

HOUSE to HOUSE
HEART to HEART

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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 25 NUMBER 5



“I HEARD THE BIBLE HAS MISTAKES. Is that true?” *Allen Webster*

One said, “If I were Satan, I would put as many barriers around the Bible as I could. I would plant thorns and hedges to frighten people off.”

The devil has been busy planting thorns (cf. Matthew 13:18–22). A Gallup poll showed that only twenty-four percent of Americans believe the Bible is the literal word of God, the lowest in Gallup’s forty-year tracking. The number who view the Bible as secular stories and history has risen to twenty-six percent.

Whole books—even libraries—are dedicated to answering critics verse by verse. This article can give only a sampling. Critics allege over one hundred errors in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. All their accusations are answerable. These examples show how to deal with such discrepancies.

ARE JESUS’ LINEAGE ACCOUNTS IRRECONCILABLE?

A comparison of Jesus’ genealogies (Matthew 1:1–17; Luke 3:23–38) shows more dissimilarity than duplication. Matthew’s

list descends from Abraham to Joseph (Matthew 1:2, 16) because he wrote to Jews, and Abraham was the father of the Jews. Luke’s ascends back to Adam (Luke 3:38), focusing on humanity, because he wrote to the Greeks.

There is no difficulty reconciling the first two parts:

- Adam to Abraham: Luke matches Genesis.
- Abraham to David: Tables are alike.

From David to Christ, though, the lists are different, and Luke has more names. Matthew divides forty-two names into three sets of fourteen (each ending in a national event). Luke’s list has sixty ancestors.

Answers: (1) Matthew omitted lesser-known ancestors because Jews commonly abbreviated long lists. If giving directions when someone generally knows the way, one only has to give high points. If one does not know the way, then directions must be detailed. Jews knew their ancestry, so Matthew listed only the high points.

(2) The lists differ because Matthew traces Joseph's lineage and showed that Jesus had legal right to King David's throne (2 Samuel 7:12-16). Luke traced Mary's line to show He was Abraham's biological descendant (Genesis 12:1-3). Joseph and Mary both descended from David but through different wives. (David had at least seven wives.)

(3) Jews used "son" in four ways—immediate male offspring, son-in-law, descendant up to several generations removed, and Levirate son (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). Joseph's father is listed as Jacob (Matthew 1:16) and Heli (Luke 3:23), showing a Levirate marriage. (Under Moses' law, if a man died childless, his brother married his widow and fathered a son as his heir.) Jacob was his biological father; Heli, who died before his conception, was his legal father.

DID THE CENTURION COME OR NOT?

Matthew stated a centurion came to Jesus, pleading with Him to heal his servant (8:5-10). Luke said the centurion sent Jewish elders on his behalf (7:1-10).

Possibilities: (1) It is possible the centurion asked the elders to "soften up" Jesus and followed up personally later. Not including follow-up would fit Matthew's style. He often abbreviated records (8:14-15/Mark 1:29-31; 9:1-8/Mark 2:1-12; 9:18-26/Mark 5:21-43).

(2) He appealed to Jesus through the elders. A maxim of law states that what one does through a duly constituted agency, he himself legally does. It was common to ascribe an agent's words and actions to the one who sent him (cf. 2 Samuel 14:19; 2 Kings 14:27; Esther 3:15; 8:8; Ezra 1:7-8). If a June 6, 1944, headline read, "Eisenhower invades Normandy," would it mean he personally stormed the beach? "The

President asked Congress to pass this bill" does not mean he personally addressed Congress. "Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him" (John 19:1), means Pilate ordered it. Jesus "baptized more disciples than John," but He did it through His disciples (John 4:1-2). Whether one requests personally or through an agent makes no difference.

(3) Jesus drew near the house (Luke 7:6) and marveled "at him" (7:9). It seems the centurion was in his doorway, so Jesus addressed both him and the crowd.

DID JESUS MAKE A WHALE OF A MISTAKE?

