

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

Bible Questions and Answers, Part 14

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 1301-L

Tonight we are going to have just a little fellowship time here with some question and answers. We've been doing this now for all the time that I've been at Grace Church. In fact, we used to do it on Sunday nights and we just had a great time. And then we got so many people, we couldn't cover everybody so we do it on Wednesdays from time to time. And it's an especially great time for those of you who have some questions to fire away. I'll do the best I can in answering them. The idea is not Stump the Pastor; the idea is (laughter)...that's easy to do...but to just ask whatever question you might have and we'll give it a shot and do the best we can on maybe a Bible question, a question related to the church or the ministry or something practical that's just been bugging you. And whatever it is, we'll fire away.

Now, we put some mikes in the aisles, but if you feel somewhat intimidated about getting out into the aisle and asking your question, just have somebody on the end reach and pass the mike down to you and that'll work just as well. But if you can, step out into the aisle and speak into the microphone and we'll just start whenever you're ready. That's your cue, so if you want to go directly to a microphone, do that.

Yeah?

QUESTIONER: Can you explain Matthew 18:32-35, please?

JOHN: Okay. Basically, this is a very, very important passage and it talks about forgiveness. I'll just give you a real quick look at it. You have to back all the way to verse 23: "Therefore is the kingdom of Heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had to begun to reckon, one was brought unto him who owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had nothing with which to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children that he had in payment to made."

All right. Here's the servant. He owes a debt. He owes a debt of an absolutely astronomical amount, but that man has absolutely no capacity to repay. Right? In his lifetime, he would never be able to pay back ten thousand talents. It is beyond his ability to pay back. So the lord says to him, the master says to him, all right, you're gonna have to be sold and your wife and your children and the whole thing and we're gonna take all we can get out of you. We're gonna liquidate you and your family.

"The servant, therefore, fell down and worshipped him, saying, 'Lord, have patience with me and I will pay thee all.'" Now that's the stupidity of the whole thing, is the guy said "I'll pay thee all," when that was an absolute impossibility. All right? In other words, the Lord is showing us a man who is in a desperate situation who was so far down that he had no possibility to redeem himself, and yet he was holding onto the fact that he could redeem himself. This is the picture of the person who thinks he can save himself by his own works, when the fact of the matter is, he is utterly hopeless. Okay? So that's part of the perspective here.

"Then the lord," of course, "was moved to compassion and loosed him and forgave him the debt." Umm. "But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred denarii," which is minimal. A denarii'd be a day's work and so in a 100 days, three or four months, you could pay that back. Here's a guy who owes him just a pittance. "He laid hands on him and took him by the throat and said, 'You better pay me what you owe me.' His fellow servant fell down at his feet and besought him saying, 'Have patience with me and I will pay thee all.'" Now, he could pay! "And he wouldn't but went and cast him into prison till he should pay the debt." Well, I mean, he wasn't giving what he got, was he? "So, when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, came and told their lord all that was done." The lord called him in and said, "you wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt because you besought me. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was angry...delivered him to the inquisitors till he should pay all that was due unto him. So, likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if you from your hearts forgive not every one his brother his trespass."

Now, what you have here, basically, is this: God forgives you your sin on the basis that you forgive others. All right? Now, that is a very important concept. The basic bottom line is this, that if you aren't willing to forgive someone else, you reveal an impenitent heart. And an impenitent heart cannot truly experience the forgiving grace of God. In other words, your heart has to be right to receive salvation. Right? And if you manifest an unforgiving spirit, how can you possibly go to God and beg God to forgive you of a debt that you could never possibly repay? And then you turn around and won't forgive a man of some pittance. In other words, you reveal that your heart is not really true toward God. You haven't come, truly, in confession. And if you back up to Matthew 5, you find the same thing. You come to the Lord and you bring a gift and you try to worship Him and you've got something against your brother, leave your gift at the altar, get out of there, get that thing right with your brother and then come back and God will give you what you seek.

So, the basic point is that if you don't have a forgiving heart, if you don't understand the forgiveness of sin, then you do not have the right spirit to seek forgiveness from God. That's really what He's saying. Okay?

Yes, there's one way in the back, too. Oh, there's one. Okay.

Unidentified Speaker: Right here, John.

JOHN: Yeah.

QUESTIONER: Yes, sir. I was wondering if you have heard of John Todd...

