

ASK "PASTOR M."
SPRING 2006 EDITION

by Jackson Morro
("Pastor M.")

Welcome to a new segment of *Faith On The Earth* with "Ask Pastor M." I will do my best to answer the very interesting questions you sent in.

First, we'll start with two questions from C.J. in Idaho:

1. "Why does Pastor Morro require writers to follow Pentecostal perspective?"

Answer: Since *The Crown Quarterly* will be a "Journal of Pentecostal Theology," it is only right that our articles treat biblical and theological issues from that perspective.

Why have "Pentecostal theology" at all? "Theology" has been defined as "faith seeking understanding," or reflection upon revealed truth. In one sense, all Bible studies and discussion groups are "theological" in nature. Theology, in and of itself, is not confined to academic "ivory towers." Every person is a theologian. We all reflect upon God and ultimate truth and live according to the convictions we have about our theological reflections. For example, even sayings like "That's part of life" or "What goes around comes around" are, in essence, theological reflections.

In my own view, there are currently two prevailing "theologies," or ways of looking at God and revealed truth: Roman Catholic theology and Reformation theology.

Roman Catholic theology is devastating to pure biblical truth. Catholic theologians have determined that revealed truth must be explained in terms of human philosophical systems such as the philosophies of Aristotle and Plato. Such theology removes the believer from the direct power and experience of the gospel. Additionally, such thinking has opened the door to such falsehoods as the co-mediator role of Mary, Mary's perpetual virginity, the power of saints in heaven to intercede, the doctrines of purgatory and papal infallibility, among others. None of these are biblical, but are "logical" outgrowths from applying the principles of Aristotle's and Plato's philosophies.

Thank God that in the 1500s A.D., some brave reformers like Martin Luther and John Calvin among many others exposed the lies of many

Catholic doctrines. The reformers returned us to the truth of justification by faith and the principle of “scripture only” as the norm of truth. Yet for all the good they accomplished, the reformers did not fully escape the philosophical constraints of their times. Hence, we have much sounder doctrine in Reformation theology, but the reformers still did not get a “full handle” on other aspects of the power of the gospel in areas such as the baptism with the Holy Spirit, divine healing and deliverance, the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit and the ministry of restoring the whole man inaugurated by Jesus in Luke 4:18,19.

Some reformers even shut the door on such supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit because they were reacting to the superstitions and charlatanism of medieval Roman Catholicism and often they equated these counterfeits with the genuine Holy Spirit manifestations.

Reformation theology generally closes the door to many of the biblical experiences of New Testament times, stating they were only for the apostolic age. However, there is *no* biblical evidence or justification for this conclusion. In spite of the good start it made, Reformation Theology is defective in this area.

Several subsequent revivals, such as Methodism and the First and Second Great Awakenings in U.S. history had Pentecostal and charismatic character in practice. Although there were some new theological contributions by some such as John and Charles Wesley, these new movements essentially stayed in the framework of Reformation Theology. With the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Azusa Street in the early 1900's (as well as other places throughout the world) something different began to happen. Participants in this revival began to think continually in a “Pentecostal mode” which did not retreat into Reformation Theology. Instead they persisted in acting and thinking in more experiential biblical categories. With about 100 years of Pentecostal experience around, the time has come for more systematic reflection on that experience. Such reflection has, of course, already begun with Pentecostal study Bibles and many studies of subjects such as healing and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Such theological reflection and development is necessary because issues arise that must be dealt with and interpreted in the light of scripture. The apostles themselves were forced to be theologians in Acts 15 at the Council of Jerusalem when they had to determine whether or not Gentiles would be required to obey the Law of Moses.

In closing, I do want to acknowledge the many wonderful contributions of the Reformers and their courage which got us all back to the truths of justification by faith alone, studies of such doctrines as grace and

the principle of scripture alone as the source of divine revelation.

Also, Pentecostals themselves must continually be careful they do not let their theological study put them in an academic “ivory tower” of their own and remove them from what is *most* important, the direct experience of the power of the gospel in our lives: seeing souls saved and lives restored to wholeness.

I will deal with this question in the lead article of the first issue of *The Crown Quarterly*. Be sure to request your free copy.

2. C.J. also writes, “Yes, all God’s promises have conditions attached. But I seldom if ever see conditions offered where the promises are quoted. Why? Readers want to know what is required for the promises to be useful.”

Answer: Good point, C.J. All promises (at least the covenant promises to believers) do have conditions. In my article on the promises as the building blocks of God’s Kingdom in our lives (Winter 2006 issue), I did in fact list promises *with* conditions. For example: Salvation – *If* you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and *if* you believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, *then* you shall be saved. For our whole life: *Seek first* (give priority to) the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, *then* all the other things will be added to you. I could have gone on and on (there are over 500 promises!) but space, of course, was limited for this particular article.

Notice well, C.J., that in most cases the *condition* and the *promise* are together in one or two verses. The condition is often simple and self-explanatory; the hard part is often our “doing it.” We come to an understanding of these conditions by meditating and praying on scripture so that the conditions will become a revelation to our heart; then we can move in the grace and the power to fulfill the condition and obtain the promise. As God told Joshua (Joshua 1:8) “This book of the law [the Bible] shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do all that is written in it [God’s condition]; for then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have success [God’s promise].”

