

# 119

## MINISTRIES

*“The following is a direct script of a teaching that is intended to be presented via video, incorporating relevant text, slides, media, and graphics to assist in illustration, thus facilitating the presentation of the material. In some places, this may cause the written material to not flow or sound rather awkward in some places. In addition, there may be grammatical errors that are often not acceptable in literary work. We encourage the viewing of the video teachings to complement the written teaching you see below.”*

### **Answering Your Questions - (Does God Repent?, 1 Cor. 11:14 – Long Hair, Preparation Day, 119 Email Turnaround Time...)**

119 Ministries receives thousands of emails every year. And as you would expect, many of those emails contain questions. Quite often, we repeatedly receive various forms of the same questions. Ideally, we would like to have a teaching available for every question we receive, however, some questions can be answered rather briefly, and do not require a regular length teaching to serve as a response. That is the purpose of this teaching series, to offer an easily available vehicle to answer your common questions.

In this teaching series, we will read a collection of hand-picked questions that we have received via email. Then, for whatever it is worth, we will offer a brief response, hopefully leading those interested in the right direction to find the answers they are seeking.

So, let's get started. First question:

#### **In Genesis 6:6, does God repent, or is it that he changes his mind or felt sorry?**

This is a good question. Here are some notes on the Hebrew word translated as “repent” here:

*The etymological relationship to Arab.  $n\dot{h}m$  “to breathe pantingly” (D. W. Thomas, ET 44 [1932/33]: 191f.; 51 [1939/40]: 252; also N. H. Snaithe, ET 57 [1945/46]: 48; cf. Zorell 510) offers little insight, given the semantic development in the OT (despite Thomas, op. cit. 192); the emotional element implied in it seems unlikely to be the presumable semantic foundation of the Hebr. verb. The meaning “to change opinions” (trans.) assumed by Jenni (HP 247) as the original meaning also fails to satisfy totally. The notion of human presence and support could also be implied in the root, although it does not always play a significant role.*

Obviously, we know that God does not change. He is not surprised by anything, nor does He make mistakes. The Hebrew language is a functional language. It is almost as though YHWH “sighed heavily” in absolute frustration, and less of “changed opinion” or “repented.” The end of the verse clarifies to say

a “grieving in His heart.” It would be like watching your own child live a life of complete destruction (i.e. drugs, poverty, crime, etc.). You would not be sorry that you had the child, but grieve in the actions he or she chose.

**Hi 119 Ministries, Good day! I’ve been joining a Bible study group for the past few months now, and one of the teachers there asked us to reach out to one of our spiritual mentors or congregation that we follow and ask the meaning behind Matthew 19:24. I kinda have my own understanding that it’s difficult for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God when they are too attached to the things of this world rather than following Yeshua, but I would like to get your perspective as well. Thank you and may Yah bless you. Warm regards, Andrew**

Good question. At minimum, for whatever it is worth, we would understand this was a proverbial expression for a thing very unusual and very difficult.

Some have suggested that the translation of “camel” in the Greek is better understood as “rope” instead.

Cyril of Alexandria (fragment 219) claimed that "camel" is a Greek misspelling; that kamêlos (camel) was written in place of kamilos, meaning "rope" or "cable". More recently, George Lamsa, in his 1933 translation of the Bible into English from the Syriac, claimed this as well.

However, we even see the same expression using the word “camel” found in other ancient writings as well, such as the Talmud, so we expect it likely should literally read as camel. Furthermore, as additional support, there is even in the Talmud the expression of an “elephant passing through the eye of a needle” as also being an idiom for something difficult.

### **B.T. Berakhot 55b**

*They do not show a man a palm tree of gold, nor an elephant going through the eye of a needle.*

*Baba Metzia, 38b)*

*"Are you from Pumbedita, where they push an elephant through the eye of a needle?"*

It is certainly a common figure of speech from that era and referencing the difficulty of large animals passing through small openings, and perhaps not ropes literally being threaded on needles. Some suggest the “eye of a needle” is referencing a particular narrow gate. However, there is no evidence for or against that, and appears to simply be legend in an attempt to explain the difficult-to-understand Hebraic idiom.

So what we seem to see Yeshua stating is that it is difficult or impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven. But certainly, Abraham was rich, as were others in the faith.

Yeshua was using hyperbole, not being literal. Yeshua was saying that it is impossible for a rich person to enter the kingdom, but by “rich person” he means specifically “a rich person who is trusting in their riches to enter the kingdom.” The only way into the kingdom is through trusting God fully and following Him, putting everything else in second place to the will of God.

Next question...

**Do you have a teaching on whether it is a sin for a man to have long hair and a woman short - 1 Corinthians 11:14? If so, how long is too long for a man and too short for a woman? Thank you in**

## **advance.**

This is an interesting question. Obviously, Paul viewed the Nazarite Vow as an exception to his own teaching here since he took on such vows himself. We also do not see any commandments in the Torah that directly offer instructions on the appropriate length of hair for each gender. We even see Samson having long hair, so the idea that Paul is giving some kind of universal command that men shouldn't have long hair isn't really an option.

