



July 26, 2025

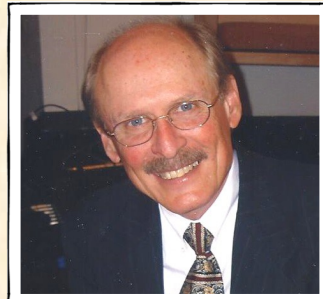
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Thanks for the questions!



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Bible Study

Acts 17

In Thessalonica

1 When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. 2 As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah," he said. 4 Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women.

5 But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. 6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, 7 and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus." 8 When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. 9 Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

In Berea

10 As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. 11 Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. 12 As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

13 But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, some of them went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. 14 The believers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. 15 Those who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

In Athens

16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. 17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. 18 A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbler trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. 19 Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we



Bible Study

would like to know what they mean.” 21 (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

24 “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. 26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. 27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 28 ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

29 “Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. 30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

32 When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” 33 At that, Paul left the Council. 34 Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

Honest Questions

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Honest Question: Is the United States the modern day “Israel” of the Bible? Do the blessings and curses given to Israel of old apply to the United States today?

Bible Answer:

“...**They are not all Israel who are of Israel**, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called.’ That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.” Romans 9:6-8. (See also Romans 2:28, 29).

Comments: What an interesting pair of questions! While I’m not certain exactly what prompted the questioner to construct these questions as they were submitted, they certainly make for a very relevant response, considering the world prominence of both of these nations, America and Israel, today. Hopefully, the following comments will adequately address the inquiry.

When God made His covenant with Abraham, the father of the nation of Israel, He told him He would make of him a great **nation**. And that is exactly what God did when He called Israel out of Egypt and established the children of Abraham as a nation in the land of Palestine. Two thousand years later, when Jesus came to live among us, He came to the Jewish **nation** of Israel. And when He was crucified, it was the **nation** of Israel that put Him on the cross! (John 11:48-51). Finally, when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D., the **nation** of Israel was forever judged and rejected by God as a nation.

Jesus said to the Jewish leaders, "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you [the Jewish nation] and given to a **nation** [spiritual Israel] bearing the fruits of it. ... Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. Matthew 21:43, 45.

The Gospel is the story of how Jesus came to save **individuals** by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone, **not as a group** – not as a denomination, not as a race, not as a **nation**! Today, Jews are saved in the same way as Gentiles – **individually** by grace, through faith, in Jesus Christ!

To the Church, Paul says, “For you [the Church, spiritual Israel] are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ... **There is neither Jew nor Greek**, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:26, 28-29.

Dispensationalism, among Christians of today the most popular view of the Jewish nation and the end times, teaches that the **nation** of Israel is still God’s chosen people. But that is contrary to the Gospel, as seen in the texts above, and is simply not true. That idea is part of a greater deception which distorts the identity of the end time Antichrist and contradicts the prophecies of Revelation!

So, to say that **any nation**, including the United States of America, can be likened to the Israel of today is a definite “NO”. Is America a privileged nation which has been under the **blessing** of God? YES. Has America been a refuge for the followers of Christ because of its Christian heritage? YES. And is America an



Honest Questions

important player in Bible prophecy? YES, again. But tragically in the days just ahead, America, a “Christian nation,” **blessed** by God, and for centuries a defender of right, will soon be under the **curse** and **judgments** of God – the very judgments poured out on Israel of old – because of the part it plays as the False Prophet of Revelation. This Christian nation has already embraced the Antichrist of the Bible as “part of the family.” She has rejected the teachings of Scripture in exchange for “unity” among all faiths. And America **as a nation** will soon reject the Christ it claims to follow. America will ultimately persecute the faithful followers of Christ and His Word, and will with the Dragon and the Beast of prophecy be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10). And the Jews? Many will become faithful followers of Jesus and a part of the harvest at the time of the return of Jesus – but individuals, not as a nation!

Honest Question: How can we be sure the Bible is **complete**, given that humans determined what was canonical or not? What would you say to someone who says the Bible is missing books that were not included [in the canon] but should have been?

Bible Answer:

“All Scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be **complete**, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

“No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

Comments: Whatever the hands of man touch is always subject to imperfection and faulty judgment, regardless of how sincere the intent and meticulous the method. But whatever God inspires, He protects from the inadequacies of those who have given us the Bible. While there are absolutely a number of “books”/“epistles” purportedly written by individuals who are even mentioned in the Bible – writings which were not included in the biblical canon passed down to us, **nothing** is missing that is necessary for a **completely** adequate understanding of who God is, what He has done for us in His Son, and a revelation of all that is ahead for His Church.

The Word of God as we have access to it today is enough to save us for eternity, and enable us to experience His presence and love in this life until we see Him face to face. It’s enough to protect us from the deceptions of Satan and His agents and from the consequences of our fallen nature. And it’s enough to inspire peace in our souls and a faith in Him that transcends the painful realities of our present life. God has chosen to speak to us through the imperfect human instrument, and nothing important for a knowledge of Him and an understanding of eternal truth has been withheld or left unprotected from the errors or devising of sinful humanity. You can trust the Word of God enough to make it your only source of faith and practice!



Honest Questions

Honest Question: Why did God allow Lucifer to become Satan and cause all the grief and evil he has? Since God has the ability to see the future, doesn't this make Him responsible for evil?

Bible Answer:

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, **I will be like the Most High.**' Yet you shall be brought down to [hell], To the lowest depths of the Pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who did not open the house of his prisoners?' Isaiah 14:12-17.

"You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering.... The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. **You [were] perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you.** By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore, I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you. ... All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; you have become a horror, and shall be no more forever." ' ' Ezekiel 28:12-17, 19.

Comments: Not only did God create mankind free of sin, He created the angels of heaven, including Lucifer, free of sin – BUT with the ability to choose to live in harmony with His ways, or to rebel against His rule. In the same way that **perfect humanity** chose to sin in Eden, Lucifer, who was **“perfect in [his] ways from the day [he was] created,”** and a third of the angels of heaven chose to rebel against the holy God who had created them. We were in Eden, and still are today, able to make that choice. And so were the angels. They chose to rebel and then convinced Adam and Eve to do the same.

God did not create robots who would live in harmony with His righteous rule because they had to, He created man and angels who would serve Him because they wanted to – who would love and serve Him from their hearts, in the same way that we want to be loved by our family, not out of obligation, but out of their deep love and respect for who we are.

The good news is that all of God's creation has now seen, at great cost, just how good God is, how much He loves us, and just how painful it can be to live outside of His will for His creation. God is holy, and He wants His creatures to be holy, not to be demanding and arbitrary, but to make us happy. What He asks us to do in obedience to His commands is for our happiness, not for His selfish control over us. He wants us to be free in His love for us, but to remain free is to live in obedience to Him.



Honest Questions

When this life on earth is over, we will be made perfect again, as we were in Eden. When Jesus returns, we will be changed into the sinless humanity God created in the beginning. But as a result of our experience on earth, seeing evil and feeling its ugliness and bondage, we, in our perfection, will also become immune to sin, and from the depths of our hearts and with a full knowledge of good and evil, we will never chose sin and what it brings again. John tells us, “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Revelation 21:4.

In the end, Satan, his angels, his human agents, and evil itself will be destroyed in the fires of hell. Our eternity will be one of true happiness and eternal bliss. God will be our God by both experience and choice! He will have His rightful place in eternity as God. We will truly worship Him forever from hearts of love. And we will serve Him eternally – **by choice!**

Please send you “Honest Questions” to Pastor@wvetm.com — then watch for them to be answered in this newsletter. To subscribe, send an email to the above email address with “Subscribe” in the subject box.