

FAQs

This PDF document will be updated frequently.

Below is a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that we sense are often on people's minds – especially when they are deciding to change their life and become a new person with Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Most of these questions do not have clear, definitive, and completely agreed upon answers; in these instances, we have provided our understanding of the answer and, where applicable, shared the Biblical Scriptures that support our interpretation.

Should you have a different answer, please let us know. Perhaps we can clarify our interpretation if we agree with you, or present why we think you might want to do some further investigation. We look at communication as a two-way process of education, and we hope you will too.

And yes, there will often be more than one plausible answer to many of these questions. When such is the case, we will lean on what the preponderance of Scripture tells us, always bearing in mind that the Bible is God's inerrant and occasionally metaphorical Word, and that God is the ultimate authority.

Sorry, but there will also be questions that we just do not know the answers to. In these instances, we will offer an opinion and label it as such.

Lastly, if you have a question that is not addressed here, please email us at jackson@whybelieveinchrist.com.

1. What happens when We die?

The Bible tells us that everyone will experience one physical death of the flesh, followed by one of two possible spiritual futures: either eternal life in heaven or eternal damnation in hell.

We are born into a perishable body that someday will die and turn to dust. This was *not* God's original plan for Man, but it is now the case because both Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God. As a result of their sins, both were driven out of The Garden of Eden, and in the process, Adam was told by God that death would now await him. ***“By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.”*** (Genesis 3:19). This “death” sentence also applied, unfortunately, to all of Adam's descendants who now constitute humanity. This is confirmed to us in Romans 3:34: ***“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”***. The wages we must pay for our sins is death, as confirmed in Romans 6:23A: ***“For the wages of sin is death.”*** We are not talking here of a “physical” death that awaits us all, but rather a “spiritual” death wherein we will not enjoy eternal life in heaven with Christ.

But as we see in Romans 6:23B, God has reinstated His original plan for us (eternal life) through His Son Jesus Christ: ***“but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*** The Apostle John makes this clear in John 3:16 when he tells us Jesus' reply to Nicodemus, a Jewish High Priest who had asked Jesus, “How can these things be?” Jesus told him, ***“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”*** So, if we come to genuinely believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior (believing that He is God in the flesh, that He died to pay the penalty for our sins with His sinless blood sacrifice, and that He was resurrected on the third day to demonstrate eternal life is possible) and abide in Him with a repentant and enduring faith, we will spend eternal life in heaven following our “physical” death.

If, however, we do not believe in Jesus and thus have not been “saved” with our name written in the “book of life”, we will spend eternity following our physical death in what the Bible describes as Hades and then a “lake of fire” where there will be great “weeping and gnashing of teeth”.

“Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:14 – 15

“The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.” Matthew 13:41 – 43

The actual process of passing from the flesh state into one of the two eternal states described above depends on the timing of our death. This is a rather complex topic and is covered in detail in our PDF document, [“Where Are Heaven and Hell?”](#)

2. What is a “false prophet”?

A false prophet is someone who teaches or preaches material that is not consistent with Biblical Scripture. False prophets may often say they are presenting actual Scripture when they knowingly are not, or they may interject their own words into Scripture verses with the clear intent of making the listener or reader believe that actual Scripture is being presented. If you suspect you are listening to a “false prophet”, ask him to provide the Scripture address in the Bible that his prophecy/presentation is based on and then look up that Scripture passage. We also recommend you follow the 20/20 rule with Scripture which is to read the 20 verses before and the 20 verses after the provided “evidence” to make sure the context fits what is being presented.

In addition to false prophets, there are also false Gospels (false good news or false concepts about how a person can be saved) that are occasionally presented to mislead people into believing something the Bible doesn’t promise. An example of a false Gospel would be something like “He who gives freely to the Pastor and his church will be looked upon favorably by God and will thus be granted salvation. And the more he gives, the greater the reward he will enjoy in heaven and on earth.” The problem with this Gospel is that (1) it isn’t the Gospel, and (2) it does have some alignment with Scripture to make it sound believable, but it isn’t what the Bible actually says.

Just know, there is only one Gospel of salvation –we must believe that Jesus Christ was God incarnate and that He died for our sins and was raised on the third day. This is clearly presented in 1 Corinthians 15:1 – 4. Now, for clarification, the Bible presents biographical Gospel books written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (Matthew and John being original disciples of Christ who walked with Jesus during His 3 plus year of ministry). These are New Testament books that detail the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, and they describe His death on the cross and His resurrection. These biographical Gospel books present in much greater detail the salvation Gospel - the “good news” that the God-man Jesus Christ died to forgive us our sins and was raised on the third day, proving to us that eternal life is possible.

3. What is the will of God?

The will of God is that we become Christ-like.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:2

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification (being made Holy); that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.” 1 Thessalonians 4:3 – 8

4. What is Fruit of the Holy Spirit?

Fruit of the Holy Spirit are Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control. Please see the table below which is taken from the Rose Book of Bible Charts, Maps & Timelines. Fruit of the Holy Spirit are not something we are given by believing in Christ, but rather who we become when we do believe in Jesus Christ and behave accordingly.

