

Digging Deeper Answers
Nov-Dec 2021 *Lamplighter*
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The questions posed in the November-December 2021 edition of the *Lamplighter* were meant to drive readers to the Word of God. While our magazine offers articles and insights to stimulate thought and reflection, the Word of God is the real source of wisdom.

We hope that you were inspired to dig deeper. And we pray that the Holy Spirit has given you insights as you've read His Word and meditated upon it.

As promised, we provide the following answers merely to continue the dialogue. Our answers are not exhaustive. For in depth articles dealing addressing each question, we'd encourage you to explore our christinprophecy.org website. Through our search engine, you can find specific articles based on any sequence of words.

May this new feature in the *Lamplighter* serve to illuminate God's Word so that it may be 'a lamp to your feet and a light to your path' (Psalm 119:105).

- Tim Moore

**Question 1) We refer to the Bible as the Old Testament and the New Testament.
Who's testimony is it?**

1) The word "testament" can mean a person's will, something that serves as a sign or evidence of a fact, or a tangible proof. The only witness to Creation was Almighty God. His revelation about the beginning of history is just as valid as His prophetic revelation about the end of history. Remember, the book we call "Revelation" is recorded by John as "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His bond servants, the things which must soon take place, and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond servant John" (Revelation 1:1).

Similarly, Moses recorded the history of mankind and the nation of Israel as the Holy Spirit revealed it to him. And, the phrase "God said" or "Thus saith the Lord" or something conveying a prophetic communication from God Himself appears throughout the Old Testament—almost 4,000 times.

By all those measures, the Old Testament is God's testimony of His revelation to mankind—fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ.

Question 2) What would you say are the themes of the Old Testament?

- 2) This question was meant to encourage you as the reader to grapple with the Word of God—figuratively wrestling with God (as Jacob did literally) to determine what He is revealing to you personally.

Broadly, the Old Testament revealed God’s desire to be in relationship with His creation, the special communion He offers those who are created in His image, His intention to dwell among His people, and the catastrophic consequence of sin that no person can overcome without the intervening of God Himself.

In that regard, the Old Testament points to the culmination of God’s plan for salvation—set forth in the omniscient mind of God before He even laid the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). Jesus was that culmination—the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega. All the Law and the Prophets were fulfilled in Him (Matthew 5:17) and “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of Prophecy” (Revelation 19:10). In other words, He is the focal point of the entirety of God’s Word.

Question 3) What are some examples of Jesus appearing in the Old Testament?

- 3) We will explore many types and Christophanies (preincarnate appearances of Jesus) throughout our overview of “Jesus in the Old Testament” series on *Christ in Prophecy*. In short, here are a few:

- He walked in the garden of Eden looking for Adam (Genesis 3:8)
- He appeared to Abram by the oaks of Mamre (Genesis 18:1-2)
- He spoke to Moses from the burning bush (Exodus 3:2-3)
- He appeared to Moses and Aaron and 70 elders of Israel (Exodus 24:9-10)
- He appeared to Joshua as the captain of the Lord’s host (Joshua 5:13-15)
- He walked about in the fiery furnace with 3 of Daniel’s friends (Daniel 3:25)

We could list many more appearances, let alone other prophetic *types* that pointed to Jesus (both living and inanimate). The point is that once you begin to look for Jesus throughout the Old Testament, you will find him throughout the Old Testament.

Question 4) Are Bible “stories” historically accurate?

- 4) In a word—Yes. We believe that the Word of God is faithful and true. It is meant to be interpreted literally. That does not mean that it does not employ poetic language and various literary tools to convey truth. But the history it records was real. The people it

describes actually lived. They are not presented as mythological figures but as real human beings with gifts and shortcomings like all of us.

Jesus bore testimony to the historical validity of people and events recorded throughout the Old Testament—from the Creation to the patriarchs to the prophets. We would be wise to heed the Golden Rule of Interpretation regarding the Word of God: When the plain sense makes sense, look for no other sense lest you end up with nonsense!

Question 5) Creation occurred in 6 literal days. (True or False)

5) True.

We believe in a 6-day Creation. That is because the plain reading of Scripture—from the repeated emphasis on the “evening and morning” of each day (Genesis 1) to God’s testimony that “in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth” (Exodus 20:11) to Jesus’ affirmation of six days leading up to the Sabbath (Luke 13:14)—reflects that plain sense.

Our friends at the Institute for Creation Research and Answers in Genesis focus on providing evidence for a literal interpretation of Creation. Only since embracing the materialistic theory of evolution has the Christian West rejected God’s Word as the final word on the timing and method of Creation.

Question 6) When was the Messiah first introduced in Scripture?