Since a whale is a mammal, when Jesus called Jonah's fish a whale (Matthew 12:40 KJV), He made His "most famous scientific error." Answer: Neither

Jonah nor Jesus spoke English and did not use the word *whale* or *fish*. Regardless of English translations, the meaning of Jonah's Hebrew word and Jesus' Greek word is the same (a giant sea creature).

WHAT ABOUT THOSE EYES AND NEEDLES?

Writers used different words for "eye of the needle." Matthew (19:24) and Mark (10:25) used the same word for needle; Luke used a surgeon's needle (18:25). Critics say, "Someone is wrong. Jesus used one word for each."

Possibilities: (1) The quotes might be from different sermons. Jesus preached the same ideas many times in different villages (Matthew 4:17). Politicians make the same stump speech every night for months. Preachers preach lessons in different churches and repeat phrases in the same sermon. The disciples likely heard Jesus use different words on different days. (2) Jesus spoke Aramaic and His Spirit-guided biographers simply chose different words to translate into Greek.

DID YOU HEAR THE ONE ABOUT THE THREE BLIND MEN?

Mark said Jesus healed one blind man named Bartimaeus at Jericho (10:46-52). Luke has "a certain blind man" (18:35-43). Matthew said there were two blind men (20:29-34). Matthew and Mark said the healing occurred as Jesus left Jericho; Luke said it was as He "drew nigh."

Possibilities: (1) Possibly three blind men were healed near Jericho. Luke mentions one; Mark another; and Matthew an additional one. No one said there was only one man. Bartimaeus may have been well-known and the others unknown. (2) Edward Robinson said *engizo* ("drew near") can mean "to be near." (3) There were two Jerichos. Old Testament Jericho (Joshua 6; 1 Kings 16:34), located at Elijah's spring, was mostly ruins in Jesus' day. Herod the Great built a new Jericho two miles south of it. This miracle may have occurred between the two.

SIX HOURS ONE FRIDAY, OR WAS IT NINE?

Mark wrote Jesus was crucified the third hour (15:25); John said He was



tried the sixth hour (19:14). How could His trial be after His crucifixion? Answer: Mark used Jewish time; John, Roman time. A Jewish day began at 6:00 P.M.; Roman days began at midnight. So Jesus' trial began at 6:00 A.M. and His execution at 9:00 A.M.

WHAT DID THAT CENTURION SAY?

Matthew (27:54) and Mark (15:39) said the centurion confessed Jesus was "the Son of God." Luke has him saying "a righteous Man!" (23:47).

Answer: He likely said both. Critics assume each book is a complete biography and that any omission is a contradiction. These are not complete biographies. Each writer limited the days, events, and words he revealed of Jesus. Combined, they contain events from only about 35 of Jesus' 1,200 ministry days.

JEREMIAH NEVER SAID THAT.

Matthew wrote, "Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, 'And they took the thirty pieces of silver'" (27:9–10). This reference is found in Zechariah 11:13.

Answer: A Jew would see nothing strange here due to their Old Testament canon. They grouped the prophets together with Jeremiah first (cf. Matthew 22:40). Jewish scholar Nahum Sarna explained: "In the Jewish way of labelling things you call a book by its first few words, and you call a collection of books by the first book in that collection" (www.tektonics.org/lp/mkone2.php).

CONFUSED ROBBERS?

All four biographers say Jesus was crucified between thieves. Matthew (27:35–44) and Mark (15:24–32) say they reviled Jesus. Luke says one blasphemed (reviled) Him but the other asked to be remembered (23:33–43). Answer: Doubtless one thief had a change of heart.

THOSE TRICKY ANGELS ...

Was it one angel outside the tomb or two angels inside? Or two men inside? Or one man inside?

- Matthew said when Mary and Mary Magdalene came to the tomb, an angel descended to move the stone (28:2).

- Mark said, "Entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side" (16:5).
- Luke said they were perplexed and "two men stood by them in shining garments" (24:4).
- John said that after they told Peter and John of the empty tomb, Mary returned to see "two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain" (20:12).

Answer: Multiple partial reports with different details do not have to be false. Courts expect truthful witnesses to give varying details. Police say when two completely agree, the testimony is either contaminated or rehearsed.

