

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Bible Questions and Answers, Part 12

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 1301-J

Tonight we're going to have a little time of question and answer and this is always a enjoyable time. I hope you look forward to it as much as I do. We want you to have the opportunity to ask whatever question might be on your heart and I'll do the best I can to answer your questions.

And I always like to say at the very beginning that the Bible tells us in the book of Acts that Paul reasoned out of the Scriptures. He reasoned out of the Scriptures. And the word used there when he was, of course, in Berea in the book of Acts is the word *dialogo*; he dialogued. And I think that's very important. I think that you have the right to be heard and to share what's on your heart.

One of the things we find in our radio ministry is that people write us all the time and ask Bible questions. And, of course, that's the part of them I like. I never get out of here on Sunday without answering umpteen Bible questions. And anywhere I go, you know, I'll be going into the market with my wife and somebody will corner me in the cornflakes and ask me to explain the kenosis, you know. So, that's just part of life, but that's the way it is. When you get into the Word of God, people have questions. So we want you to have the opportunity to ask those questions. The only thing I ask is that you speak clearly and give your name first, okay, so we can get acquainted with you. Let's start right over here.

TOM: My name is Tom. What's the significance of Moses and Elijah being on the Mount of Transfiguration with Christ? And by that I mean, why was...of anybody to be there with Him, why was it Moses and Elijah? And why did there have to be somebody there?

JOHN: The Bible tells us that when the Lord was transfigured, you remember in the New Testament that there appeared with Him in the Mount, Moses and Elijah. And normally, the reason that most scholars feel they were there is because it is a representation of the kingdom. In other words, Jesus was giving them a preview of His coming kingdom. And in the coming kingdom there will not only be Peter, James and John, who I believe are representatives, as it were, of the new covenant, right, because they were redeemed. Certainly, they were true Israelites, but after the cross and resurrection, they became part of the church of Jesus Christ. So they represent the church. Moses and Elijah represent the Old Testament saints. And it gives to us the picture that in the kingdom there will be the combination of the church, the redeemed church, and the redeemed out of the old covenant. And, of course, in many ways, the two leading individuals in the old covenant were Moses and Elijah, one representing the law and the other, what?... the prophets.

So I think that's probably the best way to look at that, that they are representative of the Old Testament saints who will appear in glory in the coming kingdom, which Christ was portraying there, or previewing, and that they represent the law and the prophets. Okay?

ALLEN: Hello, my name is Allen. I have a verse here I've been having a little bit of a problem with.

JOHN: Okay.

ALLEN: In Genesis 10, verse 5, it refers to the descendants of Noah and the settling in the certain areas and I'm not having a problem in the verse by itself, but I'm coming to my problem after the verse that says they were "divided in their lands; every one after their own language or tongue." I think that's referring to language, "every one after his tongue." And then we went down to verse 20 and it's talking about the sons of Ham and they were divided "after their tongues," and in verse 31, "after their tongues." The problem I was having with this is it appears to me that this all takes place before Babel.

JOHN: Mm-hmm.

ALLEN: And in chapter 11, verse 1, "the whole world was of one language," and I just couldn't reconcile the... It appears that happens earlier in time than, or before the Tower of Babel. Could you clarify that? Or maybe this happens afterward, I'm not sure, but it seems to me like it happens before.

JOHN: What you've got in the genealogy is, you have the full flow of the Noachic genealogy and it goes beyond Babel. Then when you come to 11, you recap backwards and pick up Babel. You understand?

ALLEN: Oh, so that does precede, actually...

JOHN: Yeah, Babel would precede.

ALLEN: Yeah, that's what I was thinking and I couldn't get it clear in my mind.

JOHN: Right, yeah, that's the right answer. What you have then is that he gives us Noah's generations all the way out from here to here and Babel occurs in here somewhere, see, in the beginning. So you find that, too, in the first part of Genesis. For example, in chapter 1 of Genesis, you have a full-blown perspective on creation. Then in chapter 2 of Genesis, he backs up into the creation and picks up and redefines and re-describes the creation of man. It's almost a...it's like you would say to someone, well, yesterday I went to the beach.

ALLEN: Mm-hmm.

JOHN: Then you said, first of all I got in my car and I drove down to Santa Monica and then I went north to Zuma and then I got out of my car and you give all the details. Well, essentially, that's what happens here. Chapter 11 explains why they had different tongues and languages, so it would occur prior to that. Alright?

ALLEN: Yeah.

JOHN: Good question.

ALLEN: Okay, thank you.

JOHN: Yes?

JIM: John, my name is Jim.

JOHN: Hi, Jim.

JIM: I have been plagued by a question that's been bothering me. There's a group of people today on the radio that are contending that Daniel 7's description and Ezekiel and various others all tie together with today's world powers, the Russian bear and various others. And I've been studying back through chapter 7 of Daniel and I don't see what they're alluding to.

JOHN: Right.

JIM: I can see they're taking something out of context cause the last part of chapter 7 explains the vision and it doesn't fit with what they're saying. And I'm wondering why they're taking this view at this time.

JOHN: The answer to that is this: I feel that Russia does appear in prophecy, territorial Russia, Gog and Magog, Rosh, the prince of Meshech and Tubal, in Ezekiel 38. And Russia also appears, I believe, and we're going to get to that this Sunday night, the king of the North of Daniel, chapter 11, and it describes Russia invading Israel, which by the way is not too far off.

You know what the big stress now, the big pressure in Russia is? They need a Mediterranean port. The only ports that Russia has are ports on the east in the Bering Sea, which is frozen so much of the time. They would like a warm-water port. That's one of the reasons they want the Persian Gulf so badly. They could control 40 percent and above of the earth's oil. And they would like to have a Mediterranean port so they're looking at Israel. And I think that fits both Ezekiel 38 and Daniel, chapter 11. However, there is no indication at all that Russia appears in any way, shape or form in

Daniel 7.

