

# Bible Questions and Answers



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**Fellowship**  
BIBLE CHURCH

# Matt. 27:51-53 Resurrection



- Who exactly are these resurrected “saints” and where did they go after the brief episode recorded only by Matthew?
- We desire more detail in the text! It may be that when Jesus died and went to Paradise (Luke 23:34) that he emptied out Paradise and sent its residents to the third heaven. He proclaimed to the lost, particularly to those who lived during the days of Noah, that He had won victory over sin and death (1 Peter 3:19).

# Matt. 27:51-53 Resurrection



- ✧ Continuing our supposed reconstruction: Before the resurrection and appearance of these saints, a violent tremor opened up the graves and tombs of some people.
- ✧ Some of the Old Testament saints were raised into glorified bodies. They appeared in the city after the resurrection of Christ.
  - ✧ Christ was the firstfruits of the dead, so they did not rise before Christ did.

# Matt. 27:51-53 Resurrection



- ☞ Subsequently, they were taken up into heaven with the Lord and remain there.
- ☞ Since there is no record of them “sticking around,” it appears that they must have left the earth, and ascension to heaven is the most plausible scenario. It seems unreasonable to suppose that all of them went back into their graves, as if they were zombies at sun-up or something.



# What Sins Qualify...?



- ❧ Church is full of sinful people. There are:
  - ❧ Gossips, cheaters, liars, gluttons, proud, etc.
- ❧ Would a person who practices those sins routinely fall under church discipline?
- ❧ Are those listed as bad as the immorality of 1 Cor. 5?
- ❧ The practical issue is that the church could be chasing after these sins forever.
- ❧ Where to draw the line?

# Biblical Lines



- ✧ Sexual immorality clearly crosses the line. 1 Cor. 5.
- ✧ Idleness, not working when able, laziness, busy-body is another line explicitly mentioned in Scripture. 2 Thess. 3:6-11.
- ✧ Paul expands the categories in 2 Thess. 3:8-14 to those who do not obey the word of God in the epistle.
- ✧ Romans 16:17-18 is another example: divisiveness.

# “Qualified Sins”



- ✧ Matt. 18:15 “If your brother sins against you...”
- ✧ This starts the process. If no one brings such a thing to the church’s attention (usually through its established leadership) then there is nothing for the church to do.
- ✧ You need to make a proper evaluation of the type of sin as to whether it warrants this kind of treatment. Is it an oversight? Is it unrepentant and a pattern? Is it undercutting the person’s testimony? Damaging the church?

# “Qualified Sins”



- ✧ In this approach, the corporate church is not involved in chasing down sins.
- ✧ The understanding is that someone has sinned against you, so it is a sin that is done by one person against another. It is not, “I saw so-and-so sin as I was looking at them through my telescope!”
- ✧ Gluttons and proud people may not manifest their sin “against” a brother.



# “Qualified Sins”



- ✧ I believe that a pattern of sin of gossip, cheating, and lying could be an occasion for the church to minister to the person if the person continually doing them is doing them against another person, and is clearly unrepentant.
  - ✧ For example, Col. 3:9 says that lying is to be put away.
  - ✧ 1 Timothy 5:13 clearly condemns gossip
- ✧ How many times does the sin have to be done before it qualifies? Seek wisdom on the issue if you are unsure.

# “Qualified Sins”



- ❧ So if someone was gossiping against you repeatedly and would not stop, that could qualify if you approach the brother with the offense.
- ❧ The line is crossed when a person is unrepentant about their sin. Then it is qualified.

# COVID-19 Outlook



- ❧ What is the outlook for us meeting again as a church?
- ❧ We haven't made a final decision as yet. But I want to lay some groundwork because there will undoubtedly be differences of opinion and some controversy if we meet before certain authorities desire us to do so.
- ❧ The question requires wisdom. Let's think about it some more.

# Update on Exec. Order



- ✧ Michigan Executive order 2020-59 section 16:  
“Consistent with prior guidance, neither a place of religious worship nor its owner is subject to penalty under section 20 of this order for allowing religious worship at such place.”
- ✧ Section 20 specifies that a willful violation of the order is a misdemeanor.
- ✧ A plain reading indicates that the penalty does not apply to churches. Thankfully the state is recognizing the Michigan and national constitutions.



# About Gathering Again



- ❧ In the long run, Biblical church services are essential to our eternal well-being and necessary because of God's command.
- ❧ More so than many activities presently "permitted" ...
  - ❧ Hardware, big box, nurseries, and grocery stores.
  - ❧ Abortions, lottery sales, and marijuana sales.
  - ❧ See Matt. 6:25 and Job 23:12.
- ❧ We do not expect the media or non-Christian population at large to understand our values and how we process the facts of this situation.

