

# **African Questions Bible Answers**

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## **ABRAHAM**

**Q: Was Abraham an Arab?**

**A:** He had two sons. Ishmael became father of the Arab race. Isaac became father of the Jewish race. Abraham was *pre-Arab*. This is not an important issue of biblical doctrine.

## **ADAM / EVE**

**Q: Does Paul in 1 Timothy 2:14 mean Eve was deceived but Adam was not?**

**A:** When Adam and Eve sinned, Adam knew better and Eve was deceived/tricked by the devil. Since Adam heard the rule not to eat directly from God, he knew better. But Eve probably heard it from Adam, so the devil found Eve easier to trick.

## **ALCOHOL (see DRINKING, DRUNKENNESS)**

**Q: In qualifications of church leadership, 1 Timothy 3 says "not addicted to wine." But in some cultures Christians don't drink any alcohol. Is it a sin?**

**A:** There is a difference between biblical truth and cultural reality. In any culture, Christians need to remember not to damage the opinions and perceptions of others.

## **APOSTLES**

**Q: Please explain if we have apostles and prophets today?**

**A:** Pastors answer people's questions like this: Apostles had to be eyewitnesses to Christ's resurrection. Apostles and prophets were the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20) and received revelation from God (Ephesians 3:3, 5).

If there were prophets today, they would be 100% correct all of the time. And if that's true, we wouldn't need the Bible—which is occurring in many churches. They don't open the Bible; they only let the *man of God* tell what God says.

And if prophets today are NOT always right, then how do we know when they are right or wrong? And if we don't know when they are right or wrong, then is it not dangerous to listen to them at all? In conclusion, either the Bible is sufficient or it is not sufficient. Pastor Steve believes it is totally sufficient for every believer.

There were apostles of the early church. In Acts 14:14, Barnabas is an example. They were *messengers* with NO extra authority or *power*.

People today who speak for edification, encouragement, and consolation might be called prophets, as in 1 Corinthians 14:3. Pastors do this by teaching and preaching the Bible, which is

God's complete revelation. But more important than the title *prophet* is their function. Ephesians 4:12 says they equip the saints and the church becomes mature, which is what pastors do. After our death, when we stand before Christ, He will not ask, "What is your title?" He will ask, "What did you do with your ministry, your stewardship?"

**Q: Can you clarify the "five-fold ministry and difference between apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers in Ephesians 4:11?"**

**A:** Believers should not want to move their *pecking order*, simply to get more money. Preaching is not about *getting cash* or *bigger titles*.

**Q: Romans 16:7 says Junias is called an apostle, and Junias was a woman. Can a woman be an apostle?**

**A:** Scholars are not sure Junias is a woman's name. Scripture says this person was outstanding among the apostles, which could mean the apostles had a high opinion of him or her. This person could have been an apostle of a church, like Barnabas, Silas, and others, which means he or she was only a messenger, not on the same level as Peter and Paul.

**Q: Apostles had to eyewitness the resurrection, but Paul wasn't an eyewitness.**

**A:** Paul witnessed the risen Christ on the road to Damascus.

**Q: There were 12 apostles, then Matthias was chosen to replace Judas. Then Paul became an apostle of Christ. So, were there 13? And if 13, can there be more today? Aren't apostles messengers, and since we're all messengers, we're all apostles?**

**A:** There were two kinds of apostles: Apostles of Christ and apostles of the church. Apostles of Christ did signs and miracles to validate their message that came from God (2 Corinthians 12:12). Apostles (messengers) of the church, like Barnabas, Silas, Andronicus, Junias, and James (2 Corinthians 8:3, Phil 2:25, 1 Corinthians 15:7, Galatians 1:19, etc.) were simply sent to represent the church; they are never seen performing signs or miracles. In 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 tells us there were false apostles in Paul's day. In verse 12:12, Paul said the signs of a TRUE apostle were signs and miracles.

Why do false apostles today try to demonstrate miracle working power, to *prove* that they are a true apostle? Matthew 7:15-21 shows Jesus warning them of false prophets, who claim to perform miracles, cast out demons, and prophesy in Christ's name, but Jesus didn't even *know* them (they were not even saved).

Paul and the other apostles of Christ performed miracles, before our written Bible was complete. That was the way God told everyone, "Listen to these men!" Today, we have the Bible; we don't need miracles to validate His message of truth. Messengers of truth today are pastors and

teachers, who open the Bible to show what it means and how to apply it (1 Timothy 4:13).

**Q: Do we have apostles today? How can I know if I am called to be an apostle?**

**A:** Ephesians 2:20 and Acts 2:42 say the church was founded on teachings of the apostles and prophets. The 12 apostles chosen by Christ were called. The apostles of the church were not called, they were appointed by the church (Acts 13:1-2). This was still the first century, when apostles and prophets were still needed to speak to men. Ephesians 2:20, 3:3, 5 taken together teach that they received direct revelation from God.

They had no authority of their own. They were sent with the authority of the church that was sending them. A key component is in Ephesians 3:5, which shows they received direct revelation from God. There was no Bible at that time, so men served as an inspired Bible of flesh and blood. Another key factor is that they had special abilities to do miracles and signs and wonders: 2 Corinthians 12:12; Acts 2:43. But when the inspired Word of God was completed, there was no longer a need for this inspired office of men inside the developing church. Barnabas and Silas were a second kind of apostle; they were church messengers, nothing more.

Ephesians 4:11 says God gave apostles to the church. The gift is not apostleship. The gift IS the apostle himself. Apostles and prophets were the church's' foundation, and their office was gone by the end of the first century. Today the emphasis is on evangelists, who lead people to Christ and start churches, and pastors, who bring believers to maturity.

**BAPTISM, BAPTISED with HOLY SPIRIT**

**Q: Do you need water to be baptized, and what is *fire baptism* in Matthew 3:11?**

**A:** Yes, baptism requires water. The Greek word means *submerge* or *to dip*. Baptism of the Holy Spirit happens at salvation and places us into the body of Christ, as it says in 1 Corinthians 12:13. *Baptism of fire* is judgment upon those who do not repent and turn to Christ. That is seen clearly by verses before and after Matthew 3:11.

**Q: Which mode of baptism is right?**

**A:** The Greek word baptism means *to dip* or *to immerse*. The early church immersed. When there was a shortage of water, they poured some on the person's head. Around the 12th or 13th century the church began to sprinkle water on people who were sick or weak, when immersion or pouring was not practical.

**Q: When do we actually receive the Holy Spirit?**

**A:** If we try to understand doctrine by reading only the stories in the Gospels and Acts, we will get confused. We need to allow the epistles to *explain* the stories. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 it says



we receive the Spirit when we are saved and placed into the body of Christ.

**Q: What can we say to people claiming believers are supposed to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire?**

**A:** This comes from Matthew 3:11, where John the Baptist said, "I baptize in water for repentance, but one is coming after me who will baptize with the Spirit and with fire." Read it in context; context is always important!

Verse 8 says, "Bring forth fruit of repentance (necessary for salvation)." Verse 10 says, "Every tree that does not bear fruit is cut down and burned." The fire of judgment is the result of not repenting. Then verse 11 says, "Jesus will baptize with fire (judgment)." Verse 12 says, "Jesus will gather the wheat (believers) into the barn and will throw the chaff into unquenchable fire."

"Fire" means judgment, and Jesus will baptize true believers with the Spirit, which places them into the body of Christ. Unrepentant unbelievers he will baptize with fire, which is judgment.

**BELIEVERS, ADOPTED of God / Little gods**

**Q: What does Romans 8:23 mean, when it says we are waiting for adoption as sons of God, and Ephesians says we are already adopted as sons of God?**

**A:** This is the future completion of the adoption plan, our glorification at death. Read the following verses, which say "we wait eagerly for our adoption." Later it says "we wait eagerly for our 'hope'." That hope is "eternal glory." The following verses underscore it.

**Q: Are Christians *little gods*, who are not supposed to worship God? Are we instead to only have fellowship with Him? Some verses say, "...you are gods..."**

**A:** Read the **context** of the Bible passages! Some are about idols. Unfortunately, they are often taught in Africa, and by some US evangelists on TV, as being about believers.

"Tell us what is to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods; do good, or do harm, that we may be dismayed and terrified," Isaiah 41:23 is about idols.

"You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you," Psalm 82:6 is about fallen angels.

Scripture strongly and clearly teaches God's opinion: "You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you . . ." Deuteronomy 6:14.

"But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them..." Deuteronomy 30:17.

"Then this people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them."

Deuteronomy 31:16.

Read also Joshua 24:23; Judges 18:14, 18; 1 Samuel 7:3, 8:8 and other verses.

### **BIBLE (see SCRIPTURE)**

### **BINDING (Demons, Satan)**

**Q: When Jesus tells Peter to “bind and loose” in Matthew 16:19, does it talk about spiritual warfare, or is there another context?**

**A:** Matthew talks about church discipline not spiritual warfare also in chapter 18:18. Since this is the same Bible book, and the same person is speaking, and the chapters close together, we understand the verses must mean the same thing.

### **BISHOPS (see ELDERS)**

### **BLASPHEMY**

**Q: What is unforgivable blasphemy against the Holy Spirit in Matthew 12:31?**

**A:** Read the story: Jesus cast out a demon; Pharisees said it was Beelzebub’s (Satan) power. Jesus said it was the Holy Spirit’s power. This blasphemy attributed the Holy Spirit’s work to Satan.

### **BLESSINGS of GOD**

**Q: The book of Job says God restored Job’s fortune and gave him twice as much as before, and the Lord gave him 10 children. But since he had 10 before why isn't that twice as many, and did all 20 have the same mother?**

**A:** His first ten died physically but were alive spiritually with God, so he did have a total of twice as many. Job's wife had not died, so we assume all 20 had the same mother.

**Q. What does the Bible mean: “Those who bless Abraham (Israel) God will bless?” Do we need to visit Jerusalem for blessing?**

**A:** What does *bless* mean? Is this verse to a nation or to individuals? What if a government is hostile towards Israel and an individual is not? These are questions to help find the right answer. Scripture does not say anything about visiting Jerusalem to receive God's blessing.

**Q. If Jeremiah 29:11 (“I know my plans for you. . . to give you a future and a hope”) is not for Christians to claim, what does it mean?**

**A.** Use the *inductive Bible study method* to answer. Ask: “What does it say?” (NOT: “What do I  
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THINK it says?") Then ask: "What does it mean?" Then ask: "How do I apply it?"

In Jeremiah, who is the speaker? (God) Who does "you" represent? (Judah) What is the context? (Captivity) What is their hope? (To return to Jerusalem) How do we apply it today? (We also have a future and a hope, but our hope is not in this world, not in Jerusalem or any other city, but in the world to come, in the New Jerusalem.)

### **CALLING of GOD, Holy Ground**

**Q: How can an individual understand God's calling?**

**A:** Our primary calling is to be conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:28-30). Be sure you are saved (2 Peter 3:9; 2 Peter 2: 4), Spirit filled (Ephesians 5:18), sanctified (1 Thessalonians 4:3), and submissive (James 4:7). If you have all those qualities, then do what you want (Psalm 37:4), because at that point your desires will be God's desires!

**Q: Some people walk around without shoes, because of Exodus 3:5, when God told Moses to take off his sandals, because he was walking on holy ground. Is that proper?**

**A:** God said this specifically to Moses—not for everyone for all time. If you see a bush that is on fire and isn't being consumed, and if that bush talks to you (like Moses), take off your shoes! (That last statement was meant to be humorous.)

### **CHILDREN**

**Q: Do dead relatives return to tell people what to name their children?**

**A:** In some countries, like Kenya, people believe their ancestors tell them what to name children. If a pregnant African woman tells older clan members about a dream, they may explain the dream's meaning and what she is to name her child based on the dream. "This is how the devil tricks African people and draws them into bondage," one pastor said. Pastor Steve said that Westerners choose names different in each family. Some choose from books, names of relatives, friends, biblical or historical people they admire.

**Q: Is it true that if pastors let their children be involved in church ministry it will bring down the ministry, like Samuel's children who were not ready to follow Samuel as priest/prophet over Israel?**

**A:** The Bible does show children who went astray from godly fathers, like Samuel's boys; Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu; as well as David's son, Absalom. But it is not always true. Timothy

grew up strong and became a pastor. Each is an individual situation. The father or mother is not the most important criteria; it is the child's heart!

**Q: How can Christians raise children in the fear of God?**

**A:** There are biblical principles on parenting and Christian books on parenting focus on this. A few basic principles include:

1. Make rules reasonable. When children break a rule apply appropriate discipline. Don't only keep threatening; follow through on your instructions to them.
2. Ask or tell them to do something once and expect immediate obedience. Explain and train them in this first. If they refuse to respond after the first request, follow up immediately. Don't keep asking, asking, warning, and warning.
3. Don't raise your voice; don't yell. Remember that you are the adult. Give commands quietly. Give discipline quietly. Be self-controlled, patient, and kind.
4. Have fun. See the humorous side of life and family. Kids are going to be kids.
5. Increase their freedom as they grow and mature. Give them freedom to attempt and fail at things; then help, teach, and guide. Listen more.
6. Before answering a child's request, ask, "What did your father (or mother) say?" Watch for them to pit their mother's and father's decisions against each other. They are smart!
7. Help them think. Don't give them all of the solutions. Ask: "What do you think you should do?" Then discuss it.

**Q: Why are pastors' children often so unruly, and what should be done?**

**A:** Remember that all children are children; all children will sin; we all sin. The issue is how does the pastor deal with the disobedient child? Is the child totally out of parental control? Scripture says if a pastor's child is completely out of control, the pastor is disqualified from leading the church at that time says Titus 1:6.

If churches seriously applied qualifications of leadership as 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 instruct, we might find half the pastors need to resign. When a pastor with a bad reputation does not resign he gives the church a bad reputation.

**Q: When children are not behaving, why is the blame heaped on the mother?**

**A:** Before God, the father is ultimately responsible. He is the head of the home. He must see to it that a child is raised in the fear and instruction of the Lord.

**CHRISTIAN LIVING**

**Q: Is there a difference between a natural conscience and a biblical conscience?**

**A:** Not really. We only have one conscience. Before we were believers, we were informed by the world, the flesh, and the devil only. Now as Christians the Word of God shapes the conscience and gives the Holy Spirit something to work with.

**Q. What is a Christian?**

**A:** In Africa 48.4% claim to be Christians, but often it's simply their culture. Many also claim faith in Christ for wrong reasons—safety, health, wealth, protection, etc. Remember that in Matthew 7 Jesus said, "Not everyone who says Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven." That is a warning! It's not enough to only say, "I believe in Jesus!" A Christian understands they are a sinner, separated from God. They agree they need forgiveness and come to Jesus repenting of their sins and accepting His gift of salvation, paid for on the cross. Eternal life is proved by His resurrection from death. They begin a new life learning and following Bible instructions in daily life.

**Q: We are not to kill, but some faiths try to kill us; should we let them kill us?**

**A:** Not all killing is murder. Self-defense under attack is not murder.

**Q: The Bible says to obey the government, but why didn't Peter obey when they said to not preach, or as some countries might say, to not share your faith?**

**A:** Peter chose between obeying the government and obeying God. When believers have to make that choice, they MUST choose to obey God!

**Q: Since people need to prosper, how can we balance standing for truth and meeting everyday needs, like clothes, food, and a job?**

**A:** First, when talking with someone who is poor, sympathize with their economic situation. Then acknowledge the need for *holistic* ministries that meet both physical and spiritual needs. For example, an internet café in Congo helped raise money to buy sewing machines for women. The Sunday focus from the pulpit ministry should always be to preach and teach the Word of God. During the rest of the week, church leaders can work on meeting other needs and get others in the church involved in those ministries. A pastor needs to focus on prayer and the ministry of teaching God's Word, like the apostles did in Acts 6.

**Q: If people feel a pastor does not "build them up," should they leave that church?**

**A:** No. Stay,, unless the pastor is living in sin. If the pastor is doing his best, then believers should try to help the pastor any way they can. Too many people think only about their own needs, instead of the needs of others in the church, including the pastor's needs.

**Q: What should teachers do if some people want to grow in Christ and others do not?**

**A:** Pastors and teachers should *move with the movers* and pray for the others. When an uninterested person changes and becomes a *mover*, then bring them into that group and work with them. (NOTE: A *mover* is a person who wants to grow in Christ spiritually.)

**Q: Why doesn't everyone live to at least 70, when the Old Testament promises it?**

**A:** That was a promise to Israel and it was a general guideline. People lived much longer in those days and some lived shorter. Today some people live longer and some live shorter. Some babies are born dead; some die very young. This was just a general guideline.

## **CHURCH**

**Q: What is the Church?**

**A:** The church is made up of all believers and is also called the body of Christ. The purpose of the church is to glorify God, lead unbelievers to Christ, edify and purify the believers in the church. A local church is involved in spiritual warfare and is responsible to teach what Scripture says about it. A local church is also responsible to keep sin out of the church, by proper use of church discipline (Matthew 18:15-20).

**Q: What is the meaning of the word *church*?**

**A:** Literally, it's from two Greek words 1) to call and 2) out. Therefore, "The ones who have been called out." Another ancient usage of the word was "assembly."

**Q: Who is supposed to care for the church?**

**A:** Look at Acts 20. Elders are to *shepherd* God's flock. Elders are New Testament pastors. It says the same thing in 1 Peter 5:1-2.

When we consider different forms of church government, sometimes a pastor is the only *leader* and everyone else supports his vision. Another form says that all elders are equal, and all have equal authority. Yet another form places a bishop over churches. Some denominations let each church exercise a certain amount of autonomy and independence. Scripture doesn't support only one way.

**Q: What's the difference between church and ministry?**

**A:** Ministries are the way the church fulfills its purpose. The church is to glorify God, lead the unsaved to Christ, and edify and purify itself. Ministries help the church accomplish those purposes.

**Q: How do we divide work in the church, as in Acts 6?**

**A:** The 12 apostles had the people choose seven men to take care of the Hellenistic widows, so the apostles could devote themselves to the ministry of the Word and prayer. Today, the believers are to carry out the work on the ministry (Eph 4:12), and pastors are to function as the apostles did, by devoting themselves to the ministry of the Word of God and prayer. Another way to look at

it is that the pastors take care of the spiritual needs and the others take care of the physical needs.

**Q: Can you discuss the three forms of church government: Congregational rule, elder rule, and the Presbyterian form?**

**A:** Pastor Steve prefers elder rule, but the form of government is not as important as the maturity of the church. If carnal people in the church change the form of government, there are still carnal people in the church who need to become spiritually more mature and that is more important than the form of church government.

**Q: Why should we always ask for a testimony of someone who is joining our church?**

**A:** Without such a practice you might be allowing unbelievers to join the church and cause problems. Asking everyone who joins your church to give a testimony of how they came to know Christ prevents this from happening.

**Q: Where is the line between spiritual and numerical growth in a church?**

**A:** There is not any necessary connection. If people are being taught and are sharing the Gospel of salvation with friends, and if their friends are won to Christ, then a church should grow. There is no guarantee. Sometimes people go to other churches because of children's/teenager's programs, music, or other things. A pastor is to study and teach, as unto the Lord, and leave the results to God.

**Q: How did Pastor Steve feel, when his church was declining?**

**A:** Pastor Steve did what God says a pastor should in the Bible but his church still declined in size. He continued to check his heart and conscience. As long as they were clean, he figured God was on his side and had a plan. He relied on 1 Corinthians 4:1-5 (especially verse 5: "God will reveal the motives of men's hearts...") and 1 Corinthians 3.

He thought about Paul's analogy of building with wood, hay, and straw; or gold, silver, and precious stones. Which is more valuable? The answer is obvious. The point is that it's not the *size* of your ministry that God looks at. He watches and will reward the quality of ministry and the motives in our hearts.

## **COMMUNION**

### **Q: What beverage is proper to use in the Lord's Supper?**

**A:** Wine and *the fruit of the vine* are in the New Testament. But what if you are in a village and don't have wine or grapes? Will you ignore communion? Will you forsake *remembering* the Lord's death? What about protection of a former alcoholic? Will you serve him alcohol? The more important thing is to remember and honor Christ's saving work on the cross.

## **CREATION**

### **Q: How many years were there from Creation to the New Testament?**

**A:** There are *old earth* theologians and *young earth* theologians. Pastor Steve is a *young earth* theologian and believes that creation was only 6,000-10,000 years ago and takes Genesis 1 very literally. If a pastor doesn't consider Genesis 1 literally, how can he believe Genesis 3 (sin), Genesis 6 (universal flood), etc. is literal? If believers don't believe God's Word from Genesis 1:1 is literal, then at what point do they begin taking the Bible literally? Why believe it is literal at a future point but not Genesis 1?

## **DAY of the LORD**

### **Q: When did the day of the Lord start?**

**A:** It started when Jesus came the first time and will end when He comes the second time. Joel 2:30-32 speaks of signs to come at Jesus' Second Coming, the end of the *last days*.

## **DEACONS/DEACONESS**

### **Q: Are deacons no longer part of the church, like apostles and prophets?**

**A:** Ephesians 2:20, 3:3, 5 explains the original role of the offices of apostles and prophets. They are no longer necessary after the New Testament was completed. Scripture doesn't say that about deacons, who still function in the church today. Barnabas and Silas were a second kind of apostle; they were church messengers, nothing more.

### **Q: One qualification of leadership is to have children under control. What ages?**

**A:** All ages, understanding that a noisy baby or toddler is not the same as a disobedient or rebellious older child.

### **Q: What is the difference between a deacon and an elder?**

**A:** An elder must be able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2), rule, and preach. A deacon's role is serving the



church's needs so the pastor can devote himself to prayer and the Word (Acts 6:1-4). Basically, pastors care for spiritual needs and deacons take care of physical needs. In this case, apostles were the teachers, before elders were appointed in churches.

**Q: Can we have deaconesses?**

**A:** It depends upon the way you interpret 1 Timothy 3:11. Women are mentioned in the middle of the qualifications for deacons. So many believe these women were wives of deacons, others

believe they were female deacons (deaconesses).

**DEEDS of FLESH**

**Q: Does Galatians 5:19 talk about the deeds of the flesh or the sinful nature?**

**A:** The Greek word is *flesh*. The so-called sin nature (which made us a child of God's wrath, according to Ephesians 2:3), was replaced by the divine nature, at the time of our spiritual birth (2 Peter 1:4). What remains is the flesh (our humanness), which wars against our spirit, trying to keep us from obeying the Lord, which the true believer desires to do.

**DEMONS / DEVIL (Satan)**

**Q: Can demons possess a believer?**

**A:** The Bible teaches that a true believer CANNOT be demon possessed and Satan needs God's permission to hassle any believer. Some Africans are taught that if a believer thinks they are being controlled or overpowered by the devil, it is a sin problem and they need to repent. Scripture teaches believers to *stand firm and resist* in James, NOT to attack the devil. Prayer is always asking God to do the work.

**Q: Why does God allow Satan to attack Christians?**

**A:** We must remember that ALL things are to bring glory to God, even suffering. No matter what happens, it will glorify God if we respond in a godly way. Specifically, 2 Corinthians 12 shows Paul's experience: God gave him a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble, to keep him seeking God, to remind him of God's grace, and to cause him to rely on God's power to endure. Job's story proves Job worshipped God, because God is God, not for wealth, health, or prosperity from God.

**Q: Do we need to be afraid of demons at night?**

**A:** The evil one cannot touch a believer in the day or at night. Read 1 John 5:18.

**Q: Will all believers cast out demons, like Paul in Acts and in Mark 16:17?**

**A:** We must understand why Paul was different. He was an apostle, and 2 Corinthians 12:12 states that apostles were given the ability to perform signs, miracles, and wonders. They were God's special messengers and these *signs* validated what they wrote.

**Q: Can you explain binding and rebuking?**

**A:** Binding and loosing are discussed in Matthew 18:18. Binding and loosing have nothing to do

with the devil. They are talking about church discipline.

The Bible context is church discipline, not spiritual warfare. John 20:23 shows a parallel passage about retaining or forgiving sin.

Binding and loosing was a rabbinical tradition, when Rabbis said to an unrepentant sinner, "Your sins are bound to you." They said to one who repents, "Your sins are forgiven/released/loosed from you."

Note also, Matthew 18:20 says, "Where two or three gather . . ." In context, this is about church discipline; it is not a prayer meeting. When Jesus talks about having two or three witnesses involved, the context is church discipline.

Nowhere in Scripture do we see a person rebuking a demon or the devil except false teachers in 2 Peter 2:10-12. If a devil is cast out of an unbeliever, and if people do NOT lead the unbeliever to Christ, then the demon will come back and may bring others with him (see Luke 11:24-26).

**Q: If we don't need to rebuke the devil, when he is active in a Christian's life, don't people pray for healing in the USA? (Yes, they do.) Are we not rebuking the devil to pray for healing? Doesn't the devil cause all bad things, including sickness?**

**A:** In Revelation 20:2 it shows that during the millennial kingdom, Satan will be bound. But, during the kingdom period, sin and evil will increase, without Satan on earth. Revelation 20:7 says Satan will be let loose to organize one last assault against Jesus.

Unlike traditional views in Africa, all good does not come from God and all evil from the devil and evil spirits. Isaiah 45:5-7 quotes God: "I create light and darkness, and blessing and calamity." God is sovereign over all of it!

**Q: Is it good for pastors to try to exorcise demons by beating people with a stick?**

**A:** Scripture gives no examples of using a stick in any exorcism. Evil spirits were always *cast out* by prayer. If a person is truly born again, then they do not have a demon—no matter what they say.

If they are in sin, they need to repent, not be delivered from a demon. Revelation chapters 2-3

show several churches with Satan's presence. They were always told to repent, NOT to cast out a demon.

But if a person is not a believer and truly has a demon, the only permanent deliverance is by salvation in Christ. Scripture says if a demon leaves, it might return to an unbeliever and bring more demons. Salvation is the only guarantee that a demon cannot return to indwell someone.

**Q: What is the difference between binding and casting out?**

**A:** Binding has nothing to do with the devil. The Matthew 18:18 context is church discipline.

**Q: If Satan is God's instrument, why does God use evil to hurt Christians?**

**A:** In Job, Satan said that Job served God simply because God was good to him. So God let Satan take everything from Job. Chapter 2 says Job's health suffered. Yet, he never stopped worshiping. Why? God showed Satan that Job worshiped because He is God, NOT because of what God gave.

Paul's testimony in 2 Corinthians 12, said he had a thorn in the flesh and prayed three times, but God didn't remove it. God used the *thorn* to keep Paul humble, not exalting himself. It brought Paul to pray, to experience God's grace, God's strength, and to teach Paul to rely only on Him.

**Q: Why should we not rebuke Satan?**

**A:** Our rebuking Satan has no purpose and is not biblical teaching. In 2 Peter 2:1-11, it states that false prophets (verse 1) claimed to have power to rebuke, when even God's angels would not dare try it. Read also Jude 9.

**Q: If we are not to fight with demons, how do we understand Mark 16:9?**

**A:** First, these verses are not in manuscripts closest to when Mark wrote the original. They showed up 700-800 years later. And since we don't have the original, we can't confirm it, but they are not in the earliest copies.

