

Ask for the Ancient Paths - James Guirguis

(updated 7/17/2015)

1. Fr. James Guirguis provides several reasons why attending the right church matters. Please provide two of those reasons?
2. Why does the author quote Acts 8 and the story of the Ethiopian eunuch? Give four examples the author mentions regarding the modern issues that churches argue about.
3. There are over 38,000 Christian denominations. According to the author, explain the historical origin of these denominations? Describe the logical argument and the verse which the author quotes to suggest that this confusion shouldn't have existed?
4. What are the reasons that led Martin Luther to have conflict with the Roman Catholic Church and what new doctrine about the Bible did this lead to?
5. According to the author, give two examples of the modern issues that churches argue about because it is easy to be confused when reading the bible.
6. According to the author, why do we have to be ready to use sources besides the Bible?
7. To follow the words of the Lord Jesus that says "the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls", the author suggests to become treasure hunters in search of fine pearls. How can we do that?
8. According to the author, explain what is one of the best ways for us to understand what we call "the mind" of the early Church? Describe how this way is not 'a leap' from our practice today?
9. When were the first books of the New Testament written? When was it that the New Testament as a complete work compiled and accepted by the Church? Who officially named all the books of the New Testament, while rejecting many that were not considered authentic or instructive for the salvation and life of a Christian?

10. What is the verse in 2 Thess 3:6? What resource does the apostle Paul refer the faithful to? According to the author, explain the difference between this resource and the epistle St Paul wrote?

11. The earliest Christians didn't look to the New Testament to answer their questions. What could be the two main reasons for this? What was the authority for the early Christians that was referred to in 1Tim. 3:15? Describe how the author uses both the written and unwritten in 1 Tim. 3:15 to explain this authority.

12. The Great Schism refers to the first major split of the Christian Church.

a. Name all the great centers of Christianity at the time of this schism (p29)

b. What became of these great centers after this great dispute and what are they known as now?

13. Martin Luther pushed Christians to firmly believe in sola fide. What do these words mean? Please provide at least two verses that they use to defend such a claim. (p34)

14. Regarding salvation by faith, what is the teachings of the Protestants about faith versus works in our eternal salvation?

15. Eph. 2:8-9 says "For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast". This verse states that we are saved by the grace of God, but verses like this present only half the truth Describe how the author explains this using his example.

16. What is the example of the wealthy banker referring to and what argument is the author making ?

17. According to the Orthodox Church, what is the Christian life? Explain the definition as it relates to god's grace?

18. According to the author, explain the teachings of the Orthodox Church about Christian life and God's grace? How did God show his grace?

19. According to St Paul in (1Tim 4:10b) Jesus Christ is "...the savior of all men, especially of those who believe" the Lord writes the check and we have to make a decision to accept it or not. Describe the difference in view between the Protestant and Orthodox doctrines regarding this decision? Support with biblical evidence?

20. While believing in one God is great, why is this not enough? and what is it that allows us to partake of God?

21. Give 3 example verses and explain how the author use them to show that our works, and not only our faith, are necessary for our salvation on judgment day.

22. In light of St Paul's epistle to the Philippians, what does it mean to be an Orthodox Christian? Support with a verse from the epistle? How does St Peter confirm the timeline in his general epistle?

23. Explain (3) possible reasons for what the author describes as 'fast-food faith'

24. According to St. John Chrysostom, why is it not enough to believe in the son in order to have everlasting life?

25. According to St. John Chrysostom, why is it we are not all saved "if salvation is by grace [Rom 11:6]"?

26. According to the author How are individuals not appointed to lead the people of God? Why is that? Provide three (3) examples from the ministry of our Lord and His apostles afterwards which support this idea.

27. In the early church, there was clerical hierarchy consisting of bishops, presbyters and deacons. How does this fit in the priesthood of all the faithful according to St. Peter? support with two (2) new testament evidence

28. The Orthodox Church believes that all Christians are priests, explain this role? but the author says this is not the end of the story. Explain and support with biblical evidence?

29. Who are Nadab and Abihu? What is their story? How does it relate to the seriousness of priesthood?

30. What is the story of the rebellion of Korah?

31. In the Old Testament, We see example and foreshadowing of church leadership and unity. Explain in your own words the two (2) biblical examples that were given.

32. In the New Testament, List two (2) examples of ordination of priests and deacons?

33. According to the author, what are the roles of a bishop and a presbyter?

34. Provide four (4) sayings from Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch in regards to church leadership and church government.