Now, they also go so far as to say that America is in all of this and they use the prophecy about the lions and the young lions and they say the lion is Britain, the U.K.

JIM: Yeah.

JOHN: You know, we all know that the symbol of the British kingdom has been a lion and so forth. And that we are the young lions or the whelps, that the United States and all the various colonies and so forth. And I'm asked frequently how I argue against that Biblically. And the answer is, you can't argue against it cause it isn't there. I mean, the burden of proof is on them. They do the same thing, for example, Charles Taylor came out with a book on Revelation 18 in which the whole book says that Revelation 18 describes the United States of America and the vast economic system of the United States of America. The burden of proof is not on me to argue against that; the burden of proof is on them to prove that because it doesn't say that. I mean, they gotta be getting it in the white spaces cause it isn't in the words (laughter).

So, it's very difficult, you know. If you go to the seventh chapter of Daniel, it tells you, you have these four great world powers. It names who they are. You go right through from Babylon, Medo Persia, Greece and Rome. I don't see Russia there at all and I certainly don't see the United States in prophecy. And it's been very interesting to me to see that the closer we get to the time of the return of the Lord, at least in the imminency of this hour, the more diminished America becomes in terms of a force in the world. In the first place, we're too far away from the point of conflict, which is in the Middle East. And we're not really a... I think the issue over there as you find it in the book of Daniel, we'll see it this Sunday night, is that the West, the coalition of the European States, the East, the great army of the East of 200 million, and the North, Russia, all those parts of the puzzle fit. Because if the... Russia's greatest enemy in the world is not the United States. Russia's greatest enemy in the world is Red China. And that whole thing will precipitate Armageddon.

But I just feel the burden of proof is on them. I thought about that a lot since you mentioned it Sunday. And in trying to come up with a way to argue against that, I'm at a loss because there's no way to prove that. To say that the young lions are America, to say that the lion is Britain, you know. It could be Ethiopia because they took a lion as their motif. But, I mean, that's not a valid approach. But you have to be careful of that highly speculative approach, a kind of a sensationalizing of Biblical prophecy. You have to be discerning.

JIM: All right, one last question. Do you see the United States as being a part of the sword that is brought against Russia to destroy Russia when they come against God's people?

JOHN: Well, prophecy-wise, the United States doesn't appear, you know, at all.

JIM: Yeah.

JOHN: All you have in the theater of prophecy is this little country, Israel in the middle, and what's north of it, east of it, south of it and west of it; that's it. I mean, Argentina's not there, Alaska's not there, Hawaii's not there, Australia's not there, you know, South Africa, just that little tiny area. Now, it may well be that the United States is involved in some kind of an alliance with the Western powers. That's a very real possibility. If we're to block Russia's power, I can see us making some kind of treaties and building a coalition with Western powers in Europe of the reformed Roman Empire. But in terms of specificity, the United States being involved, there's no way that we can say that because the Scripture just doesn't give us that liberty.

JIM: Okay, thank you.

JOHN: Mm-hmm.

JOHN: Hi, my name is John. I have this book on Babylon Mystery Religion by Ralph Woodrow and I just wanted to ask you what you thought of it and is Christmas derived from paganism and is the cross derived from paganism?

JOHN MACARTHUR: Well, I'm not sure, who published, what's the publisher of that book, John?

JOHN: He published it himself.

JOHN MACARTHUR: Okay. Basic principle: Be careful of books that are published by the guy who wrote them (laughter).

JOHN: Uh-huh.

JOHN MACARTHUR: You just have to be discerning. Usually, when a man publishes his own material, it is either because no one else will publish it or because it is...it is too volatile or argumentative or there's no audience for it or it's not right or something. Now, basically speaking, I believe that he's right on many of those issues. Much of modern Christendom is a result of paganism. There's no question about that.

You asked about Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. In the early Greek periods, December was the month orgies and feasts and festivals to the gods. It was the time of the Feast of Saturnalia. The winter was coming and they wanted to appease the gods that they would survive the winter and they would see the spring and all of this. And so these tremendous pagan festivals to Saturnalia and to many other deities were held in December.

Now, the Constantine Roman Empire that came about in about 300 or so, after that they wanted to sort of Christianize everything. And so in approximately 450 A.D., the Bishop of Rome decided that it would be really good if they could Christianize the festivals of December. So he determined in some kind of conjunction with the Bishop of Jerusalem that they would spot December 25 as the birth of Christ. And if they could pick December 25 as the birth of Christ, that might sanctify all of this, even though it's highly unlikely that He was born then. They were really trying to overpower the paganism. But instead, they got a mish-mash. Mistletoe, that's from paganism. Christmas trees, paganism. Holly basically is a rather pagan thing. Christmas cards, 1864, and they were first invented by a businessman who thought of a way to make money and they had drinking scenes on them. So you can go right down the line. Saint Nicholas, from Scandinavia, was a saint in the Roman system who was supposed to leave things stuffed in little wooden shoes of kids who were good. This is not uncommon in Christianity.

Another illustration, just before Easter, traditionally the Christian church celebrates what season? Lent. You know where lent came from? There's no lent in the Bible, none. It never appears in the Bible. It had nothing to do with the resurrection of Christ. But in ancient paganism, in the instructions of Baal and Ashteroth and the deities of the ancients, it was believed that Tammuz, or Baal, he goes by a lot of different names, Cupid, many names, but that Tammuz or Baal was killed by a wild boar. And when he was killed by a wild boar, his mother Semiramis, the high priestess of Babylonian paganism, mourned for him and cried for him for 40 days and at the end of those 40 days, he was risen from the dead. So the whole concept of the 40-day mourning and going without and fasting has absolutely nothing to do with the resurrection of Christ but was an imposition on Christianity from pagan mystery religions of Babylon. The mother/child perspective where you see in the Roman churches, you know, the virgin or you see the pieta, the carving, this whole mother/child thing does not come, basically, from Christianity. There's no sentimentalization of that in the Bible, but it comes, again, from paganism. Semiramis, it was said by the pagans, conceived her son Tammuz because she was implanted by a sunbeam. That would falsify what? The virgin birth. And after that she gave birth to her son without a human father. So that the mother/child cult really came through mystery religions of Babylon and in its pagan origin, was superimposed on Christianity and, ultimately, the confusion came out in the Roman Catholic system where you have lent, which has no Biblical basis at all. In fact, that's only one part of it. You know the term "Queen of Heaven"? I was reading a Catholic book the other day. Queen of Heaven...Queen of Heaven you can find in the book of Ezekiel. And the first Queen of Heaven was Semiramis, the high priestess of Babylonian cults, the mother/child cult. Many of these features have come out of paganism and been superimposed across Christianity.