Note also, those verses say: "You will drink deadly poison and not die . . ." Do you want to try that also? To claim that all believers should cast out demons is to also agree they all can drink poison and live. Also consider, if a believer says they have bound Satan, then someone keeps letting him loose, either they didn't bind him or they didn't do a good job!

**Q: What is the difference between a fallen angel, a demon, and an ancestor spirit? And in the traditional African view, are all spirits ancestors?**

**A:** In the beginning, God created everything, including angels. One-third of the angels rebelled and followed the devil. They became *demons*. There is no difference between fallen angels and demons. They were created beings under God's ultimate authority.

The Bible does not mention ancestor spirits; it mentions *familiar spirits*, which are demons. An Old Testament story shows King Saul asking the witch of Endor to call the spirit of Samuel, but the witch was frightened when Samuel actually arrived. The witch was expecting only a *familiar spirit*.

**Q: Can you explain people who attend church every week and claim to have an evil spirit? Can pastors rebuke the devil and chase demons away?**

**A:** Nowhere in the Bible does God tell anyone to rebuke a demon or the devil. In Jude 9 the archangel Michael does not even bring judgment against Satan.

In 2 Peter 2:10-11, false teachers dare to rebuke angelic majesties, even though angels, who are more powerful, do not do so.

The Bible teaches that a saved believer cannot be indwelt by a demon. Therefore, if a person is actually possessed or indwelt by a demon, that person is not a believer in Jesus. They need to have the Gospel shared with them.

**Q: Does Mark 16:17 say we will all cast out demons?**

**A:** This needs to be a long answer. Mark 16 verses 9-20 are disputed, because they were not in any manuscript until about 800 AD. Various copies of Mark are dated 50 AD, 100 AD, 300 AD, 500 AD, 700 AD, and 800 AD. Men had to write copies by hand—century after century. So the first point is: all the centuries of copies didn't have verses 9-20, until 800 AD, when those verses finally showed up. So, which manuscripts do you think are more trustworthy? Probably the ones closer to Mark's original copy and they do not have these verses.

Second point is: If the verses do belong in the Bible, note that everything listed did take place in the book of Acts also—except drinking poison and living to tell about it.

Therefore, to explain this to churches and Muslims who say it proves the Bible has errors, simply explain, "These few verses, 9-20, do not belong in the Bible."

We say our English or Swahili Bibles are "the Word of God," but actually they aren't. The original manuscripts are the actual Word of God and we do have accurate copies of the originals to compare.

**Q: If a Christian cannot be demon possessed, why do some pastors say believers can be and give Bible examples, (Luke 13:16), when a daughter of Abraham was delivered from a demon? Are pastors right to use Lazarus' resurrection as an example, when Jesus told disciples (John 11:44) to "unbind him and let him go."**

**A:** The woman was a Hebrew and a natural descendant of Abraham. Christians are spiritual children of Abraham. In John 11:44, Jesus told the disciples to take grave clothes off Lazarus, after his resurrection. It had nothing to do with being set free from a demon.

**Q: Please explain, how does God use Satan and demons for His purposes?**

**A:** One example is Job, when Satan got God's approval to torment Job to test his faith. Another example is Paul, when God gave him a thorn in the flesh, which referred to a messenger of Satan. It was given to Paul, to keep him humble and relying on God.

**Q: Does a pastor need to *bind and cast out the devil and demons to prove to the congregation that he is powerful, so people stay at his church?***

**A:** Only God has power to cast out. Believers are to pray to Him to do it. A pastor needs to teach the church Scripture that shows that his job is to study and teach.

**Q: If demons are throwing rocks at a non-Christian family, what should they do?**

**A:** Duck! (This was said as a joke but the following was not.) The Bible teaches that demons cannot touch a believer unless God gives direct permission (see Job, Paul, and Peter). Non-Christians should trust in Jesus for safety.

**Q: When church members call and say a demon is tormenting them, what do you do?**

**A:** Revelation 2-3 says if they are Christians, then they should repent, because they are allowing the demon to torment them. If they are a non-Christian, tell them to give their life to Christ. That is the only permanent deliverance.

**Q: If pastors do not rebuke the devil but rebuke people living in sin, who rebukes pastors?**

**A:** Church discipline handles this. 1 Timothy 5:19-20 says, if there are two witnesses to the pastor's ongoing sin, they are to speak with him. If he refuses to repent, he is to be rebuked in front of the church.

**Q: Luke 10 says: "You will have authority over the demons . . ." but we learned we are not to rebuke, bind, or cast out demons. Can you please explain?**

**A:** Check the context. Jesus was speaking to 70 specially chosen representatives. Be careful NOT to take specific doctrines from the Bible books of history. The stories only tell us what happened then. The Epistles explain what was happening in those historical books. Now, we need to study the Epistles, to learn what the standards are for our day.

For example, Jesus said in John 13, after washing the disciples' feet, "I have given you an example. Go and do the same for one another." Yet we do not wash feet in churches. Why not? Because it is not mentioned any place in any of the epistles. Many people want authority over demons, because it is mentioned in Luke 10, but they do not pay attention to Jesus' remark to wash each other's feet. The principle is that history books tell us what happened. The Epistles explain what was happening then and what the norm is now for us today.

**Q: What is included in resisting the devil?**

**A:** It's an act of the will that becomes easier, when we are constantly in the Word of God, hiding it in our heart (Psalm 119:9-11). It requires us to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16). Only the Scripture and the Spirit, working hand in hand, can empower us to resist the devil.

**Q: James 4:7: *resist the devil; he will flee.* Our translation says *fight*. Which is right?**

**A:** The word in Greek is clearly *resist*. Sometimes translators rely more on tradition than original texts. And many African traditions focus on fighting with the devil and spirits. But the Christian church is never told in Scripture to attack; we are to *stand firm and resist* (See Ephesians 6).

**Q: Can you explain casting out demons in Mark 16:17?**

**A:** If you read verse 17 about “casting out demons and speaking in tongues,” you also need to include verse 18, about “handling snakes and drinking poison.”

Second: Strong evidence shows these two verses were not in Mark's original writings; they were not in any early copies. Someone added those 800 years later! Pastors need to find other New Testament verses that teach similar things. But no other verses say that all believers are to cast our demons.

Third: Even if they had been in Mark's gospel, all the things listed happened to the apostles in Acts except drinking poison. The apostles' miracle-working powers authenticated their authority.

**Q: Can you explain spiritual warfare and a *prayer of deliverance*?**

**A:** A Christian cannot be demon possessed and therefore will not need to be *delivered*. However, a demon can cause a Christian problems, but that is not the same thing. A non-Christian can be demon possessed, but the only permanent deliverance is salvation, so the unsaved person needs to be led to trust in Christ! A demon might need to be removed first so the person can clearly hear and respond to the Gospel. But even if a demon leaves, it can return, if they are not led to Christ (Luke 11:24-26).

**Q: If a person with a demon falls down in front of us, what should we do, if we are not supposed to rebuke the demon?**

**A:** Christians cannot be demon possessed. If a non-Christian is possessed, you need to lead the person to Christ or the demon will come back; they need to become a believer if they hope to be permanently delivered. Early churches were tormented by demons.

**Q: What about Mark 16:19? It says, “one sign that will follow those who believe is that they will cast out demons.”**

**A:** Verses 9-20 do not appear in earlier manuscripts and are questionable and disputed. They do

not justify a belief that every believer is supposed to do supernatural things.

**Q: Can ALL believers cast out demons (Mark 16:17, Acts), as Paul cast out a demon?**

**A:** Paul was different; he was an apostle and 2 Corinthians 12:12 says apostles were given the ability to perform signs, miracles, and wonders. They were God's special messengers, and these *signs* validated what they were writing.

**Q: If no other verses besides Mark 16 tell us all Christians should be active in casting out demons, explain Luke 10:19 (70 others got power over demons and to tread on serpents)? Also, why does John 14:12 say, "You will do greater works than Jesus" and 1 Corinthians 12 talks of gifts of healing, miracles, prophecy?**

**A:** In Luke 10:19, look at the context! Verse one says "to 70 others." This implies there were people *before* these 70. Who? The apostles! Now, those same powers were given to 70 more—but it never says these powers were given to *all* believers.

In John 14:12, did the apostles do greater miracles than Jesus? Jesus healed the sick, and the apostles healed the sick. Jesus raised the dead, and a couple of times the apostles raised the dead. But by the end of Paul's ministry, he was *not able* to heal Timothy of his stomach problems (1 Timothy 5:23) or Trophimus of his sickness (2 Timothy 4:20).

So it doesn't make sense that we will be able to *do greater* miraculous works than Jesus, if the first apostles couldn't. And what are *greater works*? In a phrase, the *greater work* is spreading the Gospel! Jesus was limited to Jerusalem, Judah, and Galilee. Beginning with the apostles, the Gospel has since then been taken around the world.

Back to Mark 16:17-18, "These signs will follow those who have believed." These verses are questionable, because they were not in the earliest copies of Mark's gospel. Pastors need to find more than one verse that agrees with "these things would follow ALL who believe," but they don't exist. No other verses say that "all believers should cast out demons, drink deadly poison and survive, speak in other tongues, or handle deadly snakes."

**Q: If God is sovereign, why would He allow anyone to add verses to Mark's gospel, 800 years after Mark wrote it?**

**A:** We do not know. We do know God is sovereign. If He allowed it, ask Him why.

**Q: Satan was in God's presence in Job 1:6, yet God is absolutely holy and sin cannot survive in His presence. Why did God allow Satan into His presence?**

**A:** God is God; He can do what He wants, when He wants, including making exceptions to His rules. God is everywhere. None of us *deserve* to live but we live by His grace. The Bible teaches there are different rules for humans created in the image of God, than for angels, who are not.

**Q: Why are believers not to cast out demons today?**

**A:** The authority to cast a demon out of an unbeliever rests with God. Christians today are not instructed in Scripture to cast out the demon; we are told to pray for God to remove the demon. In 2 Peter 2:10-11, false prophets are said to be supposedly rebuking demons and Satan, but God's powerful angels did not! Also read Jude 9.

**Q: If a believer is being tormented by the devil, they need only to repent. But what if God wants to use the devil in that person's life?**

**A:** An excellent point to clarify: If a Christian has been drawn into sin by the devil, then the believer needs to repent. Job was tormented by the devil, but he never sinned. That was different. God was *using* the devil in that case.

**Q: Jesus cast out demons and John 14:12 says "we will do even greater works." Does that mean we will cast out demons?**

**A:** Who thinks we can actually do greater works than Jesus did? Read the next few verses. Jesus is talking about how we will accomplish greater things as He answers our prayers. It is not us who will do it, but Jesus working in answer to our prayers.

**Q: Mark 16:17 says those who follow Jesus will cast out demons. True?**

**A:** These verses were not in copies of Mark's gospel until the 9th century. Therefore, scholars question if these verses were written by Mark or added later. These verses are too weak to prove that all believers are to cast out demons.

Also note: Everyone wants to talk about that passage's "casting out demons," "speaking in tongues," and "healing the sick." But people skip the section about "drinking poison and not being affected." Any volunteers to prove that verse is inspired by God?

**Q: What is the difference between a demon and an evil spirit?**

**A:** There is no difference. Remember, demons are angels who rebelled against God. And Satan is only an angel; he leads other angels. God is sovereign over all angels, good and bad.

## **DIE/DEATH**

**Q: In Judges 13 (God's holiness lecture) Manoah said they will die, because they had seen the Lord. Why did he say that?**

**A:** Manoah understood that God is a holy God and sin cannot exist in God's holy presence. Manoah knew he and his wife were sinful; they expected to die since they had been in the presence of God (i.e. the Angel of the Lord, who is Jesus in the Old Testament).



## **DISCIPLINE**

**Q: Should pastors apply church discipline differently, depending upon who it is? Should elders or relatives get different treatment?**

**A:** Because of this inconsistency, many are leaving African churches. This should not occur. Discipline should be applied equally to all. A pastor is to apply the principles biblically.

**Q: What happens to a person under church discipline who dies before it is lifted?**

**A:** A true believer goes to heaven. But if they were unwilling to repent of the sin, they might not be a believer, even if they say so. A non-Christian goes to hell, judged for their sins.

**Q: Pastor Steve said we are to help a repentant person be restored but the Bible says to rebuke them publicly. How do we do both?**

**A:** In 1 Timothy 5:20 it says to rebuke an elder publically, if he continues in sin. This is after two or three witnesses go speak with him. The same procedure is in Matthew 18, but it bypasses only one person going, which protects the pastor or elder from a single person who has an agenda against the leader making a false accusation.

In 1 Corinthians 5:11 it says to not have fellowship with a *so-called believer* who is living in sin. This is meant to remove the person from Christian fellowship, so they will become hungry for it again and repent of their sin. If the person is a non-Christian they should be separated from Christian fellowship also, until they repent and believe.

**Q: If a person under church discipline says he repented, do we always believe him?**

**A:** Yes, but have him in a discipleship/accountability relationship. Watch his life, and see if he brings forth fruit, as he would with repentance, shown in Matthew 3:8.

**Q: Do we discipline any believer who is struggling with a sin, like Paul in Romans 7?**

**A:** No, church discipline is only for those who are NOT dealing with sin in their lives, who are wandering into sin and do not appear to be trying to deal with it. Galatians 6:1 does encourage us to always help each other live a holy life.

**Q: What do we do if someone under church discipline goes to another church?**

**A:** Your responsibility as pastor ends. You can tell the other pastor the situation, but if he chooses to ignore the fact that his new church member is under discipline it becomes his issue before God.

**Q: Concerning church discipline, "light cannot have fellowship with darkness." .. yet, in 1**

**Samuel 16, God gave Saul an evil spirit. Isn't God having fellowship with darkness?**

**A:** Relationship is not fellowship. A master's relationship with a slave doesn't mean they have fellowship. God had a demon torment Saul, but it doesn't mean God and demons have fellowship.

**Q: Matthew 18:20 says where two or three are gathered, Christ is there. Many Christians believe this talks about prayer; others say it's church discipline. Can you explain?**

**A:** This is a simple matter of context. Everything from verse 15 in Matthew 18 talks about church discipline; it's not a prayer meeting. Jesus mentions two or three witnesses earlier in the passage. In verse 19 he talks about two or three agreeing. Verse 20 speaks of two or three gathering. In all cases, this section refers to two or three witnesses who are involved in the *ministry of church discipline*.

**Q: Can you explain 1 Corinthians 5:4-5 concerning church discipline? Verses talk about a destruction of someone's flesh, but their spirit saved.**

**A:** Destruction of his flesh speaks of God's chastening or disciplining the man's body, which may lead to sickness or even death. But there is a better chance that the man will ultimately be saved spiritually under these conditions, as opposed to letting him remain in his original sinful condition and not be confronted.

**Q: We know church discipline and the process to follow. Do you follow the same process if the person is a new Christian or a mature Christian?**

**A:** Yes, if the person who is sinning is a new Christian, they will be happy you are helping them understand that what they are doing is not biblical or not pleasing God. The same is true with a mature Christian. Confusion comes when we see church discipline used as something harsh and severely confrontive. But it isn't meant to be that way. It is meant to be loving, kind, patient, and gentle (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

**Q. A church discipline example: A single man got a young woman pregnant outside of wedlock. They were brought before the church to let the church know. The couple confessed their sin to God and were forgiven. The church needed to forgive them also. If it was a pastor, must he resign?**

**A:** If the man was a pastor or any church leader, then he disqualified himself to lead, even though he confessed, because his life is no longer *above reproach* (1 Timothy 3:2).

**Q: What does Paul mean in 1 Timothy 1:18-19, when he turned two men over to Satan, to teach them not to blaspheme?**

**A:** It is church discipline. These men were unrepentant. They were to be treated like unbelievers and not allowed Christian fellowship, similar to 1 Corinthians 5:5. These men would not be under the spiritual protection that comes from being deeply involved in a spiritual community (a church). As a result, they would become miserable, left to the world and the God-allowed works of Satan in their lives.

**Q: If someone kills a person, then confesses to the pastor and repents, should he also repent publicly?**

**A:** This is not only a sin, it's a crime. US pastors are required to report it to the police or they will be charged with covering it up.

**Q: Two girls in my church are pregnant but they are not married. What should I do?**

**A:** If they are not saved, lead them to Christ. If they are saved, find out if they are repentant of their sin. If they repent, then leave them alone. If they do not, then confront them. Explain why and how they need to repent—with kindness and gentleness.

## **DISCIPLESHIP**

**Q: Is it not always good to bring evangelists who say 100,000 come to Christ?**

**A:** Months later, where are the converts? What does Scripture say about concentrating on discipleship instead (Matt 28:18-19)? Pastors are to study and teach (1 Tim 5:17; 2 Tim 2:15). Read verses in that section.

## **DIVINATION**

**Q: Can you explain Genesis 44:15, when Joseph mentioned practicing divination and in the same chapter he put his silver cup in a brother's pack to accuse them of stealing? Did Joseph practice divination, forbidden by God?**

**A:** It seems Joseph was trying to scare them, so they would bring his younger brother Benjamin to see him. He talked like a lord of Egypt and threatened them, but he didn't practice divination.

## **DREAMS**

**Q: How can we know apostles or prophets dreams are true today?**

**A:** God is capable of communicating through dreams, visions, or other people today. Yet in Colossians 2:18 He also makes it clear that we are NOT to rely on those.

One man said he is an apostle and talked several minutes about his dreams, and how *prophets* from two countries validated the dreams. He believes he is supposed to preach around the world and seeks financial support to go. How does he know the *validating prophets* spoke from God? How does he know they are not speaking falsely?

“Because my dreams said the same thing, and the other prophets told me the same thing,” the *apostle* said.

Pastor Steve warned him to be careful of possibly abusing God’s direction to say these things. Who can say his dreams are not from God? Unfortunately, they cannot be confirmed or discounted by human judgment, but only the Holy God knows.

**Q: Does God give dreams (visions or revelations) about the future?**

**A:** The purpose of a *revelation* in the New Testament era, as Scriptures were being written and assembled, was to let people hear from God until His Word was completed. So God set apart

apostles and prophets and gave them direct revelation, sometimes by visions or dreams or a direct word from God. Their teaching, then, became the foundation of the early church.

Read Ephesians 2:20 and 3:1-5. God also gave apostles the ability to do miracles to validate their message that had been given directly from God (2 Corinthians 12:12). 2 Corinthians 11:13 discusses false apostles who claimed to have visions and revelations from God.

**Q: Can God speak to people in a dream today? Is that revelation?**

**A:** Answer: God can do anything He wants to do. But be warned—do not seek answers in dreams and keep your dreams to yourself. Don’t involve others. Is it God talking or simply your own thoughts? How do you know? There are a lot of factors that lead to dreams we have. Don’t jump to conclusions and tell everyone.

**Q: What happens when believers rely on dreams?**

**A:** Here is a warning: If pastors rely on visions, dreams, and revelations to get instructions from God and directions to lead the church, their people will also begin to rely on visions and revelations. False teachers will easily come along and say, “I had a vision, or a revelation. God told me ‘this’, so follow me.” And the people will have NO way to know the truth from error. How will they know who is telling the truth or who is lying?

Christians can become dependent upon the *dreamer*, the *receiver of the revelation*, the one who has *visions*, rather than developing his own relationship with God through His mighty Word. People will stop reading and studying their own revelation from God—their Bible—which sets us free (John 8:32), sanctifies us (John 17:17), and causes us to grow (1 Peter 2:2)!

**Q: If apostles and prophets vanished by the end of the first century, what about Joel 2:38, ”**

**.. in the last days your sons and daughters will dream dreams and prophesy?"**

**A:** *The Last Days* started when Jesus came to earth (Heb 1:2). Joel 2:39 continues with, "... signs in the sky and the moon turning red and the sun becoming dark."

When the verse says "YOUR sons and daughters," it refers to Israel, concerning the time right before Jesus returns. Acts 2 mentions these verses also, to explain what was happening on the day of Pentecost, when the church was formed. The other things will happen when Christ returns a second time. Verse 31b speaks of "the awesome day of the Lord," which is His return.

In Acts 2, Peter quotes Joel about the dreams, prophesying, and visions. Acts describes events that will take place during the last days, which began when Christ was born and will last until he returns again. Those kinds of miracles decreased back then but they will increase again shortly before the Lord returns.

**Q: What is the key to understanding Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17?**

**A:** These verses don't prove prophesying, visions, and dreams are expected today. The key is the importance of *context*. Who is the audience when it says "your sons and daughters?"

Joel 1:2 makes it clear the audience is the land's inhabitants, Israelites, Jewish people. So Joel 2:28-32 is a promise to the nation of Israel.

In Acts 2:14, 22 Peter makes it clear he talks to the Jews. Acts 2:16 says: "This is what Joel wrote about." "This" refers to what was happening at Pentecost. But that only takes care of Joel 2:28-29. Verses 30-31 speak of signs to come at the Second Coming of Jesus, which marks the end of the last days. Again, it's a reference to Jews and their acceptance of their Messiah (Joel 2:32).

**Q: What if the African understanding of dreams, revelations, visions is different?**

**A:** Some people say, "I had a dream about starting a church, so I will do it." Or, "I had a revelation to start a church, so I will start one." That is an ongoing pattern in Africa.

People search for direction from God by dreams, revelations, and visions. They might rely on their own experience, or they might consult other people who say they have these experiences. This creates an environment where people everywhere claim to have dreams, revelations, and visions about the future. We always need to ask: What was the purpose of *revelation* in the New Testament?

Scriptures were being written and assembled for years but until they were completed people needed to hear directly from God. So He set apart apostles and prophets and gave them direct revelation, sometimes in visions and dreams or simply in words. This was during the foundation of the early church as Ephesians 2:20 and 3:1-5 explain. However, when the Scriptures were completed, God no longer needed to give direct revelation, because He had all his revelation recorded.

Remember that 2 Timothy 3:17 says Scripture makes the pastor adequate and equipped for every good work. It does not say visions, dreams, and revelations make him ready. Also, in 2 Corinthians chapters 12 Paul records his vision of heaven but says, “. . . boasting is necessary but not profitable,” unlike many false apostles in Corinth.

**Q: How do we know which people are telling the truth about a dream or vision?**

**A:** In Colossians 2:18 Paul warns people not to rely on visions rather than God’s Word and not to *be inflated (proud) without cause*. Imposters will claim to have a dream, vision, or revelation to mislead people. Jesus warned about this in Matthew 7:15-22. Jude 8 talks about false teachers also.

If you believe God spoke in a dream and told you to go to Ethiopia, then go. But keep it to yourself. Do not try to convince someone else that God gave *you* a vision or a dream about what that *other* person should do. Do we believe *everyone* who says God spoke to them in a dream? No.

**Q: How can we answer people who say God has NOT put everything in the Bible; He speaks today in dreams and visions?**

**A:** Jude 3 says the faith (Scripture) was handed down once and for all. Revelation is closed. Colossians 2:18 warned the believers that some (false teachers) will try to cheat them out of their spiritual prize (rewards) by taking a stand on visions they have seen.

From Bible times until now, false teachers have claimed personal revelations, visions, dreams to try to place themselves in authority and to try to influence people to follow them. Scripture alone does not allow them to exalt themselves, so they have to claim a *special connection with God* to try to set themselves apart.

Ask that person, “How can I know you really had that dream or revelation?” Ask them, “Should we believe every person who claims to have a vision or revelation? If not, why should we believe you and not others? What makes you special?”

**Q: Can we believe prosperity pastors’ dreams, like we did of mediums or witches?**

**A:** No. Some cities and countries are overrun by prosperity-preaching pastors, and pastors claiming dreams, visions, and revelations. People want to know about the future and think their African traditional worldview and religions can give more than the Bible.

Instead of church attenders—not all are Christians—seeking a diviner or medium to consult spirits about the future, as in the past, they might now ask a local prophet or their pastor. Some pastors use a form of witchcraft to basically enslave the people. He might say they have a demon and he needs to cast it out, or he must pray so they would know their future. He might say he’s had a vision that revealed their future. These tricks keep people coming back to him.

**DRINKING / DRUNKENNESS (alcohol)**

**Q: When Jesus turned water into wine in John 2 was it not real wine since Scripture says “a drunkard will not inherit the kingdom of God?”**

**A:** Notice that the verse speaks of a *drunkard* not simply a drinker. Some cultures look down on all alcohol and believers need to take that into account. The Bible says, “. . . don't get drunk with wine . . . (Ephesians 5:18)” but it never says all alcohol is wrong.

**Q: The Bible doesn't say to not drink alcohol, but our culture says no. Who is right?**

**A:** The Bible says getting drunk is wrong but doesn't forbid all drinking. If all drinking of alcohol is wrong in your culture, do not compromise Scripture; be sensitive to your culture.

**Q: Qualifications for leadership say a pastor is not to be a drunkard. What about other church people? Can they drink alcohol at all?**

**A:** Ephesians 5:18 says we should not get *drunk* with wine. Always go back to what the Bible says. It is important what culture and tradition show to unbelievers but Scripture may state differently. Some recovering alcoholics cannot even have one small taste of *cooking wine* since it can cause some recovering alcoholics to be drunk again. And some believers don't drink, because they don't want to make anyone stumble. But Scripture only forbids being *drunk*.

## **ELDERS**

**Q: How do we choose completely qualified elders according to 1 Timothy 3:1-7?**

**A:** Understand how to choose elders. What is their role? How does it differ from a deacon? Do you elect or appoint them? How many do you need? What is their job description? How many were enough? How many were too many? If you have 75 qualified men will you make them all elders? Are more, better? Are fewer better?

Be warned to not put men in leadership because they have money or influence in town. If they are new at church, test them with small tasks, like sweeping floors and putting chairs away. Luke 16:12-14 gives three tests of faithfulness: How do they handle small tasks, money, and the possessions of others?

In Acts 6 the apostles were burdened to care for the Hellenistic Jewish widows so people selected seven to care for widows. Now the apostles could focus on prayer and ministry of God's Word. Elders take care of spiritual needs and deacons take care of the physical needs.

**Q: One qualification for church leadership is a pastor is to be the “husband of one wife.” If so, can single men be elected as elder?**

**A:** The phrase in 1 Timothy 2:2 is the pastor is to be a *one woman man* and that applies to a single man as well as a married man.

**Q: If a New Testament elder/pastor/bishop are the same, who has more authority?**

**A:** The book of Acts ends before 70 AD. There were no denominations then so all churches were independent and had independent leaders. Therefore, pastors/elders/bishops were all the same guy. A few hundred years later churches began to organize and bishops were appointed over a group of churches.

**Q: If pastors/ bishops/overseers/elders/shepherds are all the same person in Scripture, why do churches have “bishops” today, ruling over pastors and churches?**

**A:** As the church grew in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th centuries they needed to get organized. Bishops became *overseers* of several churches in a local area. That’s not a problem as long as we know it is only a product of church history not position seen from careful Bible study. ITEM is NOT against denominations having bishops.

