

# **Random**

(Rev. 05/25)

### **Do you like dogs?**

I have three of them, all hounds. They are mouthy, talk back to me, and are stubborn creatures...and I love every minute that I get to snuggle with them! Cats, on the other hand, are soulless, killing machines... (I'm pretty sure that's Biblical!)

### **How are you doing?**

Pretty good. Debating if I need a nap, but otherwise I'm doing all right!

### **How many saints does it take to screw in a light bulb?**

I had a snarky middle-schooler ask this, and I had a TON of fun answering it! Check this out:

*This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I am writing to God's holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus. - Ephesians 1:1 (NLT)*

Literally, Paul is writing a letter to a group of Christians and he calls them "holy ones" or "saints". Paul is writing this letter in around 60 A.D. Does all of that make sense?

Well, in 1880 A.D., Thomas Edison filed the patent for the electric light bulb. (People were experimenting with lights for years, but we'll choose Edison as our fixed point.) Because of that, there's 1820 years between the saints at Ephesus and the electric light.

So, to answer the question of how many saints does it take to screw in a light bulb? None! Light bulbs weren't invented yet!

### **How old is Pastor Barry?**

Older than dirt...

### **Is this a dumb question?**

Since you asked it, I'm assuming that you wanted to know an answer. Since you wanted to know an answer, it's not dumb! (I really do mean it when I say, "The only dumb question is the one that you wanted to ask...and didn't.")

### **The difference between cremation and burial.**

Okay, there isn't much of a "question" here, so not sure where to go with this.

First of all, let's define the basics:

*Cremation* means to turn the body to ashes in a fire.

*Burial* means to put the body in the ground. When you get into it, though, burial has a thousand different variations. You had the mummification of the Egyptians, you have the "bone boxes"

(ossuary) of Israel, you have the embalming done today, etc. So “burial” encompasses a wide range of options.

Is one of these more “Christian”? Actually...no. There are some churches/denominations that teach that if you’re cremated, you don’t get to go to Heaven. The problem with that is:

- First, God created us from the dust. In Genesis 2:7 we’re told:

*Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man’s nostrils, and the man became a living person. - Genesis 2:7 (NLT)*

If God can create us from the dust in the first place, it probably isn’t any harder to recreate us from the dust.

- Second, if cremation prevents us from going to Heaven, then the martyrs killed by being burned at the stake died for nothing. They lost their lives and their eternal lives at the same time. But what do we see in the Book of Revelation?

*When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of all who had been martyred for the word of God and for being faithful in their testimony. They shouted to the Lord and said, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you judge the people who belong to this world and avenge our blood for what they have done to us?” Then a white robe was given to each of them. And they were told to rest a little longer until the full number of their brothers and sisters—their fellow servants of Jesus who were to be martyred—had joined them. - Revelation 6:9-11 (NLT)*

- Third, what happens to bodies that have decomposed totally to dust? God even tells us this will happen after the Fall in the Garden of Eden:

*By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.” - Genesis 3:19 (NLT)*

Again, God doesn’t seem all that stressed about us turning back into dust...

- Fourth, what happens to bodies that are pumped full of preservatives in our modern time? Can God resurrect a body like that?

I think the easiest way to deal with this is to realize that God created life...and He can also recreate life. We WILL have a resurrected body for all eternity.

### **What advice would you give a young ‘un?**

Wow! This is a GREAT question! I think that would depend on whether they were a Christian or not; so, if it’s okay, let me answer that in two ways:

If you don't believe in God, first of all, you have to know that's all right. I won't sit here and say, "You MUST believe in Jesus!" (I really do pray that you will ask Jesus to be your Savior, but that's between you and Him!) But, if you don't have Jesus giving you His definitions:

**Advice #1: Be VERY CAREFUL of who you let define you!**

I know a man who's older than I am and who has spent his life trying to prove to his teacher that he isn't a failure...like she said he was. She's been dead for years and he's still hearing her voice in his head.

I know in my life, my abuser told me that I would get in trouble if I ever told anyone. I spent years of my life afraid of talking to anyone because I didn't want to get in trouble! I once heard a Pastor – someone who SHOULD know better – look at a teen and go, "Your problem is that you're too afraid of everything!" She now lives her life in fear, because a Pastor can't make a mistake, right?

If you let a human define you, if you let them tell you WHO you are, it can be very dangerous! Even the most well-meaning parent, someone who truly loves us, can give us definitions that are untrue, unhealthy, and overwhelming.

So, if you're not a Christian, be very careful of who you let define you and always check your definitions! (If you're not sure how to do that, let me know and I'll give you some tools!)