Now, that is not to say that we have to abandon all meaningful things. I mean, just because the world wants to mess up and confuse the issue doesn't mean that I have to be confused about it. I could celebrate Christmas today if I wanted to and I could celebrate it any day I want and I can be grateful

the Lord was born or the Lord was risen from the dead or whatever. That's my prerogative as long as I understand the distinction. The part that I don't think is necessary is for us to sort of just say, well, we will not do all of that. I think you miss something there. I think if you want to honor the Lord Jesus Christ, that's great. And if you are really good about it, you will capitalize on people's sensitivity toward Christ at that season. I know that every Christmas season, I gear up to preach an evangelistic message and people come to Christ because there's a sensitivity. Plus, psychologists tell us that the most depressing time of the year is the Christmas time. That's when people are most depressed because they're supposed to be happy and they're not. They look forward to all the family getting together and the family gets together and nobody likes each other (laughter) and so it's some problems there.

But, yes, there's no question about the fact that the systems of Babylon have been superimposed upon Christianity. There's no question about that so, insofar as he brings that issue. There's another book that's very helpful called *The Two Babylons* by Hyslop, H-Y-S-L-O-P. Also, a very, very helpful book.

LARRY: Hi, my name is Larry.

JOHN: Hi.

LARRY: And on July 31 Israel annexed Jerusalem as its capital, which made a lot of the Moslem nations upset. And I was wondering if that was one of the prophecies and are there any more prophecies that need to be fulfilled before the Rapture or Great Tribulation takes place?

JOHN: Larry, I don't think that, specifically, the annexation of Jerusalem as the capital city fulfills a prophecy. They could make the capital city any city they wanted and it still wouldn't affect the fact that Jerusalem is the main city in that country. That's simply a technicality. You see, because the Jews know that Jerusalem is the Holy City. The Jews know that Jerusalem is the place of promise, that Jerusalem is the apple of God's eye. And so I think this just shows that. But, specifically, I don't think prophecy necessitates that Jerusalem be the official capital. It certainly will be the capital of the Millennial Kingdom.

Now, insofar as, are there any prophecies that need to be fulfilled before the Rapture? There's only one, just one. And that's the trumpet and the shout; that's it. And when that happens, we're gone. There are no prophecies to be fulfilled before the Rapture. That's why we say the Rapture is imminent. The prophecies begin to be fulfilled after the Rapture. If prophecies were to be fulfilled prior to the Rapture, the Rapture would be determined then, wouldn't it, by what we see going around us, but no man knows that. And that means it's imminent. He can come at any moment. Once the Rapture happens, then the explosion of prophecy fulfillment takes place. Okay? Good.

LARRY: Thank you.

JOHN: Thank you, Larry.

GARY: Hello, John; my name is Gary. And in Deuteronomy 5:8 when we're given the Ten Commandments, it mentions...I'll read the verse: "Thou shalt not make thee any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the waters beneath the earth." I was wondering what your feeling was on pictures of Jesus.

JOHN: Well, I don't think that's the intent of the Scripture. The text, "thou shalt not make any carved image" is based upon the prior verse: "thou shalt have no other gods before Me." "Thou shalt not make thee any carved image or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above or in the earth beneath." The assumption is that you're not to worship the stars, the sun, the birds, the animals, man, any other thing. But once God invaded the world in a human form, He gave substance or image, didn't He? And that's exactly what Hebrews 1 says, that He is the express, what?...image of God. God...God gave us an icon. And I hate to use that sense, but God gave us an image. God gave us a model and a pattern. So I don't think that it is outside...I don't think it violates this intent to make an image which is constituted as another god. You could never make an image of a spirit being. Right? So He couldn't be talking about an image of Himself. I mean, not essentially. But there was a case where they did this. You know, in the golden calf incident, I don't know if you've thought this through, but if you read the text, in the wilderness when the people made the golden calf, you remember Moses was up on the mountain getting the law and the people were down with Aaron making the golden calf. They made the golden calf as a representative of the true God. It was not a pagan idol. It was...it was the representation of their own God. They were still, in some sense, monotheistic. They were trying to represent God, and that's what the text indicates, in that calf. And at that point, God judged them. The only proper manifestation that God has ever permitted of His Person is in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Now, there's one other thing that I might just mention. God has used a lot of symbols of His Person. In the Old Testament I can think of one major thing was a serpent on the rod, which, in a sense, pictured Christ. And there's much language imagery as well. Every lamb that was slain was, in a sense, prefiguring Christ. But I think you're safe in saying that since God has revealed Himself, this is the bottom line, God has revealed Himself in the image of man, the man Christ Jesus, that God allows us that one representation. I don't have a problem with that. He allows us that one representation so that we see God in human dimension.