**Q: Is the elder in 1 Timothy 5:1 the same as the elders in verses 17, 19?**

**A:** In verse one Paul is writing about older (elderly) men who are to be respected by a younger pastor (Timothy). Verses 17, 19 talk about church elders (pastors). They are called *elders* in the New Testament, not because they are older men, but because they are *spiritually older*, more mature.

**Q: What does James mean: Call for elders who anoint with oil and pray over you?**

**A:** It was either ceremonial, to heal the individual (Mark 6:13), or it was actually medical treatment for a bruised individual, possibly someone beaten up persecution. Or it was a metaphor. Shepherds applied oil to sheep’s injuries, when they returned to the sheepfold. This could be a metaphor for elders caring for and comforting believers who were emotionally or even physically hurt.

**FAITH MOVEMENT/NAME-IT-&-CLAIM IT/see PROSPERITY GOSPEL**

**FALSE TEACHERS**

**Q: Should we exclude titles from our church book table, if “most” of the text is truth?**



**A:** Ask yourself, "Do most people have the ability to read a book and know the truth from error while reading page by page, sentence by sentence? Can a believer be expected to only be touched by truth and not affected by error, if they do know the difference?"

**Q: Can you explain Jude 3-4: "Contend earnestly for the faith . . . certain men have crept in unnoticed."**

**A:** The men mentioned in Jude 4 are the false teachers. Pastors must be discerning and protect their flocks from false teaching.

**Q: How can we tell a false teacher from a true one, if they both use the Bible?**

**A:** Jesus said you will know a false prophet by their fruit, in Matthew 7:16-18. Then he used passages in 2 Peter, Timothy, and other books to list the *fruit from their lives*.

**Q: We hear many things from the West, like relativism, secularism, cultism. How should pastors deal with all these different teachings?**

**A:** Teach your people what the Bible says so they will not be misled. Even if someone doesn't believe the Bible, use it anyway. It is God's Word. Also, consider, if you or others have a presupposition. If you believe the Bible is all we need, then stick by your conviction. Don't apologize for believing the Bible is God's inspired, infallible truth. When you discuss things with people who have different ideas, simply keep stating the truth: "The Bible says..., "the Bible says..." Isaiah 55:11 promise His Word will never return void.

**Q: How can we tell false teachers from true teachers, if they both use the Bible?**

**A:** Do they preach/teach directly from the Bible only, without personal opinions? In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 it says God's inspired Scripture makes pastors adequate and equipped for every good work—not visions, dreams, and revelations.

In 2 Corinthians 12, Paul recorded his vision of heaven. Verse 1 says, "Boasting is necessary but not profitable." There were false apostles in Corinth, boasting about personal visions and revelations. They tried to persuade Corinthians to turn away from Paul's teaching and follow them instead.

In 2 Corinthians 11:11-15, Paul felt compelled to talk about his vision of heaven to defend his apostleship. But he called it boasting. So even if a person has a vision or revelation from God, it is boasting to call attention to it, to focus on *me* and *my* spirituality.

**Q: What does Scripture say about false teachers who use dreams, visions and revelations to mislead people?**

**A:** Jesus warned of false apostles, claiming visions and revelations in Matthew 7:15-22. He called them "false prophets who appear as shepherds dressed in sheep's clothing." They claim to

prophesy, do miracles, cast out demons in Jesus' name, but they aren't even saved.

Jude 8 talks about false teachers who claim to have dreams. And in Colossians 2:18, Paul warns against following those who stand on visions; Paul says they are "inflated without cause by a fleshly mind." So today, to bring attention to yourself by claiming to have visions is also boasting and being *inflated (proud) without cause*.

## **FEAR**

### **Q: Should believers fear spirits?**

**A:** Not if you are saved and walking in the Spirit. Proverbs 23:7 says, particularly the first part, "What a man thinks, so is he." Scripture teaches Christians to replace *traditional thinking* about God, Satan, spirits, salvation, etc. with *biblical thinking*. As time goes on we should keep applying Romans 12:2, "... be transformed, by the renewing of your mind."

And 2 Corinthians 10:3-5: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not wage war in a fleshly way, since the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but are powerful, through God, to destroy strongholds. We demolish arguments and every high-minded thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive, to the obedience of Christ." Strongholds are false teaching and lies about God, Satan, and the spirit world; these keep so many people in bondage.

## **FIGHTING**

### **Q: If any religion or person takes guns against Christians, to drive them out, should we defend our families, or leave and not fight?**

**A:** Always defend your family, but do not try to advance the Gospel with guns.

### **Q: Qualifications of leadership show a pastor cannot be a *striker*, one who uses his fists and fighting to get his own way. What about when Jesus got angry and turned over the money changer's tables in the temple?**

**A:** Jesus was angry about false teaching; we should be angry about false teaching also. The key is, *what are you angry about?* The Bible says, "Be angry but do not sin." There is a righteous anger, when you are angry about the right things, like when God or His Word is blasphemed or mocked. Another issue is a believer's/pastor's motive. We should never get angry when we are offended. We should get angry when God or His Word is offended.

Finally, concerning fighting, it would be proper for a pastor to use his fists to protect a girl from being raped, or to stop some similar offense. And if a pastor ever uses his fists, the people should be totally surprised. It should be the *extreme exception* in his life, not his normal habit.

## **FILLING of HOLY SPIRIT**

**Q: Can you clarify being filled with the Word of Christ (Col 3:16) and being filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)? Why don't they include signs and miracles?**

**A:** Several New Testament passages talk about signs, wonders, and miracles but only special messengers of God had those capabilities. They were communicating the true revelation of God which had not been written down yet.

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:12: "The signs of a TRUE apostle . . . signs, miracles, wonders . . ." He explained that his ability to do miracles was evidence to PROVE he was a *true apostle*. But since God's revelation (the Bible) is complete, there is no longer any need for apostles or men who can perform signs and wonders.

**Q: Do people become filled with the Spirit immediately, when they believe in Christ?**

**A:** Yes! The *filling* simply means *control by the Spirit*. The moment a person is saved they are

under the Spirit's control. When they sin, they are no longer under the control of the Holy Spirit so they need to repent and give the control of their life back to the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:8 refers to Pentecost, which was the first time *all followers of Christ* had been indwelt with the Holy Spirit; and it has been that way since then. The Spirit empowers each believer, when we walk daily in His Spirit, not grieving the Spirit, and not quenching the Holy Spirit. Also, 1 John 2 teaches that we are all anointed by the Spirit.

**Q: How can the Holy Spirit help us impact our community?**

**A:** We need to be filled with the Spirit and walk in the Spirit. The New Testament says more about how we are to *live* than it does about how we speak and proclaim the Gospel. Why? A godly lifestyle is a BIG part of an effective evangelism (Matthew 5:13-16, 1 Peter 3:8-16, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, 2 Peter 2:1-2, 9-12). Notice these verses always refer to people of the world watching, observing how we live. Sometimes they glorify God because of it. As pastors, we need to teach people how to live holy lives, so proclaiming the Gospel of eternal salvation is more effective.

**Q: What does it mean in John 14:12: "Greater works than Jesus will be done by those who believe," after Jesus returned to His Father?**

**A:** Can we truly think that we can do greater (more powerful) works, or more in quantity, than Jesus? When we say, "I think . . ." we must remember: What we think does NOT matter! All pastors and believers need to go to God's Word, study it diligently, and determine exactly what Jesus said.

## **FORGIVENESS**

**Q: If a pastor keeps sinning and repenting, should we forgive him again?**

**A:** In Matthew 18, Jesus told Peter to forgive someone 70 times 7 times. But if a pastor keeps doing this, at some point he must forfeit his position as pastor, because his life is no longer under control. He is no longer above reproach as in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

## **GENTILES**

**Q: It seems that Romans chapters 9-11, about the Jewish people, are out of place. Would chapter 12 more naturally follow after chapter 8? How do these sections fit the overall context of Romans?**

**A:** Many Bible students have asked that. Since the first part of Romans is about the Gospel, one writer thought Paul anticipated the question: "If God has turned to the Gentiles with the message of salvation does that mean He is finished with Israel?"

## **GIVING**

**Q: If a pastor is to be a model of giving but has little or nothing, how can he do so?**

**A:** He doesn't always give money. He can give time or something else. Giving and generosity begin with *attitudes*. If you see someone hungry, share your food.

**Q: In the early church, everyone sold their possessions and brought the money to the elders; why do churches and Christians not do that today?**

**A:** It was a unique situation. There was a famine in Jerusalem and everyone was just trying to survive. Remember, because something is in the Bible, especially in stories, doesn't mean everyone is supposed to do it. The book of Acts simply reports what happened back then.

## **GOD'S PRESENCE**

**Q: Unholy people cannot enter God's presence but are we not always in His presence? Are we to avoid God's presence when we are unholy?**

**A:** The difference is between *positional* holiness (clothed in Christ's righteousness, when we become Christians) and *practical* holiness (when we become more like Christ over time). We can enter God's presence any time, because He sees Christ's holiness covering us at all times.

## **GOD'S WILL or VOICE**

**Q: How can you know God's will or hear His voice?**

**A:** Listen to the Word of God: Spend time with God reading His Word and praying. 1 Peter 4 says to use the gifts God gave you. God will close some doors and open others.

**Q: What's the difference between God's revelation to me, which is closed, and His leading me to make decisions?**

**A:** The only perfectly clear will of God is in the Bible. Besides Scripture, we have a lot of freedom to make decisions that are not right or wrong but bad, good, better, and best. Pray for wisdom. Ask God to help you use all means available to make the best decisions.

### **GOSPEL**

**Q: Can you explain the theology in Romans and Ephesians about the Gospel being only for the Jew or the Gentile and being offered to the Jew first?**

**A:** Romans 1:16 says the Gospel is for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. Then in Romans 11:11 Paul wrote that after the Gospel was rejected by the Jews it was offered to the Gentiles to make the Jews jealous. Eventually, all Israel will be saved.

**Q: Luke 12:51 says Jesus came to divide; what does that mean?**

**A:** Jesus referred to the Gospel of salvation as belief in Christ alone. The Gospel sometimes turns one family member against another. It can bring persecution, even martyrdom.

**Q: In 1 Corinthians 9 Paul said he "became all things to all people in order to take the Gospel to them." Does it mean Paul respected the culture he ministered to in Ephesus as stated in 1 Timothy, which didn't allow women to be pastors? Is this why we don't have women pastors today?**

**A:** In 1 Timothy 3:15 Paul said the purpose of 1 Timothy was to give guidelines for setting up the church. Then in 1 Timothy 2:12 it says, "a woman is not to teach or exercise authority over a man," implying that was how it should be *in the church*. But in verse 14 Paul says it was because of "the order of creation" (NOT culture) that a woman is not to be a pastor.

### **GRACE versus LAW**

**Q: Should we keep the law or live under grace only?**

**A:** Romans 7:1-13 shows we died to the law. Galatians' entire letter compares law and grace. Paul explains in Galatians 3:23-25 that the law was given to lead us to repentance and a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. When we are saved the law has finished its role.

**Q: What is the difference between the Law of Moses and the Ten Commandments?**

**A:** The law of Christ is in addition to the Law of Moses, which are the first five Bible books, which Moses wrote. The 10 Commandments are part of the Law of Moses. Romans 8:1-5 shows that Christ fulfilled the law, and for believers who are in Christ, the law is fulfilled in us.

## **HEALING**

**Q: Are there really no healers today, like the New Testament apostles?**

**A:** Understand the difference between healing as answered prayer and healing as a result of some person laying hands on a person in a tent meeting.

**NOTE:** If you asked a local faith healer to come with you to the hospital and heal everyone, would they do it? Or would they say, "The anointing isn't present right now?"

**NOTE:** A pastor said he saw a *healer* go into a hospital and heal a few people. But the question must be asked, "What were they supposedly cured of?" and, "Why didn't he heal all of them?"

**Q: In 2 Corinthians 12 Paul prayed three times for healing. Why didn't God heal him?**

**A:** God sometimes uses suffering in our lives for His glory. He wanted to use suffering in Paul's life, too. In 2 Corinthians Paul learned that God's grace was sufficient. He learned to rely on God when he was weak. The suffering humbled Paul and kept him from exalting himself because of his vision.

**Q: If healing is not an active gift but healing takes place, isn't that a contradiction?"**

**A:** In the New Testament a few were given a special ability to perform miracles and heal other people. These were signs of a true apostle (1 Corinthians 12:12; Acts 2:43; Hebrews 2:4). They were given that ability to validate their ministry of communicating the revelation of God. Once the revelation was complete there was no longer a need for *miracle workers*, but God continues to do miracles in answer to our prayers. The same goes for the gift of healing compared to God healing.

There is definitely divine healing today. God--not humans--heal people. God chooses to heal or not heal sick people. God sometimes also answers prayers of Christians and heals. But there are no longer Christian *healers* with the power the apostles had.

**NOTE:** The tension between groups, when it comes to this issue is often the definition of the gift

of miracles and healing. We must always begin by agreeing on the definition before we can even begin to discuss the other issues.

**Q: Some believe there are people with a gift of healing today, but all of us can pray for someone to be healed. True?**

**A:** God can heal on His own and in answer to prayer. What would the Scriptural gift of healing look like today? Organizing a stadium crusade? Did that happen in the New Testament? Did people announce: "Next Tuesday, come to the stadium! We will heal a lot of people!" No, healing happened spontaneously.

When someone was sick, Jesus or an apostle prayed, and the person was immediately healed. Why don't these so-called *healers* today go into hospitals and empty them out by healing everyone?

Why was healing power given to the New Testament apostles? Because they were the ones receiving and recording God's revelation, which we now have total access to (Ephesians 2:20, 3:3, 3:5; Acts 2:42, 43). By the end of Paul's ministry, he was not even healing his friends. He told Timothy to take wine for his stomach and left Trophimus sick.

**Q: Can you explain faith healers and their crusades? Should churches support them, accept them, and allow unsuspecting people to keep giving money?**

**A:** There is no doubt that God heals! He does it on His own and in answer to our prayers. But only a few of the Old Testament prophets, along with Jesus, the apostles, and selected others were chosen and used by God as instruments to heal. It was always to validate their message, which they received directly from God before the Bible was completed.

Consider a *healer* in a stadium. Why in a big stadium? Why not in a hospital? When did Jesus or the apostles ever set meetings in stadiums to heal people? Why doesn't the faith healer restore blindness or amputated limbs?

Believers must think critically about these issues and *connect Scripture truth* to today. Generations of traditional beliefs, practices, and assumptions can be in error.

All Christians need to "be transformed by the renewing of our minds" as Romans 12:2 teaches. This is what learning from the Bible will do!

**Q: Why does 1 Peter 2:24 say healing and salvation are connected? ("By His stripes we are healed.")**

**A:** The context here and in Isaiah 53 clearly shows *spiritual healing*. For example, if a child is born crippled and becomes a Christian later in life, then dies and is still a cripple, are they truly saved? And what about other Bible people, like Paul who had some thorn in the flesh that God would not remove. He apparently had eye problems, and he traveled with Luke, a doctor, but

remained unhealed. Only God decides.

**Q: James 5:14 says to “lay hands on the sick, pray, and they will be healed.” I saw that happen at a crusade, so how can you say it doesn’t happen?**

**A:** Investigators cannot verify one person who has encountered a full, final, permanent healing at one of these crusades, verified by a doctor.

## **HEAVEN**

**Q: People say they died, went to heaven, and Jesus sent them back to warn others. What does the Bible say?**

**A:** People will only die once and then be judged (Hebrews 9:27). Even if someone was sent back with a message to warn unbelievers, those who didn't believe before will not believe them now (Luke 16:20-31).

**Q: What was Jacob's dream and the *ladder from heaven* in Genesis 20 about?**

**A:** In the context and in the verses immediately following this dream, God confirmed that He was giving the covenant He had made with Abraham. It was given to Isaac and was being given now to Jacob.

**Q: What does Malachi 3:10 mean, where God says. “I will open up the ‘windows of heaven.’” What are they?**

**A:** These are simply what we call *figures of speech*, a mental picture.

## **HELL**

**Q: What does Matthew 16 mean when Jesus said, "the gates of hell"; what are they?**

**A:** These are simply what we call *figures of speech*, a mental picture.

**Q: In Matthew 16, Jesus tells Peter, "the gates of hell will not prevail against the church." Why did He say *gates* instead of a single gate?**

**A:** Because He did.

**Q: Some pastors teach that Matthew 27:52, 53 says that when Jesus was crucified, He descended into hell. True?**

**A:** Do not try to build a *doctrine* out of a Bible story (a narrative). These verses simply tell us that



at the time of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, supernatural things happened, confirming that He was someone special—the Son of God (Matthew 27:54). Bible people who came back to life eventually died again. In eternity, resurrected believers will never die.

## **HOLINESS**

**Q: What is the difference between positional holiness and progressive holiness?**

**A:** Positional holiness is when we become a Christian; we are forgiven and clothed in the holiness and righteousness of Christ. Progressive holiness is that we are actually becoming more and more righteous as time goes on.

**Q: Is it a contradiction to say we have *positional* holiness and are growing in *practical* holiness? Galatians 5 says, “if we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the desires of the flesh.” So, if we walk in the flesh, we are not holy; do we need to be delivered from a demon?**

**A:** Though we have times of walking in the flesh, when we are not growing in holiness, over time the direction of our life will be toward holiness. We may go three steps forward and one or two back, but there is a continual growth in the life of a true believer.

No matter what or who causes us to *walk in the flesh*, it is our responsibility to repent and not blame the devil.

## **HOLY SPIRIT**

**Q: What is *fire* in Matthew 3:11, (“Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire”)? Is it the *fire* hovering over people’s heads at Pentecost? Is something different in other verses, or is it always the same thing?**

**A:** In 1 Corinthians 3 it says, “our works will be tested by fire.” John 15 says: “branches in Him that do not bear fruit are gathered and burned in a fire.” The answer is, in all cases we have to look at the *context*. Yes, it can mean different things in different verses and have different applications. The *context* will always determine a word’s meaning and application.

Often, other passages will build on a same idea but not always. In Matthew 3:11 *fire* is the fire of Judgment. We see that when we study the context.

**Q: What are the five-fold gifts of the Spirit in Ephesians 4:11?**

**A:** The five gifts are people—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. (Some believe there are only four and pastor-teacher is only one.)

**Q: Can you explain the baptism and filling of the Spirit? What are the results in 1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 5:18 to 6:9, and Acts 19:1-5?**

**A:** 1 Cor 12:13 says Spirit baptism happens at salvation and places us into the church, the body of Christ. Ephesians 5:18 tells us to be constantly filled (controlled) by the Spirit and the following verses through 6:4 show the results. Acts 19:1-5 do not say the people believed the Gospel of salvation; they experienced only the baptism of John. When Paul spoke, they apparently believed the Gospel and were baptized into Christ.

**Q: What is unforgivable blasphemy against the Holy Spirit in Matthew 12:31?**

**A:** Read the story. Jesus cast out a demon. The Pharisees said it was the power of Beelzebub (Satan). Jesus said it was the power of the Holy Spirit. So this blasphemy is attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan, a blasphemy that will not be forgiven.

**Q: The Bible says that in the upper room, Jesus breathed on his disciples and said receive the Holy Spirit. Then later, He said to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit. Did they lose the Spirit and get Him back?**

**A:** This was either a prediction of happenings at Pentecost or a partial giving of the Holy Spirit.

**Q: Do pastors today need the anointing in Acts 1:8: "You will receive power, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be witnesses."**

**A:** This was addressed to the disciples and was referring to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Pastors today do not have or receive a *special empowering or anointing of the Spirit* over other believers. Their gift is teaching (1 Timothy 3:2).

## **IDOLS**

**Q: In Revelation 2:22, Jezebel had believers eat food sacrificed to idols, which God condemned. But in 1 Corinthians 8, Paul said it is okay to eat them. What is right?**

**A:** These are in different contexts. In Revelation 2, people ate the food as a part of their worship and religious tradition. In 1 Corinthians 8, they were buying meats in the market and feeding it to their families.

## **ISRAEL**

**Q: What is the Abomination of Desolation in Matthew 24:15?**

**A:** This is linked to Daniel 9:27 and 11:31 and seems to speak of a future time, perhaps the

tribulation, when a certain individual, like the antichrist, makes a covenant with Israel. After three-and-a-half years, the person breaks the covenant and destroys Jerusalem. Some teachers believe this was fulfilled by Titus of Rome in 70 AD, when Rome destroyed the Temple. Many other Bible scholars say it has not yet occurred.

**Q: God didn't want Israel to have a king, because God was to be their king. God was upset when Israel chose Saul, then God chose David. Why did God choose any man as king, if He wanted that position?**

**A:** God had a specific purpose in choosing a human king. He established, through David, an eternal throne upon which Jesus will one day reign. Israel had the wrong motive for wanting a king. They simply wanted to be like every other country.

**Q: Do believers apply all promises to Israel to ourselves today? Do we claim** **2**  
**Chronicles 7:14, "If My people . . . I will heal their land?"**

**A:** We have to be very careful since there are hundreds of promises to Israel. Many would never apply today. People like to claim Jeremiah 29:11, "I know the plans I have for you . . . a plan . . . to give you a future and a hope . . ." But notice that the verse 10 promise came at the end of 70 years of captivity!

**Q: How do we fit in with the covenant God made with Israel?**

**A:** Covenants God made with Israel were unconditional covenants/promises that He would one day fulfill with Israel. (Theological note: This is not a universal viewpoint even among reputable theologians but this is ITEM's official position and it's generally taught everywhere in Africa.) In 1 Corinthians 11:17 we see Christians are grafted into those promises.

**Q: If we cannot claim the promises given to Israel, why does the New Testament say we are Abraham's spiritual children? Can we claim the promises to Abraham and Israel as Abraham's spiritual children?**

**A:** As spiritual children we can claim the spiritual promises, but only the physical descendants of Abraham can claim the physical promises God made to Abraham.

## **JESUS**

**Q: Muslims say Jesus is not God and many people are confused. Is Jesus God?**

**A:** Yes, Jesus is God. The Bible teaches that there is one God, manifested in three persons. It is hard to understand and explain, but it is true nonetheless.

**Q: How many years were between creation and when Jesus was born?**

**A:** Some people believe a *young earth* theology and say creation was between 6000-10,000 years ago. Others have reasons for *millions of years*. ITEM takes a firm stand on a literal interpretation of Genesis 1 and that creation happened in six literal days with no gaps; so ITEM supports a *young earth* position. Many reputable scientists also have a *young earth* theology.

**Q: How can we have the Second Coming of Christ , if the world doesn't get better?**

**A:** Some teachers say all prophecy was fulfilled by a.d. 70, when the temple was destroyed. Others teach that the *kingdom* is a spiritual kingdom it will continue to grow and improve society until Christ returns. This is not ITEM's position. ITEM teaches that things will get worse until the Lord returns and then He will set up his kingdom on earth.

### **JUDGE (others)**

**Q: What is pointing out a sin versus judging someone?**

**A:** If you use Scripture to point out a sin, then you are not judging—Scripture is judging. If you point at a behavior you call sin but the Bible doesn't identify it as sin, then you are judging. Galatians 6:1 tells us that only a spiritual person is to restore one who is caught in a sin. That means only a person who has no unconfessed sin in his or her life is qualified to point out the sin

in someone else's life. Jesus said, "... first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye (Matthew 7:5)." That means to deal with your own sin before you try to help someone else with their sin.

### **KINGDOM OF GOD**

**Q: The Old Testament teaches about the kingdom; where is the kingdom today?**

**A:** Today the kingdom that Christ rules over is a spiritual kingdom. The members of the spiritual kingdom are the followers of Christ. One day he will return to earth and rule from David's throne in Jerusalem.

**Q: Some people say the kingdom of God has already come. Can you explain please?**

**A:** The current form of the kingdom is invisible and according to the parables in Matthew 13, there are even unbelievers in the kingdom. There is wheat and tares in the kingdom; true believers and those who claim to be Christians and who are not. They will remain until they are removed by Jesus when He returns.

## **KNOWLEDGE (Word of ) (see WORD OF WISDOM)**

### **LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS**

**Q: Why cannot a woman be pastor?**

**A:** Scripture says, “an overseer is husband of one wife (1 Tim 3:2),” implying that overseers are men and in the New Testament an overseer was also the pastor. So pastors must be a husband, which mean the pastor is a man.

**Q: What is the difference between a church leader and a religious leader?**

**A:** A *religious leader* refers to any religion. A *church leader* is in a church of Christians. Some say that religion is *man seeking God* through ritual and tradition but Christianity is *God seeking man* by sending Jesus to dies on the cross for man’s sins. In the New Testament, Jesus often referred to Jewish leaders as *religious leaders*.

**Q: If a church has all new converts and none are qualified as leaders, how does the church function without leaders?**

**A:** Give people responsibility without titles; they don't need titles. When people begin to mature and develop leadership qualifications, then a church can begin to choose elders and deacons. But people don't need titles to serve in these needed leadership roles.

### **LAST DAYS**

**Q: Are we in the last days?**

**A:** The *day of the Lord* started when Jesus came a first time and will end, when He comes again. Joel 2:30-32 speaks of signs to come at Jesus’ Second Coming, at the end of the *last days*.

### **LEADERS**

**Q: If a church leader commits a serious sin, like adultery, but repents, can he remain a church leader?**

**A:** Even if the leader repents, he should still resign long enough to prove to everyone that he is again worthy of their trust as a leader. A suggested time would be at least one year. The key in Scripture is always for restoration to fellowship. NOTE: Some will say that if this leader is the pastor he should never be allowed to be a pastor again, because pastors have a higher level of accountability.

**Q: The Bible lists qualifications for leadership, but one verse tells people to choose their leaders. How can we please God, if we don't choose biblically-qualified people?**

**A:** Acts 6 says people are to choose. But even then there were qualifications Acts 6:3). The qualifications for church leaders are listed in 1 Timothy 3-12.

When a congregation chooses elders, repeatedly insert the word *qualified* in the process; e.g. "Nominate only biblically-*qualified* people." My church screened nominees and questioned them on their qualifications. By the time a list was presented to the church, only *qualified* people were on it. Then elders said, "If you voted *no* on any of these men, you must provide a biblical reason for your *no* vote. Therefore, they did *choose* leaders but they were all *qualified* biblically.

### **MAN of GOD**

**Q: How is it true that only Timothy was a *man of God*?**

**A:** The New Testament, in 1 Timothy 6:11, refers to Timothy as *man of God*. This is the only time the New Testament ever refers to anyone as a *man of God*.

### **MAN**

**Q: What is *man* in 1 Timothy 3 and *man* in Genesis 1?**

**A:** One means mankind (all humans), the other means male. That is not understood easily in local languages. Genesis 1 means *mankind*. In 1 Timothy 3:2 it means *adult male*. Two different words are used in the original languages. We don't read that in translations.

### **MARRIAGE**

**Q: How can I serve like Paul, who was a single man, when I'm already married?**

**A:** Serving God as a single man is okay; being married is okay also. The only difference is that a married man must first consider the needs of a wife and children, ahead of the ministry needs.