If you ARE a Christian, I have similar advice, but from a different angle:

**Advice #2: See how God defines you!**

If we're going to trust God for our definitions, then we need to actually get into God's Word to see how He defines us! I can give you a massive set of pages to get you started, but God has even more to say about who we are! If you want a copy of these, let me know. When you get it, read it, study it, dig deep, and it can literally change the way you see God, yourself, and the world you live in!

I spent 30+ years of my life trying to figure out who I was. When I finally worked on letting God define me, life became much more...peaceful!

**What do you know about Joel Kramer / Expedition Bible?**

Biblical archaeology is good. Good Biblical archaeology is better. With that, let's talk about Joel Kramer and his website: [expeditionbible.com](http://expeditionbible.com).

*... I became the lay pastor of a small protestant church in northern Utah, where I gained a new passion—exploring Scripture. My desire to learn about the context of the Bible led me back to the Middle East, to Jerusalem, where I lived for nearly a decade. While there, I earned an M.A. in Archaeology, excavated extensively in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Ai, and explored the rich landscape of Biblical sites. My book, Where God Came Down: The Archaeological Evidence, comes out of my time there. (Source: [expeditionbible.com/about](http://expeditionbible.com/about))*

So Joel Kramer has a Masters Degree in Archaeology from the University of the Holy Land. He also serves as the Research Professor of Biblical Archaeology at Shepherd's Theological Seminary (STS) with sites in Laramie, Wyoming and Bryan, Texas. STS is an accredited college through the Association of Theological Schools (ATS).

According to their site, Joel Kramer has been involved in excavations at the following locations:

- Mount Zion Dig – Jerusalem
- Church of the Nativity – Bethlehem
- Khirbet el-Maqatir
- Suba
- El-Qanabiz
- Et-Tell

Unfortunately, I can't find the documentation of who was heading up the excavations, the standards adhered to, the discoveries made, etc. (In some ways, this is like saying, "That man is an expert on the entire story and history of George Washington. Why? Because...he went to Mount Vernon!") Until I can verify the conditions of the digs, it raises some questions for me.

At this time, I've only watched two of his "Expedition Bible" videos on YouTube, so I'm far from an expert. In the process, I have formed a couple of opinions:

1. First, he is passionate about the topic of Biblical archaeology. I truly do respect him for that, because I believe that the more historically-literate that we, as Christians, become, the better able we will be to both understand and defend our faith.
2. Second, he draws his own conclusions. The problem I have here is that, in Kramer's case, there's no scientific consensus, only a single opinion. Let me give you an example as to why this can be a problem:

In the Sodom and Gomorrah video, Kramer states that Bad edh-Dhra is the Biblical city of Sodom.

Others, however, believe that Biblical Sodom is a site called Tall el-Hammam. The people who support this view are Trinity Southwest University's College of Archaeology and Bible History (Albuquerque, NM) and the Department of Antiquities of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. These organizations started by rereading and studying the original Hebrew texts to determine a rough location; and then they used modern technology (e.g. LiDAR, satellites, etc.) to discover the city. Then both organizations sent multiple PhDs to the site to oversee the dig and catalog the discoveries; with their results being written up in respectable archaeology journals.

Kramer says that Trinity and the Kingdom of Jordan are wrong. However, if I had to choose, I would go with the major university and the Department of Antiquities over the opinion of just one man.

Does he teach history and archaeology? Certainly! Does he get all of the details right? Not always... Again, if I have to choose research done by a PhD with a university behind them or a guy working on

his own with only a MA, I will choose the PhD!

However, I think there's a lot of good information to be gained from Expedition Bible. My only caution would be to take with a grain of salt, rather than believe it 100%! When in doubt, go and verify his data on your own...using books written by people with PhD's and who come from a large, reputable university.

By the way, my favorite book on Biblical Archaeology is: The Popular Handbook of Archaeology and the Bible: Discoveries That Confirm the Reliability of Scripture, by Joseph M. Holden and Norman L. Geisler.

### **What do you know about Ron Wyatt?**

Before we answer this question, let me give you a couple of Bible verses to think about:

*“Look, I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. So be as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves. - Matthew 10:16 (NLT)*

Jesus is telling His Disciples that there are people out there who will hate them and attack them. In the process of going out, they need to be wise in what they believe, how they speak, and how they serve. At the same time they need to do it in a way that doesn't deceive others, doesn't hurt them and isn't aggressive.

Next, let's go deeper into Matthew:

*“Then if anyone tells you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah,’ or ‘There he is,’ don't believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God's chosen ones. See, I have warned you about this ahead of time.*

*“So if someone tells you, ‘Look, the Messiah is out in the desert,’ don't bother to go and look. Or, ‘Look, he is hiding here,’ don't believe it! For as the lightning flashes in the east and shines to the west, so it will be when the Son of Man comes. Just as the gathering of vultures shows there is a carcass nearby, so these signs indicate that the end is near. - Matthew 24:23-28 (NLT)*

In this case, Jesus says, “There are people who are going to lie to you! They're going to claim that they're sent by God! They're even going to perform miracles and claim to know secrets about Me! Don't believe them! You will ALWAYS know where I am and you'll know when I come again!”

