



# Covenant Answering Service



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**QUESTION:** In our group study, we have run into several snags and I'm appealing for help. In 2nd Timothy 3:16, we are told that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God etc." — does this cover all the Books in the Bible, does it apply to the Books in existence then and are the Apocryphal Books to be rejected on this score? Our group has several problems with this scripture and others, but we feel that if we could be guided on this, it may help us to overcome some of the others.

**ANSWER:** It is held by some — and often on the basis of Bible numerics — that 2nd Timothy 3:16 covers all 66 Books in the Bible and that any other writing, while having certain historical importance, does not fall within the area of being "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness . . ." Thus, notwithstanding the fact that there has been and still is considerable diversity of opinion concerning the dates on which each of the New Testament Books were written, it is claimed that the writers were inspired by the Holy Spirit and that their works should be considered as absolutely authentic.

Needless to say, Bible study groups — researching the scriptures against this thesis — will find themselves in considerable difficulties. According to *The New Testament from the Greek Text as established by Bible Numerics* and edited by Ivan Panin, the first words in the New Testament create more problems than they solve. "A genealogy of Jesus Christ, David's Son, Abraham's Son . . ." This is NOT a genealogy of Jesus Christ but rather that of Joseph who subsequently married Mary. The genealogy begins in Matthew 1:2 and runs continuously without a break and is concluded in verse 16 with the words: "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ . . ." As the remainder of the first chapter in Matthew's Gospel emphasises the Virgin Birth, it becomes patently obvious that the first words in the New Testament are incorrect and should read: "A genealogy of Joseph etc . . ." The feature of the three sets of "fourteen generations" too should be considered in which at least three names are omitted in the second list from David to the captivity to maintain the pattern of "fourteens" but as this could lead from the main question to be answered, it must be left for further and later consideration.

In returning to 2nd Timothy 3:16 and in order to fully appreciate its significance, one should note the preceding verses which read: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and has been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." One does not

of course, know the age of Timothy when he accompanied Paul on his journeys, but whatever his age, there was not a single New Testament document written when he was a child – the earliest of these, so it is claimed, being written between 45 and 50 A.D. Thus the “holy scriptures” to which Paul was referring here, could only have been the *Torah*, the *Nebiim Rishonim*, the *Nebiim Akheronim* and the *Kethobim* – the 22 Books which at that time, formed the Old Testament canon.

In summing up our answer to this question, the whole context in which the statement: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God” appears, should be noted and this undoubtedly points to the “sacred writings” – *heiros grammata* – with which Timothy was familiar as a child.

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**QUESTION:** Would you please give me the information of when the English word “Jew” came into being. I understand that it is a 16th or 17th century translation.

**ANSWER:** As the best authority on this subject are the Jews themselves, a quote from the *Jewish Encyclopaedia* will suffice here. “JEW (the word): Up to the seventeenth century, this word was spelled in Middle English in various ways: ‘Gyu’, ‘Gui’, ‘Gyw’, ‘Iu’, ‘Iuu’, ‘Iuw’, ‘Ieu’, ‘Ieuu’, ‘Iuez’, ‘Iwe’, ‘Iow’, ‘Iewe’, ‘Ieue’, ‘Iue’, ‘Iew’, ‘Jew’. All these forms were derived from the Old French ‘Giu’ which was earlier written ‘Juieu’ derived from the Latin accusative ‘Judaeum’ with the elision of the letter ‘d.’” It is an incontestable fact that by 1775, the word “Jew” had become part of the English vocabulary for it is found as such in Sheridan’s play *The Rivals*.

Again and according to the *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, the Hebrew *YEHUDIY* which was applied to the tribe of Judah, was later expanded to cover the people inhabiting the south of Palestine, but after the “exile”, it was applied to all adherents of the religion which was centred in the Temple in Jerusalem. Thus, in tracing the origin of the English word “Jew”, one finds that it began with the name of the fourth son of Jacob *YEHUD* which in English is rendered as

JUDAH. The name was initially and exclusively applied to those who were descended from the patriarch but prior to the captivity, it was used to designate all who lived in the southern portion of Canaan and who formed the “kingdom of Judah” as separate and distinct from the “kingdom of Israel” which comprised ten of the twelve tribes of ALL Israel. After the removal of true Israel from Canaan, a nation comprising a minimum of 17 different people, was set up and with the passage of time, all the inhabitants of a province which was called Judaea by the Greeks, were called by this name. As the *Jewish Encyclopaedia* states, the patriarchal name *YEHUD* was applied to all adherents of the religion practised in Judaea and, as must be obvious, the name was transposed from a patriarchal and tribal name into that denoting a religious faith. The 8th century conversion of the whole nation of the Khazars to the religion of the Jews – a nation subsequently identified as Jews, is a clear vindication of the above contention.

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**QUESTION:** Please explain what Jesus meant when He said to the thief who was crucified beside Him: “Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” Those words have always puzzled me.

**ANSWER:** The problem which resulted in this question strangely enough, lies in the question itself. It will be noted that the question quotes the Lord as saying: “Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise” without considering the whole verse and the context in which it appears. Thus, in answering the question, Luke 23:42, 43 are set out. “And he (one of the malefactors) said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

The first point which should be noted is *what* the malefactor requested and, as must be obvious, it was: “... remember me when thou comest into *thy kingdom*.” While many may be disappointed at this, the Kingdom of our Lord has not yet been set up and remains for the future to reveal

and of which, Revelation 11:15 has this to say. "The kingdom (in the Greek text it is singular and not plural as in the King James version) of this *kosmos* (a system of government based on the Law of the LORD) has become the kingdom (again in the singular) of our Lord (Jesus Christ) and of his Anointed (the word *Christos* means 'anointed') people, and they shall reign for ever and ever." This translation is a literal rendering from the Stephen's Text of 1550. In the light of this, it is patently obvious that the Authorised Version's rendering of the Lord's response to the request, cannot be true. *That* day, our Lord died and was buried and remained in the sepulchre for three days and three nights after which, He rose again. Is death and the grave the Kingdom of our Lord? Surely not.