**Q: What should be done if a husband is beating his wife or if the wife beats him?**

**A:** Matthew 18 explains church discipline. The offender needs to be confronted and told to repent. They both need to be sure they are not provoking their spouse.

**Q: Can a childless woman marry a woman and find a man to father a surrogate son?**

**A:** One tradition is for a dominant, childless woman—without a son—to *marry* a woman. They

do not engage in sex themselves, but the dominant one can bring in a man to have sex with the submissive woman she just married to produce a child. If they have a boy, it becomes the heir of the dominant woman, and she is allowed by tradition to keep marrying more women, bringing men to them until she finally gets a boy. (*A youth pastor said the youth need biblical teaching to counter this tradition.*)

### **MARY (Legion of)**

**Q: What is the Legion of Mary, and why do people believe it?**

**A:** This is a sect about a black, Kenyan messiah—an organization with little or no doctrine. A man named Simon said Jesus was the “white man's messiah” and that he (Simon) was the African messiah. Some believe Simon was also a prophet and received a revelation from God. They say they go to heaven by following him. He is dead now, but previously, when he entered a room, people seemed to worship him. Though he is dead today, the sect lives on.

### **MILLENNIUM**

**Q: What is the role of Israel and the church in the millennial kingdom?**

**A:** Understand that *the church* means the *body of Christ*, when we study the *pre-tribulation rapture* and the *pre-millennial return of Christ*. Basically, the church will be removed from the earth before a literal seven year tribulation period. That is the rapture.

During this literal seven year tribulation, 144,000 Jews will be saved and will preach the Gospel to the world. At the end of the seven years, Jesus will return to judge sin. He will set up a kingdom and will reign for 1,000 years.

After that, there will be a final rebellion. Satan will be released from his bondage and there will be a final war, a final judgment, and eternity will be ushered in. In this kingdom, there does not seem to be a different role for Israel. Only Christians, Jew or Gentile, will enter the kingdom and all believers will have an equal position.

### **MINISTRY**

**Q: What is Philosophy of Ministry?**

**A:** No matter what you do to serve God, pastors should incorporate the five points learned in ITEM seminars. First, most important, is to have and teach a high view of God! These are principles that should influence every ministry; at the center of it all is God's holiness.

**Q: What happened to your *vision for ministry*, when you became the associate pastor for another church, did you have to adopt the other pastor's vision for ministry?**

**Did you give it up? Was it wrong?**

**A:** Our vision is not always God's and His plan may include a change in our vision. Proverbs 16:1, 9 explains that man makes plans, but God directs his steps.

Joseph's vision didn't include slavery in Egypt. Daniel's vision didn't include captivity in Babylon. So sometimes we have a *vision* for our lives and ministry but we should hold it loosely in case God wants to take it away and give a different one.

As an associate pastor, in 1998, I was allowed to teach a course at a seminary in Africa, which changed my life and ministry. Only God knew that was in my future.

**Q: How do we involve new believers in church ministry?**

**A:** Very slowly. Give them small, simple tasks. Give them time to mature and grow spiritually. We are warned in 1 Timothy to not lay hands on a man too quickly because it might inflate his ego. If they prove to be faithful in little things, with money and with the possessions of others, then they show that they can be counted as faithful (Luke 16:12-14).

### **MIRACLES (SIGNS, WONDERS)**

**Q: Do miracles occur today?**

**A:** Yes, God can and does miracles today. Know also that Satan counterfeits miracles to lead us astray. Remember there is a difference between God doing miracles and some people calling themselves miracle workers.

**Q: In Matthew 8:17, after a woman is healed, the Bible says it fulfills Isaiah 53. Is physical healing linked with Christ's death? Did His death provide healing?**

**A:** Isaiah 53:4 predicted that the Messiah would physically heal people. This was one of the signs that He was God. But this is not a prediction that all disease would be healed by Jesus.

Christ's death gives healing from all diseases **in eternity**. God is not *obligated* to heal someone when we pray for them using that verse.

**Q: Aren't saints today supposed to be equipped? And since that process is still not complete, should all Bible miracles continue today? Doesn't John 14:12 have Jesus promise that believers will do greater works than He will do?**

**A:** It is true that apostles had gifts and abilities the ordinary Christian didn't have then or today. Apostles were writing down God's revelation. In biblical history, miracle workers came before God's revelation was written down. Moses' miracles preceded giving the Law of Moses. Miracles by Elijah and Elisha preceded prophet's messages to Israel from God directly. Miracles by apostles



and Jesus preceded recording God's New Testament, His revelation.

**Q: How do we discern between true and false miracles?**

**A:** The Bible miracles were so obvious that no one could dispute them. But false teachers today, who claim to perform miracles and heal the sick and crippled, cannot provide unquestionable proof.

We do not question miracles but we do question those who call themselves miracle workers. Only God performs miracles today. He often does them in answer to believers' prayers. We do not need a faith healer to pray for a miracle. Christians have authority and ability to pray for a miracle as much as anyone. Faith healers usually only want money.

**Q: What does it mean not to seek miracles, supernatural experiences, visions, and dreams, but seek the simple teaching about integrity, happiness, holiness, righteousness, from Bible teaching?**

**A:** Many people are not concerned about how they live. They are only interested in seeking miracles or some other supernatural experience. But what God wants us to do is seek a godly lifestyle, which comes from studying and applying the principles of God's Word.

**Q: Is Mark 16:7: "these signs will accompany those who believe . . ." meant for all believers today?**

**A:** The study Bible notes (bottom of page, for verses 9-20) says these verses do not appear in the earliest manuscripts. They were probably added about 850 A.D. by people who didn't like the ending to Mark's Gospel: "and they were afraid. (Mark 16:8)". Mark 16 also talks about "drinking

deadly poison and handling deadly snakes," but no one today wants to take a chance on those verses; they only like the signs and wonders verses.

**Q: If *miracles* aren't an active gift but miracles do occur, is that a contradiction?**

**A:** In the New Testament a few were given a special ability to perform miracles. These were signs of a true apostle (1 Corinthians 12:12, Acts 2:43, Hebrews 2:4). They were given that ability to validate their ministry of communicating God's revelation, before it was written down in the Old and New Testaments.

Once the revelation (Bible) was complete, there was no longer a need for *miracle workers*, though God may choose to continue to do miracles in answer to prayers. The same goes for the gift of healing compared to God healing.

**NOTE:** In biblical history, there were only three periods when certain people were empowered to perform miracles: 1) the time of Moses (the Law period); 2) the time of the

prophets (prophets spoke God's revelation to the nations); and 3) the time of the Gospels/Acts (the Gospel message was being established and preached).

**Q: Are believers supposed to perform miracles today, like in Mark 16:9-20?**

**A:** The ability to perform miracles was given to the apostles (2 Corinthians 12:12; Acts 2:43) who received and communicated God's *new revelation*. Now, His revelation (His Word) is complete so we don't need miracle-working apostles to deliver God's revelation. Paul's experience with the false apostles in Corinth is an example.

Copies of Mark's gospel from the earliest texts to the 800s a.d. did NOT contain verses 9-20 in Mark 16. So it is not a good idea to base doctrine on questionable verses. We should look for more Bible texts that repeat the same thing, but we cannot find that with the Mark section. No other New Testament verses say all believers will perform miracles.

Verses 9-20 were not in any copies of Mark dated closest to the original. They showed up 800 years later, suggesting that someone added them. Verse 9 is a bit *similar* to parts in other gospels, but NO wording, like "all who follow Christ will perform miraculous deeds," is in any other Gospel.

Also, why is the emphasis always on miracles? The passage also talks of handling poisonous snakes and drinking poison. Do pastors want to teach people to do that today?

**Q: Acts 1:8 says we will receive power. Stephen and Philip were filled and did miracles. Do we have the power today to perform signs and miracles?**

**A:** What does Acts 1:8 say about power? Power to do what? It says, "you will receive power and then you will be witnesses." Our power today is to proclaim the Gospel of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ. Romans 1:16 says this Gospel is the POWER of God for salvation.

Ephesians 5:18 talks about the filling of the Spirit, and the results that followed had to do with *lifestyle* NOT miracles or spiritual gifts. Read Ephesians 5:19-6:9. All of these verses are describing the results of the Spirit's filling. Colossians 1:16 teaches us to let the Word dwell in us. The following verses explain the results of the Word dwelling in us (Col 3:16-4:1), which are exactly the same as the results of the filling of the Spirit.

Simply: The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to produce within each of us the lifestyle that glorifies God. Paul's testimony in Philippians 3 says that after knowing Christ for 25 years, and after completing three amazing missionary journeys, he had one desire—to continue to mature and be conformed to the image of Christ (Philippians 3:12-14).

What does God desire from each believer today, to perform miracles, or to be conformed to the image of Christ? The answer is obvious, and we know it.

## **MONEY**

**Q: Is a pastor wrong to not *read, explain, and apply* a Bible text, as in 1 Timothy 4:13?**

**A:** ITEM encourages pastors to simply study and teach through books of the Bible. Acts 20:29-31 warns of false teachers and coveting. I.T.E.M. is concerned that many people seem to covet a portion of seminar money, like it's an income. Some charge high for transport, for more or better food, to borrow a car or use a building. We guest pastors are responsible to raise the funds and spend properly, but men's greed can cause a bad attitude in us, toward the men we come only to serve and to teach.

**Q: How would the Bible address dishonest actions and motives for money?**

**A:** One example is a pastor who volunteers his church for a seminar and charges nothing *as a favor*, then later says we should *appreciate him* (thank him) by paying him \$100. That way he gets the money, not the church.

Another example is a man driving visitors around all week *as a favor*, then later asking payment of \$80 per day, since commercial drivers charge \$100 a day.

1 Timothy 3:8, Titus 1:7, 11, and 1 Peter 5:2 all say a pastor should not be motivated by making money in dishonest ways. If it is not right for pastors, it's not right for the rest of us.

**Q: Is it okay for women to manage finances in the home instead of men?**

**A:** A husband is to provide for the home. The husband or wife can do family finances, especially if one is better at it. When people marry, the two become one. Therefore money belongs to both of them. Proverbs 31 shows a wife who adds to the household income. If a husband dies, it is not right for his blood relatives to come and reclaim any property he brought to the relationship when he married a wife, because the Bible says they have become "one." What belongs to one before marriage belongs to both after marriage.

**Q: We are not to love money, but everyone needs it to live. Should we not want money?**

**A:** Needing money to live and *loving* money is different. The important thing is the motive. In 1 Corinthians 9:8-14, Paul lists reasons why a pastor should be paid. Then he warns us not to do anything that leads people to question our motives about why we are a pastor (1 Corinthians 9:15-17). We do not want people to think we are pastors only to take an offering and get money. Paul offered the gospel without charging anyone (1 Corinthians 9:18).

**Q: Is it true that most TV preachers are false teachers and love money?**

**A:** There are a few good TV preachers, but it seems that here in Africa there is a constant procession of false teachers who want more money.

**Q: Many pastors are greedy for money; it's all they think about. What will their position be in the kingdom of God ?**

**A:** If they are truly saved, they will be in heaven. But if they have been greedy for money, their reward will be small or nothing at all.

## **PASTORS**

**Q: What do we do if a pastor preaches false doctrine but will not allow anyone to question him about it and claims *pastoral privilege*?**

**A:** 1 Timothy 5:20 says there must be two or three witnesses to confront him. If he doesn't listen, then tell it to the entire church.

**Q: Why do Western pastors leave churches and come to Africa to do seminars?**

**A:** Pastor Steve's testimony is that in 1998 his heart was touched to teach pastors here. Finally he wondered where to invest the rest of his ministry life, and God confirmed it was to equip African pastors. Each man will answer only to God, who sees the man's heart and motives.

**Q: Can a pastor receive a church salary, or should he?**

**A:** Yes. In 1 Corinthians 9:8-14 Paul gives several reasons why pastors should receive a salary. The last reason: "The one who shares the Gospel should make his living from the Gospel." But remember, Paul says he does not take advantage of those reasons. He wants to be sure no one questions his motives. He shares the Gospel without charge (1 Corinthians 9:18). Pastors today deserve a salary, but they shouldn't demand it, so a church doesn't misunderstand their motives.

**Q: Who holds the pastor of an independent church accountable, when there is no denominational authority to question, discipline, or remove him?**

**A:** In the New Testament, pastors and elders are the same. ITEM believes that the New Testament calls for more than one pastor or elder in a church and that provides accountability. A church might pay only one, but there can be lay pastors and elders. In some Bible contexts, there is one pastor and other elders. They are all accountable to each other. If a pastor is living in sin and will not change, then he should be told to leave the church. No one should have complete spiritual authority of a church.

**Q: 1 Timothy 5:17 says an elder or pastor can be worthy of double honor. Is this a salary? Yet Old Testament priests got no salary; they ate food brought to the temple. Why should pastors get a salary, when priests didn't?**

**A:** Verses in 1 Corinthians 9 demonstrate that a soldier does not serve and support himself at the same time. A vine grower eats from his own vineyard. A rancher eats from his own flock. An ox

should not be muzzled, while it works in the field. So priests ate from temple offerings, and the man who gives his life to preach the Gospel should also make his living from the Gospel. The principle is that a person gets his living from the work he does in life.

**Q: The Bible says the pastor is to be the husband of one wife. Does that mean other men can have more than one wife?**

**A:** No, the pastor is to be an example to everyone in the church, as Hebrew 13:7 shows. That is why he must be qualified according to 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:5-8. If other men didn't have to follow the same principles then they wouldn't have to be gentle either. They could be lovers of money. They could be drunkards. They could cause physical conflicts, or be strikers. These are all opposites of how a pastor is to be qualified. If other people are not expected to apply one principle (like being the husband of one wife), then they can't be expected to apply any of them.

**Q: It's *tradition* for many Africans to want powerful pastors. If they perceive he is powerful over demons and over Satan, and he is rich and has a nice car, should believers ignore his sinful lifestyle?**

**A:** No. Our lifestyle is the most important thing. That is why the qualifications for a pastor listed in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:5-8 are all character qualities.

**Q: Can a pastor have two wives?**

**A:** No. He is to be the husband of one wife, or a "one-woman-man", as 1 Timothy 3:2 says.

**Q: How do we deal with a pastor who lives in sin and needs to be rebuked publicly, according to 1 Timothy 5:20?**

**A:** One US church refused to do right, when their high-profile pastor sinned. Churches cannot allow this. Though African culture says not to rebuke someone higher in authority, believers must be passionate to obey the God we serve, who has all authority. Jesus is in authority and sin must be dealt with, no matter who commits it. An example is when Paul rebuked Peter.

**Q. The Bible says some are given the gift of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. But is it true the pastor is superior?**

**A:** In the body of Christ we all have a role, exactly like a physical body (1 Corinthians 12). And Ephesians 4 mentions spiritual gifts. But a man is not *given the gift* of being a pastor. The passage makes it clear that *the pastor himself is the gift*. The pastor, who is the gift given to the church, is supposed to be able to teach the Bible, as 1 Timothy 3:2 says. But he is not superior any way.

**Q: Can we use *titles*, like apostle and prophet?**

**A:** Titles are used to identify the ministry that a person does. Ephesians 4 mentions apostles,

prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The New Testament seems to combine pastor and teacher. But there are other titles in the New Testament. There are overseers, elders, and bishops. Since there are no apostles and prophets today, like there were in the first century, it would be wrong to use those titles.

In the New Testament, the pastor, bishop, elder, and overseer were the same person. Actually, only pastors and evangelists remain from the original list of titles, because the pastors were also the elders, bishops, and overseers.

But the title is not important. If a person does the ministry of a pastor, he is a pastor. But he must do the ministry in order to call himself a pastor. The same is true of someone called an evangelist. They must do the ministry of an evangelist to be called an evangelist.

**Q: If women should not be pastors, what about churches they pastor now?**

**A:** Reread the Scripture about a pastor being the husband of one wife, in 1 Timothy 3:2, and about women not teaching men, in the context of church ministry, in 1 Timothy 2:12. If a church allows a woman to be their pastor then they either do not know what the Bible teaches or they do not care what the Bible teaches.

**Q: If a pastor is not to drink *much* wine, why do American pastors come here, give a seminar, then go to a hotel and drink beer. When we asked them, they said, "Oh, Africans have weak faith", and kept drinking beer. How should we respond?**

**A:** The Bible says, "do not get drunk" with wine (or alcohol). But it also says, "do not do anything to cause your brother to stumble (Rom 14:21)." If the pastors knew the African culture, which basically prohibits Christians from drinking *all* alcohol, they should not have drunk the beer.

**Q: What does Ezekiel 22:30 mean to "building up the wall and stand in the gap?"**

**A:** The rest of the verse says, "... stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it..." God was looking for someone to warn Israel that destruction was coming if they didn't change the way they were living.

**Q: What is a pastor?**

**A:** The word "pastor" is the same word in the original language as "shepherd." A pastor is the shepherd of God's people. He has God's call, a specific role (1 Corinthians 4:1-2), and certain spiritual qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7) to serve in a church.

He has a preaching ministry (1 Timothy 4:13), which is the most important thing he does. Paul's advice to pastors is in Acts 20, beginning in verse 28, where he tells the elders of Ephesus five things to look for in a man. Instructions from Paul are in Acts 20:28-35.

**Q: How is it possible to be a pastor without being ordained? Ordination is big event in**

### **Africa; ceremonies can be almost as extravagant as a wedding**

**A:** A US church can *license* a man to perform the duties of a pastor; that license is registered with the government. Each denomination has *traditions*. African traditions are different than the traditions in the USA. Understand that a *tradition* is not a Bible *doctrine*.

The closest thing to ordination in the New Testament was when the elders laid hands on Timothy, recognizing his gift and his call (1 Timothy 4:14). But notice, there was no elaborate ceremony, simply a public recognition by laying on hands.

### **Q: How can a pastor teach his church what God wants, not what the pastor wants?**

**A:** First, pastors need to take whatever time is needed to bring the church completely and voluntarily under the authority of God's Word, as a general principle, before they start studying what it says specifically about any topic. Christians need to understand they are accountable to God, not the pastor. Then study and teach through Paul's epistles, a chapter each week: 16 weeks in Romans, 16 weeks in 1 Corinthians, 13 weeks in 2 Corinthians, etc.

### **Q: If a New Testament pastor/elder/bishop are the same, who has more authority?**

**A:** Since they are all the same person they all have the same authority. Remember that early in church history, denominations started giving different roles to each of these. Eventually bishops were put over many pastors and elders who served in just one church.

### **Q: How does a pastor or teacher become good at finding Bible verses, going back and forth and connecting verses when they teach?**

**A:** It is the result of a lifetime of study, taking notes, and listening to other teachers. When you learn something new, write it down where you can find it again! Also, share what you learned with someone as soon as possible. The more times you go back to it, to show someone else, the more it becomes a part of your memory.

### **Q: Pastors learn a lot from schooling, but don't they also learn apart from schooling? Can the Holy Spirit teach us things outside of God's inspired Word?**

**A:** One example: for over 40 years, Pastor Steve has devoted his life to learning what that Bible says about everything it talks about. And by God's grace, a lot of Scripture has sunk roots in his heart and mind. When he teaches, the Holy Spirit brings to mind verses and passages he has learned. These are not new revelations; they are the Holy Spirit reminding him of God's inspired revelation, already handed down to the saints once and for all.

When a pastor uses illustrations and stories, God brings Scripture to his mind and helps him apply God's revelation in our daily lives and ministry. Pastors should try to see everything through the window of God's Word. This is called a *biblical worldview*.

**Q: When I set time to study the Word of God, my mind gets busy thinking of other things. How can I avoid this?**

**A:** Keep a notepad handy! If it is something you need to remember, write it down. Also, commit your problem to God in prayer; commit your time to the Lord and persevere. In Colossians 1:29 Paul says he would labor and strive, according to the power of God, to present every man mature in Christ. So pastors today also need to persevere, work hard, and strive—according to His power!

**Q: Is it good for Christian authors' books to replace Bible study, like TD Jakes, Joyce Meyer, and Creflo Dollar? We want to be like them. For example, some churches use 40 weeks to read and study Rick Warren's *Purpose Driven Life*.**

**A:** The first priority is always to read the Bible. The Bible is God's Word. The books are man's word. Pastors and churches need to be careful what they read and who they listen to. Some of what others say is correct, but some mix it with what is false. Be very careful.

If a believer can't separate truth from error accurately, then avoid all of it. Pastors need to get people to read God's Word first.

**Q: What does 1 Timothy 3:2 mean about a pastor is to be a "one woman man?"**

**A:** If a pastor is married, he is to have only one wife and should be devoted to her completely. He is not to be interested in other women.

If he is single, he must not be spending a lot of time with a lot different women. He must not be seen as a man who is chasing after a lot of women.

In either case, a pastor is not to be interested in having close, intimate relationships with a lot of different women. A single pastor cannot date or go to parties with a lot of different women.

**Q: Galatians 3:23-29 talks about Law and faith; Law said women should not be pastors, but since we are no longer under the Law, can women now be pastors?**

**A:** Where does the Law say women are not to be pastors? Paul wrote that in 1 Timothy 2:12-15. The Law was given to Moses and Moses lived 1400 years before the church was started. There were no churches or pastors when God gave the Law to Moses. The context and message of Galatians 3 is comparing the Law versus grace. In chapter 3, is salvation given by keeping the Law or by faith in Christ? If by faith, then why the Law (v. 19)? The Law simply shows us our guilt and leads us to seek forgiveness and salvation by faith alone (v 24-25). Galatians 3:28 ("either male nor female") is in the context of *who can be saved*, NOT who is qualified to serve as pastor.

**Q. How is a pastor to fast and pray for his church? What is he to pray?**

**A:** We recommended praying the prayers Paul prayed for the churches where he worked. Read African Questions – Bible Answers



his letters to the different churches and notice his prayers and pray prayers, like Paul prayed for your church.

**Q: Do pastors need visions and revelation to lead their churches?**

**A:** Here is a warning: If pastors rely on visions, dreams, and revelations to get instructions from God and directions to lead the church, their people will also begin to rely on visions and revelations. Pastors must learn how to think through Scripture!

False teachers will come along and say, "I had a vision (or a revelation). God told me 'this', so follow me." And the people will have NO way to know the truth from error. How will they know who is telling the truth? Who is lying?

Christians can become dependent upon the *dreamer*, the *receiver of the revelation*, the one who has *visions*, rather than developing his own relationship with God, through His Word. People will stop reading and studying their Bible, which sets us free (John 8:32), sanctifies us (John 17:17), and causes us to grow (1 Peter 2:2)!

Only God's Word is the final authority. Be a good Berean (Acts 17:11); study for yourself and determine if "these things are so." Compare what you hear people say and preach with what the Bible says.

**Q: What if I believe what Scripture says, but in my denomination, I am not in a place of influence; no one will listen to me. What should I do?**

**A:** Remain faithful to study and teach God's Word, when and where you can.

**Q: If a pastor's family is to be a good example, what if his children or wife are unsaved? What if his children or wife are rebellious?**

**A:** There are two criteria to be a pastor: The call and the qualifications. Both must be in order. The qualifications do not only include the man, but also his wife and children. So, if a wife will not live properly, he is not qualified. She doesn't have to be perfect, but she cannot live in habitual, unrepentant sin.

A pastor's entire family is to be a good example. If his wife is causing problems, he needs to step aside and get his house in order, then return as the pastor. But if she never agrees, then he should not return as pastor.

If anything seriously harms his reputation in the church or community, then he should step down as pastor. If his wife is not cooperative, or if his children are not under his authority, are rebellious, or if they are at an age of personal accountability and remain unsaved, the pastor should resign (Titus 1:6).

But if they have the same challenges as any family, then *how a pastor's family deals with normal issues* should be an example to the church and community. This is all a part of having a good reputation.

**Q: One qualification for pastors is their children need to be under control. What if only one of many children goes wayward?**

**A:** Look for any exceptions in the Bible; there are no exceptions to this qualification. In that case, a wayward child can affect the pastor's testimony, causing him to remove himself as the pastor — at least for a while — to get his household in order and his child under control. If the child is under his father's control while he is living with him and then, as an adult, he goes out of control that would be different.

**Q: If a pastor *should not be addicted to wine*, can he drink some wine?**

**A:** Yes. The Bible says, don't get drunk (Eph 5:18) and Paul told Timothy to drink wine as medicine for his stomach (1 Tim 5:23). But if a culture looks down on all drinking, it is best to abstain completely and accommodate the culture on this issue.

Does this contradict *clinging to Bible truth and letting go of tradition/culture*? Yes, but until the majority of the culture knows and accepts what the Bible says it is better to abstain completely and not cause other believers to stumble in their faith. A similar situation in Paul's day was when he was asked if it was alright to eat meat that had been sacrificed to an idol. He said it was OK unless it caused his brother to stumble in his faith (1 Cor 8:13).

**Q: If being a pastor is not a job, but a calling, does that mean he is not to get paid?**

**A:** Pastors should be paid (1 Cor 9:14). But if he wants to be a pastor *primarily* to get paid, then it's not his calling; it has become a job.

**Q. How do you know an African pastor is anointed?**

**A:** 1 John 2:27 says all believers are anointed. Every reference to anointing in the New Testament refers to Jesus or all believers. As a person repents and gives his life to Christ he is immediately anointed and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This is also called Spirit baptism (1 Cor 12:13).

**Q: In the lecture on qualifications for leadership you said pastors are to be hospitable. That means *lover of strangers*. But today there are a lot of bad people who will come into your home and do harm. What should we do?**

**A:** Be careful, use wisdom, and be sure that you or someone you know knows the person. But the pastor's home should be a place where people feel *at home*.

**Q: Can a pastor be married, then divorced, remarry, and still be a pastor?**

**A:** If his wife did not commit adultery and he divorced her he is immediately disqualified to be a pastor and should resign. If his wife committed adultery, the divorce is allowed by God (Matt 5:32). But he probably should still resign, because he is no longer above reproach (1 Tim 3:2). But

eventually he might regain full respect and could be a pastor again. But if he remarries that creates other issues, because some do not believe the Scriptures allow remarriage. If he is divorced, it is probably best, for the sake of Christ and the church, that he resign and never again pastor a church.

**Q: If a pastor's wife is not a Christian does that disqualify him?**

**A:** Yes, definitely.

**Q: Concerning qualification for leadership, is it right for churches to call their own pastors or for bishops to appoint pastors?**

**A:** Qualifications for leadership is not about *how to call* a pastor. It is about the *qualifications of the man called* or sent to be the pastor. Whoever calls, appoints, or chooses a pastor, it is very important that they call, appoint, or choose only men and only those who qualify according to 1 Tim 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9).

**Q: How can I remain confident about my call as a pastor, when people leave my church and go to another one? Am I doing something wrong? Why do they leave?**

**A:** Be faithful to God's call to "preach the Word without compromising!" Be a God pleaser, not a man pleaser. You CANNOT always please people, but you CAN always please God!

In 2 Timothy 4:3, it says, "people will not always listen to sound doctrine and will seek to have their ears tickled." In Isaiah 6, after humbly volunteering to *go*, he was told in the next few verses that no one would listen, but keep preaching until the cities were empty. It's true, sometimes people respond negatively to sound biblical preaching—keep on!