What do these both have in common? The realization that there are people looking to destroy us out there. Also, we, as Christians, need to investigate everything carefully; not just believe it when someone claims to know something about God; even if it's accompanied by signs and miracles!

So, with that as our preface, let's talk about Ron Wyatt:

Ron Wyatt was an American nurse anesthetist. He had no historical, archaeological, or scientific

training. According to his bio, though, he made over 100 trips to the Middle East in search of some of the most iconic piece of Biblical “proof”. As part of his “digs”, he claimed to have found:

- Ark of the Covenant
- Book of the Law (written by Moses)
- Gold from the Golden Calf
- Goliath’s Sword
- Jesus’ Blood (used to confirm Virgin Birth)
- Jesus’ Tomb and Tomb Seal
- Location of the Red Sea Crossing
- Noah’s Altar
- Noah’s Home
- Pharaoh’s Chariots
- And over 82 other MAJOR discoveries!

If that’s the case, if Wyatt managed to discover all of these things, why is he not the most famous of all Biblical archaeologists? Why aren’t people making movies about him and teaching about his discoveries in churches and universities?

Well, the reasons Ron Wyatt is NOT the most famous person in Biblical history are:

- He never brought back any evidence. According to some reports, bandits stole his proof, the shipping company lost it, etc.
- The stories he told contradicted each other. The blood of Christ was supposedly tested in Tennessee...or Jerusalem. Also, none of the hospitals in either Nashville or Jerusalem remember testing the blood.
- He told people that either angels or “government officials” prevented him from sharing the information...even though he wrote books that shared the information...

A scientist and atheist (someone who doesn’t believe God exists) named Carl Sagan once said:

*“Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence!”*

In other words, if someone is claiming supernatural abilities, they had better be able to back it up. The problem is that neither Ron Wyatt, nor his followers, have been able to substantiate a single claim! In fact, let me share with you a quote from the Israel Antiquities Authority:

*"Ron Wyatt is neither an archaeologist nor has he ever carried out a legally licensed excavation in Israel or Jerusalem. In order to excavate one must have at least a BA in archaeology which he does not possess despite his claims to the contrary. ...[His claims] fall into the category of trash which one finds in tabloids such as the National Enquirer, Sun etc." - Joe Zias, Israel Antiquities Authority*

Did he really discover anything? I don’t know. The fact that I can’t touch the evidence would argue that he didn’t. Because of that, we, as Christians, need to be very careful about promoting Ron Wyatt’s discoveries as truth. (I would rather be considered skeptical than to damage the cause of Christ by promoting something that is proven to be false.)

### **What is the current state of Christian Camping at CLBC? Other camps in the state?**

All right, to be honest, I'm not really sure how to answer this. Do you mean from an evangelism/discipleship standpoint? Financial? Long-term feasibility? All of the above? Well, since I'm not sure, let's go for "all of the above".

First, many, many years ago CLBC discussed whether or not more people would come if they dropped the "Bible" out of their name. The Board and the Staff immediately said "no"! So we're still a Bible Camp.

Second, it was discussed whether or not we should drop to Chapel only once a day to provide more time for recreation. Please notice that we're still doing Chapel twice a day.

Third, from a financial standpoint, Camp is doing well. Are there needs? Certainly. Are there wants? (Well, a new generator would be nice...) Certainly. But God has raised up people who faithfully support the Camp and its Staff; and our programs are doing well!

Fourth, from a long-term standpoint, Crescent Lake Bible Camp has been developing long-range plans, including: new cabins, a new multipurpose building, a new gymnasium, and more. We figure that if we plan it and if God approves it, He will fund it.

Oh, and just as a reminder, this year is our 90<sup>th</sup> years of sharing the Gospel and helping people grow in their faith. Just last week we had two decisions to follow Christ, five baptisms, one person asking about the mission field, and over 40 teens trained to share the Gospel. Overall, I'd say that Christian Camping at CLBC is as strong as it ever was!

As for other camps in the state, there ARE problems. COVID took out a couple of smaller camps that I know of. A "mega camp" had financial issues, changed owners, and last I heard, was still struggling to try to get back online again. I've even heard of one camp program that has cut down it's "Christian" emphasis to be more inclusive.

If you want to, I would love to have you pray for ALL camps in the state, Christian or not. Even programs that only teach "positive values" are still safer places for some children to be than their homes are...



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