Some assume angels have wings and look ethereal. In Scripture, sometimes they did (Exodus 25:20; Isaiah 6:2), but usually not (Hebrews 13:2). When appearing as humans, they were often called men (Genesis 18:2, 16–33; 32:24).

Put the accounts together, and an angel moved the stone and sat upon it outside the tomb (Matthew 28:2). Inside the tomb were two men (angels) (Luke 24:4; John 20:12); perhaps one was the same angel, as it seems to have been a different time. Mark never said there was only one angel. He could have referred to the one who spoke of Jesus going to Galilee.

Suppose I say I saw Eric at McDonald's and he told me Ashley was expecting. Later Blake says he and I were at McDonald's and saw Eric and Ashley. Would one be lying? Both could be true, though I did not mention Blake or Ashley.

The entirety of God's Word is truth (Psalm 119:160). Parallel passages are complementary and more valuable than identical records. Piecing them together answers many supposed discrepancies in Jesus' biographies and parallel Old Testament histories (Kings/Chronicles).

Critics often strain at gnats and use unfair methodology. Would you want such illogical people on a jury to decide your case? Still, the Bible is not hurt by criticism. Jesus' biographies have been tried in the fire of controversy and proven accurate. Christians grow in faith by studying for answers and gain a more complete picture of Jesus' life and teachings.

Get past the thorns.



Gratitude

Years ago, a woman living on a farm in Germany brought to her minister about \$10, which was a lot at the time.

She explained, "In former years, I have had to pay about this amount in medicine. This year there has been no sickness in our family. I want to show my gratitude to the Lord in this way."

Some time later, she came with about \$5, explaining that many of her neighbors had suffered losses in a recent windstorm, but that her farm had been spared. "I bring the church this donation as an offering of thanks."

—Steve Shepherd

"Be thankful to Him, and bless His name."

PSALM 100:4

God's Plan for Saving Man

Divine Love: John 3:16

God's Grace: Ephesians 2:8

Christ's Blood: Romans 5:9

Holy Spirit's Word: Romans 1:16

Sinner's Faith: Acts 16:31

Sinner's Repentance: Luke 13:3

Sinner's Confession: Romans 10:10

Sinner's Baptism: Acts 22:16

Christian's Love: Matthew 22:37

Christian's Work: James 2:24

Christian's Hope: Romans 8:24

Christian's Endurance: Revelation 2:10

Subtract the Pants

A college graduate had passed with flying colors. He was a full-fledged Certified Public Accountant.

He returned home feeling proud of himself. His father had immigrated to the U.S. and now owned his own little business.

The young man began to criticize his father's bookkeeping. "Dad, you don't even know how much profit you've made. Over here in this drawer are your accounts receivable. Over there are your receipts, and you keep all your money in the cash register. You don't have any idea how much money you've made."

The father answered, "Son, when I came to this country the only thing I owned was a pair of pants. Now, your brother is a doctor, your sister is an art teacher, and you are a CPA. Your mother and I own our home. We have a car, and we own this little business. Now add that up, subtract the pants, and all the rest is profit." —Author Unknown

"Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving."

PSALM 95:2



I Want to Walk Barefoot

A 12-year-old boy named David was born without an immune system.

He underwent a bone marrow transplant to correct the deficiency. Up to that point, he had spent his entire life in a plastic bubble to prevent exposure to common germs, bacteria, and viruses that could kill him. He lived without ever knowing human contact.

When asked what he would like to do if and when he was released from his protective bubble, he replied, "I want to walk barefoot on grass, and touch my mother's hand."

For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.



Founded on Purity

Jacob and Rachel "dated" for seven years without behaving immorally (Genesis 29:20–21).

How different this is from today, when many seem unable to go on even one date without being promiscuous. In a permissive society, little thought is given to remaining pure until marriage. As many as one third of all babies are conceived outside of wedlock. Many of these are murdered by abortion (cf. Proverbs 6:17). Although some couples marry before the birth of their child, still about 300,000 babies are born each year outside of marriage.

Singles need encouragement to remain strong in a sinful world (1 Timothy 4:12). John wrote, "I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:14).