If you are called, and you know you are called, do what you are called to do and leave the results to God.

**Q: Does God give each pastor a *special message*.**

**A:** If you can find this principle in the Bible repeatedly, then you can believe it. God's message to all of us is written in the Bible. The faith was handed down once and for all to the saints (Jude 3).

**Q: Should people ignore the Bible and look only to the prophets for direction?**

**A:** The office of "prophet" went away after the first century, when the Scriptures were complete. The prophets were part of the original church's foundation (Eph 2:20), which was complete by the end of the first century. People should look only to the Scriptures for guidance (2 Tim 3:16).

**Q: Should pastors use flyers and posters, advertising their *special message*?**

**A:** Nobody is receiving a *special message*. We have all received the same message and it is found

in the Scriptures. In the New Testament the apostles and prophets received special messages, because the written message from God, the Bible, was not yet complete. Now that it is complete there is no need for special messages.

**Q: If pastors are supposed to give priority to the most important things and not worry about unimportant things, how do we know what they are?**

**A:** The essentials include the belief that the Bible is inspired by God, the gospel, and the Trinity. If a preacher is drawing people away from God with a false teaching of any kind, then he needs to be silenced. A pastor is responsible for *God's sheep*, who call His church their home. If any believers are pulled away by a false teacher, with a false message of any kind, then the pastor will have to give an account to God, because he is *the shepherd, the guardian of his flock*.

### **POLITICS (Elections, Rules), CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT**

**Q: Should Christians get involved in politics or not?**

**A:** Politics involves *compromise*, and Christians will often need to compromise at some point to be effective and get things done. Believers must not compromise what the Scripture says at any time. If believers compromise a little to win an election, will they also stand firm on biblical issues and lose? Christians must not budge on biblical issues, like abortion and homosexuality. But they might compromise a little on non-biblical issues, if their conscience is clear.

**Q. If a church (or denomination) has rules not in the Bible, what should we do?**

**A:** If it's a cultural rule, then follow it but acknowledge it is not found in the Bible. If it is obvious that it is a complete violation of Scripture, then you can't follow it and might need to leave the denomination.

### **PRAYER/PRAV**

**Q: Does God answer the prayers of non-Christians?**

**A:** ITEM founder, Dr. Steve Van Horn, gave two examples when God directly answered his prayers as an unbeliever. He feels it was God's way of assuring him that He (God) was there, waiting for the day when he would meet his future wife, who God used to lead Steve to put his faith in Jesus.

**Q: What does praying in the Spirit mean?**

**A:** The same as what it means to walk in the Spirit; it means to walk under His control. Praying in the Spirit is praying under God's control. Galatians 5 says we are to "walk in the Spirit."

That means allow the Spirit to lead you as you live your life. Praying in the Spirit is similar. We should allow the Spirit to guide our prayer life. We live the Christian life by faith, which includes praying *in the Spirit*.

**Q: At times I wake up at night and try to pray, but I can barely open my mouth and my body is weak. Do I need to open my mouth to pray, or can I pray in my mind?**

**A:** Psalm 139:23 invites God to know our thoughts, and since He knows our thoughts, we can pray with only our thoughts.

**Q: Does God answer prayers based on the context of our need or only His purposes?**

**A:** Yes! Both! We are told to ask, according God's will in 1 John 5:14-15, with right motives in James 4:3. So pray for what you know is God's will from the Bible and pray for anything else, with a pure heart and pure motives. Keep your heart right, walk in the Spirit, be in the Word, and pray as you want—always with Jesus' words in your mind: "Not my will, but Your will be done."

**Q: Should we pray for jobs? Does God tell church leaders when you will get one?**

**A:** We are to pray about everything and understand that God doesn't always answer how we want. Jesus Himself prayed, "Not my will, but Thine be done." Paul prayed three times for the thorn in his flesh to be removed; God said NO each time. So pray about everything, but don't expect all answers to be what you want.

**Q: Are Prayer Rooms good?**

**A:** If this refers to places where people get prayer and counseling, from self-proclaimed prophets, who counsel and prophesy over people for a price, then NO. Help Christians not be led easily astray and pay *ravenous wolves* (false prophets) for their false advice (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:29).

## **PREACHER, PREACHING**

**Q: Is it okay to change the sermon on Sunday morning if the Holy Spirit gives a pastor something else to preach at the last minute?**

**A:** Obviously, yes. But do not use that for an excuse to not study. It rarely happens. I've never preached a sermon without doing at least some preparation. Remember, a pastor is God's appointed guardian of the *pulpit* in their church and the Scriptures. Pastors are responsible for

everything spoken from their pulpit, good or bad. If anyone speakd something that is not biblical, the pastor has the responsibility to correct the false teaching. Remember, he is the guardian.

**Q: Where is the right place to preach the Gospel?**

**A:** *Where* you preach is not the issue. We are to preach it everywhere, at all times! The issue is what motive. In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul said he preached the Gospel without charge, so his motives would not be questioned. His issue was that people preached all over town and then took an offering. The offering was the motive, not the Gospel.

**Q: Can a woman, who is not the pastor, preach on Sunday morning?**

**A:** In 1 Timothy, Paul explains to Timothy how to organize the church (1 Tim 3:15). Paul writes in 2:12 that a woman is not to be the speaker/teacher/preacher on Sunday mornings when men are present. Consider what it would be like if a woman was a pastor and she was married. She would be her husband's pastor. So as the pastor, she would be in authority over her husband but as her husband he would be in authority over her. That would cause a big problem. In creation, in the church, and in the family God has always put the man as the leader.

**Q: If a church has a woman pastor, is it a false church?**

**A:** No. *People* are the church. This is simply a church with a pastor who is out of the will of God.

**Q: If an area has no qualified man to pastor, can a woman teach men and women?**

**A:** Because there is no qualified man to teach, this woman can teach the Bible but not allow them to call her *pastor*. They should pray together for God to bring a mature man to be the pastor.

**Q: How many chapters of the Bible should we read every day and for how long? (This was in reference to preparing for a sermon.)**

**A:** As many, and as long as it takes to understand the passage you are preaching from next Sunday. (NOTE: It was learned later that the average pastor takes zero notes into the pulpit when he preaches. He reads three or four random verses, closes the Bible, and then speaks extemporaneously about something he wants to talk about.)

**Q: Is topical preaching okay? Isn't preaching verse-by-verse less organized?**

**A:** If pastors spent time studying the Bible, topics would come out of the Scripture he is studying. But a pastor needs to first dedicate himself to studying. The goal of preaching is not to cover a topic. The goal is to tell the people what the Bible says and what it means. means—in context. When a pastor begins to study, he should not look for a *sermon*; he should look for *understanding* of the Bible passage being studied. A pastor's task is to learn what Scripture means, by what it says, and then tell people on Sunday what he discovered.

It's like a *beggar looking for bread*. When he finds it, he tells other beggars where to find it. A pastor should be like a hungry beggar looking for *understanding*; when he finds it, he should share it with the church. THAT is preaching/teaching; THAT brings the church to maturity.

**Q: Jesus used simple untrained fishermen, and God spoke through them. Can that be true today? Can God speak through untrained pastors?**

**A:** Peter was an inspired apostle and received direct revelation from God. Then he passed it on to others. Pastors today do not receive direct revelation from God but have God's written revelation. In 2 Timothy 2:15, Paul told Timothy, a young pastor, to be "...diligent (some translations say *study*) to show yourself approved. . . rightly dividing the Word of truth." A pastor needs to diligently study God's written revelation to learn what it says and means so he can tell others.

**Q: Is it appropriate to shout when you preach?**

**A:** His motive is what is important. If the preacher is trying to emphasize an important point in the sermon, then shouting might be appropriate. But if he is just trying to be entertaining and get people emotional without teaching them anything worthwhile then it is manipulation and he should not shout.

**Q: How can a pastor in Africa spend 15 hours a week preparing a sermon, when he has another job he is doing to provide for his family?**

**A:** An African pastor might not be able to spend 12-15 hours, but he can't rely on one hour of study, if he wants to understand the passage he will preach from so he can explain it to the church. A pastor must make time for Bible study, even three or five or seven hours a week. Only one hour is not enough, if the pastor wants to teach the meaning of the Bible to his church.

**Q: We must be careful not to take verses out of context when we teach, which I was doing. So should we stop teaching until we are sure we understand everything?**

**A:** No. Learning is a lifetime experience. Do the best you can. Study the entire context of the section you will be preaching from the following Sunday. If you learn later that you made a mistake, then admit it and correct it.

**Q: What is expository preaching?**

**A:** Expository preaching is simply reading, explaining, and applying a passage in the Bible and progressing through one book in the Bible, verse by verse, until you are finished with the book. That can take weeks or months for one book.

**Q: If we try to teach using the study Bible, many people will say they want us to preach, not**

**teach. They want us to shout, not talk. Is this okay?**

**A:** Why do people want a pastor to shout? Does it show he is powerful? During our seminars the lectures might shout but it is to emphasize on important point. Pastors can shout when they teach. Do people only want their pastor to shout to be stirred emotionally? What believers need is to have their minds engaged with the truth of Scripture. The Bible says to be transformed by the renewing of our minds not our emotions. So, pastors have a choice: Please God or please people.

**Q: What is preaching compared to teaching, compared to only telling stories?**

**A:** Africans often pass on traditions by stories and songs. ITEM simply teaches the Bible, trying to keep it simple to understand. Should ITEM change? Not a single pastor says we should change! Some say the average layman in church could understand. Stories are good and important but they should be used to illustrate something from the Bible.

A Bible School dean said the presentation on *preaching* was simple and helpful. He wants to use it in the school. We simply go to 1 Timothy 4:13 where Paul told Timothy to *read* the text, *explain* the text, and *apply* the text. That is *preaching*.

**Q: How should pastors teach today?**

**A:** When you study 2 Timothy you see it build to a challenging climax in chapter 2:2. Paul writes from prison while awaiting his death. He challenges young a preacher, Timothy, to “pass on what he had learned to faithful men who would teach others also.” Pastors today must do the same. In 2 Timothy 4:2, Paul challenges Timothy, in the presence of God and Jesus, to preach the word in season and out of season, because a time is coming when people will not listen to sound doctrine but will gather to themselves preachers who will tickle their ears by telling them what they want to hear.

The things that “tickle the ears are things like, *God will make you rich and healthy*, when in reality God might call you to suffer hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. We must preach only God’s Word, whatever the cost. Don’t be deceived by western preachers that you see on TV. Defend the truth and teach the Word!

**Q: Can a pastor preach without opening the Bible? Can he just quote the verse?**

**A:** If a pastor *teaches* the Bible verse-by-verse, he needs to open the Bible when he preaches, because he will be referring to the Scripture he is preaching from many times during the sermon.

**Q: Do pastors preach/teach directly from the Bible only?**

**A:** In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 it says God’s inspired Scriptures make pastors adequate and equipped



for every good work—not visions, dreams, and revelations.

**Q: Pastors are called to preach (evangelistic sermons) and teach. Yet we do not have the education or the books to study and teach deeply. Can we concentrate on preaching only?**

**A:** A pastor's responsibility is to bring the church to maturity, like Colossians 1:25, 28-29, which shows that Paul was called to be a minister, to preach the Word, and to present every man complete (mature) in Christ. 1 Timothy 5:17 says an elder (pastor) who works hard at preaching and teaching is worthy of double honor—and doing it well is hard work!

Remember the qualifications of leadership: 1 Timothy 3:2 says a pastor should be *able to teach*. If a pastor does not want to teach or learn to teach, maybe they should not be a pastor. Maybe they are supposed to be an evangelist.

**Q: Our church has a team of preachers, so how can we apply the principle of preaching through books of the Bible, in context?**

**A:** Work together. Be sure you are all committed to the same principles of preaching and the same theme of the book. Otherwise, you will only confuse people, because there will not be any consistency in the messages. Work together.

**Q: If pastors should preach through books of the Bible starting with a chapter, instead of the way we preach now, why are a lot of people already coming to Christ?**

**A:** You have heard the phrase: "The African church is a mile wide and an inch deep." That shows that the Gospel is indeed being shared and people are coming to Christ. But Jesus said to make disciples not just converts (Matt. 28:19) by teaching them to obey all of his commands (Matt. 28:19). Without deep discipleship, Christians remain immature and untaught.

**Q: How can we preach through a book, if we're a guest speaker only one time?**

**A:** When you preach once in a church, preach from an entire passage, not one single verse. Teach through a passage.

**Q: Should believers watch and be influenced by TV preachers all the time?**

**A:** A problem occurs when people watch TV preachers all week. Most do not teach the truth. Then a pastor who wants the people in his church to know the Bible has one hour on Sunday to

correct everything they have been watching all week. Competing with television preachers is a tough challenge. It should be confronted in your church. A pastor is shepherd of his people, God's sheep, bought with the blood of Christ. If one wanders away into false teaching, God has to hold the pastor responsible for not warning them (see Acts 20:28-29).

The solution is simple: Teach the Bible. Teach. Teach. Teach. Teach not only the narratives

(stories), but teach the apostles' *letters* to churches, where they warned about many false teachings still evident today.

Changing a believers' understanding of God's instructions will not come overnight. A baby doesn't become an adult in a week. It takes a long time and a lot of food is required! It's the same for a spiritual baby. They need nutritious *food* (Scripture) and time, to grow, mature, and become a spiritual adult who knows what's right. Pastors need to get started and be faithful.

**Q: What about listening to Billy Graham?**

**A:** Billy Graham taught good Bible principles. Some criticize him for putting unsaved people who thought they were Christians on his planning committees. He said this was so other unsaved people who knew the people on the planning committee would come to the crusades. In his later years, he said some things he probably would have not said earlier in his life about who would and would not be in heaven. (Steve Van Horn, ITEM founder, was saved watching Billy Graham on TV in June 1968.)

**Q: How long should a sermon be? What should pastors do if people sleep and don't listen, or when one pastor *teaches*, but another only tells stories about himself?**

**A:** First, if you have nothing to say when you get up to preach, then five minutes is too long. But if you teach God's Word in context, it takes longer. Some like 35-40 minutes or an hour. Second, if a pastor is committed to preach verse-by-verse, they need to train believers to listen. Make sure people open their Bibles and look at it when you teach. At first, a teaching sermon might need to be shorter to help people grow into the teaching style.

Finally, if a pastor is committed to verse-by-verse preaching, then call all the church preachers together and explain the kind of sermons you and they will begin to preach from now on. If a man talks only about himself, he should be corrected and if he still just talks about himself then he should not be allowed to preach again.

**Q: If the message is important, not the messenger, can anyone speak to our church?**

**A:** The church/pulpit/pastor's purpose is to communicate the truth in God's revelation, the Bible. An unbeliever cannot understand, therefore is unqualified to talk about God's Word from the pulpit. Someone spiritually dead cannot possibly communicate spiritual truth. Also, the Bible makes it clear that the elders (the pastors) are the ones who are to teach the Bible to the church (1 Timothy 5:17).

**Q: If we should spend 15-20 hours preparing a sermon, where does prayer fit in?**

**A:** When ITEM founder, Steve, was a pastor, he took 15-20 hours to prepare. It's not what others might need. ITEM associate Pastor Phil said there are three times he is certain to pray: 1) He starts praying months in advance for God to guide him into the next series to preach; 2) When he

studies, he asks God to give understanding, lead him to resources, and to help him learn what the passage means; 3) After teaching, he asks God the Spirit to apply the truth to the lives of his church members. Make prayer a part of the time you are using to study.

**Q: Paul was a great leader and teacher but today is different. Can TV preachers speak to today's needs, differently? Some have influenced and helped me a lot. Is it possible God has anointed them "for such a time as this?"**

**A:** God's Word is the issue. A preacher's job is to give people God's revelation as it is written down in the Bible. A preacher's primary responsibility is to read, explain, and apply God's revelation (the Bible). If they add to it, or leave some out, or take it out of context to make a point, that is not good and God is not pleased.

If a TV preacher is not applying the Bible properly, I will try to warn others about the misapplication of God's Word. But I hope to never judge their intentions or motivations. That is up to God. I try to focus only on what a preacher says. Does it match Scripture? Here are five helpful tips:

1) God handpicked about 40 people and inspired them to record His one and only revelation, to author the Old and New Testaments.

2) These inspired authors are who we need to pay attention to. Today's preachers and teachers are to communicate ONLY what the handpicked, God-inspired authors wrote.

3) If any preacher or teacher says anything else, he is not doing what he is called to do.

4) Many verses challenge us to contend for the faith, like Jude 3. Guard the Word, the treasure (1 Timothy 6:20, 2 Timothy 1:14). God was careful to give us an inspired revelation (the Bible). Now, we need to honor and protect it from those who choose to be careless with it.

5) Paul wrote in Galatians 1, if anyone, including himself or an angel, preached another Gospel, they should be accursed.

### **PROPHETS, PROPHETESS, PROPHECY**

**Q: Are we in a prophetic era, like Joel 2, "...girls will prophesy, and men will dream"**

**A:** Look at the context of the entire book of Joel. It is written to Israel. God speaks of their judgment; He calls them to repent. He promises to restore them. "*Sons and daughters*" refer to Israelite children. He is speaking to Israel and says, "your sons and daughters." There are also

signs in the sky that will happen but it didn't happen then. Obviously Joel refers to the time of the tribulation, when Israel will turn to God in Christ. It does not refer to Gentiles now. Pentecost was the only the beginning of the signs to Israel.

**Q: In 1 Corinthians 12 it says, “...the body of Christ has many parts, and if any part is missing, the body is damaged.” Since God originally put prophets in the body, but there are no prophets today, then is the body not complete today**

**A:** “Prophets” today are more like preachers. The difference is that in the early church, the prophets were receiving direct revelation from God and then telling the early church what God told them (Eph 3:5). Now that revelation is complete and written down (Jude 3), there is no longer a need for anyone to be receiving direct revelation from God. But anyone who is preaching from God’s revelation, telling God’s people what it says and what it means is functioning as a prophet today.

The key is that *revelation* is complete (Jude 3), since we have the complete Bible. God is not giving any new revelation today, but those who preach from God’s revelation, the Bible, function like modern day prophets. But that includes all preachers who are faithful to the Bible.

**Q: What does the Bible teach about apostles and prophets?**

**A:** Read Ephesians 2:20 and 3:3, 5. The apostles of Christ and the prophets were the foundation of the church (Eph 2:20). What that is referring to is that they received direct revelation from God (Eph 3:3, 5) and it was their responsibility to write it down and to teach God’s revelation to the believers (Acts 2:42). God then gave the apostles special miracle working powers so the people back then would know they were the true messengers of God (2 Cor 12:12; Acts 2:43). So their “teaching” was the foundation of the church and should be the foundation of every church today.

**Q: Why do we not ordain prophets or evangelists, since they are listed with apostles and pastors in Ephesians 4:11?**

**A:** There is no example of any apostle or prophet being ordained in the New Testament so there is no reason to ordain them today. But also, apostles and prophets were special men who received direct revelations from God (Eph 2:20, 3:3, 5). They taught the church what God had revealed to them and the apostles wrote it down, to form the New Testament. Now that we have the completed New Testament, we no longer need specially gifted men like apostles and prophets. Therefore, there are no true apostles or prophets today who are like those in the New Testament.

**Q: How can an unbeliever tell what is true prophecy or false (See 1 Cor 14:24)?**

**A:** Regarding a true or false prophecy, remember that prophecy, in the context of 1 Cor 14:24, is simply speaking God’s Words. In the early church, that meant speaking new words from God,

because the Bible was not complete, but now it means speaking the completed Word of God, the Bible. So, we can tell *true prophecy*, if it comes from Scripture, in context.

**Q: Do we have prophets and prophecy today?**

**A:** Old Testament prophets are in the *past*; John the Baptist was the last of that type. New Testament prophets speak God's revelation for the *present and future*. We have prophets in the New Testament, as the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20). They received and spoke direct messages from God (Ephesians 3:5). Now we have God's complete, written revelation and do not need prophets. Therefore someone does not receive direct revelation from God now, like in the New Testament. It was God's way of communicating His truth before there was a completed Bible containing His complete revelation (Jude 3).

**Q: If someone stands up in church and prophesies five things are going to happen, and only two or three of them really happen, is he a false prophet?**

**A:** A true prophet will be correct 100% of the time. So, yes, that person is a false prophet. In the Old Testament, the person would have lost his life.

**Q: If someone stands up in a church and says they have a word from God, but if it tears apart the church or divides the church, is that person a false prophet?**

**A:** Verses in 1 Corinthians 14:4 say "one who prophesies edifies the church." So, if the person is tearing down or dividing the church, they are certainly a false prophet.

Also, remember, anyone who wants to gain an advantage can say, "God told me" something. I could tell you, "God told me to go drown myself in the river." How would you know if God told me that or not? There is no new revelation from God today. It is all in the Bible. So, anyone who says they are speaking God's message must always be speaking from what is written in Scripture. In Acts 17:11, the Bereans checked everything by what had been written in Scripture.

**Q: Can you explain how we have all of God's revelation in the Bible, but still have *prophets*, who speak God's message today?**

**A:** Ephesians 2:20 says apostles and prophets were the church's foundation and Eph 3:3, 5 tell us they received direct revelation from God. Acts 2:42 says new believers listened to the apostles teach. The apostles taught what God revealed to them, because they did not have the New Testament. The same is true of the prophets. Jude 3 tells us that the faith (the Scriptures) were handed down to us once and for all. So, revelation is complete.

In a sense, pastors minister like prophets today. But they don't receive new revelation like the New Testament prophets. They speak from God's written revelation, the Bible.

**Q: Why is God not giving any new, direct revelation today, if he gave to Elisha, when he told a woman what would happen in her life?**

**A:** Moses, Elisha, Elijah, Jesus, Apostles, and a few other chosen people were special cases in the Bible. God was doing something special through a specific individual. They had to rely on God's

direct revelation, because the Word of God—God's revelation—was not yet completed, until the end of the first century. Jude 3 tells us that the faith was handed down once and for all.

**Q: What is the difference between a prophet and a teacher?**

**A:** Teachers take time to present, and his goal is to give understanding. A prophet's motive is urgent action.

**Q: Deuteronomy 18:20 says prophets who were wrong were to be killed. Today, why do prophets who are wrong not die?**

**A:** The Old Testament law of God said false prophets were to be stoned to death. Today we are under the law of our governments, which do not allow stoning of false prophets. Today we are to call them out, correct them, if necessary rebuke them, and definitely warn them. Read 1 Timothy 1:3; Titus 1:10-11; Jude 3-4, 8-13; 2 Peter 2:1-2. At times, we should even call the false teachers by name, to warn and protect believers (3 John 9-10; 2 Timothy 2:17).

**Q: Do Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:17, which are about the day of Pentecost, prove we are all supposed to prophesy, have visions and dreams today?**

**A:** Context is most important. When it says *your sons and daughters*, who is he talking to? Joel 1:2 makes it clear that the audience is the inhabitants of the land, the Israelites, the Jewish people. Joel 2:28-32 is also a promise to the nation of Israel.

In Acts 2:14, 22, Peter makes it clear he is talking to the Jews. In Acts 2:16 he says, "This is what Joel wrote about", referring to what was happening at Pentecost. Then, Joel 2: 30-32 speaks of the signs to come, at the Second Coming of Jesus, which marks the end of the *last days*. These all reference Jews and acceptance of their Messiah which will be in the tribulation period.

**Q: How should we respond to a man who continually prophesies falsely, when no one in his church will confront him, because it's not cultural to confront your pastor or Bishop?**

**A:** The Bible pattern is to confront him gently, and if he ignores you, take one or two witnesses and talk to him again. If he still ignores you, you are supposed to tell it to the church, if he is a pastor. I know it's hard. This is why we need to be teaching the Bible to the church members, so they know what God says, which might be different from the cultures. If his own church will not do anything, then turn him over to the Lord.

**Q: Can the promises in Joel 2 happen today?**

**A:** Joel's prophecy was written to Israel, so they will be fulfilled with Israel. Some have already been fulfilled in Acts 2, but not all of them. This prophecy speaks of the *Last Days*. They started with Christ's ascension and continue until He returns. All of Joel's prophecy will happen by the

time Christ returns. But that doesn't mean right now or even in the near future—although they might.

### **PROSPERITY GOSPEL/ HEALTH & WEALTH/ FAITH MOVEMENT**

#### **Q: How are Bible stories of healing or faith blessing not Prosperity Gospel?**

**A:** God can heal anyone that He wants to heal and He can heal someone any time that He wants. Because God healed some by their faith doesn't mean all who have enough faith will be healed. Even in the Bible He didn't heal everyone who asked Him. One important example was Paul. He had doctor Luke traveling with him, because he needed medical help at time. In 2 Corinthians 12 he prayed for God to remove his thorn in the flesh and God didn't do it. Timothy was told to drink wine to help his stomach. Epaphroditus was sick to the point of death (Phil 2:26). Does this mean they did not have enough faith to be healed? No.

#### **Q: Is Health and Wealth Gospel the same as Prosperity Gospel? Is it OK to follow that teaching?**

**A:** They are the same. No, we are not to follow that teaching. Are we to always be prosperous? In 2 Timothy Paul invited Timothy to suffer hardship for the Gospel. That is a simple answer to the question.

Some pastors defend Kenneth Hagin, the so-called *father of the Faith Movement*. They say he's blessed many people and written many books, so pastors think the size and visibility of a ministry means God's blessing. But the size of a person's ministry does not prove they are being blessed by God. Even false religions, like Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses, have large followings.

Prosperity teachers may teach some good things from the Bible but what they specifically teach about faith, healing, and money is not biblical.

#### **Q: Should we continue to listen to preachers of the prosperity gospel?**

**A:** No. The average Christian cannot separate what they are saying that is true from what is false. Satan uses half-truths to confuse Christians and lead them astray. Satan uses little bits of truth to snare Christians and drag them into bondage to his lies. Christians can be captives to Satan's lies—lies about spirits, God, and lies about the devil himself. Only the truth of God's Word will free anyone from Satan's captivity, as 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 says.

### **REPENT / REPENTANCE**

#### **Q: If a pastor is living sinfully, should he leave his church, or only until he repents?**

**A:** In 1 Timothy 5:20 it says to rebuke him in everyone's presence. One Kenya pastor helped

organize a Bible seminar, but when confronted about having two wives, he did not repent. He said, "Our families approve, and the church still wants me as pastor." In that case the people in his church should leave the church and find a pastor who is living a godly life. But if he sincerely repents and immediately changes the way he is living then there is no reason to leave the church.

**Q: What should be done if a pastor is always angry?**

**A:** He should be lovingly confronted by the other church leaders. They should help him deal with his problem of anger. He needs to confess it as sin and seek the help of God and others. If he continues in this sin he should be encouraged to step aside as the pastor until he is able to control it, because he is not a good example. One qualification of a pastor is that he must be self-controlled (1 Timothy 3:2).