JOHN: Oh, yeah.

QUESTIONER: ...and if you would comment on his credibility. Second, a question from the Scripture in Revelation 20, verses 4-5. Some I've run into indicate that this indicates that we will be going through the Tribulation. I was wondering if you would comment on those verses and the fact that this is the first resurrection.

JOHN: Okay. Revelation 20:4&5 I'll comment on in a moment. As far as Johnny Todd is concerned, Johnny Todd is, came through this area some years ago supposedly being someone saved out of a witchcraft background, being designated as a witch and a medium and contacting all these demons and so forth, supposedly was saved out of this and was going around giving his testimony. Those people who were sponsoring him at the time...he was involving himself in claims that the demon hosts were after him and he was going into churches and getting them to get guns together and arm themselves to shoot those who came against them and so forth and it was pretty bizarre. And people wanted us to have him here but I...it just never was right, never rang true to me. And then later on we found out that some investigation was done. And they found out that the same time that he was going around giving his testimony, going around telling about all this conversion, he was having other meetings in the other side of the camp with the occultists telling them what they wanted to hear and selling all of these products that he was engaged in in witchcraft and everything else. So he was living a completely double life. The Spiritual Counterfeits project in Berkeley did a resume on him and it showed up in Christianity Today, which showed him to be a complete fraud from top to bottom. He had bilked people out of all kinds of things. And at this point he has just disappeared from the Christian scene, and well he should because he has no credibility at all.

As far as your question relative to Revelation 20:4-5 saying this proves we should go, we'll go through the Tribulation. There's no passage in the Bible, in my mind, one passage that proves we will or we won't. You have to cover the whole body of truth. You know, when I did a series on will the church go through the Tribulation, I think I preached six hours on that because there is so much Scripture to deal with. Now, I believe that if you go into Revelation 20, what you have here is the statement about the fact that you do have some people...he's saying here that those who go into the kingdom and reign with Christ will be those who have not worshipped the Beast or his image or received the mark on their foreheads or in their hands. There is no question in my mind that the saints of the Tribulation

are in view here because that's the context of what's happening. You see, in chapter 19 you have Armageddon. You have this great holocaust of Armageddon. You're in the Tribulation here and so you're dealing with those people. Now, there are only two groups of people in the Tribulation. The first group would be those who are sinful, those who took the mark of the Beast. They are described in the last part of chapter 19 as those who are slaughtered and those who are massacred and those who are cast in the Lake of Fire, right, and all of that. The other side are those who are the redeemed. And so in order to sum up the whole of human history to that point, he simply discusses where those who were the redeemed out of the Tribulation are going to fit into the picture. He's not discussing the church saints at this point. In fact, they don't really get into the picture until chapter 21 when the Bride comes down from Heaven. And then the church enters into the scene. The very fact that they come down to earth from Heaven is indicative of the fact that they'd been up there. So I think you just have to take the whole context and see it in that perspective. And as I say, if you have further questions, we have a whole series of tapes on will the church go through the Tribulation. To me the key thing in not believing we go through the Tribulation is that I believe the Bible gives us a blessed hope, not a miserable one. I'm not looking for the Tribulation, I'm looking for the Lord. And so I think that's the key thing. Okay?

QUESTIONER: John, I'd like to know what constitutes the church in view of Revelation?

JOHN: What constitutes the church? The church is distinguished in the book of Acts from Israel and the Gentiles. Israel, unique; the church, unique; the Gentiles, unique. Now, the church is a unique organism called the body of Christ, which by the way is a metaphor used for the church, never used for Israel, although many other metaphors are used of both. The church is born at Pentecost. It came into existence at Pentecost. It didn't exist before that. That's why Paul calls it a "mystery." It was something that was hidden and finally revealed. From Pentecost to the Rapture constitutes the church. All believing people who put their faith in Christ from the day of Pentecost to the Rapture constitute the church. Now, when the church is raptured out of the world at the Rapture, the calling away, the catching away, in I Thessalonians 4, you know, where we meet the Lord in the air "and so shall we ever be with the Lord," that is the fullness of the Gentiles. It's called "the fullness of the church." It's completed, then it goes. Then immediately begins on earth a seven-year period called the Tribulation. Okay? That is a time specifically dealing with what nation?...Israel. And that's why it's the 70th week of Daniel. You see, you have 69 weeks of Daniel's prophecy. Daniel predicts 69 years...69 blocks of seven - 483 years. And this period of 483 years goes from the decree of Artaxerxes to rebuild the city to the coming of Messiah. Now, if you chart the course, accurately mathematically, from the time of Artaxerxes' decree to rebuild the temple when Isaiah said the period begins, to the coming of the Prince, you will find to the very day, that that 483 years will land on the very day that Jesus entered into the city of Jerusalem that we know as Palm Sunday. He came as the Prince. He came as the King. All right? But at that time, He came and what happened? They rejected Him that very same week. Right? And that was the end of the 69th week. But there's one other week of history still for Israel, one other period when they're gonna be redeemed. But it had to be