Now, having said that, let me say this. We do not have in our house a picture of Jesus of any kind because I don't think any of them look like Him, probably, and I would rather have Him be who He really is than me to assume that He is someone He's not. That's just a personal thing. So what we do

is, without having a picture of Jesus, we still encourage our children to read many, many Christian books and all of them have pictures of Jesus, but all of them have pictured Him differently. And I think you're pretty safe if you approach it that way. If you get some great big head of Christ slammed in the middle of your house, I'm not against that. That's okay if you like that but I perceive Christ in my own mind and I'm very comfortable with that and I've never yet seen the picture that looks like what I believe He is. So that's just a personal preference. But I really don't think the spirit of Deuteronomy 5:8 is broken when we have representation of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, the word imagery of the New Testament paints for us marvelous pictures of Christ. And you can never, I don't know about you, you can never, I can say for myself, I can never really read an account in the Gospels of Christ without vivid imagery of His Person; can you? I mean, when I see Him, for example, reach down and touch a leper, if that was just God doing that, I don't know that I could even focus on that. When you think of God, do you think of something? Do you think of a form or a shape? I don't. I don't think of... I don't know that I think of anything. But when I think of Christ, immediately I have this image of the robe and His hands and you know... So I really think that the spirit of the person who simply has in his mind or perceives Christ in human form is not in violation of that.

GARY: And could I ask one more question?

JOHN: One more, sure.

GARY: In Matthew 4 where Jesus is tempted by the Devil...

JOHN: Right.

GARY: ...I believe He answered three times the Scripture out of Deuteronomy.

JOHN: Right.

GARY: Do you think that's just a coincidence that they're all three out of the book of Deuteronomy or...?

JOHN: No, it's not a coincidence. It is because Deuteronomy is the summation of all the Old Testament law. Deuteronomy, you might say, is to the Old Testament what Romans is to the New. Deuteronomy takes the Pentateuch and builds it into summary fashion. Deuteronomy is the gospel of the Old Testament. And I think He drew them to Deuteronomy because Deuteronomy, more than any other book, sums up the Law of God.

GARY: Thank you.

JOHN: Yes?

GLORIA: Hi, John; my name is Gloria. And my girlfriend and I were both Catholics and after becoming born-again Christians, there's a question that kind of bothers us and we thought maybe you might be able to shed some light on it.

JOHN: I'll try.

GLORIA: The Roman Catholic Church claims a direct line of Popes beginning with Peter. Since many of the names are men in the early church, how can they label them as "Pope?" And also, there might be some material available for us to research this.

JOHN: Yeah. You see, here we are back to the same situation again. The burden of proof is on them. There is no way under the sun that you can ever make Peter the first Pope out of the Bible. In fact, if you study Peter carefully, you have to ask yourself why in the world they'd want him to be the first Pope (laughter). You know, I mean, the guy is the apostle with the foot-shaped mouth (laughter). You know, I mean, you hate to think that he was speaking ex cathedra, he said so many dumb things. But, basically, there is absolutely nothing in the New Testament to tell us that Peter was the first Pope.

GLORIA: But yet they claim that they do get it from there, something about, you know, _____...

JOHN: Well, they go to Matthew 16 and they say "upon this rock I will build My church." But that is not what it's talking about. It's not...Peter's not the rock. It says "thou art Petros, but upon this Petra, I will build my church." It's a play on words. You're one thing; I'm building My church on something else. And what I believe He'll build His church on is that Peter said, "thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus said, you're a pebble, but upon the rock bed of that affirmation of My deity, I'll build my church. See the difference? In other words, the rock bed is "thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Now, Peter wasn't the foundation for "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus," 1 Corinthians 3. But Peter was one of the chief stones as the building went up.

But you have to understand this basic thing. Catholic theology is a combination of two things: the Bible and tradition. Both are believed to be of equal truth. So if a church council determines something, it is as if the Bible says it. Now, that's wrong. The Bible says in the end of Revelation, "if any man adds anything to this Book, shall be added to him the plagues that are written in it," and that goes for church councils or anybody else. Nobody, after this canon was closed, has the right to say this is the Holy Word of God equivalent to Scripture. That's where the Roman system got into trouble, see, when they started doing that. And it's obvious through the years because they've been changing their minds so much. They made a whole bunch of people saints at one time and then they unsainted them the next thing you know. And then they're fighting now over the issue of celibacy and, you know, other things.

But, basically, the burden of proof is on them. There's, for example, historically, it can be verified as far as all evidence is concerned that Peter never went near Rome, never got there. So there's just no...apostolic succession through Peter is simply the fancy or the whim of the Roman system determined by their own whatever...tradition.

You know, I could get into this whole thing, but there are lots of books on this. You can check in the bookstore. Ask the, whoever's there, and they'll help you with this. But one of the things that is fascinating is that they wanted to hold a power. The papacy at one time was the most powerful position in the world. In fact, it was so powerful that it wasn't uncommon to have three Popes at the same time, all three claiming to be the apostolic successor to Peter and fighting for their right. I mean, it was so powerful that there would be three Popes at one time. And do you know that some Popes were followed by their sons? That's right. So it was a...it was kind of a mess. But they wanted this...and they're supposed to be celibate, right? But one of the things that was so true was that they wanted to maintain power over the people. They wanted to be the Vicar of Christ so they wanted to have an apostolic succession, a connection to give them that authority. And that's exactly where that all generated but there's just nothing in the Bible about that. That's the issue. Okay?

GLORIA: Thank you.

JOHN: Good. Yes, sir?

QUESTIONER: The book the young man was referring to is actually The Mystery of Babylonis just a shorter version of Hyslop's Two Babylons.

JOHN: Oh, great.

JOE: Which has a lot to say about the very question that lady was talking about.

JOHN: Yeah.

JOE: My question is pragmatic and threefold arising out of a discussion that some of us had concerning whether or not we should be working in the movie industry. First of all, what percentage of movies and television produced today would you say are detrimental to the morals of our country and shouldn't be shown at all anywhere? Or...

JOHN: Or? (Laughter)

JOE: I didn't...I didn't want to assume there. Or is the percentage high enough that, while someone working on the movie set might not always know the nature of the movie he was producing or helping produce, by virtue of the fact that they knew the percentage was high of bad movies, then that would

dictate his involvement in it. Or is it wrong for someone such as a sign painter, a set builder, a vehicle driver, a camera operator, etc., to do their job on the movie that they know will...that they, for sure know will show fornication, drunkenness, homosexuality, etc., in a positive light even though their actual job, in and of itself is not immoral? And lastly, what effects do you think it would have if all the Christians in the movie industry from secretaries to actors to set painters, etc., to directors were to refuse to work on movies that promoted immorality?