The Bible does not sanction immorality. Before fornication develops between a man and woman, there is first a departure from Jesus (Matthew 5:8, 27–28; Mark

7:20–23; 1 Corinthians 6:18–20; Galatians 5:19–21; 1 Thessalonians 4:3–7; 5:22; 1 Timothy 5:1–2, 22; 2 Timothy 2:22). God has not placed the sex relationship in any part of the dating period—He designated it as post-marriage (Hebrews 13:4). Experienced outside of marriage, it is sin, plain and simple. Although forgiveness is possible, one cannot go to heaven as a fornicator (1 Corinthians 6:9–11). Love is not spelled l-u-s-t. Love waits.

Purity should last throughout marriage. Families are destroyed by a lack of purity. Adultery is the only sin that breaks the marriage bond (Matthew 5:31–32; 19:9). The world is full of spouses like Potiphar's wife and Gomer (Genesis 39:7–20; Hosea 1; 3). A leading women's magazine reported that mutual adultery or "wife swapping" is practiced by millions of couples.

Sex is God's wedding gift to His children. —Author Unknown

"Call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

2 TIMOTHY 2:22

Decide to Be Better

Each of us should form a resolution right now.

Husbands, promise yourself that your wife is going to have a more caring husband till death separates you.

Wives, promise yourself that your husband will have a more appreciative wife till death separates you.

Parents, resolve that you are going to love your children and give more of yourselves to them (Ephesians 6:4; Titus 2:3–4).

Children, resolve that you will honor and obey your parents (Ephesians 6:1–3).

Stronger families begin with us. Determine to do your best for those you love.

—Author Unknown

Don't Believe Everything You Think



I admit a curiosity for bumper stickers. On occasion, one succinctly states a great truth or at least provokes reasonable thought.

Once I stopped at a light, and the car in front of mine had the sticker, “Don’t believe everything you think!” The more I thought about it, that statement struck me as appropriate.

Often people reason, “If I think it, it must be right.” The press and the politicians seem to believe that if one repeats something often enough, even if it is wrong, people will believe it. When people decide that this propaganda is what they believe, then it must be right.

While the mores of society are in transition, morality is not. Society thinks that we have a new morality, but thinking it does not make it so.

In spiritual matters, the dangers and consequences are so much more serious because they affect the eternal.

Naaman made this mistake because things did not turn out as he thought they would. He became furious, saying, “Indeed, I said to myself, ‘He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy’” (2 Kings 5:11).

Because of his thinking, Naaman could have lost the opportunity for healing simply because what God, through Elisha, required was not what Naaman thought it should be. People reject God’s plan of salvation because it differs from what they think. Different folks think that God ought to save them by certain means—faith only, sprinkling, good works. Others think God should save them in their sins, not from their sins.

Many become indignant when it is suggested that what they are practicing—whether in worship, works, or manner

of life—does not have God’s approval according to the Scriptures. The defense offered is that this is what attracts people, what pleases people, and what people think they should do.

A good reminder to all men is, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts’” (Isaiah 55:8–9).

Whether it is our judgments about our fellow man, about the world around us, or about our responsibility to God, remember that in every case truth should be the measuring standard. Please, do not believe everything you think! —Oran Rhodes

“Behold, I thought”

2 KINGS 5:11

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.



Bible Quiz

VOLUME 25:5

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark! We will grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark “Can We All See the Bible Alike?” as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State: _____
Phone: _____

Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

Answers to Previous Quizzes

V. 25:3 Women in the Bible: 1. Tamar (Genesis 38:12–15); 2. Rebekah (Genesis 24:15–19); 3. Delilah (Judges 16:18); 4. Jochebed (Numbers 26:59); 5. Deborah (Judges 4:4–9); 6. Jael (Judges 4:18–21); 7. Rahab (Joshua 2:1–6); 8. Miriam (Exodus 15:20); 9. Hannah (1 Samuel 1:20; 2:18–21); 10. Not named (2 Kings 4:8–17); 11. Michal (2 Samuel 6:20–23); 12. Eve (Genesis 4:1–2); 13. Elizabeth (Luke 1:57–60); 14. Sarah (Genesis 21:3); 15. Rebekah (Genesis 25:21–26); 16. Rachel (Genesis 46:19); 17. Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:24); 18. Hagar (Genesis 16:15); 19. Hannah (1 Samuel 1:20); 20. Naomi (Ruth 1:22); 21. Martha (Luke 10:38–40); 22. Miriam (Numbers 26:59); 23. Not named (Judges 9:50–55); 24. Mary (Matthew 1:16).