postponed because they rejected the Messiah. And into the slot in that postponement the Lord dropped the Church Age, the mystery, the fresh channel. Israel was not available to God as His channel to reach the world anymore because they rejected Messiah. So the Lord, remember, turned to the Gentiles, carved out a church. When the church is complete and the church is taken out of the world, then you go right back to the 70th week of Daniel and that's a seven-year period we know as the Tribulation. God goes right back to dealing with Israel. Israel becomes the focal point of the world. There's where you have Armageddon and all the things going on that take place in Israel. And then after that, Israel is redeemed, they become evangelists and a multitude of people from all over the world are won to Christ, Revelation 7 says. And then comes the 1000-year millennial reign. And in the 1000-year millennial reign, there will be Israel and there will be redeemed Old Testament saints and there will be redeemed Tribulation saints and there will be the church all together.

But, basically, the church is that unique mystery period between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel. Old Testament people were not part of the church. The church never begins until the Day of Pentecost when the Spirit comes and indwells and makes the Body. That's the church. And anybody who's a believer, who's redeemed, is a member of the church. People say to me, "Well, what are your requirements for membership in your church?" And I always say, "Well, if you're a Christian, you can be in our church because we can't set a standard higher than God set." People say, "Oh, don't they have to do certain things and believe certain things?" No, we figure we'll take them like they are and try to make them into what we think they ought to be. Well, if we're looking for perfect people for the church, the church would be rather limited in its scope. I wouldn't be here, that's for sure. Okay?

Somebody else have a ..

Unidentified Speaker: Here's one _____.

JOHN: Okay.

QUESTIONER: I've been considered a newborn Christian for a very short time.

JOHN: How long?

QUESTIONER: Say about six months, seven months. And I have a lot of knowledge to learn, I guess, like everybody else.

JOHN: Sure.

QUESTIONER: But the biggest question that I have a hard time answering _____ a friend of mine who's doing things now that I'm away from, and his question...I tell him how all the _____ that God gives you and how He gives you all the chance and He's forgiving and loving and all of this for

anybody. And he doesn't feel he'll ever deserve the right, but when it comes to the part when I just say he deserves the right to be a Christian to go to Heaven or anything and have eternal life, he goes, "Well, if He's that just and so that liberal, what if Satan wanted the same thing? Would He give it to him?"

JOHN: Yeah. Well, of course, the key thing...I would just say this. If somebody says that they're not worthy, seize on that because they've just made the greatest recognition possible. Well, when somebody says "I'm not worthy," you grab that and say, "You're right. You are right. That's the whole point." And then when they say, "Well, but how can God do that and be just? If He's so just, how can He forgive me?" Right? That's what he's saying? If He's so righteous and so just and all, the answer to that is, because He was so just He had to take all your sin and pay for it Himself in order to free Himself from the binding of His own justice to forgive you. In other words, there had to be a penalty paid. People say, "Well, if God's so just, how can He forgive?" That's not the issue. If God is...God is so just that in order to forgive, He had to pay the penalty Himself. And that's the key thing. And if a person cannot understand the graciousness and the love of a God who not only wants to redeem an unworthy soul, but wants so much to redeem that unworthy soul that He Himself takes on the penalty, if you can't understand that kind of love, then his eyes are still blinded and you need to pray for the Spirit of God to give him understanding.

QUESTIONER: _____

JOHN: Good.