JOHN: I can answer the last question (laughter). You know what'd happen? They'd dump them all and get some other people to do what they do and they'd keep doing the same thing they're doing. I don't think it'd have any effect at all. We've had people in our church who were very capable actors who moved into Hollywood and as soon as they started saying, "I won't do this," "I won't do that," "I won't do this," "I won't do that," they were out that fast. And I think of one young man who was a...who was being paid thousands of dollars every week just to be on the, you know, on the list. He didn't even have to be in the movie. But the moment he turned down a nude scene or turned down some other deal, they began to blackball him and finally he was just washed out even though he was a real shining light in his career.

Let me really speak to that issue. And I'm not sure I can gather up all the ramifications because I'll be very honest with you, I don't go to movies. Okay? I just don't go. I mean, they don't...to me, they don't have any redeeming virtue. I mean, I might go see...I might, I don't know, I might go see... What might I go see (laughter)? What? Joni! (Laughter) (Applause) I might go see Joni. I might go see, in fact, I did have the experience of seeing "The Black Stallion" which was a fabulous cinematography and a wonderful, wonderful story of a horse. And I think that's the only movie I've seen in, I don't know, three years. And so I can't...I really can't say that I can speak, you know, knowledgeably for the whole of the industry. But let me just tell you where my experience would come from. I have occasion to fly on airplanes a lot. And I'll be very honest with you. I cannot bring myself to watch movies on airplanes, to pay whatever, two dollars or three or something to get those earphones because the language and the innuendo and what is implicit or explicit is always the same. It's always the same! There is not anything you...there are no movies except Walt Disney or G-rated movies that don't imply something sexual or something wrong. And even some of the ones that don't have the sexual thing, it might be G-rated, have the basic ethics that the end justifies the means. And you see this all the time. People...the good guy lies to get his own ends and things like that. Basically, I just don't go...I don't see any virtue in sitting there and letting people pump garbage into my brain. I don't care what they are and I'm not going to sit there and listen to four letter words. I don't see any value in that. It isn't that I'm prudish. My family, when I grew up, permitted me to go to films, movies, and they maybe should have been a little more stringent because I wasn't as discerning. Fortunately, I was protected because the industry wasn't as bad as it is now. But...so I had that choice. But at a conscious point in my life, I chose not to go. I just won't go. The first reason is, why? The second reason is, is that the best thing I have to do priority-wise? The third reason is, I don't want to go there cause, for sure, somebody'll see me there and they'll say, "Oh, you go to movies," and they don't have discernment

that they should have. They just accept that as a blanket recommendation and off they go.

The second thing is that I monitor the television because the television's full of garbage. I mean, it's just garbage from morning till night, just plain garbage all day long. My own personal feeling is, and I'll be very honest with you, you could take about 99 percent or maybe 95 percent, somewhere in there, of the T.V. and the movies and just blow it all up for what's good in it. And if you...if you just expose yourself to that stuff just for a social evening, I don't think it has redeeming value. I think it puts the wrong kind of things...what it does basically, you may not go out and do the things that are there, but what it'll do is it'll weaken your conscience against those things. You'll become more and more tolerant, less and less firm and rigid in a Biblical standard of morality.

And so, bringing it down, Joe, to a practical thing, I can only speak for myself. I...my conscience would never permit me to work in that industry. That's just where I'm at. I couldn't do it. I'm too much of a purist. I just...I mean, I don't...I won't even go speak somewhere where I think there might be somebody there in the program whose life isn't right if I know about that because I just, you know, that's just a strong perspective. I mean, I know there's some Christians who drive a beer truck and, you know, and stuff... Well, I can't...that's just very difficult for me. I'd like to see, and I'll be very blunt, I'd like to see all the Christians just pull out of that whole deal, mess, and I have enough faith to believe God'll put you somewhere better.

JIM: Amen.

JOHN: That's what I believe. I don't see any purpose in any of it. One that just robs little kids minds...you know, the average kid who sits at home and watches stuff on T.V. and by the time...that's what I told you about the age of puberty going down and down and down and down and down and down and kids getting pregnant earlier and earlier and earlier. Why? Because they're exposed to this stuff all the time. And the music, you know, it's unbelievable. Do you ever listen to the words? I heard some words the other day. I was down at a place getting my car fixed. I couldn't believe it! I couldn't even repeat them. Blaring over there and this guy in there, I mean, he might have been a dooper or something, I don't know. But he was in there and he was working in there and he was listening to this stuff and, just all day long, beating that stuff into his brain. Filth! The other night they had a movie on television called "The Deer Hunter" and somebody, well, it was...it was suggested that our kids watch it for extra credit. So I said, I don't know what it is but I'll...I opened it up, I couldn't believe it, turned it on and when it came on, we watched it about two minutes and I was very upset and called the school. So I just can't see any virtue and value in it. I...now, let me just back up enough to say that maybe once in awhile there's something that comes along that has beauty and artistic value and maybe there's something wholesome about it. But all in all, I just can't see it. People say to me, oh, you know, such-and-such is such a great movie. Oh, I really enjoyed it. And you find out, well, they'll say, well, it's got a lot of profanity, but apart from that, and there's only one scene where, you know, they're in bed, and... Who needs it? All right. We all got enough trouble with that, huh? _____ go

and sit there and, ooohhh, you see. Why? Like beating your head against a wall. I mean, what are you going to do that for? So, you got enough of a battle without sticking your head in that kind of a place. Anyway, that's probably a longer answer than you wanted, Joe.

JOE: Thank you.

JOHN: Thanks for a good question.

