

## **Ammo for Your Ready Answer Arsenal**

As we've discussed on numerous occasions, I often felt something was missing in attending a Sunday church. The spiritual fulfillment was incomplete. There was always more ceremony than scripture. I knew the emptiness I felt was God stirring me to seek Him and Him alone. I felt a stirring I cannot describe but knew from where it came. God had heard my angry outburst over 22 years ago, when I threw His Bible against the wall out of frustration. I yelled at God and cried out, "I want to know You! All of You! You've all heard me speak of this frustrated plea to the Creator. Well, He heard that cry and I can tell you from a perspective of looking back, you don't shove God in the chest asking Him for His I.D.

In my walk through many denominations, attending various churches and even my trips in support of TACTICA law enforcement ministries to Central America, I felt there was still more. Those trips too, were a numbers game to see how many cops we could get to say the "sinner's prayer." It finally dawned on me and with a gentle whisper from above, I had not been seeking Him or His Word in earnest. I needed to blow the dust off my Bible and crack His book and read it for myself. To read it, see it, speak it and hear it with my own eyes, mouth and ears. **AND LIVE IT, EVERY WORD AND EVERY COMMANDMENT.**

Perhaps it is time. Time to sound the trumpets and band together in preparation for what is to come. Most of all, it is time to worship God in spirit and in truth.

**John 4:23-** “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”

**John 16:13-** “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth; is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.”

As we know what is coming, perhaps it is more critical to focus on what we’re doing now. We need not be concerned about the First Resurrection *if* we’re doing what we’re supposed to right *now*.

So, I began to dig into God’s Word intensely and increase my prayer life, talking with God, not at Him or giving Him a wish list. Wow! Was the light turned on! How could I have missed so much? Again, I never read it for myself nor proved ONCE what I had been “taught” by my parents and pastors over the years. “Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good.”- **1 Thessalonians 5:21**. I relied on the word of others, some I thought to be learned of God’s Word. The only way to grow closer to God Almighty is to love Him first, love His Son Jesus Christ our Savior and again, live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. We know the verses.

I began to see answers for questions I had right in God's Word. Undisputable. Undeniable. **Matthew 7:7-8**- "Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it shall be opened." I wasn't doing any of these things. I was seeking Him through religions and preachers. Lip service and traditions.

Asking, seeking and knocking isn't a one-time thing. Keep at it. The more you ask, the more that will be given to you, the more you seek, the more you will find, the more you knock, the more that will be opened unto you. The clarity and understanding will become obvious. God will not waste His Holy Spirit in a cracked vessel.

**2 Timothy 2:7**- "Give careful consideration to the things *that* I am telling you, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things."

If you truly want to know God, we can go directly to Him through His Son Jesus Christ. Our communication lines are always open through His Holy Spirit and His Word. You will never meet Him the way He desires on T.V. or watching a Sunday preacher because they have good sermons or make good points. Satan can too. We spoke of wasting time yesterday so why should we waste time on anything that is of no profit in our growth and knowledge of God? **2 Timothy 2:14**- "See that *they*

remain mindful of these things, earnestly charging *them* in the sight of the Lord not to argue over words that are not profitable in any way, *but which lead to the* subverting of those who hear.”

His Word, like Him, does not change. From the Old Testament, **Malachi 3:6**- “For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore, you sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

From the New Testament, **John 1:1-2** – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.”

**Hebrews 13:8**- “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

I learned to read the Bible and how the Old and New Testaments are in support of one another. From a New Covenant perspective, it doesn’t make much sense to discard the Old Testament as being “nailed to the cross” as so many denominations preach. Jesus Himself said otherwise. **Matthew 5:17**- “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.”

**Isaiah 28:9-10**- “Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine? *Those* who are weaned from the milk and drawn from the

breasts, For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little;”

It is prudent we know God’s word to provide an answer for those He will send our way in these end times. To be a good witness, we must be a good example and knowing the Word of God will be an asset. As a fellowship, we should be listing and discussing some common questions and arguments we may be confronted with. I thought I’d list the few to follow just to get the thought process rolling. The answers are clearly stated in the scriptures. This may be something we can address between now and next Passover? I’m sure you will be able to add even more support to what is listed by searching the scriptures.

### **1. Do I go to heaven when I die?**

So many churches preach that when a person dies, that person’s spirit floats off to heaven as an eternal spirit being to walk the streets of heaven for all eternity. Just how one gets there is a variation on the different religious theocracies and doctrines. Most believe you must be “born again.” Simply say the “sinner’s prayer” and receive Jesus into your heart, be a good person and you’ll float off to heaven and be with grandma upon your death and live out all time walking the streets of gold.

So many times, I've been to funerals and have heard people say of departed loved ones "I'll bet they're looking down on all of us right now smiling wishing we were with them..."

Well, it makes everyone present feel better and all warm and fuzzy but what in fact does God's word say about death and what happens to us when we die?

To get a grip on this, let's take a look at where we started, where were we made and how. I believe if we keep it simple and at the beginning, we won't get confused and if explained in the Words of Our Creator, we won't have any room for arguments. So, let's go back to **Genesis 2:7**- "Then the LORD God formed man *of the* dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."

