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Questions Youth Are Asking Today

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Questions Youth Are Asking Today · Mervyn Maxwell

BABIES AT THE END OF TIME?

We have one child. He talks constantly about wanting a little brother or sister. Every night he prays, "Dear Jesus, help us get a baby." What worries me is that Jesus said, "Alas for women with child in those days, and for those who have children at the breast!" Matthew 24:19, NEB. I am wondering if this means we shouldn't have any more children in these last days. Or am I putting the wrong meaning into this?

There is always a danger that dedicated, conscientious people (like yourself) will read things into the Bible that aren't there. This is why you wrote.

If Jesus had meant we ought not to have children in the last days, He would have said so. But all He says here is that pregnant women and mothers with tiny babies who get caught in the trials of the last days will naturally suffer more inconvenience than other people.

1 Corinthians 7 provides an interesting parallel. Paul there counsels young people that if their desire to get married is not overly strong, it would be better for them not to marry because the persecutions ahead of them at that time in history were going to be harder for married couples to bear than for single people. But if you read the chapter carefully you will find that it doesn't forbid marriage. For those couples to whom remaining single would bring greater distress than persecution would, Paul counseled marriage as the wiser course.

If the final time of trouble comes

while your baby is small, Christ will stand by you with additional assistance. He has said, "I will never fail you nor forsake you." Hence we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid; what can man do to me?" Hebrews 13:5, 6, RSV.

GIVING YOUR HEART TO GOD

Revivalists who come to our church keep telling us, "Give yourself to God," "Give your heart to God." They say it will solve all your problems and really turn you on. It sounds great and I'd like to do it, but they don't explain how to do it. Can you?

In the Bible "heart" sometimes means what we today call the mind, sometimes the emotions, sometimes the power of choice. For our purposes these are close enough to make no difference.

When God asks, "My son, give Me your heart" (Proverbs 23:26, RSV), He means, "Please make a clearcut decision in your mind and in your feelings to walk with Me and let Me be your Guide."

My favorite devotional book contains this counsel: "Desires for goodness and holiness are right as far as they go; but if you stop here, they will avail nothing. Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians. They do not come to the point of yielding the will to God. They do not now choose to be Christians."—*Steps to Christ*, page 48.

You can give yourself to God this minute. It isn't complicated. You want to be a Christian (as the rest

of your letter indicates). You believe God is love and His way is good. Very well, choose now to be a Christian. Say this simple prayer: "I know Your way is right, dear God. I know You want to help me every step. Right now I choose to be Your follower. I give myself with everything I have and am to be Yours forever." Believe that you mean it and remind yourself that you meant it whenever you may be tempted to doubt in days to come. And believe that God accepts you. "I will never refuse anyone who comes to me." John 6:37, Phillips.

NOT SO SURE ANYMORE

When I first became a Christian, about a year ago, I knew I had it made. I wasn't afraid of dying or anything. I knew I belonged to God through Jesus Christ and that whatever happened to me I'd be resurrected to eternal life. But lately I haven't been so sure. I keep thinking, "Suppose when it's all said and done God says, 'Son, you tried hard, but you didn't try hard enough?' Well, what will I have gained by being a Christian?" So that's my question, Will I make it? And if I don't, what's the use?

A year ago Jesus was so big to you that He filled your screen. You thought so much about His love in dying to save you that you were sure His grace was enough to take you all the way.

Like many other Christians, as the newness has worn off a little you've backed your zoom lens away from Christ. Now your sins, your selfishness, your trials fill much of

the screen and Jesus doesn't seem so big as He used to.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus again. Look full in His wonderful face. "Do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward." Hebrews 10:35, RSV. "I am sure that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion." Philippians 1:6, RSV.

BORN AGAIN—WHEN?

My best friends know when they were converted. They can remember how they thought and acted before they knew Christ and can compare it with the way they feel now. I think that I love God. I want to be a Christian; but I cannot pinpoint any sudden change in my life. Of course I haven't always been good, but it seems like I have always wanted to be. I have believed Christ was my Saviour as far back as I can remember. But the Christian Education minister at my church says that everyone is born totally depraved and that if I don't know when I was born again, then I haven't been. Who's right?

You probably can't remember being born either, let alone being born again! So what does that prove?

If only people who can remember when they were "born again"

will be eligible for heaven, then only people with good memories will be saved.

But do you know that in the original language of the New Testament Jesus did not say so much, "You must be born again," as, "You must be born *from above*." That's right! "From above" is by far the more natural translation of the Greek word in question. John 3:1-5.

The context shows that Jesus is much more concerned with our being born "of the Spirit" than with our being born a certain precise number of times. Of course!

Now look at Luke 1:15. The angel Gabriel here says of John the Baptist before his birth, "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." John the Baptist, therefore, was born "of the Spirit" at the same time that he was born from his mother. He was "born again" when he was "born."

How can this have been? Through the devotion of his godly parents. They sought God's blessing and His Spirit, and they brought up John the Baptist from infancy to love and honor God.

I gather that your parents have done the same for you. Ever since you were an infant they have taught you that Jesus loves you and is your

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION?

Would you like to ask Mervyn Maxwell to help you find an answer? If so, send your question to:

**Mervyn Maxwell
"Signs of the Times"
1350 Villa Street
Mountain View, California 94040**

Saviour, so that you have never known Him in any other way. This saving knowledge has come to you only through the working of the Holy Spirit. You may rejoice that you were born "of the Spirit" in your childhood and thank God that He has molded you, too, from your earliest moments.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WEDDING MARCH?

I have been to many church weddings and always the Wedding March was played. Now suddenly our new pastor has announced that it cannot be used anymore in our church because it isn't proper for a religious service. I want to know why. If you can't tell me, would you please pass this on to someone who can? Thank you.

If you've been to a wedding with a printed program, you've noticed the traditional wedding march is "from *Lohengrin* by Richard Wagner." *Lohengrin* is an opera based on a fairy tale replete with intrigue, a murder, and the changing of a boy into a swan. At the end *Lohengrin* is forced to leave his wife, who then swoons lifeless to the ground.

Whether or not a piece of music belongs in church depends a good deal on what it makes the congregation think about. When you hear the Wedding March, you think of weddings you've been to. When musicians and opera buffs hear it, some of them think about the wedding *Lohengrin* went to.

Operas aside, we are living in an age of experiment. In some weddings I've heard some beautiful religious pieces used in place of the Wedding March—and some horrid ones.

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