STEVE: Hi, my name's Steve and I have a couple of questions. One is, I was under the impression that the temple had to be rebuilt before the Rapture would occur. Is that...that kind of goes back to the...Larry's question.

JOHN: Yeah, well, the Bible doesn't say that. The Bible says that...and we'll get into this this Sunday night. The Bible says that during the middle of the Tribulation, the temple will be desecrated. So all that simply means is that there'll need to be a temple in the Tribulation, but that could be built after the Rapture. It could be built before it. The Bible doesn't really say. But there will be...and by the way, if they ever get the right, and they will, to the temple ground, they'll slap up a temple in about two days. So it isn't any time problem. They can build things over there. They've got prefabricated housing. I remember when I was speaking in Palm Springs one time I met a very interesting man who flew down for the series. I did a series down there on Israel in the Palm Springs Community Church before they pulled out of the presbytery some years back. We had a packed-out place every night, you know. They'd get a bunch of Presbyterians in on prophecy and, you know, it's all new to them (laughter). So, anyway...right, Bill? _____ amen (laughter). So, anyway, we were having a ball in this thing and this guy would fly down in his jet from up in San Francisco every night, you know, to hear this deal. And he was a builder in Israel and he said that they have already...he was talking to me about the fact that they had already developed the prefabrication system so well and guys had already laid out plans for a temple because the minute they get that deal, they're going to get that temple up fast, so... It really isn't necessary that it be built before the Tribulation.

STEVE: The other question is, in the Catholic Bible, there's several books between the Old and New Testament...

JOHN: Right.

STEVE: ...and I'm wondering how Christian theological circles look on it and how you feel about it.

JOHN: Okay. Basically, you have the Old Testament and the New Testament. And then you have a series of books known as the Apocrypha. Now these books are books that come from a specific period of time. The Old Testament canon was closed about 400 B.C., the time of Ezra. The New Testament was opened about 50 A.D. So you have a period of about 450 years which there was no

writing. When John the Baptist appeared on the scene prior to the ministry of Jesus Christ, he was the...he was the voice that broke 400 years of silence. But during that 400-year period, all kinds of books appeared that claimed to be authoritative books authored by God. In fact, you might be interested to know that there are even many, many such books during the New Testament era in the first century that were written and...there was the Gospel of Peter and all different things, the Coptic narrative, a lot of books that were supposedly written by Paul or Peter and they're all false. Well, during that inter-Testamental period, there were a series of books written. These books were never accepted by the general church consciousness because it was apparent they were not inspired. They are filled with historical error. In other words, their datings and so forth are wrong, inconsistent with what we know to be historical. They are filled with theological error. They are filled with spiritual and moral error. It is apparent to the most cursory reader of those books that they don't match up. And so the church never recognized them at all. Now, I'm not sure exactly why the Catholic Church inserted them in. But at some point in time and I can't even remember what the council was, they put them back into the center of the Bible. But they have never really stood the test of inspiration. They are not authored by the apostles. There are Bel and the Dragon, Esdras, First, Second and Third Maccabees. They're not apostolic writings and they're not Old Testament prophets either so they don't fit any of the criteria. And as I say, the quality of the book does not match the standard of inspired literature.

STEVE: Would it go back to the Catholic traditionalism that you spoke of earlier?

JOHN: Yes. Oh, yeah. They inserted them at some point, which at this juncture, I can't recall the specific year. Right, but again you see, the problem with the system, and keep this in mind, all systems that are deviants of Christianity build their system on two bases: the Bible plus something else. Okay? If it's Christian Science, it's the Bible plus Mary Baker Eddy Patterson Glover Frey. She had a problem (laughter), Mary Baker Eddy. If it's Mormonism, it's the Bible plus Joseph Smith. It doesn't matter what it is. It's the Bible plus Annie Besant, "Judge" Rutherford, Mr. and Mrs. Fillmore, Madame Blavatsky, somebody. It's somebody...always the Bible, plus. The Bible, plus; the Bible, plus. And that's what happened in the Roman system. It was the Bible plus the church councils, plus the traditions, plus the papal bulls and so forth. And whenever you do that, you give to man the right to affirm what is divine truth. You just utterly create chaos. So Christian scholars today just universally reject the validity of the Apocrypha as an inspired text. But I might add, once in awhile I'll quote something out of there cause it does give us insight into the historical period there. Some of the things that are historical are helpful.

Yes?

GLORIA: My name is Gloria and I've been studying...or I've been a Christian all my life, but I am having trouble defining the Trinity at this time. I never really got into studying it. I just accepted God the Father, Jesus as the Son and the Holy Ghost. And I still, in studying, I haven't found any mention

of the Trinity in books.

JOHN: Well, let me just say this to begin with. You've been right all along. The Trinity is right, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. You can read the Old Testament, just sit down and read it and read it and read it and read it and read it. When you get all done reading it, you may not pick out a single specific verse that says, "these are the three," but there won't be four, there won't be two; they'll be three. You can read the New Testament, you may go right over the verses, then you get all done and you're gonna say, obvious, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. It's so...it's so patently obvious.

But apart from that, there are some specific, very, very specific verses. For example, in the baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ, you have one, I think, in Matthew 4, right at the end of chapter 3, right before 4. "And Jesus," verse 16, "when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water and, lo, the heavens were open unto Him and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him and a voice from heaven saying, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.'" Now, who do you have there?

GLORIA: I have the Father and the Son.

JOHN: And the Spirit descending like a dove, all three. Look at the end of...

GLORIA: But, well, I understand that, but when Jesus was on earth He prayed to His Father in Heaven...

JOHN: Right.

GLORIA: ...which to me shows the separation of...

JOHN: Right.

GLORIA: ...I mean that, I have no trouble believing...

JOHN: I'll get to that.

GLORIA: Okay.

JOHN: I'll get to that. Okay, at the end of II Corinthians, II Corinthians chapter 13, verse 14, it says, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all." All right, do you agree there are three?

GLORIA: Yes.