**Q: If a church leader commits a serious sin, like adultery, but repents, can he remain a church leader?**

**A:** Even if the leader repents, he should step down long enough, to prove to others that he is again worthy of their trust as a leader. The key in Scripture is always for restoration to fellowship. But 1 Timothy 3:2 says the pastor must be above reproach or not in a position to be criticized for his lifestyle.

After committing adultery, it will take months and maybe years for him to overcome criticism. Some believe he is disqualified to ever serve as a pastor again, which might be best, because of the important of a man being "above reproach," to be a pastor (1 Timothy 3:2).

**Q: How should we treat someone caught stealing or in adultery who then repents?**

**A:** The purpose of church discipline in Matthew 18:15 is to restore believers, not to punish. When a sinner truly repents, they are to be restored to fellowship immediately, regardless of the sin.

## **REVELATIONS (today)**

**Q: How do we deal with people who claim to get a new revelation from God or the Holy Spirit? Can they can say anything and claim God or the Holy Spirit told them?**

**A:** Jude 3 says the faith (the truth of Christianity) was handed down once and for all. That means there is no new revelation today. The Bible is God's completed revelation and where we look for



God's truth.

**Q: What is the difference between revelation and a vision?**

**A:** In the Bible, a vision was one form of a revelation, or direct information from God.

**Q: Does God give revelations (dreams or visions) about the future?**

**A:** The purpose of a *revelation* in the New Testament era, as Scriptures were being written and assembled, was to let people hear from God until His Word was completed. God set apart apostles and prophets, and gave them direct revelation, sometimes by visions or dreams or a direct Word. Their teaching then became the foundation of the early church. Read Ephesians 2:20 and 3:1-5. God also gave apostles the ability to do miracles, to validate their message, given directly from God. In 2 Corinthians 11:13, Paul warns the Corinthians about false prophets who were trying to pull the Christians from Paul's influence and get the Christian to follow them. Then in 2 Corinthians 12:12 he tells them that true apostles performed signs, miracles, and wonders

**Q: Do pastors preach/teach directly from the Bible only?**

**A:** In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 it says God's inspired Scriptures make pastors adequate and equipped for every good work—not visions, dreams, and revelations.

**Q: If we should not say, "God revealed something to me...", but we know He leads us, what do we say?**

**A:** Is the Bible always right? (Yes) When someone says God "revealed this to me", are they always 100% right? (No) That is the difference.

The Bible has no errors. We could be wrong when we say, "God told me or God revealed to me..." So it is better to say, "I think God might be leading me..." We usually do not know for sure, until we take steps of faith and later look back.

**Q: What happens when believers rely on dreams?**

**A:** Here is a warning: If pastors rely on visions, dreams, and revelations to get instructions from God and directions to lead the church, their people will also begin to rely on visions and revelations.

False teachers will easily come along and say, "I had a vision, or a revelation. God told me 'this', so follow me." And the people will have NO way to know the truth from error. How will they know who is telling the truth? Who is lying?

Christians can become dependent upon the *dreamer*, the *receiver of the revelation*, the one who has *visions*, rather than developing his own relationship with God, through His Word, the

Bible. People will stop reading and studying the Bible, which sets us free (John 8:32), sanctifies us (John 17:17), and causes us to grow (1 Peter 2:2)!

**Q: Is it okay to have people predict our future?**

**A:** Many people seek out those who will tell them about their personal future, and many people are willing to tell them — for a PRICE! But James 4:13-16 says we cannot know the future. We can't even be sure about tomorrow. Verse 16 calls it boasting and arrogance to claim to know the future.

**Q: Explain why God is not giving any new, direct revelation today? What about Elisha, when he told a woman what would happen in her life?**

**A:** Moses, Elisha, Elijah, Jesus, Apostles, and a few other chosen people were special Bible cases, when God did something special through a special person who had to rely on direct revelation, because the Word of God, His complete revelation, was not done until the end of the first century.

**Q: Why is revelation finished, if the Bible says, “the Holy Spirit will come to lead us into revelation?” Jude 3 says, “faith was given once and for all,” not revelation. So, does revelation still come from the Holy Spirit today?**

**A:** There's a difference between *revelation* and the *Holy Spirit's involvement* in our lives today. John 13:16 says the Spirit will lead us into *truth*, not revelation. This is part of *illumination*, not *revelation*. The apostles and prophets received revelation, (Ephesians 3:3, 5), and their responsibility was to write it down. Their teaching was the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20). What the Holy Spirit, today, gives wisdom and guidance. We cannot know perfectly that the Spirit is guiding us because we are sinful, but we can often look back in our lives and see that He was. That is *walking by faith*.

## **SALVATION**

**Q: Doesn't John 6:37 ("all the Father gives me I will not cast out") contradict Hebrews 6:4-6 ("if someone falls away")?**

**A:** Hebrews 6:4-6, like 1 John 2:19 and 2 Peter 2:20-22, teaches there are those in the church who think they are saved, but they are not. They look, act, and sound like a Christian for a while, but eventually they leave.

**Q: Can we lose our salvation?**

**A:** If God saves someone, only God can unsave them. Philippians 1:6 says, if God starts something,

He will complete it. Hebrews 6:4-6 says, if someone could lose their salvation, then it would be impossible for them to be saved again. What complicates this is that a lot of people claim to be Christians but their life has never had a transforming encounter with Jesus and, therefore, they are not really *saved*.

**Q: If people received salvation at a false teacher's crusade, are they still born again?**

**A:** Obviously, if a person responds to the Gospel message, it doesn't matter who is presenting it. They are born again.

**Q: Romans 8:1 says there is no condemnation in Christ. Yet Scripture also says the unrighteous will not enter the Kingdom (1 Corinthians 6:9). Can you explain?**

**A:** When we give our lives to Christ, we become holy and blameless in the eyes of God (Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; Colossians 1:22; 1 Corinthians 1:8), and therefore, He can take us into heaven.

## **SATAN**

**Q: If we are not to bind Satan, why does the Bible say: "What you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven," and what does it mean?**

**A:** It comes from Matthew 18, the chapter on church discipline, and refers to a rabbinical tradition that says rabbis have the authority to say to an unrepentant sinner: "Your sin is bound to you," and when they repent, "Your sin is loosed from you." Compare it to John 20:23, which is much clearer. One is Jewish in nature; the other is Gentile in nature.

**Q: Satan was in God's presence in Job 1:6, yet God is absolutely holy and sin cannot survive in His presence. Why did God allow Satan into His presence?**

**A:** God is God; He can do what He wants, when He wants, and that includes making exceptions to His rules. God is everywhere. None of us *deserve* to live, but we live by His grace.

**Q: Is Isaiah 14:12-14 about Satan, or in later verses about a king?**

**A:** Some Bible teachers believe the verses have a double meaning and the second meaning is the fall of Satan.

**Q: What does Matthew 16:23 mean, when Jesus said to Peter: "Get behind me Satan."**

**A:** Earlier in the chapter, Peter was led of God to say that Jesus was the Christ. Yet in verse 23, Peter is influenced by Satan, who was trying to keep Jesus from going to the cross. Jesus was speaking to Satan who was at that point influencing Peter.

**Q: In John 6:70 Jesus called Judas the devil. What does that mean?**

**A:** He called Judas a devil (not *the* devil). Jesus made the point that someone there was an enemy.

**Q: Hebrews 2:14 says Jesus made the devil powerless, “the one with the power of death.” What does that mean?**

**A:** Before Jesus died for our sins, Satan had the power of death but he is talking about spiritual death. When people died physically he could take them to hell. That is spiritual death. Now he is powerless over those who receive Christ. Jesus removed Satan’s *power of death*. If someone is born again they will not die spiritually. They will live spiritually.

### **SCRIPTURE (Bible)**

**Q: Do translators change God’s Word during their work?**

**A:** Translation is a hard task. There are two types of translations. The first is a literal, word for word translation. Translators do their best to translate the original languages of Greek and Hebrew into the word that is the same in the local language.

The second is translators who may not translate the Greek and Hebrew word for word. They might use other words, while trying to keep the meaning the same.

The third is when a translator uses the English words and changes them into the local language. That means one translator takes the Greek and Hebrew and translates them into English. Then the local translator takes the English and translates it into the local language.

Sometimes a Greek or Hebrew word does not have the exact word in English, and the local language does not always have the exact same word. These are some of the challenges. The best local translation comes when the local translator uses the Greek or Hebrew, or a literal English translation, like the New American Standard or the English Standard version, as beginning text. Another challenge is when a local translator doesn’t understand theology, and when they try to interpret from the English, into a local language, when they may not understand what is being taught, then they translate incorrectly. One example is when the qualification for church leadership, “*husband of one wife*,” is changed to simply, “*married*.” This changes the meaning completely

Problems also occur when people study from a Bible translation that is not accurate and

Word, we cannot rely on personal interpretation.

**Q: Can the Scripture that says the pastor is to be a "husband of one wife" also mean a "wife of one husband?"**

**A:** No. The Bible says what it says. We cannot reinterpret it, add to it, or take away from it.

**Q: Is all the Bible inspired by God? What about Mark 16:9-20?**

**A:** If verses belong in the Bible, then they are inspired by God. If they were added later, they do not belong in the Bible, and they are not inspired. Scholars remind us that these verses were added about 800 years after Mark wrote his original Gospel. Therefore, they probably do not belong in our Bibles. But translators left them in case for some reason they belong in the Bible.

**Q: Jesus said man is to live by every WORD that proceeds from the mouth of God, so, is the "Word of God" and "Scripture" the same thing?**

**A:** God's Word has taken different forms through the centuries. It was spoken by the prophets. It was revealed to the apostles and prophets in the New Testament times. Today, the *Word of God* to us is the Bible, the Scriptures.

**Q: What is the Bible?**

**A:** The Bible is God's message to us. About 40 different men were involved in writing it down. Moses was the first. He wrote Genesis about 1445 BC. The last was John who wrote Revelation about 95 AD. All of these authors received a direct message from God and the Holy Spirit guided them as they wrote down God's message. The original Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew and the New Testament was written in Greek. It has now been translated into hundreds of languages. The Bible is our only authority and is the sufficient resource for ministry.

**Q: What is Sola Scriptura**

**A:** These words are Latin words that mean "Scripture alone." They come from church history. In the 1500s, the church was relying more on tradition than on Scripture, the Bible. One man, Martin Luther, started a movement that is called "the reformation" that brought the church back to the Bible alone or Scripture alone. These words are at the center of what ITEM believes and teaches.

**Q: Can you explain the phrase "Scripture is sufficient," when warning about people who claim dreams, visions, and revelations as their sufficient authority?**

**A:** Many people, including preachers, claim that God speaks to them in their dreams and visions.

But it is through the Bible that God speaks to us. Paul warned the Colossian church to avoid people who rely on tradition and visions in Colossians 2:8, 18.

Jude 3 tells us that the Christian faith, God's truth, the Scriptures, are complete. Therefore, Scripture is all that we need, and, therefore, Scripture is sufficient. Review 2 Timothy 3:16-17, which says ALL that is profitable is found in the inspired Word. And 2 Peter 1:2-3 shows we ALREADY have everything we need for life and godliness.

**Q: If God used about 40 authors to write the Bible and then His revelation was complete, why do people say, "God revealed something to me." Is Ephesians 4:11 "God gives prophets" true today?**

**A:** Apostles and prophets were the church's foundation (Ephesians 2:20); they received direct revelation (truth) from God (Ephesians 3:3, 5), wrote it down, and spoke it to the church (Acts 2:42). God gave them the ability to do miraculous works and signs to validate their authority and message (Acts 2:43).

Once God's written revelation was written down and available, there was no longer a need for direct revelation or validating signs and wonders. Ephesians 4 is speaking of the times in which it was written. That was before the Bible was written down. Prophets were still receiving revelation from God. A prophet today is one who speaks and preaches God's revelation, the Bible. They do not receive direct revelation.

**Q: Our preaching notes say: "Practice reading the Bible out loud." What do you mean?**

**A:** When you read the Bible to the church, before preaching the sermon, read it with the appropriate emotion. Put feeling into Bible reading; when you read it publicly; practice.

**Q: Should we put aside all culture and follow only the Bible?**

**A:** No. We all have traditions and culture; that is good. But when culture or tradition contradicts the Bible, then we need to let go of the tradition and hold on to Scripture (Mark 7:6-9).

**Q: In 2 Chronicles 9:29 it says there existed a book of "Nathan the prophet and another prophet." Do we need these to know everything we need to know?**

**A:** 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says "all Scripture is inspired," so if it is not in God's collected Scripture, then it isn't inspired by Him. It also says, "all Scripture is profitable and equips the man of God (pastor) for every good work." God gave us all that we need in His Word.

**Q: How do we answer religions that say the Bible is corrupted by its many versions?**

**A:** A Christian won't be able to argue anyone into believing something they don't want to believe; but if they are willing to discuss it objectively, we can talk about the evidence that the Bible is the

Word of God. Different versions are different translations of the original Greek and Hebrew documents. Translators may use different words, but the basic meaning and message remain the same. If “the Word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword,” then we don't need to defend it, simply USE it. God promises it will not return void (Isaiah 55:11).

**Q: How did the early church know which books were inspired and were supposed to put in the Bible?**

**A:** There were specific tests they used. The apostles were special. They received God's revelation directly and then wrote it down. Their ministries were validated by the signs and wonders God enabled them to perform (2 Corinthians 12:12; Acts 2:42-43). Many books and letters were similar but did not pass the tests of inspiration. Here are the tests:

**Tests for Old Testament books**

1. Did the book indicate Divine authorship?
2. Did it reflect God speaking through a mediator?
3. Was the human author a spokesman for God?
4. Was the human author a prophet or did he have the prophetic gift?
5. Was the book historically accurate?
6. Did it reflect a record of actual facts?
7. How was the book received by the Jews?

**Tests for New Testament books**

1. Was the author an apostle/connected to one? (Mark wrote with Peter's authority.)
2. Was the book accepted by the church generally?
3. Did the book reflect consistency with doctrine that had already been accepted?
4. Did the book reflect the quality of inspiration?

**Q: How can we answer people who say God has not put everything in the Bible. Does He speak today in dreams and visions?**

**A:** Jude 3 says the faith (Scripture) was handed down once and for all. Therefore, there is no new Revelation. Colossians 2:18 warned the believers that some (false teachers) will try to cheat them out of their spiritual prize (rewards), by taking a stand on visions they have seen. So it is dangerous to follow one who says God has spoken to them in their dreams.

From Bible times to now, false teachers have claimed personal revelations, visions, and dreams to try to place themselves in authority and to try to influence people to follow them. Scripture does not allow them to exalt themselves, so they have to claim a *special connection with God*, to try to set them apart.

Ask that person, "How can I know you really had that dream or revelation?" Ask them, "Should we believe every person who claims to have a vision or revelation? If not, why should we believe you and not others? What makes you special?"

**Q: If the Bible is inspired, why do some have 66 books and others have 72 books?**

**A:** Some include the Apocrypha books. These books are not inspired but add some historical information that is helpful. Some denominations include them. Many do not.

**Q: Does the Bible contain the Words of God and, also the words of Satan and men?**

**A:** Yes. The Bible is called the "Word of God" but that doesn't mean that every word was said by God. The Bible is the message God wants us to have.

**Q: Many churches have accepted homosexuals and gay marriage. Should we?**

**A:** Is there any question in your mind what the Bible teaches? The Bible does not allow for either. But remember that even though both are considered sinful behavior in the Bible, homosexuality is not worse to God than slander or a lying tongue. If a person is an unsaved homosexual, what they need most is salvation, not rebuke for being gay.

**Q: Should Proverbs be removed from the Bible, because of how Solomon sinned against the Lord, as some pastors and church leaders teach?**

**A:** No. Every man God used to write parts of the Bible were sinners. David wrote most of the Psalms, and he committed adultery. Paul called himself the chief of all sinners, and God used him. The Bible says, "all have sinned." The pastors who believe that Proverbs should be removed from the Bible because of Solomon's sins need to look at themselves and ask, "Am I a sinner also? Can God use me even though I am a sinner saved by God's grace?" God used Solomon's writings, because he tried to find satisfaction in life apart from a relationship with God and learned that only a relationship with God brought true satisfaction.

**SEEK (not seek)**

**Q: What does it mean not to seek miracles, supernatural experiences, visions, and dreams, but seek the simple teaching about integrity, happiness, holiness, and righteousness from Bible teaching?**

**A:** Matthew 6:33 tells us to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Jesus said that we are to "hunger and thirst for righteousness and live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (the Bible)." But many people do not seek righteousness. Nor do they live by every



word that proceeds from the mouth of God. They seek supernatural experiences, like miracles, visions, and personal revelations, because they have been told that this is what people do to get closer to God. God wants us to seek a godly lifestyle, which comes from studying and applying the principles of God's Word.

## **SERVANTS**

**Q: What does the Bible say about pastors being servants to their congregations?**

**A:** In 2 Corinthians 4:5, Paul calls himself a bondservant of the Christians in the Corinthian church. The pastor is the leader but he is a servant-leader. The needs of the people in the church are more important than his needs.

But many people expect bishops and pastors to act like a boss at the top. Bishops are overseers. They have a high position and many people expect them to act and be treated differently. Some bishops allow or expect to be treated like a king or a chief.

Some in authority, like pastors and bishops, think that if they humble themselves and serve others, they are lowering themselves and doing what they are not supposed to do. It might even disappoint people who are to submit to them.

Scripture shows Jesus washing the disciple's feet in John 13:1-17 and teaches them how to be a servant. Who is a greater example than Jesus?

## **SIN**

**Q: What is Balaam's sin in Revelation 2? What was the woman Jezebel teaching?**

**A:** Balaam was an Old Testament prophet *for hire*. He would not curse Israel for money. Instead, he tricked them into intermarrying with Gentiles, which led Israel into idolatry. Jezebel was called a *prophetess*. She led believers into idol worship.

**Q: What should we do when people are living in sinful ways?**

**A:** They should be confronted in love by someone who knows about the sin. Then two or three if they don't repent. If they still don't repent, then tell the church. This is all for the purpose of bringing the person back into fellowship with God and the church. We call this church discipline. Read Matthew 18:15-17. Galatians 6:1 says that only *spiritual* people, people who are not living in sin themselves, should be involved in the process of church discipline.

**Q: If a believer is sinning, is it true the devil causes him to sin?**

**A:** That is a lie of the devil. 1 Corinthians 10:13 tells us that God always gives us a way to escape

the temptation and not sin. The believer needs to take responsibility and repent of his sin.

**Q: What sin will lead to someone being removed from the church?**

**A:** Matthew 18:15-17 says “if a person sins” but it doesn’t single out any particular sin. God doesn't grade sin. Any ongoing sin could lead to them being removed from the church if they refused to repent. But remember that the purpose of church discipline is ALWAYS restoration. Whenever a sinner repents, they should immediately be restored to fellowship. Even if they are removed from the church for a time, when they repent they are to be restored to fellowship immediately.

**Q: 1 John 3:4 says all sin is "lawlessness." Is all sin breaking "the law"?**

**A:** Yes. All sin breaks God’s law.

**Q: We should stay away from those living in sin, but what if it is your spouse?**

**A:** Marriage is different. The only reason God’s gives for one marriage partner to leave the other is when the other has committed adultery.

**Q: If the church is told about the sin of an unrepentant member, and then the member truly repents, should the whole church be told that the sinner repented?**

**A:** Yes. The one who repented should be welcomed back into the fellowship of the church. They should be embraced by everyone, like the prodigal son was reconciled.

**Q: When a believer sins, how do we bring them out of the sin?**

**A:** Follow the steps outlined in Matthew 18:15-17

**Q: What does a church do, if it is the pastor who is sinning?**

**A:** Hebrews 13:7 says the church is to follow the example of the pastor/leader. In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul said, "Imitate me." Hosea 4:9 says, "Like people, like priest." If the pastor is living in sin, he needs to be confronted like anyone else in the church. In 1 Timothy 5:19-20 it says, “If you have two or three witnesses witnesses of the pastor’s ongoing sin, he should be confronted. And if he refuses to repent, then he should be rebuked in the presence of all.”

People will follow the example of their pastor/leader. Therefore, if God wants the church to be holy and righteous, it has to start at the top, with the leader.

## **SLAVES**

**Q: Can you clarify John 15:15, where Jesus said He no longer called them slaves but**

**friends?**

**A:** Traditionally, slaves did not know what the master was doing. But that wasn't true in the relationship between Jesus and His disciples. He told them everything His Father told him. He didn't treat them as a traditional slave was treated. He treated them as His friends. But we are still slaves of Christ and therefore expected to obey. (Note: Most translations say "bondservant" but the Greek word actually means "slave".)

### **SORCERY—(see WITCH/WITCHCRAFT)**

### **SOUL and SPIRIT**

**Q: When Hebrews 4:12 states the Word of God can divide the soul and the spirit, what is the difference?**

**A:** We do not know for sure. Even scholars do not agree. Some Bible passages refer to people as having a body, soul, and spirit. Other verses only state body and soul or body and spirit. But God knows, and His Word is accurate enough to divide them!

### **SPIRITS (Authorities)**

**Q: Can you explain territorial spirits or authorities?**

**A:** This comes from two places I know. In Daniel, an angel came against the prince of Persia, a demon. Ephesians 6 talks about "world forces of darkness." These seem to indicate that spirits are assigned to geographical locations. The problem that comes with the term "territorial spirits" is that some Christians believe it is their duty to engage territorial demons in spiritual warfare. This, however, cannot be justified by Scripture. Be wise; don't take those two references and build a new doctrine how to "come against territorial demons."

### **SPIRITS (FEAR OF)**

**Q: What do we do about spirits of family members that come back to haunt or indwell other family members?**

**A:** Is that in the Bible? No. It is not biblical. Spirits of ancestors are either in heaven or hell. Demons will impersonate spirits of ancestors if they think that they can deceive us and control us.

**Q: The Bible talks about "familiar spirits" and Saul. Are those ancestor spirits?**

**A:** Saul was seeking the counsel of Samuel and went to a witch. When Samuel actually showed up, the witch was frightened, because she wasn't really expecting Samuel. She was expecting a

demon who would impersonate Samuel. Some believe that demons follow people and memorize their lives so they can impersonate those people after they die.

If someone tries to contact a dead relative, the spirit of the relative will not come to them but a demon may come and impersonate the dead relative.

**Q: Are people to appease spirits?**

**A:** No. Many have been taught that whatever happens, good or bad, is a direct result of the spirits and that one must keep the spirits happy in order to gain their favor and positive results. Many Christians, in Africa, still visit a witchdoctor to seek their help in appeasing the spirits. But this is not biblical and is even forbidden by God. Listen to Deuteronomy 18:14, where God was warning Israel: “For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do so.” This is a warning to us as well. God does not allow a Christian to practice witchcraft or divination.

**Q: Are we at the mercy of spirits? Do we appease spirits and fear them?**

**A:** There is no reason to fear the spirits if you are a true Christian. 1 Peter 1:5 tells us that we are protected by the power of God. 1 John 5:18 tells us that the evil one cannot touch us. It is the devil's lie that Christians are at the mercy of the spirits. It is different for unbelievers. They are not protected by the power of God and, therefore, leave themselves open to spiritual attacks.

**SPIRITUAL DEATH**

**Q: God took the lives of some Bible people, because they did not take Him seriously. Some examples are Nadab, Abihu, Uzzah, Ananias, and Sapphira. When someone loses their physical life because of sin, do they also lose their spiritual life?**

**A:** No, physical life and spiritual life are independent of each other.

**SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

**Q: What are spiritual gifts?**

**A:** A “spiritual gift” is some special ability given to every true follower of Christ by God by which the follower of Christ can be effective ministering to others (1 Corinthians 12:7). Spiritual gifts are always for the purpose of being able to minister to others. No spiritual gift, including the gift of tongues, is meant to bless the person who has the gift. People who use their spiritual gift for personal reasons is self-centered and out of God’s will.

**Q: If being filled with the Holy Spirit does not lead to spiritual gifts, but leads to a lifestyle that pleases God, what does 1 Corinthians 12 mean: “The Holy Spirit gives us spiritual**

**gifts?”**

**A:** Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not connected to any spiritual gift. What confuses people is that at Pentecost, people were filled with the spirit and spoke in tongues. But those were two separate things happening at the same time. Pentecost was unique. The Holy Spirit came on every believer, all were filled with the Spirit and all who were believers were baptized by the Spirit. In 2 Corinthians 12:13 text says that every Christian is baptized by the Holy Spirit, and we receive our spiritual gift at that time. Ephesians 5:18 commands us to be filled with the Spirit. What follows from Ephesians 5:19 – 6:4 describe the results of being filled with the Spirit and no spiritual gift is mentioned in those verses.

**Q: Are there spiritual gifts today?**

**A:** Yes. There are! But every Christian has been given a spiritual gift and every Christian is commanded to be filled with the Spirit. These are two separate things.

**Q: Is it a spiritual gift for a pastor to raise a small child back to life?**

**A:** The gift of healing was a *sign* gift in 2 Corinthians 12:12. It was given to a special few apostles and a few others in the NT. The apostles received direct revelation from God (Ephesians 3:3, 5). God gave them miracle working abilities to validate their message (2 Cor 12:12). No one since the first century has been given the power to raise the dead.

If God wants to raise the dead, He does it as an answer to prayer. But the Bible says, we all die once and then we face judgment (Hebrews 9:27). Paul said if we are absent from the body (that happens at death, when our spirit is separated from our body) then we are present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:6-8).

One village story says that two days after a two-year-old died, before the burial a pastor prayed for the dead child, who came back to life. Only Jesus and the apostles had this power in the New Testament and no one has this power today. God can do what He wants to do but He does it in answer to prayer not through the power of some person.

**Q: Can you discuss the different spiritual gifts from different Bible books?**

**A:** In 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 again notice the context. The passage is about the body of Christ and says the body has many members, like a physical body has many parts: hands, eyes, mouth, feet, etc. Not everyone is to be hands or eyes. In the same way, not everyone has the same *gift* (miracles, healing, tongues, wisdom, knowledge, etc.). Note that 1 Corinthians 12 is NOT a complete list.

Romans 12 gives another list which is not as *spectacular*. It includes things like teaching, mercy, faith, leading, serving, etc. 1 Peter 4:10 divides giftedness into two categories: speaking gifts and serving gifts.

So the doctrine of spiritual gifts comes from piecing together all of these passages, not just 1 Corinthians 12, which is the scripture people want to focus on. They want to talk about signs and wonders. No gift is more important than another, and 1 Corinthians 12 says "to one," "to another," and "to another." The implication is, no gift is given to every person, and no person has every gift.

In the early church, there were those (apostles) with the more miraculous gifts. The other believers had other gifts, listed in these passages. They all worked together to bring glory to God and build up the body, the church.

**Q: If every man and woman has a spiritual gift, what are women allowed to do in church?**

**A:** Women have gifts and can minister in the church like a man, except they are not to be the preacher/pastor/elder. They are not to be the preacher when the church gathers.

**Q: What gifts are available today?**

**A:** All of the gifts are available today except those that were the signs of the Savior and the true apostles. John 20:30-31 says that the miracles that Jesus did were signs that He was the Son of God and that we could have eternal life through Him. In Acts 2:43 and 2 Cor 12:12 we are told that signs, miracles, and wonders were signs of true apostles.

