the new kingdom of Christ. He was talking, not of wool, cotton or rayon clothing, but of our own flesh and blood. In that moment of re-creation, our bodies of flesh will be contructed in a new way, in new materials, independent even of matter itself. Flesh and blood, said Paul, cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

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July 1999

## **Correction:**

Dear Sir/Madam,

We have read your internet website about the journeys of St. Paul with great interest.

However, we feel obliged to remind you that St. Paul also visited Galatia (today's Ankara, the capital of modern Turkey) and Phrygia (with its famous capital Gordion). In Acts 18/22, it is clearly stated that St. Paul has visited those sites and wrote his LETTER TO THE GALATIANS.

Sincerely yours,

AA

Archeologist & Hotelier  
Goreme-Nevsehir-Turkey

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August 20, 1999

## **Question:**

The churches are filled with hypocrites...why do we need them (churches)? Isn't it better to worship God in our own way at home? MV

## **Answer:**

We live in an age of criticism, and critics rule. The daily newspapers are filled with fault-finding. Little that is written nowadays is reverent, respectful or uplifting. It is easy to find fault with fellow Christians or the churches we build, just as it is easy for us to find fault with each other, or with our wives or husbands or with our children or parents. We are indoctrinated to cynicism from the moment we are born. The writings of Babylon abound in it. Our society's search for knowledge and truth is built on the predicate that these values almost never exist in either the present or the past. So everything that now exists is subject to casual and thoughtless destruction. As the leaves of the past are peeled away under this perpetual assault, the process seems to be self-fulfilling -- and a more or less orderly circumstance of our rebellious and violent nature. Perhaps it is. Perhaps this is why Christ taught that we must never judge. "*As we judge*", He said, "*so will we be judged*". Criticism, itself, is rarely Christian.

We are called, in Christ, to fix our own backyard, not that of our neighbor. "*Take the beam that is in thine own eye out first, so that you can see clearly to remove the speck that is in thy neighbor's eye.*" (Matt.7:3-5). Yet it is difficult to raise children without cataloging behavior that is wrong, and outlining that which is correct in Christ's eyes. Is there a difference between teaching and criticism? Of course. A very fine line, though. It is a line we must always be careful, as Christians, not to misjudge. Jesus showed how narrow the guidelines for correction are in the Christian religion when He said, "*If your brother does something wrong, reprove him and, if he is sorry, forgive him. And if he wrongs you seven times a day and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I am sorry', you must forgive him.*" (Luke 17:3-4). In our judgmental society, the reproofs come easily, but the warning to forgive is often ignored.

Critics argue that their perpetual assault on the people and institutions of our society are meant to make these people and institutions function better. Yet the process has become so severe of late that the wreckage of these attacks often preclude reconstruction. So it is with the Church. We have all heard loud and frequent criticism about hypocrites and scattered episodes of licentious behavior in churches. A large and growing body of critics detest the Christian doctrine altogether and want it watered down so that it will no longer be offensive to those it now judges immoral. Leaders are sought that would initiate these compromises.

Many have lost sight of the fact that the only leader in the Christian Church is Jesus Christ. Instead, more and more, people are chasing after pied pipers, looking for men to lead them to God. God sent only One Man down from heaven for that purpose. Only Jesus can lead anyone to God. No other man is an intermediary in that process. Yet few read His words. If we look for pied pipers, we are going to fall, and the 'narrow gate' will elude us. That is why Jesus told us to beware of the leaders who take the high posts in religious circumstances. Many of these are seeking the gilded robes, the esteem of the congregation and the riches that come with their office, not God, said Jesus. Yet in saying that, He ordered that we must follow what they say because they sit in the seat of Moses, but not do as they do, because their behavior does not lead into heaven.

Those who put their stock in Jesus know these words. They did not learn such doctrine from the ministers. Jesus, Himself, taught them this. And that is the way it is with heaven. Our knowledge of God comes from Christ. We should be on guard, then, following only the path Jesus Himself taught, and much more willing to forgive and protect the Church. The Church is greater than the ministers who run it and is in place for a very important reason. We must understand this, especially today, when the Church is the subject of such heated controversy and criticism.