JOHN: They're all one. Because Deuteronomy 6:4 says, "the Lord our God is one Lord," because Jesus said, "I and the Father are one," because He said in one place, it says "the Spirit of God," and another place, Romans 8:9, it says, "the Spirit of Christ." They're all one and yet they're separate.

GLORIA: Where...are...are they one...

JOHN: They're one...

GLORIA: But are they one in...

JOHN: They're one in...

GLORIA: ...spirit and purpose?

JOHN: No.

GLORIA: I mean, like, our congregation is one.

JOHN: Don't, don't say that "one in purpose." That's the lie of the Jehovah's Witnesses. That's...that's particularly Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, too, but that is particularly the Jehovah's Witness thing. But what you...what you need to realize is they're three and yet, one. They are three...they are one in essence. They are one in essence and yet they are three distinct Persons. Now, you can't understand that. There's no way you could. You could say, oh, it's like ice, water and steam; it's all H₂O. No, no, no. Because it can't be ice, water and steam at one time like God is. Say, oh, it's like an egg. You have the shell, the yolk and the white. No, no, no. God is not like an egg (laughter).

GLORIA: But...

JOHN: You can say, oh, it's like a man. A man is a son, and if he has a son, he's a father, and if he has a brother, he's a brother. So, he's a son, a father and brother all at one time. No, no, no.

GLORIA: But, he's not one...

JOHN: No, he's still one...

GLORIA: ...when he's all those things.

JOHN: ..._____ not three, He's just one. The point is this, if you start trying to unscrew the unscrutable (laughter), if you start trying to figure out the Trinity, you're going to find yourself under

the pew saying the Greek alphabet (laughter) even if you don't know it, because it's beyond your comprehension. You see, let God be God. If you could figure God out and get Him all reduced down to what you could understand, then you'd be equal to God. See? God is one. That is the heart of all Biblical theology. The Lord our God is one Lord. Monotheism was what identified Israel as over against all of the polytheism, animism, polydemonism and everything else that was going on around Israel. The Lord is one and yet He manifests Himself in three distinct Persons. You can have the Son praying to the Father. You can have the Spirit praying to the Father from the believer. You can have all of these things within the framework of God and all it simply means is that you don't understand God. You see, it's like if you...I illustrate it this way. If you took a little cup down and you scooped out the Pacific Ocean, you wouldn't have the ocean in your cup. It's way beyond you. I mean, there's so much more vastness to the immense reality of God that we can't perceive that you just have to let it go at that. I don't understand it. I know He's one; I know He's three. Indivisible...

GLORIA: Well...

JOHN: Indivisible oneness.

GLORIA: Mm-hmm. Well, when He said the Father is mightier than I, then what, why would He...

JOHN: He was talking in His humiliation. He said, the Father is greater than I, not in essence, but in my humiliation. He said, for example, I have taken on the role of a servant. He even said, no man knows the date or the hour, right, not even the Son of Man. What was He saying? He was saying I limited myself in my submission. You see, when Jesus referred to Himself, over 50 times He called Himself the Son of Man. When He came into the world, He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." He thought it not something to hold onto and to grasp, but "He took upon Himself the form of a servant" and "He humbled Himself" and was "found in fashion as a man," Philippians 2. Now, in His humiliation and His humbling, He submits Himself in some divine fashion that's beyond our comprehension, to the will of the Father. And in His submission and in His humanness and in His earthiness, He says the Father is greater than I. Why? Because the Father was not fulfilling the role of a servant; He was. And He submitted Himself to the Father in that sense. He said, I only do the things the Father shows Me to do and so forth and so on. Now, the mystery of that is way beyond us.

GLORIA: But it doesn't...

JOHN: In fact, the Bible calls it a mystery; doesn't it?

GLORIA: But it doesn't seem like...well, it doesn't seem like if we're never to see God and He's...if He came to earth as man, then we have seen God. And He said, no man will see God.

JOHN: Well, we've seen God in Christ. You see, it says in John 1:1 that "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was face-to-face," pros ton theon, "was face-to-face with God" in an equality. "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was God," face-to-face with God. All...

GLORIA: Do you think this is essential to salvation, to believe in the three-in-one?

JOHN: Absolutely. Because if you don't, you fall into the old error of what was known as modalistic monarchianism that...or Sabellianism, that God simply appears once for awhile like this and once for awhile like this and He has different uniforms He wears. But you can't do that because you got the Son praying to the Father in the Spirit. If you don't believe in the Trinity, then who loses their deity? You take God's deity away, you take the Son's deity away or the Spirit's deity away and you've denied the reality of the Person of God. And invariably the cults do this. They will...you've got a group in the middle of Africa. They believe in the Father, the Son and the Spirit of Zimbabwe. What is that? Or you've got the Mormons who believe in God and Jesus is a created being. They...that's deathly because if you preach any other Christ than the Christ of the Word of God, you're anathema. And the Christ of the Word of God said "if you've seen Me, you've seen the Father. I and the Father are one." So, the thing you want to do is accept it by faith and not try to understand it intellectually because it's beyond your understanding. Okay? That's a hard one. That's a fair question, though.

QUESTIONER: Did our Lord ever show a sense of humor and are there any examples that He ever laughed. I know that many times, I, you know, I've read that Jesus wept, you know, but I've never heard that He ever laughed. I never...I've never _____.

JOHN: Listen, _____, He could not have survived three years with the disciples if He didn't have a sense of humor (laughter). There's absolutely no way He would have ever made it. Listen, He was all that a man is. I mean, He loved little children. He gathered them in His lap and a lapful of little children in Matthew 18 must have brought joy to His heart. I mean, I know there were times when He must have laughed as men laugh as He cried when men cried. But when it deals with Him in the Bible, the seriousness of the presentation of the writer precludes any of the frivolous and the passing. I don't think He laughed as much as most people because He could see the reality of everything so clearly. But if the angels rejoice in Heaven over one sinner that repents, surely He does. Surely His joy is the truest joy, the most profound joy. But I happen to believe that God made a sense of humor. I mean, if we're created in the image of God, then God...I mean, just look at all of us. He has to have a sense of humor (laughter). Right? I mean, do you ever just sit and watch people go by? God has to have a sense of humor.