Fruit	Definition	Description	Scripture[s]
Love	Seeks the highest good of others	Love is not based on emotions or feelings. It is a decision to be committed to the well-being of others without any conditions or circumstances.	1 John 4:7–12
Joy	Gladness not based on circumstances	Joy is more than happiness. It is not based on financial success, good health, or popularity. By believing in God, obeying his will, receiving His forgiveness, participating in fellowship with other believers, ministering to others, and sharing the gospel, believers will experience joy.	1 Peter 1:8–9
Peace	Contentment, unity between people	Peace is a state of assurance, lack of fear, and sense of contentment. It is fellowship, harmony, and unity among individuals. Peace is freedom from worry, disturbance, and oppressive thoughts.	Phil. 4:6–7
Patience	Slow to speak and slow to anger	Patience is a slowness in avenging wrongs. It is the quality of restraint that prevents believers from speaking or acting hastily in the face of disagreement, opposition, or persecution. Patience is bearing pain or problems without complaining.	James 5:8–9

Kindness	Merciful, sweet, and tender	Kindness is an eagerness to put others at ease. It is a sweet and attractive temperament that shows friendly regard.	Proverbs 11:16 – 17
Goodness	Generous and openhearted	Goodness is the selfless desire to be openhearted and generous to others above what they might deserve.	Galatians 6:9 – 10
Faithfulness	Dependable, loyal, and full of trust	Faithfulness is firm devotion to God, loyalty to friends, and dependability to carry out responsibilities. Faith is the conviction that even now God is working and acting on our behalf.	Proverbs 3:3 Revelation 2:10
Gentleness	Humble, calm, and non-threatening	Gentleness is a humble, non-threatening demeanor that derives from a position of strength and authority and is useful in calming another's anger. Gentleness is not a quality that is weak and passive.	Proverbs 15:1 1 Peter 3:15
Self-Control	Behaving well	Self-control is restraining our own emotions, actions, and desires, and being in harmony with the will of God. Self-control is doing God's will, not living for ourselves.	Proverbs 29:11 Titus 2:11 – 12

5. What are sins?

Basically, anything that separates us from God (like idolatry, witchcraft, or selfish ambition) or does not glorify God (like lying, debauchery or lust) is a sin. Another way to look at sin is to know that since none of these behaviors will be tolerated in the Kingdom of God, we need to cease their practice here on earth if we expect to be welcomed into God's Kingdom. Sinful behaviors would include the following (mostly taken from Galatians 5:19 – 21 or Colossians 3:5 – 9). Think of this as a starter list.

#	Sinful Behaviors	Explanation
1.	idolatry	Worshiping anything other than God
2.	murder & abortion	Self-explanatory
3.	bearing false witness & gossip	Spreading untruths about the nature or behavior of another person
4.	lying	Knowingly and willingly not telling the truth
5.	theft	Taking what is not yours
6.	lust	Longing for sexual immorality
7.	sexual immorality	Any of several sexual practices performed outside of marriage between a male and a female. Adultery and fornication are prime examples.
8.	hatred / rageful anger	Self-explanatory
9.	slander	Intentionally maligning another person
10.	coveting & envy	Wanting something that doesn't rightfully belong to you, or which belongs to someone else
11.	impurity	Often related to just thinking about sinful behaviors
12.	debauchery / orgies drunkenness	Any behavior that results in a loss of self-control. Most addictions would typically fall into one of these categories or would often lead to one.
13.	factions / strife	Causing strife among the brethren that destroys fellowship
14.	witchcraft	Practicing the occult
15.	filthy language & taking the Lord's name in vain	Self-explanatory
16.	selfish ambition	Putting yourself and your needs ahead of God or your neighbor
17.	greed	Wanting more than you need or more than what rightfully belongs to you
18.	evil desires	Wanting something that would harm yourself or others
19.	malice	Acting or thinking in an evil or vengeful manner towards another
20.	deceit	Self-explanatory
21.	unrighteous anger	Anger which has no relationship to the righteousness of Christ or to our loving God
22.	blaspheming the Holy Spirit	Rejecting once and for all the Holy Spirit's clear and compelling testimony that Jesus is the Christ of God and Savior

6. What Bible should I read?

If you know how to read Hebrew or Greek, then you should probably find a way to read the Bible in either of these two languages, as the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew (and then translated into Greek in 225 BC) and the New Testament was originally written in Greek.

If you are unable to read Hebrew or Greek, we recommend the New American Standard Bible (NASB) Life Application Study Bible – Updated Edition, copyright 2000 by Zondervan. This Bible falls in the word-for-word translation category (see below) and has many features that we think will make your Bible reading easier and more enjoyable. In addition to the actual Biblical Scriptures, there are also informative introductions, timelines, maps, summaries, and short biographies of the key people in each book. Alternate Bibles that are very popular and trustworthy include:

- KJV – King James Version
- ESV – English Standard Version
- NIV – New International Version
- NLT – New Living Translation
- HCSB – Holman Christian Standard Bible
- NKJV – New King James Version

Ideally you would also want to find one of these Bible versions translated into your own language.

Translation Philosophies

Once the manuscript families are determined for the translation of the Bible, translators need to decide what translation philosophy they will follow. There are three main philosophies: formal equivalence, functional equivalence, and optimal equivalence.

1. **Formal Equivalence** focuses on translating word-for-word and strives to be as literal as possible. Bibles that fall under the formal equivalence philosophy are the ESV, KJV, and NASB.
2. **Functional Equivalence** focuses on a thought-for-thought (dynamic equivalence) translation. Its goal is making the text easy to read and easier to understand. Bibles that fall in this camp are the NLT and NIV.
3. **Optimal Equivalence** is a balance of word-for-word and thought-for-thought where needed for the reader to better understand. The HCSB is considered an optimal equivalence approach.

Other Excellent Bible Resources

For reference use only, we highly recommend Green's *The Interlinear Hebrew-Greek-English Bible* (Hendrickson Publishers). This is a four-volume set that gives you the original Hebrew or Greek words of the Bible with their applicable English equivalent. When used with Strong's *Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, the Interlinear Bible gives you a solid set of tools to discern exactly what each word in the Bible means.