The true apostles were receiving God's direct revelation and writing it down until the New Testament was completed. The signs and wonders they performed proved that they were the true messengers of God. Jesus is not with us physically today and we do not have true apostles with us so the sign gifts are no longer being exercised today. False apostles tried to trick people by claiming to be miracle workers and performing fake miracles. The same is true today.

## **SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

**Q: Is Satan always under God's authority? Does he always need God's approval to do anything to a believer?**

**A:** In Matthew 28, Jesus said: "All authority is given to me in heaven and on earth." Psalm 115:3 reads: "God is in heaven and does anything He pleases." Jesus have all authority? Can God do anything He wants to do? The answer to both questions is, "Yes." Can God stop Satan if He wants? Yes. Therefore, Satan is totally under God's authority. One day God will bind Satan for 1,000 years, but for now, Satan is loose, but he is always under God's authority.

**Q: What was Paul's thorn in the flesh, in 2 Corinthians 12:7?**

**A:** We are not sure. Some think he had poor eyesight. Paul calls it a "messenger from Satan." In the previous chapter, he wrote about the false apostles who were actually Satan's messengers (2 Corinthians 11:12-15). Some think the thorn in the flesh was not a physical condition but the false teachers and false apostles who followed him around to challenge and accuse him. But we

don't know for sure.

The important thing to remember is that Paul did not rebuke or try to bind Satan. He prayed to God, asking God to remove it and God chose not to but promised that His grace would be sufficient for Paul to endure it.

**Q: Can you please explain spiritual warfare?**

**A:** Remember that Christians cannot be indwelt by demons. Satan has no power over a believer; he must get permission from God to bother them. If a Christian is being bothered by the devil/demons, it is a sign the believer needs to repent. We Read that over and over in Revelation 2, 3, when God speaks to the seven churches.

Christians are told to be strong in the Lord, put on the armor of God, stand firm and resist. We are not to concern ourselves with binding and rebuking the devil. We are to pray to God to do so. If a person is truly possessed by a demon, they need to be led to faith in Christ. Otherwise, a demon can come back and may bring others with him.

Some Christians had power over demons in the early church. In Acts 16:14, Paul cast a demon out of a slave girl. Luke 10:17 shows 70 people who were sent forth; they rejoiced that the demons were subject to them. Mark 16:9-20 states that those who follow Christ will cast out demons. Matthew 15:24 describes a Canaanite woman's daughter delivered.

**Q: Matthew 18:18 shows Jesus talk on binding and loosing; do we do this to Satan today?**

**A:** The devil is not in this verse. The context is church discipline. It was a *rabbi tradition* to tell an unrepentant sinner, "Your sin is bound to you" or "Your sin has been loosed from you." A similar passage is John 20:23 that talks about "retaining" and "forgiving" the sins of others. So "retaining" and "forgiving" is equal to "binding" and "loosing."

**Q: Matthew 18:19 says, "If two or three agree . . .it shall be done." Should we find someone to agree with us in prayer?**

**A:** This context is church discipline. The two or three are witness of a sin; read verse 16.

**Q: Matthew 18:20 says: "Where two or three are gathered . . .I am there in their midst." Should we only pray in small groups?**

**A:** This verse is not about prayer meetings, but church discipline. If this was about praying, then we would not be effective praying alone. But in Matthew 6:6 Jesus tells us to pray in secret, alone.

**Q: In Acts 13:8-11 Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit and announced that the sorcerer would become blind and he did. Is this spiritual warfare?**

**A:** By definition "of the battle" in Ephesians 6, we do not war against flesh and blood. So, in one

way, anything like this is considered spiritual warfare. The magician was using the power of the devil to do his magic. God used Paul to judge this instrument of the devil.

Paul talks about spiritual warfare in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 and Ephesians 6:10-18. In 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 Paul describes spiritual warfare as a war for the truth about God. In Ephesians 6:10-18, Paul explains how to fight. He says to put on the full armor of God, then stand firm and resist. He never says we are to attack Satan.

**Q: In spiritual warfare we are protected by God, but Scripture says “put on the armor of God.” Do we need to attack the kingdom of darkness offensively?**

**A:** The armor is what we actively “put on,” to take advantage of God's protection. If we choose to not use it, we are no longer protected like we were before.

Ephesians 6 says: “Put on the full armor of God, to stand firm and to resist . . .” Nothing more. Nowhere does Scripture say to “attack.”

Colossians 1:13 says we have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness already. Col 1:16 says all things, including rulers and powers, were created by Jesus for Himself and that He is sovereign over the devil and the demons.

Hebrews 2:14 says “through His death, Jesus rendered powerless the one who had the power of death, the devil.” So, if we storm the kingdom of darkness, we are storming a “defeated” kingdom. And by sharing the good news of eternal salvation with unbelievers through the work of Jesus, we rescue them from Satan’s kingdom of darkness. We attack with the Gospel.

## **TEACHERS / TEACHING**

**Q: Should pastors simply “teach what the Bible says,” even on TV?**

**A:** Pastors should “teach the Bible, ONLY after they correctly interpret it.” Many people claim they teach the Bible, but they do not take time to study first so they can understand what it means before they preach it. They must not take verses out of context or “make” the Bible seem to say what they want.

Preaching and teaching is the easy part. Taking time to understand the one true meaning of any text is the hard work. After that, you are ready to preach the Bible accurately.

## **TEMPTATION**

**Q: What’s a temptation (or a trial)?**

**A:** James 1:3,12 says trials lead to positive things in our lives. Temptations lead to bad things and



sin, but they are from the same Greek word. Whatever comes into our lives can become a trial

that builds our faith, or it can be a temptation that weakens our faith and leads us into sin. James 1:14 says we are tempted, when drawn away by our own lust. It is our “response” to any situation that turns it into a positive (a trial) or a negative (a temptation). In two words, “NO difference”; both the same Greek word.

**Q: Does God allow us to be tempted? Does God let Satan attract us with temptation?**

**A:** In James 1:2, the word for trial is also the word for temptation. God uses a trial to test our faith; when we persevere, our faith and character grow.

But we are tempted when we are carried away and enticed by our own lust (James 1:14). A trial or a temptation depends upon our response. If we fail a test, then it becomes a temptation. If the devil tries to draw us into sin and we persevere, then it’s a trial; God uses it to strengthen us.

**Q: 1 Corinthians 10:13 says God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able, but He will give a way of escape, so we are able to bear it. Is God really able to keep us from being tempted or giving in to it?**

**A:** Is God sovereign? (Yes) Psalm 115:3 says: “He does what he wants to do.”

How did God create the universe? He spoke it into existence. If he spoke the universe into existence, do you think He could give you strength to resist temptation and sin if He wants to? (Yes!) But we must truly desire to avoid sin.

**Q: If we should turn off the TV and stay away from sin generally, to live a holy life, what do we do when people around us watch bad TV shows and are addicted to Facebook or the internet?**

**A:** Do not participate in their behavior. Do not watch the TV shows with them. But do not be judgmental. Find a kind way to call the behavior into question. Share Scripture with them and pray for them.

## **TEN COMMANDMENTS**

**Q: How do the Ten Commandments apply to Christians?**

**A:** We do not keep the Old Testament laws today, but nine of the ten commandments are repeated in the New Testament. They were repeated when the church was first established, so we are to follow the nine that are repeated in the New Testament. The only one not repeated is to “keep the

Sabbath (Saturday) holy.”

We must be careful not to take verses out of context, for example many Old Testament promises that were given to Israel. For example, 2 Chronicles 7:14 shows God healing the land

when His people repented; in Jeremiah 29:11, God told Israel, who was then in captivity, that He had good plans in mind for them. In Matthew 18, "binding and loosing" is all about church discipline, not spiritual warfare; and "two or three gathered in My name" is about church discipline, not a prayer meeting.

## **TONGUES**

### **Q: Are tongues used today?**

**A:** New Testament principles show tongues were known languages (1 Cor. 14:10; 14:21). Like all spiritual gifts, they were exercised for the "common good," not for the benefit of the one with the gift (1 Corinthians 12:7). They were "a sign to unbelievers (1 Corinthians . 14:22)".

When spoken in church, it was "limited to two or three people (1 Cor. 14:27a)," and they "always had to be interpreted (1 Cor. 14:27b)," to "give edification," for those who did not understand the language (1 Cor. 14:26b).

### **Q: Is it true today, like in Mark 16:9-20, that those who follow him will speak in tongues, lay hands on people, who will be healed?**

**A:** People always stop there and don't talk about being bitten by poisonous snakes, drinking poison, and living through both, which is also in these verses. One view is that these verses were not in Mark's original gospel, because these verses didn't even show up in manuscripts of Mark's gospel until 800 years later! This suggests they were added later, by someone else.

A second view is that all the things mentioned in those verses happened to the apostles and specifically Paul (except the poison). And 2 Corinthians 12:13 says these kinds of things marked a true apostle. There were false apostles trying to draw people away from the true apostles. God gave the true apostles supernatural abilities to validate their message from Him.

### **Q: Do "not all" speak in tongues, like a verse says ?**

**A:** The Bible never says all are to speak in tongues. 1 Cor 12:30 asks the question "Not everyone speaks in tongues, do they?" And the implied answer in the original language is "no." In 1 Corinthians 14:5, Paul says that he wished they all spoke in tongues but would rather have them prophesy. But he didn't say they all should speak in tongues. He was just comparing tongues with prophecy.

If speaking in tongues shows a Christian is "filled with the Holy Spirit," and, if not everyone

speaks in tongues, does that mean that not all Christians are at some point filled with the Spirit? No! The baptism of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13) places us into the body of Christ. Since we all are placed into the body of Christ when we are saved, we are all “baptized,” the moment we become a Christian. And the “filling” means God empowers us to “live” the Christian life daily (Ephesians 5:18-6:10).

**Q: Should we try or want to speak in tongues?**

**A:** No. We are not to personally seek any spiritual gift. The Holy Spirit gives each Christian the spiritual gift He wants them to have (1 Corinthians 12:11). Are people who focus on speaking in tongues becoming mature believers in Jesus Christ?” If you say, “No, they are not,” Then what is more important to God? Speaking in tongues or becoming mature and being conformed to the image of Christ? The answer is obvious. Speaking in tongues does not make one more mature as a Christian and that should be our goal.

The goal of a pastor is “present every person complete in Christ,” says Colossians 1:28, by preaching and teaching systematically the Word of God—week-after-week.

**TRADITIONS**

**Q: Why is “tradition” so strong in Africa and not in Europe and America?**

**A:** Countries all have traditions. Teaching of the Bible, first in Europe, then in the United States, helped the church overcome some misunderstandings about God, Satan, demons, etc. The consistent, systematic teaching of Scripture, over a long period of time, will change Africa. Satan uses other things in the West, besides traditions, to control people and keep them from knowing God’s truth, like materialism, self-sufficiency, extreme nationalism.

**Q: The Bible was written at a different time, to a different culture. Should believers apply the Bible to our culture and time now, or cling to local traditions?**

**A:** It’s true that the Bible was written in a language and to a certain culture, but we can understand it. We can find God’s principles and apply them to our time and place.

Old Testament, Gospels’, and Acts’ stories do not mean that the same things should happen today. For example, Abraham had more than one wife, but we are not supposed to today. For example, Jesus washed the disciples’ feet and said: “... go and do the same thing to one another.” Why do we not do this today? Paul’s and other New Testament books give instructions. Stories show what occurred. Each book or story is not for all times and places.

**TRIAL**

**Q: What's a trial (or a temptation)?**

**A:** James 1:3,12 says trials lead to positive things in our lives. Temptations lead to bad things and sin, but they are from the same Greek word. Whatever comes into our lives can become a trial that builds our faith, or it can be a temptation that weakens our faith and leads us into sin.

James 1:14 says we are tempted, when drawn away by our own lust. It is our "response" to any situation that turns it into a positive (a trial) or a negative (a temptation).

**UNITY**

**Q: How can believers come into doctrinal unity, with so many different churches?**

**A:** Doctrinal unity will never happen, because not everyone will study the Bible and come to the same understanding or conviction on every subject.

Pastors need to base whatever they believe and teach on their conclusions after they carefully study God's Word. You don't have to agree with everyone. The important thing is that you are studying the Bible diligently before arriving at a conclusion or conviction.

**VISIONS**

**Q: Job 33:14-16 says God speaks in dreams and visions. Is this true today also?**

**A:** The Word of God is all sufficient for us, says 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Of course, if God wanted to communicate through a dream, He could. But you cannot say God gave *you* a message for *me* in your dream. If God wants to communicate with me personally in a dream, it is up to him. In Colossians 2:18 Paul warned about following someone who *claims* to have had a vision. Why? Because we don't know the source of the dream or if they truly had a vision or dream. But what the Word of God teaches us is sure, always true, and always available.

**Q: Does God give visions (dreams or revelations) about the future?**

**A:** The purpose of a "revelation" in the New Testament era, as Scriptures were being written and assembled, was to let people hear from God, until His Word was completed. So, God set apart apostles and prophets, and gave them direct revelation, sometimes by visions or dreams. Their teaching, then, became the foundation of the early church. Read Ephesians 2:20 and 3:1-5. God also gave apostles ability to do miracles, to validate their message, that they received directly from God (See 2 Corinthians 12:12). 2 Corinthians 11:13 discusses false apostles who claimed to have visions and revelations from God.

Do pastors preach, teach directly from the Bible only? In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 it says God's inspired Scriptures makes pastors adequate and equipped for every good work—not visions, dreams, and revelations.

**Q: Are visions and revelations a distraction to spiritual growth? A deception?**

**A:** God used revelation in the New Testament, but we don't need dreams, visions, and revelations today (see more notes here). We have the completed, all sufficient Scriptures.

Yes, the devil counterfeits dreams, visions, and revelations through his false prophets today. If people rely on anyone's dreams and visions, they open themselves up to the influence of false

teachers, which is exactly what's happening. When an emphasis of time, energy, and our thoughts are on these, our focus is taken away from the Word of God that saves, sanctifies, and brings spiritual growth. Visions and dreams.

**Q: Should pastors tell people they need a vision or revelation, about who to marry?**

**Should pastors ask: "Did you have a vision, dream, or revelation about this person?"**

**A,** Colossians 2:18 warns about being led by dreams and visions. God leaves a lot of decisions up to us and suggests that we make good and wise decisions. She should get to know the boy, and if there seems to be compatibility and they want to get married then they should. At that point that relationship becomes God's plan for their lives.

**Q: What happens when believers rely on dreams?**

**A:** Here is a warning: If pastors rely on visions, dreams, and revelations to get instructions from God and directions to lead the church, their people will also begin to rely on visions and revelations.

False teachers will easily come along and say, "I had a vision, or a revelation. God told me 'this', so follow me." And the people will have NO way to know the truth from error. How will they know who is telling the truth and who is lying?

Christians can become dependent upon the *dreamer*, the *receiver of the revelation*, the one who has *visions*, rather than developing his own relationship with God through His Word. People will stop reading and studying the Bible, which sets us free (John 8:32), sanctifies us (John 17:17), and causes us to grow (1 Peter 2:2)!

**Q: What did Jesus say about visions?**

**A:** Jesus warned of false apostles, claiming visions and revelations in Matthew 7:15-22. He called them "false prophets who appear as shepherds, dressed in sheep's clothing. They claim to prophesy, do miracles, and cast out demons in Jesus' name, but they aren't saved."

Jude 8 talks about false teachers who claim to have dreams. In Colossians 2:18, Paul warns against following those who stand on visions; Paul says they are "inflated without cause by a fleshly mind."

So today, to bring attention to yourself by claiming to have visions is also boasting and

being "inflated without cause."

**Q: What about Paul's vision of heaven?**

**A:** In 2 Corinthians 12, Paul recorded his vision of heaven. Verse 1 says, "Boasting is necessary but not profitable." There were false apostles in Corinth, boasting about personal visions and revelations. They tried to persuade Corinthians to turn away from Paul's teaching and follow them instead.

In 2 Corinthians 11:11-15, Paul felt compelled to talk his heaven vision, to defend his apostleship. He called it boasting. But Paul waited 14 years before talking about it. Today, people want to tell everyone immediately, even on TV or by writing a book.

Paul was humble about it. He said, "I know a man . . ." He never even said it was himself until later. Can God speak to us in dreams and visions? Certainly, He can. But don't rely on them over Scripture. Don't use it to call attention to yourself, if indeed you think God spoke. Even if God did, don't boast. Don't attract attention. Keep it between you and God. Don't focus on *me* and *my* spirituality. Don't use it to persuade others to react in some way.

**Q: How can we answer people who say God has NOT put everything in the Bible. He speaks today in dreams and visions?**

**A:** Jude 3 says the faith (God's revelation) was handed down once and for all. Revelation is closed. Colossians 2:18 warned the believers that some (false teachers) will try to cheat them out of their spiritual prize (rewards) by taking a stand on visions they have seen.

From Bible times to now, false teachers have claimed personal revelations, visions, and dreams, to try to place themselves in authority and to try to influence people to follow them. Scripture alone does not allow them to exalt themselves, so they have to claim a *special connection with God* to try to set them apart.

Ask that person, "How can I know you really had that dream or revelation?" Ask them, "Should we believe every person, who claims to have a vision or revelation?" If not, then ask, "Why should we believe you and not others? What makes you special?"

**WILL OF GOD**

**Q: If God is not giving new revelation today, how are we to make decisions? For example: If three jobs are offered to us, how do we know God's will?**

**A:** Pastor Steve puts His trust completely in God and His abilities by praying, "God this is up to you. You are sovereign and omnipotent. Use my thoughts, friends, circumstances, etc., to put me in the right place. I want what you want in my life. If I don't end up where it is best for me, it's Your fault." He tells God this with reverence and sincerity.

Then he walks by faith, letting God direct him, his thoughts, friends, whatever God wants

to use. Then he trusts that the decision he makes is God's best for him and believes that by faith.

**Q: What is the difference between God's permissive will and His perfect will?**

**A:** God is totally sovereign. That means if something bad happens, He allowed it, which is not the same as *caused* it. He could have stopped it, if He had wanted to. That is His *permissive will*. His *perfect will* would be more of His *direct will*, where He does something directly.

**WISDOM (Word of Wisdom, or Word of Knowledge)**

**Q: If revelation is closed today, where does Word of Knowledge/Word of Wisdom come from? For example: I received details about a person, told them, and it came true.**

**A:** First, be careful how you define *Word of Knowledge* and *Word of Wisdom*. The Bible does not define these two *gifts*, but does mention them. I feel knowledge is knowledge and wisdom is wisdom. It is not supernatural wisdom or knowledge that comes directly from God to you. I can't prove that didn't happen to you. God can do what He wants, when He wants. But those events are not the *spiritual gift* you have.

**Q: What about the "gift of vision" or "word of knowledge?"**

**A:** Where can you find a definition of the gift *word of knowledge* in the Bible? There is none in Scripture; it's mentioned only once, but not defined. Believers should not take this idea and make it something that is not in the Bible. No place in the Bible is there mentioned "the gift of vision."

**WITCH/WITCHCRAFT/SORCERER/SORCERY/SPELLS**

**Q: Romans discusses eating meat sacrificed to idols. I am a pastor and my father is a witch who lives with me. When people bring him food as payment, should I eat it?**

**A:** 1 Corinthians 8 is a great passage stating we are free to eat, unless it causes a weaker brother in Christ to stumble. Don't eat it then. It might be okay for you, but people might think the entire household follows the devil. It is better if you do not eat the food given to your father.

**Q: What does Scripture say about Christians gaining power by using spells and witchcraft?**

**A:** One African worldview is *harmony*. Everything, including individual power, is to be held in balance. If someone starts gaining in power, they are suspected of using witchcraft. They also become targets of witchcraft, to bring them back into balance.

If a Christian holds this traditional belief, they will continue to practice it. If the Bible says, "You shall not permit a sorceress to live" (Exodus 22:18), does God condone it?

Some Christians do continue these practices and beliefs, which may be deeply embedded from

birth. Even after salvation they cannot easily release them; it takes time.

A second reason change is hard is because of heritage, family, and community. Community (blood relatives) oneness and loyalty is important. Your mother or grandmother may give you a charm to wear that once belonged to an ancestor. She might say to wear it for protection, so if you took it off you would offend the community and perhaps upset the *harmony* of the living and the dead. All this pressure is on a person who becomes a Christian, so some continue traditions for their family and community.

**Q: Can someone cast a spell on a believer, or offer him charms to prevent another person gaining too much power and influence?**

**A:** These examples occur, but stronger Christians refuse to participate.) Exodus 20:3-5 is clear and strong: “And God spoke all these words, saying, ‘I am the Lord your God . . . You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God . . .’”

**Q: How can we teach witchcraft is wrong in order to gain prosperity gospel results?**

**A:** There are two issues here. One is witchcraft and the other is the prosperity gospel. In Deuteronomy 18:10-12 we read these words from God to Israel, “There shall not be found among you. . . one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to the Lord. . .” So, anyone practicing witchcraft for any reason is detestable to the Lord.

The prosperity gospel is unbiblical and can be traced back to the early 1900s to cultic groups who did not teach the gospel but taught the same things about faith, healing, and prosperity.

**Q: Can Satan use witchcraft to send computer messages in this world?**

(A young man brought a photocopy of an *intercepted telex* from Satan to his followers. At the top was a warning from the person who supposedly intercepted the telex: “Pray the blood of Jesus on your family and your church, because Satan has a new strategy and he is coming after Christians!”

The two-page telex read: “To all demons, powers, principalities, etc. . . . the Christians are resisting, but we have won some battles also. We need to change strategy. Our new plan is to convince them to stop reading their Bibles, stop praying, stop tithing, use more time watching TV, and stop witnessing. Tell them Jesus is not coming for a long time, though we know He is coming soon . . .”)

**A:** Don’t worry. It was probably written by someone who was trying to scare Christians into doing what they should do (read their Bible, give to the offering, and pray). Did that young man believe it? Yes, he probably did.



**Q: Does Scripture address old beliefs, like burying a live goat underground, where the pulpit will be in a new church being constructed, to bring power to the preaching?**

**A:** The Bible condemns magic, witchcraft, and sorcery (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). There is no power in preaching besides God's Word. When a preacher is simply telling people what the Bible says, what it means, and how to put it into practice in their lives, he is preaching a powerful

message. But the power is not the preacher. It is God's Word (Heb 4:12). We have all heard these stories, often.

**Q: Can witchdoctors use a Christian vocabulary?**

**A:** Yes. False prophets and false teachers use a Christian vocabulary all the time. That is how they confuse and deceive people. Pastors might simply replace the position of witchdoctors and use Christian vocabulary.

**Q: What is a "man of God?" In some African areas, the "man of God" is replacing a witch doctor, giving people "powerful breakthroughs" to reach God, opposing demons and ancestor spirits.**

**A:** In the New Testament, there is only one reference to a man of God and that is Timothy in 1 Tim 6:11 where Paul referred to Timothy as "man of God" and tells him to flee from the things of the world and pursue the things of God. Then in 2 Tim 3:16-17 it says the inspired Scriptures equip the man of God for every good work. So, the man of God, in the New Testament, is one who flees from the things of the world, pursues the things of God, and uses God's Word in his ministry.

**Q: Exodus 22:18 says do NOT let the witch live. What does that mean?**

**A:** Israel was on their way to conquer the land God promised to Abraham and set up God's kingdom. God did not any witches or sorcerers in the land and told the Israelites to kill any they found. Witchcraft is evil and needs to be forbidden. He also told them to kill anyone who has sexual relations with an animal or who presents a sacrifice to a false god. The kingdom they were sent by God to establish was to be a righteous and holy place. (Israel failed in setting up this holy kingdom. Jesus will set it up when He comes the second time.)

**Q: In Acts 13:8-11 Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit and rendered the sorcerer blind, through the power of God. Is this spiritual warfare?**

**A:** By definition of the battle in Ephesians 6, we do not war against flesh and blood. Paul was not dealing with spiritual forces directly, he was dealing with one he referred to as a son of the devil. God used Paul to judge him.

When it comes to forming your ideas about spiritual warfare today, do not look at the stories in the book of Acts. Stories tell us what happened at a point in history. Paul deals with spiritual warfare in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 and Ephesians 6:10-18 and it is from those two passages we should form our doctrinal beliefs about spiritual warfare.

## **WITNESSING**

**Q: Should we go into bars, where unsaved people go, to witness to them?**

**A:** If your true motivation is to witness to someone who is not saved, then it isn't wrong. But remember that if another Christian sees you going into the bar, he might not know what you are going to do and might think you are going in to drink like the others. So be careful.

## **WIVES**

**Q: Solomon had many wives. Is polygamy okay?**

**A:** Polygamy is never right. In 1 Kings 11:1, his foreign wives turned his heart away from God. He followed them into idolatry, and God took his kingdom from him.

**Q: Can a Christian get a divorce?**

**A:** In Matthew 5:31-32 Jesus seems to allow it in the case of adultery.

**Q: It is common for an African pastor to leave his wife in charge of church, when he leaves on business. Is that wrong?**

**A:** Yes, it is wrong. What does the Bible say? I Timothy 2:12 to 3:2 says that a man is to be the pastor of the church and women are not to teach or be put in authority over men, in the church. Does this make women inferior? No! Can women be leaders in government or business? Yes! But they cannot pastor a church or be in authority over men in the church.

**Q: What if a pastor's wife is a stumbling block in ministry, but he refuses to resign?**

**A:** That man does not meet the qualification of having a house managed well. He is not qualified to be a pastor.

**Q: If a pastor's wife leaves him, can he still be pastor? Her action was out of his control?**

**A:** That man does not meet the qualification of having a house managed well. He is no longer

qualified no matter what her reason is for leaving him.

**Q: If an unsaved man has two or three wives and then gets saved, he should only have one. What should he do?**

**A:** He is responsible to provide for all wives and all his children but live only with his first wife.

**Q: 1 Timothy 3 says the pastor is to be husband of one wife. But pastors in some countries have one legal wife and many concubines. Is that okay, if only one is wife?**

**A:** No, it is not okay. The 1 Timothy 3 passage says that a pastor is to be a “one-woman man.” That means he is devoted to and loves only one woman. It does not mean he can have one wife and many girlfriends.

**Q: Why would a church do nothing, when their pastor has two wives?**

**A:** They either did not know what the Bible said, did not care what the Bible says, or they are afraid to confront the pastor, who they see as the “man of God.”

**Q: In polygamy, can a man's fourth wife be a leader in a church?**

**A:** Two issues here are polygamy and women leaders in church.

First, Scripture shows a man can have only one wife. Polygamy might be allowed in some cultures but not in the church.

Second, 1 Timothy 2:12 tells us women are not to be in authority over men in the church and 1 Timothy 3:2 says the pastor is to be a man. Women can lead other women or children, however.

### **WOMEN PASTORS / PREACHERS, WOMEN'S CHURCH ROLES**

**Q: Can you explain women in ministry?**

**A:** It's very simple. In the New Testament church, women are not to be pastors. They are not to teach men or be in authority over men (1 Timothy 2:12-3:2). They can do almost anything else.