All Christian churches form a single united 'Church'. In the creed of early Christians, this united Church is called 'universal'. The term may be prophetic. Science has shown us the vast size of the starry void above our heads and speculates that other worlds may be spinning far beyond our sight within its reaches. If so, those who inhabit these globes will someday be one with us in the restoration, and are, in fact, a part of the One Universal Church Jesus is wresting from Satan's grasp. *"And there are other sheep I have that are not part of this fold, and these I have to lead as well. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock and one shepherd."* (John 10:16). Death exists to the very ends of the universe, so we can be sure that Satan's impact reaches as far as our telescopes can see. Dealing with an institution that may be of this dimension, we should be very cautious about our criticism of its workings. Especially now, when the very institution of 'Church' has been made the subject of such a vitriolic and violent attack by the secular world as the latter rises from the ashes of its mortal wound.

Many church members have abandoned the churches, lured away from them by the specious arguments of critics. Some now worship in home closets, but many others have locked arms with the pagans and joined their ranks. And a great many more are lining up in the wings, getting ready to bolt as well. Unmindful of the directions Jesus put in place, their voices have joined in warning the Church to change in response to the critics, or lose its worldly membership. Shouts of 'Hypocrite!' echo from their mouths. Their criticism is tearing at the basic framework of the institutions they are pitted against, because, in Bible prophecy, this is the time for that process. The mortal wound that Jesus struck so long ago against paganism is healing. Satan is mobilizing the world for war and as a part of that mobilization, he is bombarding with his rhetoric the forts that God has stationed in Babylon against him. His volleys are meant to soften up the Church and decimate its ranks so that his great assault, now just a short time away, will be successful.

Only a committed defense by those inside these 'forts of God' will stave off his attack. Those who have abandoned these forts and taken refuge in their closets may not fall as fast, but they will be powerless to stop the advance. And that is what is most important at this critical juncture of history.

The 187 defenders of the Alamo, had they made their stand against the 5000 troops of Santa Anna in isolated groups or individual pockets would not have deterred, for even one hour, the wicked general in his advance across Texas. It was only because they housed themselves in a 'fort', the mission at San Antonio, that they were able to save the entire state of Texas, and thwart Santa Anna's relentless march north. This is the time for 'the

Alamo' of Christ and we are all being called to play the Davy Crockett's and Jim Bowie's of God's defense, armed not with weapons, but only with the sword of the Gospel of Christ. Some are scurrying away from the battle zone, others are staying. And God is taking note, because it is the Holy Spirit who has designed the churches, not man. And it is the Spirit now, that defends them against Satan.

All the criticism that has driven out those who are leaving is a part of Satan's cannonade against the forts of God. Even those which emanate from Christian tongues. The parroting of Satan's deprecations that flows from the departing church-goers serves only to ricochet his volleys, making the assault worse, and creating more casualties in God's ranks. It is time for those who serve Christ to rally round the churches (the forts of Christ) and defend them against all who would tear them down in the interests of retribution for having preached righteousness to a malignant and dying world.

We find ourselves on the doorstep of the most meaningful battle ever fought in God's war against Satan. We should be steadfast in our defense of all the forts He has raised up for this encounter.

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December 10, 1999

**Question:**

I have a few short questions that I hope you can answer, or tell me where to find the answers.

1. Where do we find more information about Seth, son of Adam and Eve?
2. Who were the wives of Cain and Able ?
3. Can you tell me more about Lylith? The first female? Living in the Garden of Eden?

Thank you for your time? LC

**Answer:**

The name 'Lylith' is not in the Bible as far as we know. The first female in the Bible is named 'Eve'. She is the only female the Bible specifies as having lived in the Garden at Eden. Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden and thereafter had to live a life in exile, as did all of their descendants. Those descendants include the current human race.

The only reliable source of information the world has concerning any of these individuals (Adam, Eve, Seth, Cain, or Able) are contained in the Book of Genesis in the Old

Testament of the Bible. (See Genesis 4-5.) Cain killed Able and for this act was sentenced to a life of wandering the land of Nod (east of Eden). During his wanderings, he married, and scripture indicates his descendants became increasingly violent. Seth was Adam & Eve's third child. Seth's descendants included Noah and his family. They were the only survivors of the great flood. Thus all present-day mankind stems from Adam through his third son, Seth.