6) The promise of a Messiah is first referenced by God in Genesis 3:15. He said, “I will put enmity between you (Satan) and the woman, and between your seed and her seed (referring both to her multitude of offspring and the Anointed One); He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”

In the very next chapter of Genesis, Cain of all people recognizes his hopeless state when he too falls under the curse of God. Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is too great to bear!” That statement captures the status of all mankind. As John 3:36 explains, everyone who has not believed in (meaning to trust for their salvation) will not see eternal life; instead “the wrath of God abides on them.”

Question 7) God’s plan of salvation through Jesus Christ was His “Plan B.” (True or False)

7) False.

There is a dangerous lie being perpetrated that God was somehow surprised at man's fall into Sin. According to that line of thinking, He quickly formulated a "Plan B" to eventually overcome the mess man caused and the curse He Himself imposed.

Such reasoning robs God of His omniscience. In other words, while He imparted to Adam and Eve the same free will that each of us possess, He knew in advance every choice—for good or evil—that we would make. And, His plan before time as we know it began was to provide a Savior. As cited above, His plan for salvation was set forth before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).

Question 8) How old is the earth? (thousands, millions, billions or years)

- 8) Thousands. We are "young earth" Creationists. That is to say, we reject the theory that the earth is millions or billions of years old (a requirement imposed by theories such as evolution that postulate a uniformitarian rate of change in the natural and biological world).

The genealogical and historical timelines presented in Scripture point to Creation occurring sometime in the past 6,000 - 10,000 years. We lean toward the first figure, because it aligns with other evidence pointing to lifespan of the earth approximating 6,000 years, and culminating in a 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ known as the Millennial Kingdom.

Extended remarks on this question can be found at:

<https://christinprophecy.org/articles/our-young-earth/>

And in our Jan/Feb 2021 *Lamplighter* magazine (https://christinprophecy.org/wp-content/uploads/Lamplighter_JanFeb21_Week-of-Millenniums.pdf)

Question 9) As long as I believe in Christ, it doesn't really matter what I believe about these issues. (True or False)

- 9) False.

This is a lie being perpetrated by liberal denominations that want to embrace the world's theories regarding our origins. The idea that God would have used "millions and billions of years" to guide man's evolution means that the Word of God is filled with falsehood. Death entered the world due to sin (Romans 5:12), so the thought that there death was present through eons of time simply does not align with biblical truth.

In addition, Jesus referenced the Creation as occurring in six days as well as the creation of man and woman—a singular act by a holy and all-powerful God. Not an accidental bi-product of random mutations and chance.

People who stray from God’s Word on this issue soon pick and choose which other truths they want to keep and which ones become negotiable in their mind. Soon, they wander altogether from faith in Christ as He is revealed in Scripture—worshipping instead another Jesus and following after another faith.

Question 10) Biblical Creation is faith-based; Evolution is scientific. (True or False)

- 10) False. We could spend pages and pages documenting the genuine science that offers factual evidence supporting the Word of God. Instead, we will once again encourage you to search through the archives of Lamb & Lion articles we’ve published on this issue. Or, visit the websites of the Institute for Creation Research (www.icr.org) or Answers in Genesis (www.answersingenesis.org) to take a deep dive on some wonderful materials.

Both offer tremendous resources for teenagers and children as well.

Question 11) Is it possible that God used the mechanisms of Evolution?

- 11) No. See our answer to number 9 and 10.

Question 12) Did Abram come from a family that honored God?

- 12) No. There is a misconception that Abram came from a faithful family. Such a sentiment fits our own hope that our faith will flow into our children and grandchildren. Jewish tradition and extra-biblical writings describe Terah as an idol worshipper—and quite possibly an actual dealer in idols as well.

God did not call Abram because he came from a faithful family, but because of grace.

Question 13) Why did God choose Abram?

- 13) Building on the last answer, Abram was not chosen by God because of any inherent merit or quality. Unlike Noah, he was not esteemed as righteous or blameless in his day

(relative even to his contemporaries). God chose him because He wanted to, and He *credited* Abram with righteousness because he believed Him—as evidenced by his obedience.

Question 14) How many sons did Abraham have?

- 14) Although the song says that Father Abraham had many sons (many sons had Father Abraham), the man Abram had eight sons. His first son Ishmael was a son of impatience. His second son Isaac was the son of promise. After Sarah died, he had six other sons by his second wife, Keturah (Genesis 25:1-4). Those sons became the patriarchs of Arabian tribes living east of Israel. But the main story focuses on Isaac and Ishmael.

In Genesis 12, God promised to make Abram a great nation (v. 2), and in chapter 15 He reiterated His covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river Euphrates” (v. 18). Abram and Sarai’s expectations were immediately realized, however, so just 5 verses later (in 16:2), Sarai offered her maid Hagar in order to “obtain children through her.”