We think Paul is giving culturally-specific halachic instruction here to address some specific issues that the Corinthian church was dealing with. One of his main points seems to be the need to make a clear distinction between male and female. When Paul argues from "nature," he is likely referring to the cultural norm of his day in which shorter hair for men was common. It was an appeal to the cultural norm—paraphrase, "Doesn't society itself teach you that long hair on men is disgraceful?"

This doesn't contradict the Nazarite Vow, which would simply be an exception to the rule. Paul is likely arguing a principle based on Deuteronomy 22:5 that men shouldn't try to look like women. Culture has to be taken into account in observing this commandment since culture often determines styles and fashion. So, Paul appears to be making a general halachic rule based on Deuteronomy 22:5 that men shouldn't wear long hair like a woman, and he appeals to the cultural norm ("nature") to substantiate his argument.

Halacha is not the same as "Torah." Torah comes from God, is eternal and unchanging, etc. Halacha comes from man and is an application of Torah that is not eternal, it can change, and it is not universal. Paul is not creating new Torah commands, he is drawing a principle from Torah (Deuteronomy 22:5) and giving congregation-specific instruction to deal with local issues. It is necessary to treat Deuteronomy 22:5 in this way because the Torah does not describe what it means to dress like a male or to dress like a female. Because of this, society itself determines what it means to appear female or to appear male. Thus, Paul clearly offered his guidance based on Deuteronomy 22:5 due to some apparent confusion with the Corinthians on this issue. This is like elders of a church creating a dress code for services.

Continuing on...

**Hello! I hear many people talking about how they have to clean the house and prepare this, that, and the other thing prior to Shabbat. My question is: Where in scripture does it say we must have our house cleaned up completely for such a rest day? My guess, it doesn't. But where does such a belief come from?**

This is a great question. There is nothing in the Torah about having a clean house for the Sabbath. Traditionally, the day before a rest day is called the "preparation day." We see that mentioned even in the New Testament and also a first century Christian writing called the Didache. Even Jews today still mention the tradition of the "preparation day."

The idea is to just be "ready for the Sabbath." This means different things to different people. But some include making sure all of the grocery shopping is done to get through the Sabbath, or even as you mentioned, having a clean house so one might not be compelled to clean on the Sabbath, as some might be stressed to have a not-so-clean house while trying to rest.

At any rate, there is nothing in the Torah about what we have to do before the Sabbath, but when you

hear of the “preparation day,” that is what is being referred to—just getting ready for Shabbat, whatever that might mean for a person.

Let’s move on to the next question...

**Well, thank you for the reply but it has been a month since I sent that message. A little slow there, are we not?**

**Anyways, I have found my answers through other sources. Thanks anyways.**

Ok, this is not much of a question we suppose. The question was, “A little slow there, are we not?” This was submitted to us after we took some time to freely answer a question that was submitted to us. Sadly, it took us a month to respond. We understand it can be frustrating when we cannot respond as quickly as might be preferred. At the time of this video, we have a dedicated staff of 13 people, each functioning in specific yet distinct roles. Some of those roles assist in answering incoming emails, various social media platform discussions, and phone calls. The key point is we only have so much time that some of our team can dedicate to responding to every inquiry that we receive, and we do try to respond to each and every point of contact, within reason. We only have a few people that can and do respond to emails, and we receive a lot of them. A LOT. For example, in September 2019 we received 2,297 emails. That does not including phone calls, DISQUS conversations, or Facebook. Can you imagine a just a few people addressing 2,297 emails in one month? Remember, in the midst of all of this, we are working on various projects, ministry services, and producing two or more teachings per week. We understand that not everyone understands why it can take some time to respond to incoming inquiries to 119.

So we would just like to answer the concern of our slowness in responding with an appeal to please be patient and afford us some understanding. Remember, we are human, and share the same faith as you. Our team works countless hours, more than is asked of them to help encourage and build others in the faith. We are here to serve. That is why we exist, to serve you and to glorify YHWH in the process. It can really break the 119 team’s spirit after fourteen and a half hours of answering emails and an email like that comes into the inbox. We are grateful for those who encourage and support our efforts, despite the fact that 1:1 interactions can often take some time. We pray that together we all glorify YHWH in all we do.

If this series and presentation format interested you, there are many more questions we will be covering in the subsequent parts of this teaching series. As always, if you have questions for 119 Ministries, please use the Contact Us page offered on our website, <http://119ministries.com/contact-us>. And if you do contact us, thank you for your patience as our team works to respond.

*We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom!*

*For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at [www.testeverything.net](http://www.testeverything.net)*

**Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.**

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