# About Masks



- ❧ 15(a)...“ Any individual...must wear a covering over his or her nose and mouth...when in any enclosed public space.”
- ❧ “No individual is subject to penalty under section 20 of this order for violating section 15(a) of this order.”
- ❧ Scripture requires us to obey the ordinances of man for the Lord’s sake (1 Peter 2:13), in particular if they do not conflict with a divinely-given duty. The lack of penalty brings into question in my mind whether this really is an ordinance, or rather a suggestion “masquerading” as an ordinance!

# About Masks



- ❧ Neither the church leadership in general, nor I in particular, have an interest in mandating people wear a mask in the church building.
- ❧ The government may make such a mandate, but that's not our role. A mask...
  - ❧ is not required for worship.
  - ❧ is not required for modesty.
  - ❧ is not required for Biblical righteousness.
  - ❧ is not penalized by law.
- ❧ Therefore the church won't require it.

# About Masks



☞ Consequently, when we open the building again, and you decide to come in the first weeks, you will likely “face” 😊 some people who have masks and some who do not.



# How are you going to handle that?

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- ❧ With a critical spirit?
- ❧ With an understanding spirit?
- ❧ With a patient spirit?
- ❧ With a loving spirit?
- ❧ If you plan to refuse to come unless everyone is masked, how long will that refusal last?
- ❧ Romans 14

# More on Romans 14



- ❧ Read the chapter.
- ❧ While our situation is not exactly parallel to the Rom 14 setting, there is some consensus today that it has application to our situation.
- ❧ Notice some pertinent instructions:
  - ❧ Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes
  - ❧ Do not despise those “on the other side.”

# More on Romans 14



- ❧ More pertinent instructions:
  - ❧ God is the judge of each one, not you.
  - ❧ Let each be fully convinced.
  - ❧ Recognize that we do not live for ourselves; we live in the sight of God and must honor Him.
  - ❧ Each will stand before the judgment seat of Christ.
  - ❧ Resolve not to put a stumbling block in our brother's way.
  - ❧ Love will go to a great extent to avoid unnecessary offense.
  - ❧ Might I add that it will go a great distance to avoid *taking* unnecessary offense!

# More on Romans 14



- More pertinent instructions:
  - Pursue peace and edification.
  - Whatever is not from faith is sin.



# When church opens...



- ❧ Some people **will not come** due to health concerns of themselves or close family members for whom they care or with whom they live.
- ❧ Some **will not come** because they are fearful (Deut. 20:8, Judges 7:3).
- ❧ Some **will not come** because they believe it is unlawful.

# When church opens...



- ❧ Some **will come** because they believe it is safe.
- ❧ Some **will come** because they can't stand any longer to be away from the church and worship. To them, that outweighs other considerations.
- ❧ Some **will come** in part because they have to get out of the house and they disagree with the restrictions.

# How we respond



- Each will respect the decisions of others in this matter, realizing the issues are not simple or one dimensional. Many different factors come into consideration.
- Eventually we have to gather again. Gradually “phasing in” over two years as one recently suggested is so far outside of reality that it is sad someone is thinking like that. The same for six months. The reality is that SARS-Cov-2 is here to stay. We have to deal with it, and we can't do so by quarantining for the rest of our lives.

# Some sobering numbers



	<b>Deaths</b>	<b>Per Day</b>	<b>4/26/2020</b>
Heart disease	647,457	1,774	205,767
Cancer	599,108	1,641	190,401
Accidents	169,936	466	54,007
Chronic lower respiratory	160,201	439	50,913
Stroke	146,383	401	46,522
Alzheimer's disease	121,404	333	38,583
Diabetes	83,564	229	26,557
Influenza and pneumonia	55,672	153	17,693
Kidney disease	50,633	139	16,092
Intentional self-harm	47,173	129	14,992



# COVID-19 Fatality Rate



- ✧ Just dividing deaths into total known cases yields numbers in the 5% to 7% range.
- ✧ In Miami-Dade study appx. 6% of tested subjects have antibodies to COVID-19. This would calculate out to a 0.14% death rate.
- ✧ A NY study estimates 13.9% of residents had the disease. If true, and 2.7 million NYers have had it, the death rate is  $19,453/2,700,000 = 0.7\%$  death rate.
- ✧ This is a factor of 10 less! Not good, but not nearly as terrifying.
- ✧ A CA study seems to indicate the same kind of trend.