V. 25:4 Who Dared Ask God This? 1. Moses (Exodus 5:22); 2. Elijah (1 Kings 17:18–20); 3. Abraham (Genesis 15:2); 4. Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16:20–22); 5. Solomon (1 Kings 3:5–9); 6. Moses (Exodus 3:13); 7. David (1 Samuel 30:3–8); 8. The Israelites (Judges 21:2–3); 9. Moses (Exodus 17:4); 10. Joshua (Joshua 7:7).

Seven Habits of Highly Effective Christians: 1. Faith (2 Peter 1:5) 2. Virtue (2 Peter 1:5) 3. Love (2 Peter 1:7) 4. Self-control (2 Peter 1:6) 5. Brotherly kindness (2 Peter 1:7) 6. Godliness (2 Peter 1:6) 7. Perseverance (2 Peter 1:6)

The Holy Spirit

Directions: Find answers in the following passages: Matthew 1:18; 12:31; 28:19; Luke 3:22; Acts 2:1–2, 3, 4–6, 13–15, 38; 5:3; 8:18; Romans 14:17; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 3:17; 2 Peter 1:21. Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

1. Before Mary and Joseph came together sexually, she was found with child of the _____.
2. When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit came down upon Him in the form of a _____.
3. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, _____ them in the _____ of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”
4. On which Jewish feast day did the Holy Spirit come upon the apostles? _____
5. “Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the _____ against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.”
6. When the disciples began speaking in tongues, some were skeptical and accused them of what? _____
7. What time of day did this event occur?
8. “Repent, and let every one of you be _____ in the name of Jesus Christ for the _____ of sins; and you shall receive the _____ of the Holy Spirit.”
9. Who lied to the Holy Spirit? _____
10. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is what? _____
11. On Pentecost, there came a sound of a rushing mighty what? _____
12. In what form did the Holy Spirit come on Pentecost? _____
13. What miraculous thing did the apostles do when they received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost? _____
14. Who acted as spokesman for the apostles on that day? _____
15. Who offered to pay money for the power to give the Holy Spirit? _____
16. “The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and _____ and _____ in the Holy Spirit.”
17. “Do you not know that your _____ is the _____ of the Holy Spirit who is in you?”
18. “Holy men of God spoke as they were _____ by the Holy Spirit.”

Principles of Interpretation

We should use the same principles to interpret the Bible as a judge would use to interpret the U.S. Constitution or a historian would use to understand the writings of Caesar.

History. The Bible was composed over a 1,600-year period that ended almost two thousand years ago. Why did Jonah act so harshly toward Nineveh? History teaches that Nineveh was the most hated nation of the eighth century B.C. and had terrorized Jonah's nation. One man said that Nineveh was "a cross between Nazi Germany and the Mafia" (Max Anders, *What You Need to Know About the Bible in 12 Lessons*, p. 151).

Culture. Without understanding the Levirate marriage law, one cannot understand the book of Ruth. A male relative was required to redeem the land of his dead brother and raise up a child with the childless widow. As another example, writers living before the discovery of

germs or molecules did not express scientific fact as modern scientists. If they had, their writings would have made no sense to anyone until our age arrived.

Geography. One major difference between modern and ancient times is the overcoming of distance. A man may now breakfast in London and lunch in New York over three thousand miles away. The world is a small place, and people live mobile lives. It was not so in Bible times. When we read the story of Samuel (1 Samuel 1–2), it seems that Hannah and the boy Samuel were far apart. Once a year, she visited Shiloh and gave him a coat she had made for him. The journey sounds like an expedition, yet Ramah and Shiloh were only about seventeen miles apart! In all His ministry, Jesus was never—as far as we know—more than a hundred miles from home. Why did He say they went up to Jerusalem when Jerusalem is south of Capernaum? We are

used to looking at maps. North is "up" and south is "down." In Bible times, such maps were not common, but walking was. People who walked from city to city talked in terms of the lay of the land. When they went to Jerusalem from Capernaum, they ascended about a thousand feet up a steep incline.

