

## Which answer? What does the Bible really teach? (2)

### Review of alternative answers

**T**HE WRITER'S review of the various alternatives given as answers to the questions in the March issue (p. 16) are set out below. However, the writer does not claim to be infalli-

ble(!) and is very open to readers' own ideas. The Editor too would welcome healthy disagreement, better solutions and better reasons, all with good Scriptural support, of course.

<b>1 Hebrews 12:23. What is meant by "the spirits of just men made perfect"?</b>		
1a	Angels caring for the ecclesia.	Angels already appear in the list, see verse 22.
1b	Immortal souls.	Certainly not! Just men are only made perfect at the judgement seat of Christ, which is still future. Note 11:39,40, which says that all true believers will be perfected at the same time.
1c	The Holy Spirit in the early ecclesia.	Whilst the Holy Spirit was active in the gifts given to the ecclesia in the first century, the verse being considered refers to men.
1d	The saints now in the ecclesia.	"Just" means justified or made righteous in Christ, which happens now. Verse 24 refers to "the blood of sprinkling" by which men are born again and are "in subjection unto the Father of <i>spirits</i> " (v. 9). According to 7:19 "the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did".
1e	The saints made immortal in the Kingdom.	For those in Christ there must be a process of growth towards perfection which will only be completed as at 1b above.
<b>2 Acts 7:2. "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia". To what does this refer?</b>		
2a	God appeared to him in Haran.	Genesis 12:1 says, "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy <i>father's house</i> ". Presumably this occurred in his previous home in Haran, which he shared with his father Terah (11:31).
2b	He appeared to him in Ur.	We presume from the following references that God would also have spoken to Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees: "I am the LORD That brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees" (15:7); "I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood [the Euphrates]" (Josh. 24:3); "Thou art the LORD the God, Who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees" (Neh. 9:7).
2c	Or in Canaan.	Canaan cannot be understood to be in Mesopotamia.

<b>3</b>	<b>Hebrews 10:37. “For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry”. To what does this refer?</b>	
3a	The imminent destruction of Jerusalem.	The previous verse says, “For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise”. Verse 37 is thus a personal exhortation against forthcoming trials, not a warning of impending judgement.
3b	The writer to the Hebrews thought that the Second Coming was near.	The verse is quoting Habakkuk 2:1-4, where the prophet, foreseeing a national crisis, is advised by God that the just will live through the period of trial by faith. Because there may well be a period of trial before the Second Coming, the apostle repeats this warning from the Old Testament prophet.
3c	Christ’s presence in the ecclesia.	The verse says “ <i>will come</i> ” but the Lord Jesus has always been there to provide help to his ecclesia when needed.
3d	A day is with the Lord as a thousand years (2 Pet. 3:8).	The verse may be saying that it might seem as though the Lord is tarrying but that is a mistaken conclusion, considering the time span the Almighty works in. He <i>will</i> come!
3e	The next conscious moment after death is resurrection.	The fulfilment of the promise for many will come after they have died and for them the resurrection is all-important. He <i>will</i> come; the Lord will return, but in the meantime those who have died in faith rest in the sure hope of resurrection.
<b>4</b>	<b>Isaiah 11:1. “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse”. Why Jesse and not David?</b>	
4a	Jesus is descended from another son of Jesse.	It is true that the royal line through David (and Isaiah’s contemporary Hezekiah) ceased with Zedekiah. However, Matthew and Luke in their genealogies both give the line through Jesse and David.
4b	The name ‘Jesse’ suggests ‘Jesus’.	There is no connection in the Hebrew between ‘Jesse’ and ‘Jesus’. ‘Jesse’ means ‘Yah exists’, and the Hebrew for ‘Jesus’, ‘Joshua’, means ‘Yah saves’.
4c	Jesse means ‘exists’ and points to Jesus as the Son of God.	‘Jesse’ does not mean ‘he exists’, see above.
4d	Jesus came when royalty had passed from David’s line.	Herod the Idumean was king when Jesus was born, but when his grandson failed to give God the glory he perished (Acts 12:23), making way for the true king who would give God glory. In fact, however, it was always his, as the angel Gabriel told his mother: “the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David” (Lk. 1:32).
4e	Jesse had Gentile roots.	There was Gentile blood in Jesse, his grandmother was Ruth the Moabitess and his great-grandmother Rahab the Canaanite (Mt. 1:5). Isaiah 11 goes on to say, “And in that day there shall be a <i>root of Jesse</i> , which shall stand for an ensign of the people [RV, peoples]; to it shall the <i>Gentiles</i> seek” (v. 10). Paul quotes this verse in Romans 15:12 regarding the Gentiles glorifying God for His mercy (v. 9).