We may wince at Abram’s impatience, but it is a trait common to mankind. We want what we want—and even what we’ve been promised—now. As one lady exclaimed to me, “I don’t want to wait until I die for God to fulfill His promises to me!” Abram’s son of impatience was blessed in his own right and did indeed become the father of many nations, “wild donkey of a man” though he was (Genesis 16:12). But that was not what God had in mind for the line of blessing that would descend from Abram.

In a testimony to His intention to honor the relationship of marriage (between one man and one woman), God’s promise was for Sarai to conceive—impossible as that sounded given her advanced age. That promise was reiterated in Genesis 18, and in a statement with Messianic implications (and pointed all the way to the Messiah’s *second coming*), the LORD said to Abraham, “Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son” (Genesis 18:14).

Abraham’s determination to trust in the Lord would be sorely tested in Genesis 22, but Abraham learned through various trials—and various failures on his own part—that God is faithful. It is important to realize that Abraham never laid hold of portions of God’s promise to him. He never possessed the land promised to him. He did not live to see his offspring become a great nation—multiplied beyond the stars of the heavens and the sand on the seashore (Genesis 22:17).

By faith, Abraham lived as an alien in the land he was promised. He lived—and died—looking for a city whose architect and builder is God. As many of us await the Lord's return, the reality is that some of us will pass from this life before He comes. God is faithful, but His timetable is not beholden to our impatience. At the *appointed* time He will return.

Have we learned to have the faith and patience of Abraham? Are we intentional about passing our faith to the next generations, confident that even if He tarries God will fulfill every promise. May He not only find faith on the earth when He returns, may He also find us faithful.

Question 15) Are the Jews still special or “chosen”?

- 15) Yes. The calling and blessing of God is irrevocable in the sense that He always keeps His promises. He is always faithful—even when we are not.

There is a dangerous and demonic ideology called “replacement theology” that asserts that God washed His hands of the Jewish people. That because they rejected Him, He has rejected them and cancelled His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Entire Christian denominations have been deceived to believe that God's promises to the Jewish people have been transferred to the Christian (and largely Gentile) Church.

Paul was very clear in Romans 9-11 that God has not cast Israel away, and that His promises to them are still valid. It is not credible to suggest that Paul is referring merely to spiritual descendants of Abraham, the context in which the children's song I referenced earlier declares, “and I am one of them (a son of Abraham) and so are you, so let's just praise the Lord.” Our adoption into the family of God should lead us to praise Him, but we have no right to declare His promises to the literal sons and daughters of Abraham null and void.

Lest anyone think that God will not bless those who have been less than faithful, consider the Word of the Lord recorded by Ezekiel: “I am not doing this (regathering the nation of Israel to their land) for your sake,” declares the Lord GOD, “let it be know to you! Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel!” (Ezekiel 26:32, also v. 22-24). Even the regathering of the Jewish people to Israel we have witnessed in the past 80 years is a testimony to God's faithfulness to His covenant promises.

So, what is a Gentile follower of Jesus to think, and to do? We should be motivating them to holy jealousy, modeling the blessing of a relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in such a way that they are drawn back to Him and to His Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 11:11)

Question 16) What does it mean to wrestle with God and man, as Jacob did?

- 16) The account of Jacob encountering God at the Jabbok stream in Genesis 32:22-30 is mysterious in several ways. Moses records that Jacob wrestled with a man, but that Jacob realized that he'd "seen God's face" (Genesis 32:30). We can recognize this as a Christophany—a preincarnate appearance of Jesus Christ, the God-Man who is the manifestation of the glory of God.

How could Jacob grapple physically with Almighty God in human form and not be obliterated in an instant? Only because Jesus constrained His own power. That aspect of this account is understandable. Only as God covered Moses could His full glory pass by without annihilating him (Exodus 33:20-23). God ongoingly constrains His power and His indignation, lest He judge every sin instantly and destroy every sinner in His holy and righteous wrath. But a day is coming when God's patience will run out and His judgment will fall. None of us knows when that day will come—either for us individually or for the world collectively. That is why we must flee into the arms of Jesus Christ without delay.

Revelation offers many promises to those who overcome (Revelation 1-3). Our walk with the Lord as Christians (see the answer to Question 17) requires that we grapple with the Word of God, and wrestle with Him as He molds and shapes our identity, conforming it to the likeness of Christ (Romans 8:29). We are also wrestling with the world, as we live *in* the world without allowing ourselves to be *of* the world (John 17:14-17). And in the fullness of time, Jesus will also give to each of us who are His a new name, just as He did with Jacob (Revelation 2:17).

Question 17) What does it mean to walk with God?

- 17) Several people are described as "walking with God" in the Old Testament. The first is Enoch. He "walked with God" and then he "was not, because God took him" (Genesis 5:24). Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD and is described as "blameless in his time" because he walked with God (Genesis 6:8-9). God's admonition to Abram was to "walk before Me, and be blameless" (Genesis 17:1).