Language. What do the words you are studying mean in English? What do the words mean in the original language? After considering the possible meanings of the word, choose the meaning that best fits the immediate context.

Difficult verses must be interpreted in light of clear verses. The implicit should be interpreted by the explicit. Narrative should be examined in light of the didactic. —Author Unknown

"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened."

EPHESIANS 1:18

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.

Recommended Resource



The Gospel Broadcasting Network is unique in the world of religious TV—commercial free, and they never ask for money! Sponsored by the churches of Christ, GBN is available on many cable systems, as well as through their smartphone apps, the Roku device, and at gbntv.org.

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- 10 Things I Wish the World Knew about Jesus
- Enough and to Spare
- Forgiven to Forgive
- Heaven Will Surely Be Worth It All



More subjects:



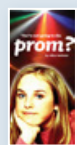
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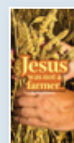
How to Follow Jesus



Where To Turn When There Is Nowhere To Turn



You're Not Going To The Prom?



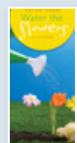
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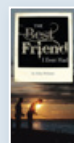
A Biblical View of Human Sexuality



My Offering



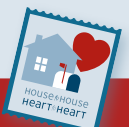
Pull The Weeds, Water The Flowers



The Best Friend I Ever Had

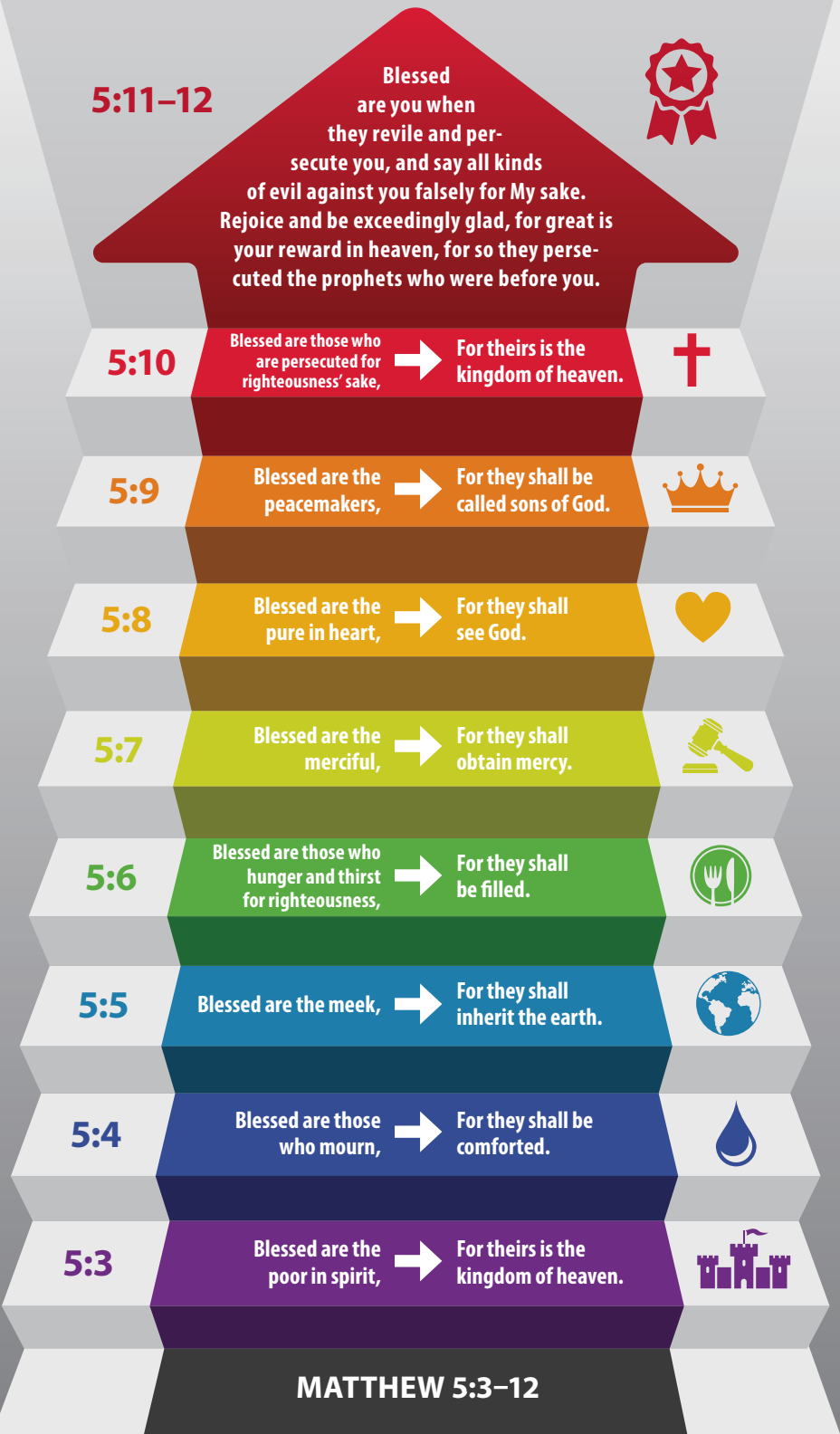
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BLESSED ARE