Not only is personal prayer and meditation necessary, but group Bible study and discussion and even individual pastoral counseling can help one obtain the promises God has for us. We pay serious attention to this at Christ’s Chapel where I pastor and we have seen some outstanding results of how God’s Word truly works! Such in-depth treatment is beyond the scope of a three- or four-page article. But we can understand and apply the condition just by careful reading of the scripture (the Holy Spirit will be our

Helper).

For example, Romans 8:28 states, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God and are the called according to His purpose.” *Condition #1*: Love God – do we truly have a delight and trust in a good God and prefer Him, His presence and His will, or is God second place in our life and do we have “an attitude” toward God? Well, put Him *first* in your *heart* and get rid of the attitude. *Condition #2*: The called according to His purpose – are we in God’s will? Are we doing our “level-headed best” to do and to be what God wants us to do and be? If not, *we must change*. Find God’s will and *do it*. Then the *promise* – God will work out *everything* for our good. We’ll walk in provision, protection, and spiritual authority.

Above all, remember the greatest promise, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

Next, we move on to two questions from Sandie in Massachusetts:

1. “What about the debate about Christians drinking? I don’t like it period, but that’s my conviction. Yet my daughter and her husband will have beer and some wine. She doesn’t now because she’s pregnant.”

Answer: coming from a Pentecostal/Holiness background myself, Sandie, I am strongly against the use of alcoholic beverages by Christians, or by anyone for that matter. I see the primary issue as one of self-control. The apostle Paul writes, “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.” (Ephesians 5:18) I always want to be in the place where the Holy Spirit has the most possible control over me. It can be difficult enough sometimes when my flesh or attitude fights for control; why add beer and wine to the picture? Also, our greatest peace and joy come from the purity of our experience of the Risen Christ within us through the Holy Spirit’s presence. Before I got saved, I was a “party animal” in college and I know firsthand how alcohol can turn us into uncontrolled idiots. As a pastor, I have seen alcohol ruin several lives and keep several others from reaching their full potential in Christ. Our bodies, also, are temples of the Holy Spirit and alcohol can do serious physical damage to that temple.

Praise God for your daughter’s decision to refrain from alcohol consumption while pregnant. That very action speaks volumes. If drinking is really OK, why not continue and let the baby in the womb get the benefit of it? But if alcohol is bad for the baby while the mother is pregnant, can it really be good for the mom while she’s not pregnant? If it’s not good, why

do it at all?

2. “In Ezekiel 39:20, what does it mean ‘You will eat your fill of horses and riders, mighty men and soldiers of every kind declares the Lord.’ Is this literal?”

Answer: Yes, I personally believe we should look for a literal fulfillment of Ezekiel 39:20. As many Christians have an interest in end-time prophecy know, Ezekiel 38 and 39 talk of a great war (not to be confused with the Battle of Armageddon at the end of the Great Tribulation) when Gog and Magog (Russia) and Persia (Iran) and a host of other nations in the area of the Middle East and North Africa will launch an attack against Israel.

Ezekiel prophesies that God will miraculously give Israel the victory. Although Israel will be greatly outnumbered, God, as He did numerous times in the Old Testament, will cause devastating carnage among the invaders. The “clean-up” effort after the battle will be a monumental task taking seven months to accomplish (Ezekiel 39:12-14). During this period many birds of prey and scavenging wild beasts will, of course, eat much of the rotting flesh available to them.

Will there be horses and riders in our day of high military technology? I feel there will be some cavalry troops due to the rough terrain in the area where such troops might seem more efficient. Don’t forget, we have news photos of Osama bin Laden on horseback going off to battle.

By the way, have you been reading your newspapers about the development of nuclear weapons in Iran (Persia)? Russia (Gog and Magog) already has nukes. Ezekiel 38 and 39 (and the Rapture of the Church) gets closer every day right before our eyes.

Finally, we close with one question from Mike Froio in Rome, NY.

“Are dinosaurs extinct because they were too big for Noah’s ark?”

Answer: Well, giraffes and the African elephants are pretty big creatures but the ark could accommodate them. I don't think size would be an issue because God, the Master Architect, could have just given Noah instructions to build a bigger ark or one with a separate compartment for “Dinosaurs Only.” Also, God told Noah to bring every kind of animal into the ark (Genesis 6:19) and we know this was fulfilled (Genesis 7:15-16). So, if dinosaurs were still around they would, in fact, have been on the ark. If they were already extinct, then they would have fulfilled God’s purpose for them and gone out of existence before the flood.

Some Bible teachers actually believe there was a “pre-adamic

creation” on earth between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. (Dr. Finis Dake writes about this possibility in *God’s Plan For Man* and so does Arnold Fruchtenbaum in *The Footsteps of the Messiah*.) According to this theory, Lucifer, a “good angel” was given oversight of this pre-adamic creation. When Lucifer rebelled God not only ejected him from heaven but also judged this original creation with a massive flood. Several teachers who believe in a pre-adamic creation also believe dinosaurs belong to this period of time. This particular theory, although not contrary to the Bible, is greatly in the realm of speculation.

But no, being too big for the ark would not have been the cause of the extinction of the dinosaur.

I’ve enjoyed doing this segment, and if you, the readers, continue sending questions, I’ll do my best to answer them for you.