**Question:**

4. Did Jesus have brothers and sisters?

**Answer:**

Scripture states unequivocably that Jesus had brothers. Almost all Protestants accept this statement at face value. The Roman church, however, argues that the term used in scripture means at times cousins and close relations (see John 7:1-11 and Acts 1:14); and at other times, is used with respect to His disciples (John 2:12). Lot was Abraham's nephew (Gen.12:5), but Abraham calls him his 'brother' (Gen.13:8). Unfortunately, in Hebrew and Aramaic the same word can mean either brothers and sisters or cousins, so a definitive answer to this question seems to be elusive.

It is possible, though, to search the prophecies of the Old Testament and see if any of these define Christ in His associations with relatives. There are several that seem to. One that stands out is in the Psalms. That it directly relates to a blood brother is implicit in its narrative:

"What business have you reciting my statutes, standing there mouthing my covenant, since you detest my discipline and thrust my words behind you? You make friends with a thief as soon as you see one, you feel at home with adulterers, your mouth is given freely to evil and your tongue to inventing lies. You sit there, slandering your own brother, you malign your own mother's son. You do this, and expect me to say nothing? Do you really think I am like you? You are leaving God out of account; take care! Or I will tear you to pieces where no one can rescue you! Whoever makes thanksgiving his sacrifice honors me; to the upright man I will show how God can save." (Psalm 50:16-23).

Prophecies of Christ and His private life abound in the Bible, especially in the Psalms. There is no way to tell for sure if this is one of those circumstances, but it very well may be. It was common practice in the synagogues at the time of Jesus for lay members of the congregation to stand up and do the readings. We know from the Gospel that Jesus

participated in these readings. This verse would have sent a private and electrifying acknowledgement of His divinity to one or more members of His own family were it delivered in an appropriate circumstance.

Whether or not Jesus had genetic brothers or sisters is irrelevant to His purpose or message. His brothers and sisters are those who do His will.

Jesus was sent by God to this planet to gather into His kingdom a specific brotherhood and sisterhood which had virtually nothing to do with His immediate biological family. He made this eminently clear:

"He was still speaking to the crowds when his mother and his brothers appeared. They were standing outside and were anxious to have a word with him. But to the man who informed him of this Jesus replied, 'Who is my mother? Who are my brothers? And stretching out his hand towards his disciples he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother'."

(Matthew 12:46-50)

### **Question:**

5. What role did Mary Magdelin (SP) play in Jesus' life? I have heard different things about her-- even to the point that they may have had physical love between them?

### **Answer:**

No. Mary of Magdala was a sinner converted by Jesus into righteousness. Scripture says Jesus cast seven devils out of her (Mark 16:9). After her conversion, she joined the apostolic group of women that accompanied Jesus and helped look after Him. This group included Mary who was the mother of James the younger and Joseph; and Salome who was probably the mother of the sons of Zebedee. There were others as well; one of whom was named Joanna (Luke 24:10-11).

It was to Mary of Magdala that Jesus first appeared after His resurrection.

Speaking as God, Jesus accused the crowds gathered around him of being "a wicked and adulterous generation". That same accusation, still there, leaps out of the Gospels into the heart of every reader who ponders His words today. That is because it is us who are the adulterers, not Jesus (not God), and it is that kind of thinking (adulterous), pervading our minds that drives us to contemplate such heretical ideas.

Scripture says that this age of lawlessness and unbelief is under the sway of Satan, who

does not allow those under the yoke of unclean spirits to understand God's truth and power. Jesus was handed over to be killed for those who have sinned so that they might turn to the truth and sin no more. Mary of Magdala made that kind of conversion.

**Question:**

6. Who were the brothers and sisters of The Virgin Mary?

**Answer:**

If she even had brothers and sisters, they are not named. Scripture tells us only of her cousin Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist.

**Question:**

7. What was Lot's wife name? Did Lot's daughters have husbands? Who were they? Did they look back and turn to salt like Lot's wife?
8. Where can I find out more about the Tar Pits of Sodom? Have Archaeologists confirmed the site of Sodom, at the Dead sea?

**Answer:**

Lot was Abraham's nephew. His wife's name is not mentioned in scripture. Lot's daughters apparently remained unmarried. They were both betrothed to men in Sodom who refused to leave with the party and so succumbed in the fiery inferno which engulfed the city. Nothing is mentioned of Lot's sons after the journey out of Sodom. It is not likely that they looked back. We are only vaguely familiar with the tar pits you mentioned and cannot advise you regarding them. Archeologists have not yet confirmed the actual site of Sodom.