God **made us** from the dust of the Earth. Fairly plain and simple. He breathed His breath of life into us and **made us** a living soul. Again, not complicated. We know that woman was taken from man in reading **Genesis 2:21-23**. We were without sin until Satan deceived Eve and both she and Adam fell from grace and sin and death entered the world. Having now an end to life, where does one go upon the end of life at death? God clearly states in **Genesis 3:19**- "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust

you *are*, and to dust you shall return.” God makes it clear, He is putting us right back where He found us, in the Earth.

Many ask, “Well what about the spirit (the breath of life)?” Well, that belonged to God in the first place, it was not ours. Even if we were a baptized saint and had received His Holy Spirit, it would return unto Him, our mortal body would still be returned to the ground from which it came. His Spirit returns to Him. **Ecclesiastes 12:7** – “And the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.”

**Ecclesiastes 9:5-6**- “For the living know that they shall die; but the dead do not know anything, nor do they have any more a reward; for their memory is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is long ago perished; nor do they any longer have a portion forever in all that is done under the sun.” Again, we see that when we die, our thoughts, our memories, all that we were, dies with us. We know nothing.

**So, who does go to heaven?**

Jesus Himself answers this question in **John 3:13**- “And no one has ascended into heaven, except He Who came down from heaven, even the Son of man, Who is in heaven.”

By the very words of Jesus Himself, **NO** person has ever ascended up to the third heaven where God the Father is seated. This deception is a lie from Satan and has been perpetuated through the ages and the many divisions among Christianity. So why all the deception and confusion? We know that Satan deceives the whole world (**Revelation 12:9**) It is a lot easier to believe a warm and fuzzy lie about “floating off to heaven and walk the streets of gold” than the truth of being buried back in the ground awaiting one of two resurrections that are actually in God’s Word. Satan is a clever enemy. We do not float off to walk the streets of gold to be with grandma when we die.

## **2. Is Sunday the Sabbath?**

No, it is not the true Sabbath. We get this question probably the most. In keeping this overview brief (as there are several studies on the Sabbath itself), we will again look to God’s Word as always to prove and answer any questions.

Please turn in your Bible to **Genesis 2:2-3**- “And on the seventh day God ended His work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”



The seventh day was sanctified or set apart at the beginning of creation. So many people claim it is a “Jewish” tradition or it is strictly “Old Testament”. These are the same folks who probably have their Bibles chock full of newspaper clippings of wedding, birth and death announcements, covered with dust on an end table somewhere. Never once cracking it open to see what is actually written in the pages inside. The real newsflash is; the Sabbath was established roughly 2300 years before a Jew ever walked on the Earth.

Okay, so how did Sunday take over as the new Sabbath? From Genesis to Revelation, there is not one scripture that God authorized changing His Sabbath to Sunday. It was actually done by the Catholic Church at the Council of Trent in 1566 without any Biblical authority. Calling it The Lord’s Day does not make it justified in the Eyes of God. In **Exodus 31:13**- “Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, ‘Truly you shall keep My Sabbaths, for it *is* a sign between Me and you throughout your generations to know that I *am* the LORD Who sanctifies you.”

Note God said “Sabbaths.” There are more than one. His Holy Days are included. Another side note, the children of Israel is 12 tribes, not all were Jews. Only the tribes of Benjamin and Judah were Jews.

None of God’s Commandments or Holy days were ***EVER*** done away with. We can find this proof in Leviticus 23. God commanded us to keep His Sabbaths and Holy

Days. **Leviticus 23:1-2**- “And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak unto the children of Israel, and say to them, Concerning the **feasts of the Lord**, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are **my appointed feasts**.” He did not say they were a Jewish feast or Sabbaths. He said they were “**MY**” feasts. In **Leviticus 23:21** God tells us that “it shall be a statute *forever* in all your dwellings *throughout your generations*.” Nothing was done away with from God’s Law as confirmed by Jesus in **Matthew 5:18**- “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

### **3. Holy Days are Jewish Traditions**

God’s Holy Days have been misconstrued as being “Jewish traditions.” If people actually read and understood God’s Word, they would know this not to be true. As we just read, Leviticus 23:1-2- “And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘*Concerning* the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, even these are My appointed feasts.”

We have dismissed His Holy days in favor of the traditions of men. There are several scriptures that Jesus mentions this in **Mark 7:9**- “Then He said to them, “Full well do you reject the commandment of God, so that you may observe your *own* tradition.” We have been duped and polluted into following vain traditions of

men by Satan our enemy who is the father of lies. **John 8:44**- “You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you desire to practice. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has not stood in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he is speaking from his own self; for he is a liar, and the father of it.” Christmas and Easter are prime examples of the traditions of men. God mentions a Christmas tradition in **Jeremiah 10:1-4**- “1. Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel. Thus says the LORD, “Do not learn the way of the heathen, and do not be terrified at the signs of the heavens; for the nations are terrified at them. For the customs of the people *are* vain; for one cuts a tree out of the forest with the axe, the work of the hands of the workman. They adorn it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers, so that it will not move.” We have substituted man-made holidays for God’s true Holy Days.