It is easy to hold on to our faith when we get our way and when others are kind to us. In the Beatitudes, Jesus shows the true test of maturity is holding to faith when we are wronged, endure persecution, or face trials. Jesus demonstrated this spirit when He endured unfair trials, torture, and painful death on the cross. He showed both in the Sermon on the Mount and in His life that, although His principles go against common perceptions, they produce unexpected results.



Fingered Verse

During the First World War, men were out gathering the wounded and the dead.

They found in a lonely and secluded spot the lifeless body of an American boy. He was lying on his face.

His right hand was stretched before him, and his index finger was glued with his own blood to the open page of a New Testament. When they pulled his finger from the printed page, they found it had been lying on the Scripture "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

A young man dying far from loved ones and home was thinking of home. He was thinking of a reunion, thinking of it only in terms of Him who rose from the tomb.

—Author unknown

"I am the resurrection."

JOHN 11:25

Knocking at the Door of Buddha

We knocked at the door of Buddha's tomb, but there was no answer. We knocked at the door of Confucius, but were met only with the dust of many centuries. We knocked at Mohammed's tomb, and heard only an echo. Then we knocked at the door of Jesus Christ and found Him to be alive.

"I am the way."

JOHN 14:6





The Most Difficult COMMAND

On July 2, 1893, the celebrated Restoration leader J. W. McGarvey delivered an address in Louisville, Kentucky. It was simply titled “Repentance.”

If God were giving special miraculous gifts, McGarvey said he would not ask for the gift of healing, prophecy, or tongues. Rather, he would ask for the power, above everything else, to cause men to repent.

He continued this marvelous discourse by saying, “The greatest obstacle to the salvation of men is the obstinacy of the human will.” He pointed out that, comparatively speaking, it is not all that difficult to persuade multitudes of the divine nature of Jesus of Nazareth. An honest consideration of the evidence is tremendously compelling.

Nor is it a rigorous task to lead folks to be immersed in water for the forgiveness of their sins, once they are convinced they are lost and without the hope of eternal life apart from obedience to Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:8–9; Hebrews 5:9; 1 Peter 4:17).

McGarvey forcefully emphasized that the most difficult obstacle in the path to genuine conversion “is to induce them to repent.” People do not change their minds or lives very easily. Since repentance involves both, it is challenging. Further, repentance implies a person is on the wrong path (Luke 13:3), and none of us wants to admit we are wrong.

Men want Christianity without conversion and forgiveness without forsaking. When there is authentic penitence, salvation is possible. —Wayne Jackson



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