**Question:**

9. Why is the Dead Sea like it is, and not like any other lake?

**Answer:**

The Dead Sea has no outlet and the amount of water running into it from the river Jordan, or from underground wells, usually does not match its rate of evaporation. Thus it is highly saline (salty) and for this reason supports almost no life. Far below sea level, it is like a giant sinkhole.

In terms of spiritual metaphore, its existance, name and placement is quite prophetic. Palestine has two large lakes. One, the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus did much of His

preaching, is full of life. The other lake is dead. The living lake is alive because the water coming into it flows out. So the water does not stand and become brackish. The metaphor is obvious. The Word of God is something that must be put into action. If the Living Water of Christ goes in, but nothing comes out or goes into action, the person who receives it will be like a briny sea and suffer the same fate. Jesus addressed this circumstance quite clearly, saying that our primary duty after conversion was to go and spread the good news of the kingdom of God. (See Luke 9:60). The water must flow.

**Question:**

10. It is said the Lot's daughters thought they were the only people left after the destruction, didn't they know about the other villages in the valley?

**Answer:**

All the towns of the valley were destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah. These include the towns of Admah and Zeboiim (Gen.14; Dt.29:22; Ho.11:8). A massive earthquake there caused the land to subside, not only shaking the buildings to the ground, but allowing the waters of the Dead Sea to overflow the area. The southern part of the Dead Sea is still geologically very unstable. The Bible talks about Lot's thinking, but not about the thinking of his daughters on this subject.

**Question:**

11. Were there females at the Last Supper? Serving food or tending to the men?

**Answer:**

Scripture has noted the group of women who attended to the needs of Jesus and the Apostles. They are listed in a question above. They stayed for the most part in the background, but it seems almost certain that they were present in the house on the Western hill that was being used as the site of the Last Supper.

**Question:**

12. I have never been told why the Cross, the instrument of Christ's death, is to be so Holy? I have read that when one faced the Devil with the sign of the Cross then he would die or disappear. Please tell me why this sign is so powerful, when it caused the death of Christ.

## Answer:

The Cross is the mechanism of our salvation. Jesus died for our sins. Prophecy states that He was lifted up so that He could draw all men to Himself. For this reason the Cross stands as the symbol of eternal life.

Because of this, it is one of the three primary elements of scriptural symbolism in prophecy. In this it is called the 'standard'. The other element is the preaching of the Gospel, which is termed 'the trumpet call', and the 'sword of God' which is the Gospel itself. The three go hand in hand, because the arrival of Christ brought a fire to the earth that was to sweep from one end of it to the other, burning up wickedness and purifying those who repented, like gold is purified in a furnace. The three together signal the end of Satan's reign.

There are many references to God's standard (the Cross) and trumpet call (the preaching of the Gospel) in scripture. One of the best is this:

"Enemies are coming from a distant country, shouting their war cry against the towns of Judah; they surround Jerusalem like watchmen round a field because she has apostatised from me -- it is God who speaks. Your own behavior and actions have brought this on you. This is your fate! How bitter! How it pierces your heart! I am in anguish! I writhe with pain...I cannot keep quiet, for I have heard the trumpet call and the cry of war. Ruin on ruin is the news: the whole land is laid waste, my tents are suddenly destroyed, in one moment all that sheltered me is gone. How long must I see the standard and hear the trumpet call?" This is because my people are stupid, they do not know me, they are slow-witted children, they have no understanding: they are clever enough at doing wrong, but do not know how to do right."  
(Jer.4:16-22).

The Jewish standard was the Temple, built on the rock of Abraham in Jerusalem. It had no power of eternal life and so was destroyed. It was replaced by a standard that could save, the Cross, symbol of the resurrection and of God's fire that either purifies or destroys; the fire of the Gospel, God's two-edged sword:

"Assyria will fall by a sword that is not man's, will be devoured by a sword that is more than human, he will flee before the sword and his young warriors will be enslaved. In his terror he will abandon his rock, and his panic stricken leaders desert their standard. It is God who speaks, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem." (Is.31:8-9).