**Q: How can a woman continue in the things of God and the service of God?**

**A:** Women believers should grow spiritually through study of and obedience to the Word of God, says 1 Peter 2:2, and by walking in the Spirit says Galatians 5:16. Then she should look for places to serve others. Older women should teach younger women the things of God and younger women should teach their children (Titus 2:2-5).

**Q: Can women be pastors. Many have very effective ministries?**

**A:** The question you must answer is this. Are we going to follow what the Bible says, or not? The Bible is clear. Only men are to serve the church as a pastor. The pastor is to be the husband of one wife (1 Tim 3:2) and only a man can be a husband.

Also, women are not to teach or be in authority of men in the church (1 Tim 2:12). Just because she is effective doesn't mean God approves. In 1 Timothy 5:16, 2 Timothy 1:5, and Titus 2:2-5, God says a woman can have a very effective ministry, including teaching.

The key question is her audience. She can have great influence in the lives of her children, grandchildren, younger women, and all children, but not in the pulpit preaching the sermon.

**Q: Doesn't Galatians 3:28: "there is neither male nor female" give women permission to do what a man does?**

**A:** Galatians 3:28 is has a context of *all being one in Christ*. It is a passage about salvation, not church leadership.

**Q: If 1 Peter 2:9 says we are all priests, then can we all be pastors, even women?**

**A:** In the Old Testament, only the priests of Israel could give sacrifices to God. All of the people had to have a priest do the sacrifices for them. In the New Testament, all Christians can present their own sacrifices. When we become Christians, the barriers between God and us come down and we can enter His presence personally and offer the spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. Verses like 1 Timothy 3:2 are clear and plain. Pastors are to be men.

**Q: Can women be pastors, like Deborah was an Old Testament judge?**

**A:** The Bible has no restrictions on women bring judges or presidents or prime ministers. But in 1 Timothy 2:12 Paul said he "doesn't allow women to teach or exercise authority over a man." And in 1 Tim 3:2 we read that one qualification of being the pastor is to be the "husband of one wife" and only a man can be a husband.

**Q: What can girls or women do to be a church leader, if the opportunity is not given?**

**A:** They are not to be pastors but they can be leaders in other ways. You don't have to be a pastor to be a leader. They can be leaders where they are. They can influence people close to them, for the glory of God. If the church has departments like "ministry to women," or "ministry to children," or "ministry to needy families in the community," they can be leaders there. The important thing is to be faithful, wherever God puts them. But He will not put them into a position as a pastor.

**Q: Acts 2 says on the day of Pentecost, Peter quoted from Joel 2: "Your daughters will prophesy." So, if not in church, where can women prophesy?**

**A:** This was a message given to the Jewish people and was a promise to be fulfilled in the last days. There are no prophets today like the ones in Joel's time or even in the New Testament. In the New Testament they were the foundation of the church and the foundation is now complete (see the section on "prophets"). Prophesying today is speaking from the Word of God.

There is a big world where they can share what God is teaching them or showing them personally from the Bible. The one place they cannot speak God's truth is from the pulpit, on Sunday morning, preaching the sermon.

**Q: The related question was "where can women teach?"**

**A:** The only place I know for sure where they are not allowed to teach is from the pulpit, when the church is gathered (1 Tim 2:12).

**Q: You said, a woman is not to be a pastor. If a woman out in a village preaches an evangelistic message and a man receives Christ where will he spend eternity?**

**A:** In heaven.

**Q: Can women have one of the five offices listed in Ephesians 4:11: Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers?**

**A:** In Scripture, apostles and prophets were temporary and the church's foundation (see the section on apostles and prophets). A pastor is to be a man (1 Tim 3:2). In the New Testament, an evangelist was a church planter. A woman can evangelize and organize people into a church but she cannot be the church's pastor who teaches the church the Scriptures.

**Q: Can you explain why women cannot lead the church, when Anna was a prophetess and Phoebe was a deacon?**

**A:** Neither of them were pastors or elders, which Scripture says are men's roles.

**Q: Can you please explain about Deborah judging Israel and being a woman?**

**A:** Deborah was not a pastor, she was a judge in Israel. There are no restrictions in the Bible for a woman being a judge or a leader in the country. The restriction is that she is not to be a pastor in a church. There were no churches until the book of Acts in the New Testament and it is clear in the New Testament that only men are to be pastors (1 Tm 3:2). Galatians 3:28 says there is neither male nor female; we are all one in Christ. Women and men have equal rights, when it comes to their relationship with God. All can be saved. But the roles of men and women in the church are different.

**Q: How can women be pastors if 1 Timothy 2 was only cultural for that time?**

**A:** The reason the apostle Paul gives in 2 Timothy 2:13-14 is God's creation order: Adam was created first, then Eve. If a woman was a pastor and she was married, it could cause confusion: She would be his pastor when they were at home, and he would still be her husband at church. She would submit to her husband at home, then at church he would submit to her. But she is still his wife and he is still a member of her church.

Women pastors started with the women's movement in the West, outside the church. Some good things occurred for women's rights, like voting and equal pay for equal jobs. Then ideas got aggressive and pushed their way into churches. Remember Romans 12:2, "Do not be

conformed to this world," like many churches have been. Be warned: The next battle is with the homosexual movement, already pushing its way into Western churches in Europe and America. Stand strong for the truth of God's Word!

**Q: Should women only pray or enter church with heads covered, as in 1 Corinthians 11:12-16? And should churches allow earrings?**

**A:** Matthew 23:23-24 says: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice, mercy, and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!"

True holiness in churches is not based on a constant obsession with minor things like these. The historical background focuses on local, cultural issues in Corinth at that time.

**Q: Deuteronomy 22:5 says a woman should not wear a man's clothes. Does that mean a woman should not wear trousers?**

**A:** When Deuteronomy was written, men wore dresses. So, if you are using that as the example, then a woman should not wear a dress. The point is, clothing is cultural, and as cultures change and evolve so does the wardrobe. But God's standard of modesty remains true, at all times.

**Q: If women are not to teach the church, why does Pastor Steve use a female interpreter?**

**A:** She is not teaching. She is only interpreting his teaching so those who do not speak English can understand what he is teaching.

**Q: A woman teacher explained that 1 Timothy 2:12 ("I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man") talks only about in the home. Is this true?**

**A:** In 1 Timothy 3:15, Paul explains that he is writing about how people are to conduct themselves in the church. After talking about the man's role in the church, in 2:9 he starts talking about the woman's role. She is not to teach or exercise authority over a man and the leader is to

be the husband of one wife (3:2). A woman can teach in many places. But she is not to teach men in the church.

**Q: 1 Timothy 2:12 says, "I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man." Can you please explain more the preaching or teaching ministry of women? Some of us are great followers of women like Joyce Meyer, Cindy Jacobs, and Juanita Bynum.**

**A:** 1 Timothy 2:11-14; 3:2, 15 makes it clear that it is not a woman's place to preach, teach, or be authority of the entire congregation, assuming men are present. Any woman pastor, who learns what the Bible says and wants to honor God, should humbly resign. It doesn't make women

inferior. It simply is not God's role for them in church. Concerning Sunday school classes or home Bible studies for couples, the Bible is less clear. If the church would allow that, I leave that to them and the Lord.

**Q: A woman said, "I am the only one who can read and I am trying to teach everyone the Bible, including men. Am I supposed to stop doing that?"**

**A:** She was told to keep doing it, but ask people to NOT call her pastor, and to pray for God to send a man to be pastor.

There is no question that a woman can have a ministry in a man's life. Priscilla had a strong influence in Apollo's life. Women are simply not supposed to be the pastor. Women can be teachers. Titus wrote: "Older women teach the younger women." But a woman is not to teach or preach when the church is gathered.

The desire to be pastor comes from Genesis 3:16, which says the curse of sin is that the woman's desire would be for her husband, but he would rule over her. Further defining *desire* is Genesis 4:7, where God told Cain: "Sin's desire is for you." It's not a good desire. It is a sinful desire to control. So, in the curse, the battle of the sexes was established.

The *women's rights movement* started with worthy issues: Voting rights, equal pay for equal work, etc. But over time it pushed its way into the church, and churches began changing the meaning of clear biblical passages to justify ordaining women to the pastoral ministry.

If you listen to and read the writings of these many popular women preachers today, you will see they are teaching the *prosperity gospel* or promoting other false teachings. Take that into account when listening to and believing their teaching.

**Q: What about the prophetess Anna in Luke 2? Doesn't this show women can be a pastor?**

**A:** When did the church start? (Acts 2) What period of time was Luke 2? Long before there was any church. Anna was not in any church, let alone a pastor. Christians need to stand firm on what the Bible says in all cases, learning what God says and teaching it is!

**Q: In 1 Timothy 2:11-12, Paul responded to Jewish culture that put women down. Some churches in Europe are led by women today, who do well. How can we deny they can do a good job?**

**A:** It wasn't cultural. The reason Paul gives goes back to creation. Read the passage. 1 Tim 2:13 says it is this way because Adam was created first. It is the same in the family. The man is the head of the family. It doesn't matter what happens in Europe or America, only what God's Word says.

**Q: What should we do about churches or organizations that ordain women pastors?**

**A:** You cannot be responsible for others. You can only be responsible for your own church. First,

pastors need to take whatever time is needed to bring the church completely and voluntarily under the authority of God's Word, as a principle, before they start studying what it says on any specific topic. Christians need to understand they are accountable to God—not the pastor.

Then, study and teach through Paul's epistles. One idea is to study one chapter each week. Take 16 weeks for Romans, 16 weeks for 1 Corinthians, 13 weeks for 2 Corinthians, etc. Then, when you get to 1 Timothy, you have already established God's Word as the authority. When it says a woman isn't to be a pastor, they will realize they are responsible to God—not the pastor.

**Q: Galatians 3:28 says there is neither male nor female, but 1 Timothy 2:12 says a woman can't teach. Is that a contradiction?**

**A:** Always read the Bible in *context*. Galatians 3:28 is in a chapter about equal opportunity to receive salvation, not the women's role in the church. 1 Timothy 2:12 is from a chapter on church structure. Men are the subject of 1 Tim 2:1-8. Then the subject turns to women in 1 Tim 2:9-15.

**Q: The Bible is our authority, but why can't women lead like Deborah; she had authority over men in Judges. Can you explain that?**

**A:** She was a leader, but not of a church. A woman can be a judge, a president, a prime minister, a leader of a corporation, and many other things. But a woman is not to be the pastor of a church.

**Q: Where do women have a role in the church to exercise their gifts and abilities?**

**A:** A woman can do almost anything in a church except be a pastor. She can teach or lead other women or children. But she cannot teach or exercise authority over men in the church. There are and have been great leaders in the world who are women, but they are not pastors.

**Q: Can a woman be a gifted teacher?**

**A:** Priscilla helped disciple Apollos in the Bible, therefore it appears that it is okay for a woman to have a discipling relationship with a man but not as the pastor. In the case of Priscilla, Aquilla was there also. Titus 2 shows older woman can have a teaching ministry to younger women.



Therefore, it is perfectly fine for a woman to be a teacher, but not in the pulpit on Sunday.

**Q: Psalm 68:11 talks about women saying good things. Is that teaching?**

**A:** The context is the book of Psalms, which is Hebrew poetry. There was no church. There was no pastor. This was 1000 B.C. If we brought the example to today, we would say that a woman can give a testimony, but she still would not be able to preach the sermon on Sunday.

**Q: If women can't be pastors, can they only sweep the floors?**

**A:** Though women are not pastors, women have worth and have ministry. In 1 Peter 4:10-11 Peter describes two categories of gifts: Speaking and serving. They all have a place in the body.

In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul writes about the parts of the body and how they are all important. If we think women are lowly and only good to sweep floors, then we are wrong. Pastors need to be the example of a servant, who can happily sweep the floors.

**WORKS**

**Q: What does "gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw" mean in 1 Corinthians?**

**A:** In the context, these *qualities of our works* will be rewarded. The point is this, rewards are not received because of how much we do for God. They are determined by the quality of the work we do for God. Quality is related to our motives (1 Corinthians 4:5).

**WORSHIP**

**Q: What is the difference between worship and praise?**

**A:** Worship is defined by one man as "all that we are (physically, mentally, and spiritually) responding to all that God is." Praise is one part of that response.

**Q: What is the right day to worship? Friday? Saturday? Sunday?**

**A:** In 1 Corinthians 16:2 it says believers were to take collection on the first day of the week. From the resurrection to today, Christian churches have met on Sunday to remember the resurrection.

**Q: In Acts, why did believers meet on the Sabbath (Saturday) when Paul spoke?**

**A:** They were still following the Jewish day of worship, which was Saturday. As the church matured through the book of Acts and as Paul wrote to the churches, they started to meet on Sunday.

Be careful not to form doctrines from Bible books of history. Those books only tell us what

happened in the past. They do not prescribe what we are to do now. Instructions on how to live now are in the New Testament letters to churches. History *describes*. The epistles *prescribe*.

For example, Jesus washed the disciples' feet and said, ". . .do this to others." But we don't do that. Why not? If we followed Jesus' example, we should all wash each other's feet. The reason we don't is because none of the apostles instructed the first Christians to do that. They mention communion and Baptist but no washing each other's feet.

**Q: Some worship music seems only entertainment; does it really worship God?**

**A:** Worship is a matter of the heart. What is 'worshipful' to one is not to another. Thankfully, God looks in the heart more than at the outward expression.

# Topical Index

This index will help the reader see what Bible verses were used to ask a question or answer a question of each topic.

Bible verses used in a question are marked by (Q).

Bible verses used in an answer are marked by (A).

ADAM/EVE ... (Q) 1 Timothy 2:14

ALCOHOL ... (Q) 1 Timothy 3

APOSTLES ... (Q) Ephesians 4:11; Romans 16:7

(A) Ephesians 2:20; 3:3, 5; 4:11-12; Acts 2:42-43; 13:1-2; 14:14; Philippians 2:25;  
1 Corinthians 14:3; 15:7; 2 Corinthians 8:3; 12:12; 11:13-15; Galatians 1:19;  
Matthew 7:15-21; 1 Timothy 4:13

BAPTISM ... (Q) Matthew 3:11

(A) Matthew 3:8-12; 1 Corinthians 12:13

BELIEVERS ... (Q) Romans 8:23

(A) Psalm 82:6; Deuteronomy 6:14; 30:17; 31:16; Joshua 24:23; Judges 18:14, 18;  
1 Samuel 7:3; 8:8

BINDING ... (Q) Matthew 16:19

(A) Matthew 18:18

CALLING OF GOD ... (Q) Exodus 3:5

(A) Romans 8:28-30; 2 Peter 2:4; 3:9; Ephesians 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3  
James 4:7; Psalm 37:4

CHILDREN ... (A) Titus 1:6; 1 Timothy 3

CHRISTIAN LIVING ... (A) Matthew 7:21; Acts 6:1-7

CHURCH ... (Q) Acts 6

(A) Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 20; 1 Peter 5:1-2; Ephesians 4:12; 1 Corinthians 3; 4:12

CREATION ... (A) Genesis 1-3; 6

DAY OF THE LORD ... (A) Joel 2:30-32

DEACONS ... (A) Ephesians 2:20; 3:3-5; 1 Timothy 3:2, 11; Acts 6:1-4

DEEDS OF THE FLESH ... (Q) Galatians 5:19

(A) Ephesians 2:3; 2 Peter 1:4

DEMONS ... (Q) Mark 16:9, 17-19; Luke 10:18-20; 13:16; John 11:44; 14:12; James 4:7; Job 1:6;  
1 Corinthians 12

(A) 2 Corinthians 12; 1 John 5:18; Matthew 18:18-20; John 11:44; 13; 14:12; 20:23;  
2 Peter 2:10-12; Luke 10; 11:24-26; Revelation 2-3; 20:2, 7; Mark 16:9-20;  
Jude 9; 1 Timothy 5:19-20, 23; 2 Timothy 4:20; Psalm 119:9-11; Galatians 5:16;  
Ephesians 6:10-11

DIE/DEATH ... (Q) Judges 13

DISCIPLINE ... (Q) Romans 7; 1 Samuel 16; Matthew 18:20; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5;

1 Timothy 1:18-19

(A) 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:20; Matthew 3:8; 18; 1 Corinthians 5:6, 11; Galatians 6:1;  
2 Timothy 2:24-26

DISCIPLESHIP ... (A) Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Timothy 5:17; 2 Timothy 2:15  
 DIVINATION ... (Q) Genesis 44:15  
 DREAMS ... (Q) Joel 2:28, 38; Acts 2:17  
     (A) Colossians 2:18; Ephesians 2:20; 3:1-5; 2 Corinthians 11:13; 12:12; John 8:32;  
     John 17:17; 1 Peter 2:2; Hebrews 1:2; Joel 2:28-32, 39; Acts 2:14-22, 31;  
     Joel 1:2; 2 Timothy 3:17; Matthew 7:15-22; Jude 3, 8  
 DRINKING ... (Q) John 2  
     (A) Ephesians 5:18  
 ELDERS ... (Q) 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Timothy 5:1, 17, 19  
     (A) Luke 16:12-14; 1 Timothy 2:2; 1 Timothy 5:1, 17, 19; Mark 6:13  
 FALSE TEACHERS ... (Q) Jude 3-4  
     (A) Matthew 7:15-22; 2 Timothy 3:1-9, 16-17; 2 Peter 2:1-22;  
     2 Corinthians 11:11-15; Colossians 2:18; Jude 8  
 FEAR ... (A) Proverbs 23:7; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5  
 FILLING OF THE SPIRIT ... (Q) Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:18; John 14:12  
     (A) 2 Corinthians 12:12; Acts 1:8; 1 John 2:20-21; Matthew 5:13-16;  
     1 Peter 3:8-16; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 2 Peter 2:1-2, 9-12  
 FORGIVENESS ... (A) Matthew 18:21-35; 1 Timothy 3:1-7  
 GENTILES ... (Q) Romans 8-12  
 GOSPEL ... (Q) Luke 12:51; 1 Corinthians 9:22-23; 1 Timothy 3:14-16  
 GRACE VERSES LAW ... (A) Romans 7:1-13; Galatians 3:23-25; Romans 8:1-5  
 HEALING ... (Q) 2 Corinthians 12:8-10; 1 Peter 2:24; James 5:13-15  
     (A) 2 Corinthians 12:8-10, 12; Acts 2:42-43; Hebrews 2:4; Ephesians 2:20; 3:3-5;  
     Romans 12:2  
 HEAVEN ... (Q) Genesis 28:10-17; Malachi 3:10  
     (A) Hebrews 9:27; Luke 16:20-31  
 HELL ... (Q) Matthew 16:17-19; Matthew 27:52-53  
     (A) Matthew 27:54  
 HOLINESS ... (Q) Galatians 5:16  
 HOLY SPIRIT ... (Q) Matthew 3:11; Ephesians 4:11; 5:18; 6:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Acts 19:1-5;  
     Matthew 12:31; Acts 1:8  
     (A) 1 Corinthians 3:12-15; 12:13; John 15:5-8; Acts 19:1-5; 1 Timothy 3:2  
 IDOLS ... (Q) Revelation 2:22; 1 Corinthians 8  
     (A) Revelation 2:22; 1 Corinthians 8  
 ISRAEL ... (Q) Matthew 24:15; 2 Chronicles 7:14;  
     (A) Daniel 9:27; 11:31; Jeremiah 29:11; 1 Corinthians 11:17  
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 LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS ... (A) 1 Timothy 3:2; Joel 2:30-32  
 LEADERS ... (A) Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:1-13  
 MAN OF GOD ... (A) 1 Timothy 6:11-12  
 MAN ... (Q) 1 Timothy 3; Genesis 1  
     (A) 1 Timothy 3:2  
 MARRIAGE ... (A) Matthew 18; Ephesians 5:22-33  
 MINISTRY ... (A) Luke 16:12-14; Ephesians 4:11-16

MIRACLES ... (Q) Matthew 8:17; Isaiah 53; John 14:12; Mark 16:7-20; Acts 1:8  
 (A) Isaiah 53:4; Mark 16:8-20; 1 Corinthians 12:12; Acts 1:8; 2:43; Hebrews 2:4;  
 Romans 1:16; Ephesians 5:18-6:9; Colossians 1:16; 3:16-4:1;  
 Philippians 3:12-14

MONEY ... (Q) 1 Timothy 4:13  
 (A) Acts 20:29-31; 1 Timothy 3:8; Titus 1:7, 11; 1 Peter 5:2; Proverbs 31;  
 1 Corinthians 9:15-18

PASTORS ... (Q) 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:20, 23; 1 Corinthians 9:8-18; Hebrews 13:7; Titus 1:5-9;  
 (A) 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4; 5:18; 1 Timothy 2:12-15; 4:13-14; Romans 14:21;  
 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; Acts 20:28-35; Galatians 3:28; John 8:32; 17:17; Acts 17:11;  
 1 Corinthians 8:13; 12:13; Matthew 5:32; 1 John 2:27; Jude 3; Ephesians 2:20;  
 2 Timothy 3:16; 4:3

PRAYER ... (A) Galatians 5:16, 25; Psalm 139:23; 1 John 5:14-15; James 4:3; 5:14-16; Acts 20:29;  
 Matthew 7:15

PREACHER/PREACHING ... (A) 1 Corinthians 9; 1 Timothy 2:12; 3:2, 15; 2 Timothy 2:2, 15;  
 1 Timothy 4:13; 5:17; 6:20; 2 Timothy 1:14; 2:2; 4:2; Acts 20:28-29;  
 Matthew 29:19; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Colossians 1:25, 28-29; Galatians 1:6-9

PROPHETS, PROPHETESS, PROPHECY ... (Q) Joel 2; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:11;  
 Joel 2:28-30; Acts 2:17; 1 Corinthians 14:24  
 (A) Joel 2; Ephesians 2:20; 3:3, 5; Jude 3; Acts 2:42-43; 2 Corinthians 12:12;  
 1 Corinthians 14:4, 24; Acts 17:11; 1 Timothy 1:3; Titus 1:10-11;  
 Jude 3-4, 8-13; 2 Peter 2:1-2; 3 John 9-10; 2 Timothy 2:17; Joel 2:28-32;  
 Acts 2:14-16, 22

PROSPERITY GOSPEL/HEALTH AND WEALTH/FAITH MOVEMENT ...  
 (A) 2 Corinthians 10:3-6; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Philippians 2:26

REPENT/REPENTANCE ...  
 (A) 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:20; Matthew 18:15

REVELATIONS (today) ... (Q) Jude 3  
 (A) Jude 3; Ephesians 2:20; 3:1-5; 2 Corinthians 11:13; 12:12; John 17:17;  
 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 2:2; James 4:13-16; John 13:16

SALVATION ... (Q) John 6:37; Romans 8:1; 1 Corinthians 1:8; 6:9; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27;  
 Colossians 1:22; Hebrews 6:4-6; Philippians 1:6

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 (A) Matthew 18; John 20:23; Matthew 16:23

SCRIPTURE (Bible) ... (Q) 1 Timothy 3:2; Mark 16:9-20; Ephesians 4:11; 2 Chronicles 9:29  
 (A) 1 Timothy 3:2; Colossians 2:8, 18; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:2-3;  
 Ephesians 2:20; 3:3, 5; Acts 2:42-43; Mark 7:6-9; Isaiah 55:11; Jude 3;  
 2 Corinthians 12:12

SEEK (not Seek) ... (A) Matthew 6:33

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SIN ... (Q) Revelation 2; 1 John 3:4  
 (A) Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 13:7;  
 1 Corinthians 11:1; Hosea 4:9; 1 Timothy 5:19-20

SLAVES ... (Q) John 15:15

SOUL AND SPIRIT ... (Q) Hebrews 4:12

SPIRITS (authorities) ... (A) Ephesians 6  
 SPIRITS (fear of) ... (A) 1 Samuel 28:7-25; Deuteronomy 18:14; 1 Peter 1:5; 1 John 5:18  
 SPIRITUAL GIFTS ... (Q) 1 Corinthians 12  
     (A) 1 Corinthians 12:7; 2 Corinthians 12:7-13; Ephesians 5:18-6:4;  
         Ephesians 3:3, 5; Hebrews 9:27; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Romans 12;  
         1 Peter 4:10; John 20:30-31; Acts 2:43  
 SPIRITUAL WARFARE ... (Q) 2 Corinthians 12:7; Luke 10:17; Matthew 18:18-20; Acts 13:8-11;  
     Mark 16:19-20  
     (A) Matthew 28:18; Psalm 115:3; Acts 16:14; 2 Corinthians 11:12-15;  
         Revelation 2:3; Matthew 15:24; 18:16; John 20:23; Hebrews 2:14;  
         2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-18; Colossians 1:13, 16  
 TEMPTATION ... (Q) 1 Corinthians 10:13  
     (A) James 1:2-3, 12-14; Psalm 115:3;  
 TEN COMMANDMENTS ... (A) 2 Chronicles 7:14; Jeremiah 29:11; Matthew 18  
 TONGUES ... (Q) Mark 16:9-20  
     (A) 1 Corinthians 12:7, 30; 1 Corinthians 14:5, 10, 21-27; 2 Corinthians 12:13  
         1 Corinthians 12:11-13; Colossians 1:28  
 TRIAL ... (A) James 1:3, 12, 14  
 VISIONS ... (Q) Job 33:14-16  
     (A) 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Colossians 2:18; Ephesians 2:20; 3:1-5;  
         2 Corinthians 11:11-15; 2 Corinthians 12; John 8:32; 17:17; 1 Peter 2:2;  
         Matthew 7:15-22; Jude 3  
 WITCHES/WITCHCRAFT ... (Q) Exodus 22:18; Acts 13:8:11  
     (A) 1 Corinthians 8; Exodus 20:3-5; 22:18; Deuteronomy 18:10-12;  
         Hebrews 4:12; 1 Timothy 6:11; Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5  
 WIVES ... (Q) 1 Timothy 3  
     (A) 1 Kings 11:1; Matthew 5:31-32; 1 Timothy 2:12-3:2  
 WOMEN PASTORS/PREACHERS ... (Q) Galatians 3:28; 1 Peter 2:9; Acts 2; Joel 2; Ephesians 4:11;  
     1 Timothy 2:12; 1 Corinthians 11:12-16; Deuteronomy 22:5; 1 Timothy 2:11-12;  
     Galatians 3:28; Psalm 68:11; Luke 2  
     (A) 1 Timothy 2:9-3:2; 1 Peter 2:2; Galatians 5:16; Titus 2:2-5; Romans 12:2;  
         1 Timothy 5:16; 2 Timothy 1:5; Galatians 3:28; Matthew 23:23-24; Acts 2;  
         1 Timothy 3:15; Genesis 3:16; Luke 2; 1 Timothy 2:1-15; 1 Peter 4:10-11  
 WORKS ... (Q) 1 Corinthians 3:12  
     (A) 1 Corinthians 4:5  
 WORSHIP ... (A) 1 Corinthians 16:2