We must recognize that Enoch and Noah and Abram were not blameless in the sense that they were sin-free. Paul states emphatically that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). But it is the relationship with God, represented as an ongoing walk with Him, that infers on them a description of blameless. That is a

spiritual condition that is far more significant than merely saying they were more righteous than their wicked contemporaries.

Abram offers a dramatic example of God's bestowed blessing. Moses recorded that Abram believed in the LORD and "He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Genesis 15:6). Paul made it clear that "faith was credited to Abraham was credited as righteous (Romans 4). The writer of Hebrews reviewed an entire litany of people who "gained approval through their faith (Hebrews 11 and verse 39).

The same pattern exhibited by the Old Testament saints deemed faithful and blameless applies to us today. If we believe God, putting our trust in His Son for the forgiveness of our sins, He credits us with *His* righteousness. Our ongoing relationship with Him, aptly described as a Christian walk, allows us to grow in Christ and be molded into Christlikeness.

Question 18) How did Joseph overcome adversity time after time?

- 18) Simply put: Joseph never lost hope. How did he persevere in spite of repeated injustices inflicted upon him? Scripture says four different times that the LORD was with Joseph (Genesis 39:2, 3, 21, and 23).

None of us relishes the thought of enduring a trial. We would prefer to sail on a placid sea with little peril than to be tossed in a raging storm. But it is through trials that God demonstrates His faithfulness to us—and stretches our faith in Him. That is why James says we can "count it all joy" when we encounter various trials, "knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-3).

Joseph stands as a worthy exemplar. For now, just consider his own testimony to his treacherous brothers given all he had endured in Egypt: "do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. Therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God..." (Genesis 45:5, 8).

I do not believe Joseph was endowed with a supernatural gift of optimism. He was merely rooted in the Lord and was not shaken when great storms blew through his life. Are you also rooted in the Rock?

Question 19) How did Jesus fulfill that prophetic promise of Isaiah 7:14?

- 19) Isaiah 7:14 says, “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.” Immanuel literally means, God is with us.

Had Jesus been merely a man, born of a woman in Judea, He could not have caused this prophecy to be fulfilled—any more than any of us had control over the time, place, or nature of our birth. But Isaiah said the Lord Himself would provide a sign. He seems to be making a promise to provide that which the Pharisees and Sadducees demanded in Matthew 16:1—a sign from heaven.

Matthew 1 and Luke 1 record Gabriel’s visitation to Mary. He described how she would bear a son and call His name Jesus. She did not protest but she did ask how that could happen since she was a virgin. Joseph likewise was visited and informed that Mary would have a son to be named Jesus, or Yeshua—meaning “salvation” (Luke 1:21).

Both these Gospel writers tie Jesus’ birth back to Old Testament prophecies. And Isaiah foretells the significance of the relationship of God’s people with the God who will dwell with us. Speaking of those who would oppose the LORD, he said, “devise a plan, but it will be thwarted; state a proposal, but it will not stand, for God is with us” (Isaiah 8:10).

For those who have put their trust in Jesus Christ, God is with us through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. In the fulness of time, we are promised that Christ will reign among us. He will dwell with us forevermore. In that regard, the promise of Isaiah, that God is with us, is an “already, but not yet” promise.

The prophetic promise of Isaiah 7:14 was fulfilled during Jesus’ first Advent. We pray that He is already with you even as you look forward with great expectation to His glorious return.

Question 20) The children of Israel found that dwelling in close proximity with God was a formula for inevitable blessing and success. (True or False)

- 20) False.

The children of Israel found that dwelling in close proximity with God was perilous. God’s stipulations for them to maintain cleanliness and holiness compared to other nations were exacting and difficult to maintain. Indeed, the Hebrews soon found that no one could attain the level of perfection required to dwell with the Almighty.

Moses—God’s own hand-picked mediator and intercessor—was not holy enough to enter the tent of meeting when God’s shekinah glory filled the tabernacle. Nadab and

Abihu learned very quickly that even bringing “strange fire” before God’s altar was a capital offense. David—the man after God’s own heart who aspired to dwell in the house of the Lord forever—realized that he was not worthy. Isaiah also expressed an understanding that no man could draw close to God’s perfect holiness.

Later, Israel learned once again that treating the ark of the covenant as a national talisman or good luck charm was offensive to God. Instead of ensuring their victory in battle, their callous disregard for God led to their defeat and the loss of the ark.

Conclusion

We gain hope that even these short answers inspire you to dig deeper in God’s Word.

Stay tuned for future articles that explore some of these same themes and build upon the foundations we’ve laid here.

Through all our writing and outreach, may God be glorified and may the wonderful truth that Jesus is coming soon be proclaimed.

Godspeed!