Jesus lay down His life so that we could live forever. It is this action that makes the Cross

such a holy symbol for us. But, as we have shown, that standard which we raise everywhere, does not stand alone. It is a beacon that proclaims to the earth the Gospel -- the salvation of God.

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December 16, 1999

**Question:**

Can you tell me why Moses made the people drink the ashes of the golden calf in Exodus 32:20? LP

**Answer:**

This is a very interesting question. While Moses was on top of the mountain in Sinai receiving from God the Ten Commandments, back in the camp the people of Israel became restive and decided amongst themselves to return to Egypt (the land out of which Moses had led them). They went to Aaron, who was second in command. Aaron was Moses' brother. He also officiated at the group's religious ceremonies. The leaders of the rebellion talked Aaron into fashioning a god for them to protect the group on their return journey -- a god they understood from their days in Egypt -- a golden calf. Aaron complied with the request.

Suddenly (after the calf was constructed but before the group's departure occurred) Moses returned. He was enraged at what he found. He smashed the two tablets upon which were written the Ten Commandments by hurling them to the ground. He then seized the idol and burned it in the fire. When the fire was out, all that was left were ashes. The ashes probably consisted of the charcoal created by the fire itself and the pedestal upon which the idol rested. The idol itself obviously melted as well. We are not told whether this idol was solid gold or consisted of a thin veneer of gold leaf spread across a wooden carving. It came from the earrings and jewelry of the people, so it could not have been very large if it were solid gold. However, the pedestal upon which it sat likely towered over the people so that the idol was elevated above their heads.

When the fire had burned its course and cooled, Moses took the charcoal (the ashes) from the fire, ground it down into a fine powder, and cast it upon the waters, which he then ordered all the people of the camp to drink.

Your question, why did he do this, is intriguing. Was it a rite of purification or one of

condemnation? Obviously the idol was a poison. It represented a food of death. Today, when a patient is brought into an emergency room of a modern hospital having ingested an overdose of drugs or other poison, a tube is immediately inserted into the patient's mouth. It is then threaded down the esophagus into the stomach and a solution of water and charcoal is pumped through it (into the stomach) to bind with and neutralize the poison. It is quite a messy affair. Moses could not have known 21st century medicine, but his actions were directed by God, they were not his own. God, of course, aware of all things, would know this. It is fascinating that Moses prescribed a nearly identical procedure with respect to the idol.

It is obvious that God did not go to all the trouble of leading the Israelites out of Egypt just to destroy them all in a fit of rage. He knew how rebellious they were. That is why they had received the name 'Israel' in the first place.

God had made a promise to protect this group and lead them to safety. In that leadership He would have to protect them not just against outside enemies, but from themselves as well. That is not only inherent in the story, but is underscored by the symbolism for which God created the story in the first place. The Israelite journey out of Egypt is predictive of a greater journey to come. It stands for the leadership of Jesus who brings the House of Israel (the people of God) out of Babylon and navigates them to the kingdom of heaven, a place of eternal life (John 18:36). The Gospel tells us that God will protect us on that journey in all things no matter how deadly the circumstance (Mark 16:18).

It is my feeling that the powdered charcoal and water was a finite example that represented this protection. The Bible says that we are purified by fire. Jesus is described as a fire sweeping the earth, burning all evil off of it, just like Moses burning the false idol.

"You must set fire to all the carved images of their gods, not coveting the gold and silver that covers them; take it and you will be caught in a snare: it is detestable to Yahweh your God" (Dt.7:25-26).

"Yes, a fire has blazed from my anger, it will burn to the depths of Sheol; it will devour the earth and all its produce, it will set fire to the foundations of the mountains." (Dt.32:22).

"I will smelt away your dross in the furnace, I will remove all your base metal from you. I will restore your judges as of old...then you will be called City of Integrity, Faithful City." (Is.1:21-26).

"The light of Israel will become a fire and its Holy One a flame, burning and devouring thorns and briars in a single day." (Is.10:17). "A destruction has been decreed that will bring inexhaustible integrity." (Is.10:22).

"I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing

already!" (Luke 12:49).

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-In Christ Jesus,  
E.C.S.Leavenworth

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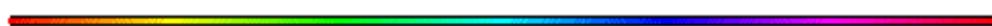
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**"The Only Thing They Insisted On Was That  
We Should Remember to Feed the Poor"**

*Galatians 2:10*