However, in considering *what* the Lord said in response to the request, it should be borne in mind that the punctuation of the text only occurred in the late 14th century of the Christian dispensation — punctuation being unknown when the early Greek manuscripts were written. In looking at the English translation without punctuation, it reads: "And Jesus said unto him verily I say unto you to day thou shalt be with me in paradise" and as must be obvious, the placing of punctuation becomes a very important matter. However, if one considers the Greek text, no such ambiguity arises. If the Lord intended to convey that *that* day the malefactor would be with Him in paradise, the Greek text would have included the word *hoti* which would then remove all ambiguity and could have been translated as: "Verily I say unto you that (*hoti*) to day you will be with me in paradise." Although omitted from the English translation, the Greek text of Luke 4:21, the inclusion of the Greek *hoti* establishes very clearly *what* the Lord was saying. "And he began to say unto them THAT (*hoti*) this day, is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" meaning of course that *that* day, the prophecy of Isaiah 61:2 was being fulfilled.

However, the Greek text of Luke 23:43 *does not* contain the word *hoti* which then demands that the English translation should read: "Verily I say unto you today, Thou shalt be with me in paradise."

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**QUESTION:** How did the confusion about what constitutes adultery come about and when did divorce and remarriage come to be called "adultery"?

**ANSWER:** Before answering this question which centres on *when* remarriage was seen as "adultery", we should note *what* constitutes "adultery" in the sight of the LORD. The Hebrew word which is generally translated as adultery, is *nâ'aph* and is used extensively to describe Israel's *national* admixture of Service to the LORD with the worship of other gods or in other words, the mixing of two incompatible factors. The Israel *nation* diluted and polluted its calling by embracing the worship and religion of other people. The same principle applies to the *individual* who commits adultery for they dilute and pollute what they are and what they were made and, as the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defines the act, they produce offspring who are "spurious, corrupt and debased".

To return to the question, if one looks at the Law of divorce as Moses wrote it, it will be seen that at no time did he equate a re-married person of either sex, with the subject of adultery. "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness (lawlessness) in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house, or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance" (Deut. 24:1-4). It will be noted here that Moses quite categorically states that the *divorced woman may remarry* and there is no question of adultery in this. The only proviso which Moses makes is that the

divorced wife, having remarried, may not return to her first husband. So then Moses was not responsible for the notion that remarriage after divorce, constitutes adultery.

In looking for the source of this notion, we find that Paul and his particular interpretation of the Law was responsible. Now, while some may not like this charge laid against Paul, it should be remembered that the question which prompts it asks how it came about that remarriage after divorce is called adultery. In his defence before Felix, Paul made this statement: "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, *believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets*" (Acts 24:14). If this is so and if this is an accurate account of Paul's defence it is patently obvious that it was not the Law of Moses which he believed. In Romans 7:1-3, Paul wrote: "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth. For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, *she shall be called an adulteress*: but if her husband be dead, she is free from the law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." As this is NOT in the law, it becomes part and parcel of Paul's "gospel" by which he states that God will judge the world (Romans 2:16).

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**QUESTION:** We are told not to kill in the Decalogue and yet there are many occasions when the Almighty apparently instructs His people to slaughter their enemies and particularly those who occupied Palestine before them. This is very difficult to explain to an opponent of Christianity.

**ANSWER:** We should understand that our English translation of the Bible is not as exact as it should be and to illustrate the point, we should note that the English

word "kill" is translated from six different Hebrew words which are *nâkâh, hârag, mûth, shâchat, tâbach* and *râtsach*. The word "kill" in the Decalogue, is translated from the Hebrew *râtsach* and in its usage, we find that it means "murder". At no time does the Almighty ever command or instruct His people to murder others.

However, in considering His instruction to Israel insofar as the seven nations in Canaan were concerned (Deut. 7:1-5), one should always look for the reason behind this. In the first instance, we should note that the Canaanites were not indigenous to that land but settled there after the Flood (Gen. 10). The next point to note is that in Abraham's day, the inhabitants of the land, although perverse and full of "iniquity", this had not yet reached disastrous proportions (Gen. 15:16). However, when Israel was about to enter the land, all the perversions which had caused the LORD to obliterate Sodom, Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, were practised by the Canaanites (Lev. 18:24) and, as archaeology reveals, those people were degenerate.

Then too there was another practice which obtained in Canaan – the religion of the "high places" which were the scenes of blood rituals in the worship of Baal and Astarte. Excavations at Gezer, Taanach and other places have laid bare a series of rock surfaces fitted with cup marks intended, so it is thought, for collecting the sacrificial blood although for what purpose, remains an enigma. These "high places" figure very prominently in Israel's history and although the LORD commanded their destruction, Israel ignored this just as they ignored the instruction to "destroy" the Canaanite nations.

Thus, in summing up the answer to this question, we see that the LORD indeed commanded the destruction of the Canaanites but, as in all His commands and instructions, we see that He had a very valid, down-to-earth reason for them.

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