35. The early church had a few ways of recognizing true bishops from those who were false. Support with quotes from St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, France? What phenomenon is St. Irenaeus speaking about?

36. Define the major difference between the Orthodox Church and the various denomination churches? What is the teaching of the Orthodox Church?

37. According to the author, what do most protestant groups believe?

38. According to the author, what is the Orthodox Church view of sacraments founded on?

39. What is the principal objection of the author to the popular protestant doctrine of the symbol of bread and wine in communion? Support with (2) verses.

40. What do we the Orthodox believe about the bread and wine in Holy Communion?

41. What is the popular Protestant doctrine regarding communion?

42. In John 6:52-58, what did the Jews quarrel about and how did Jesus answer to them? What is the significance of His answer?

43. What is The Didache?

44. Name the three distinct documents outside of the New Testament that shows evidence of the proper understanding of the Eucharist?

45. According to Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, why did people abstain from the Eucharist? (p66)

46. According to the author, what does (Rom 6:3-4) teach about baptism? State and explain the verse

47. According to the author, what is the gift that we receive in baptism? What did Jesus teach Nicodemus about being born again? use the biblical verse in John 3 to support your answer

48. The author discusses the importance of baptism in the way of a Christian life; according to this book, what happens to those who die before they are baptized?

49. In Acts 2:38-39, what did the Apostle Peter preach about baptism?

50. What does Ambrose (Bishop of Milan) teach about baptism?

51. True or false, baptism is the way to receive the Holy Spirit? Support with a verse.

52. According to the book of Acts How did one receive the Holy Spirit in apostolic time? Support with (2) verses? How does one receive Him in modern times?

53. The Apostles laid hands on newly baptized people to give them the Holy Spirit. After the Apostles died, what tradition did they pass on? Explain.

54. According to the author, how does Tertullian connect the 'Christ's' of the old testament w/ modern receiving of the Holy Spirit?
55. According to the author, what does Bishop Basil -of Caesarea- explain about the sacrament of chrismation?
56. According to the author, what is the teachings of most protestant denominations regarding the practice of confession to a human?
57. According to John 20:21-23, what was the purpose of the Lord breathing the Holy Spirit onto the disciples?
58. How was the sacrament of confession and repentance performed in the early church?
59. According to the author, how was the general confession changed in the church? Why did this change in the practice of the sacrament occur?
60. Why was the priest chosen to hear the sins on behalf of the people?
61. According to the Orthodox Church, what is unction of the sick? Provide two (2) verses to support its biblical roots.
62. According to the author, what is holy matrimony?
63. List and explain two (2) features that are present in orthodox matrimony which are absent from a protestant service? List and explain (1) one feature that is conspicuously absent from an orthodox matrimony service?
64. In the Orthodox Church and in Scripture, what kind of marriage is considered holy? Support with biblical verse.
65. According to the author, in the Orthodox Church, when are divorce and remarriage allowed?

66. According to the author, what special relationship should exist in marriage? What is the principal purpose of marriage in the Orthodox Church?

67. According to the author, what is the general definition of monastic life? Explain who undertakes this kind of life?

68. When did Christian monasticism officially begin? Provide (2) examples of people from the Scripture support it?

69. In discussing Monasticism, Provide (3) biblical verses in support of the practice?

70. Who is regarded as the father of Christian monasticism and who wrote about his life?

71. How are the monastic life and its development important aspects of the history of the Christian Church?

72. According to the author, what does the tradition of monasticism give us?

73. According to the author, Explain what does it mean to be a saint In the Orthodox Church?

74. The author talks about canonized saints. What is the meaning of a canonized saint? List two verses that the author uses to support the orthodox view of canonized saints.

75. The author uses (1Chr.:13:9-10) to explain how special St. Mary is in the Orthodox church. State the verse that is used and explain how the author illustrates Saint Mary's status.

76. "The virgin Mary is just a tunnel used by Jesus Christ" Describe the orthodox reaction to this statement and the orthodox understanding of St Mary's role in the incarnation?

77. In the Orthodox Church, Explain how and why do we ask for intercession from departed saints?

78. What is John Chrysostom's advice regarding intercession that is mentioned by the author of the book?

79. The Orthodox Church places an emphasis on disciplining the body and controlling its desires primarily through fasting: give 3 Biblical references which support this practice.

80. According to the author, what is another way to worship in the Orthodox Church?

81. What is and is not our goal during this life as Christians according to the Orthodox understanding? Use a Biblical verse to emphasize your answer.