#### **4. A Resurrection to what?**

From scripture, we can prove we do not go to heaven when we die. The Bible speaks of two distinct resurrections. We need to concern ourselves with the ***first***. In keeping God’s true Sabbath and His Holy Days, we obtain the Sign of God. An obedience to His Master plan of salvation and for the First Resurrection, which is our reward. **Revelation 3:12**- “The one who overcomes will I make a pillar in the

temple of My God, and he shall not go out any more; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which will come down out of heaven from My God; and *I will write upon him My new name.*”

**Revelation 5:10-** “And did make us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.”

**Revelation 20:6-** “Blessed and holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power. But they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”

Jesus is coming back and bringing our reward with Him. To those who kept God’s Commandments shall be the blessing of the First Resurrection. The second resurrection is after the thousand-year millennial reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ setting up His Kingdom on Earth (**Revelation 20:5**).

So many things we have perverted and changed to fit the needs of man, we have forgotten the Word of God and His Commandments. So many denominations are proof of changing God’s Word to fit our needs. The Apostle Paul addressed this in **1 Corinthians 1:10-13**. Again, The Lord does not change. **Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8**. God is also no respecter of persons- (**Acts 10:34**). He is very specific in His instructions for us. Deviation from His Word has consequences. Even Moses with

all he did to serve God, was not allowed into the promised land because of disobedience (**Deuteronomy 32:51**). Throughout God's Word, the only way to Salvation is to repent/confess our sins and be baptized, accept and follow the example of Jesus Christ and obey God's Commandments and keep His Holy Days. All of them.

I have yet to find anywhere in scripture a "sinners' prayer" that makes us automatically saved. I do find that Jesus did not preach "Jesus" but only what He was told to do by the Father, primarily to repent for the coming Kingdom of God. **Matthew 11:27**- "All things were delivered to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; neither does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son personally chooses to reveal *Him*."

**John 6:44**- "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." Jesus is Our Savior, our Example. We are to follow Him and the example He left for us in all things. He kept God's Commandments and Holy Days. We can do know less. He is the Way, The Truth and The Life.

All the Bible thumping and tambourine playing will not make any difference to God if we do not do exactly as His Word Commands. **Matthew 7:22-23**- "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name?"

And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?’ And then I will confess to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.’ *We must be very careful on what we teach and how we share God’s Word.* **Galatians 1:8-9-** “But if we, or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!”

There’s enough false prophets and preachers out there so we don’t need to help them out by not knowing what we’re teaching.

**Matthew 24:24-** “For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and they shall present great signs and wonders, in order to deceive, if possible, even the elect.”

**Matthew 23:15-** “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel the sea and the land to make one proselyte, and when he has become one, you make him twofold more a son of Gehenna than yourselves.”

We are warned in **2 Peter 2:1-** “But there were also false prophets among the people, as indeed there will be false teachers among you, who will stealthily introduce destructive heresies, personally denying *the* Lord who bought them, and bringing swift destruction upon themselves.”

We need to be very cautious when God mentions the word “Woe.” **Matthew 18:7-** “Woe to the world because of offenses! For it is necessary that offenses come, yet woe to that man by whom the offense comes!”

The blessed truth of God’s plan is that we will be resurrected to glory with Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ upon His return to establish His Kingdom on the Earth to reign with Him! But to do this we must be obedient and **KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS AND HIS HOLY DAYS**. **Revelation 22:14-** “Blessed *are* those who keep His commandments, that they may have the right to *eat of* the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.”

**John 14:15-** “If you love Me, keep the commandments— namely, My commandments.”

The Word of God is free. **Matthew 10:7-8-** “But go instead to the lost sheep of *the* house of Israel. And *as you are* going, proclaim, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal *the* sick. Cleanse *the* lepers. Raise *the* dead. Cast out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.”

We need to share it with those God brings to us. We must have that ready answer.

**1 Peter 3:15-** “But sanctify the Lord God in your own hearts, and always be prepared to give an answer to anyone who asks you the reason for the hope *that is* in you, with meekness and reverence;”

The revelation of His truth and His plan of salvation through Jesus is by far more alive when backed by scripture than the things I was taught in church throughout my life. In proving all things, I sift all doctrine through the Word of God to see what God actually said or what was “written in” for man’s satisfaction. Satan is a clever enemy and the whispers of an image of floating off to heaven as opposed to returning to the dust from which we came is a much easier sermon to swallow. But I like most never sought God’s Word to prove that which I was taught.

We used to have a saying “don’t shoot your mouth off unless your brain is loaded.” Having a working knowledge of God and His Word now is critical to our future roles. As anyone who professes to teach the Word of God, we must teach His truth in its entirety. Any deviation holds consequences that we will be held accountable for by Our Lord. We as believers must all grow and come together to worship God in spirit and in truth. We must prepare *now*, be ready *now* as we will have to have plenty of ammo for the battles that lie ahead. Amen.

BL-10/13/22