QUESTIONER: Amen.

JOHN: (Laughter) So, okay?

QUESTIONER: Yeah, I had a brief question...

JOHN: But the Bible says nothing about that.

QUESTIONER: I wonder if you could just explain a verse. In Hebrews, chapter 10, verse 26, I'll just read it briefly to you. It says, "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Could you briefly explain that?

JOHN: Yeah, what it's talking about is a non-Christian, a person who is intellectually convinced that the Gospel is truth, the same as chapter 6, the same as chapter 4, where you have a person who is intellectually convinced in their mind that they have seen all the truth. They know that it's true and if they have the knowledge of the truth and willfully "trample under foot the Son of God," that's what it says in that verse, and "count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing," they're doomed. In other words, it's talking about one who rejects against full knowledge. It's not talking about a Christian. That's it.

QUESTIONER: Okay, thank you.

JOHN: Mm-hmm.

JOHN: John, my name is John and I'd like to say I think you for your accuracy. I appreciate that. And my question is, my father, he's a Seventh Day Adventist...

JOHN MACARTHUR: Mmm.

JOHN: ...and I think I've heard you say on one of your tapes that you've referred to Seventh Day Adventists as our friends and if that's possible, I think I've heard you say that. And I wonder if Ellen G. White is a false prophet, if...

JOHN MACARTHUR: Well, basically, and I don't want to get into too much on this cause it would take a long time. Ellen G. White, let me approach it another way. Yeah, Ellen G. White was not a true prophet, no question about that.

JOHN: They claim her to be a prophet _____.

JOHN MACARTHUR: Well, some of them do. There's probably going to be a split in the Seventh Day Adventists. I just got a letter about, it was kind of an interesting letter. They asked me to speak at their five-year quintennial with 1,200 of their pastors and their national meeting. They invited me to be the speaker. They said we need to hear your message. About a week later they called up and said we've changed our mind. See, but that's okay. What that showed me was there's a tremendous tension.

Many of them are moving away. Through the years, there has been, in the midst of the Seventh Day Adventists movement, a remnant of real believers and I think those are the ones to whom I would refer. There are some who are still banking on their salvation based on their legalism and they're lost. But when I use the word "friend," friends, Roman, countrymen, lend me your ear, you know, that's a big word.

JOHN: Yeah, _____.

JOHN MACARTHUR: _____. I was raised in a Seventh Day Adventists community over in Glendale right at the foot of the hospital. In fact, all my sisters were born at the hospital. Myself, I was born Catholic at St. Vincent's (laughter). But they were all born...they were all born Seventh Day Adventists, you know. All my kids have been born in that hospital...the Adventists Hospital. And so we've talked to the doctors and, you know, I've gone through these things many, many times. I believe that in that...in that group, there are many people who really know Christ and they're moving away and they're, sort of, debunking some of the past and there's a movement to come out that's probably going to precipitate a split.

STEPHANIE: Good evening, my name is Stephanie and I thank you for tonight. It's been really a joy for me.

JOHN: Thank you.

STEPHANIE: My question is very elementary so I hope everybody bears with me. Tonight I told my mom that I was coming here and that I did have some questions and she said, like a lot of people have, there are so many people, well, there are so many Bibles and there are so many people who interpret the Bible, how do you know what's the correct interpretation?

JOHN: You know, when people ask me that, what I tell them? Get your Bible out and check me out. See, I always say, I know I'm right, cause if I was wrong, I'd change my view. Right? (Laughter) It's so simple. Wouldn't you do that, though? If you were wrong, you'd change your view, wouldn't you? Of course. I must be right or I'd change (laughter). No. You don't know how to handle that, do you? (Laughter) No. You want to know something? I stand, and I stand there with a great sense of awe and respect, I stand in a tradition of hundreds and hundreds of years of Bible teachers and preachers. I don't...I'm not out on a limb. I'm not out on a tangent. I stand right where they stood for years in the main line of Bible interpretation. There are not a lot of interpretations. There's only one and a whole bunch of wrong ones. Satan clutters the air with all kinds of smokescreens of untruth and so forth. But the only answer you can give to someone like that is to say, all right, there is truth. Somebody's right. If there are two views, one's right and one's wrong or both are wrong, but both aren't right. But there is a right interpretation of the Bible and I just say check it out. I've been here for 12 years and I've been preaching and I've preached more than anybody ought to preach to the same people. And I've

said enough and I've sent out tapes enough. And if I was a heretic or if I could have been torn to pieces, it would have happened long before now. And I'm not saying that to defend myself. I'm saying that because I don't think it's that tough. If you go to the Word with an open heart and an open mind, I believe it's not that hard. The Bible says, "a wayfaring man, though he be a fool, _____ not error." So I feel that we can know the Word of God and we can understand how to interpret it. And I'm not doing anything different than what everybody behind me has done. So just tell her.

STEPHANIE: I'm convinced. Thank you.

JOHN: Just tell her to check it out.

Well, you've been great tonight. I hope you enjoyed doing this. I really enjoy doing it, too. Bill's going to come and lead us in prayer and I'm going to take my sore throat and go. Thank you, Bill.

BILL: God bless you, John. Let's all stand and bow for prayer to be dismissed.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for this time together. We thank You that You have made it possible for us to bring our questions and to get these answers. Lord, we're grateful that we don't have to deal with these questions out of our own insights and our own knowledge and our own wisdom, but that we can come to the Bible and find Your answers, Your wisdom, as we try to find the answers to the questions of life.

Now, Lord, dismiss us with Your blessing. Take care of us as we go to our homes. Give us Your traveling mercies and Your blessings upon us as we travel wherever You happen to take us. In Jesus' name, we thank You. Amen.

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