QUESTIONER: _____

JOHN: But the answer, you know, he's saying, "Well, will he accept the Devil in the end?" That isn't the point; the point is him. You know, don't let him get you off on something. People, whenever they talk about salvation or anything, they want to get philosophical about it when they're really not ready to deal with it. So, he's not ready yet. You just be there and hang in there and when God's timing is right, boy, it'll click. It'll click. When the Lord opens a heart, that's the way it is. You know, I was thinking about Acts 16 where you see Lydia and I love it. Paul arrives and the Bible says, "And the Lord opened her heart," just like a flower to the gospel. And all she had to do was hear the message and she just took it in.

So, we do the best we can in presenting Christ. We don't let people get off on philosophical arguments. Just keep driving the point right back to the person. What about you? Lucifer isn't the issue with you; you're the issue with you. What about you? You're not gonna have to answer for the Devil, but you are gonna have to answer for you.

And by the way, the Bible says He didn't die for the Devil anyway. He died for the sins of men, not angels.

Yes?

QUESTIONER: John, I'd like to know the meaning of Matthew 24:32-36 parable.

JOHN: Matthew 24, I didn't get the rest, 30...

QUESTIONER: 32 through 36.

JOHN: You people are gonna steal all my thunder in Matthew (laughter). "Learn a parable of the fig tree. When its branch is yet tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer's near." Now, I want you to know folks, I don't know beans about a fig tree from personal experience. But I do know enough to know about winter and summer, that leaves lose their leaves in the winter. Right? And when leaves start coming back you that...what? Summer's near, summer's near. That's the whole point of verse 32. When the branch is tender, puts forth leaves, summer is near.

All right. "So likewise, when you see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." Well, what is near? Well, all of the previous part of the chapter is talking about the events of the coming of Christ. And it's simply saying, when you begin to see these things come to pass...what things?...well, the Tribulation, the Great Tribulation, verse 21; "the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel," verse 15, where the anti-Christ desecrates the sacred place; when you see, verse 7, "nation rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom," famines, pestilence, earthquake, various things. In other words, false Christs and false prophets, when all of these elements of the end time begin to come to pass, then you know that summer is near. You know that the time for the arrival of the Son of Righteousness is very near.

Then in verse 34, he introduces another element and says, "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." And the question is, what generation. And maybe the safest answer is, the generation that is alive when all of these things begin to happen. It's gonna happen so fast that they'll see the end. And I think that's really true. You know, the Tribulation is short, isn't it? And in fact, the first 3 1/2 years of the Tribulation is basically a time of peace. And it's in the middle of the Tribulation that all of the sudden the seven seals are opened and the seven trumpets are blown and the seven vials are _____ poured out, and in a rapid-fire, almost staccato succession of a tremendous cataclysmic events, bang, bang, bang, bang, in 3 1/2 years, the holocaust of the whole world takes place. So that the generation that is alive when these things begin to come, just like the people who are alive when the fig tree puts forth its leaves, are the same people who are gonna be around when the summer comes because one follows so quickly on the other. And this is the way it's gonna be. Heaven and earth might pass away, but My Word shall not pass away. In other words, you can

believe this.

Now, there's one other belief here and this is one that's been discussed and it's a possible one. The word generation, "genea" is a word that means race, people, nation, generation...very, very broad word. It's like our work people. You know, it could mean anything. And some say that the fig tree here is Israel. Right? Have you heard that view? The fig tree is Israel and that's true in the Bible. Very often Israel is a fig tree. And the generation that is alive when the fig tree puts forth its buds or its leaves will not pass away till all these things come to pass. And so they say, the generation that is alive when the fig tree puts forth its leaves, or comes out of the night of its winter...and, of course, you know as well as I do that in, I think, May of 1948, Israel became a nation didn't they? And many Bible scholars believe that the fig tree put forth its leaves; that the night of the winter of Israel's history was ended and Israel began new life and they became a nation duly constituted, autonomous nation and the fig tree put forth its leaves. And the generation that is alive to see that will not all die off until all the events of the end come to pass, which if that's the proper interpretation, and some believe it is, although you cannot be dogmatic about it...it is a possible interpretation...then the generation that is alive as of 1948 will be alive when the things of the return of Christ take place. Now you get into the discussion of how long is a generation. And some people say 40 years and some people say 60 years and some people say 30 years. If it's 30 years it's too late. Some people keep...they keep raising their date. I noticed that David Wilkerson just revised his vision (laughter). Did you see that? He had a vision, you remember, at the conference in Minneapolis and he predicted that the whole thing would come to pass by 1978 and he has now revised his vision. This is the revised vision (laughter) and the reversed version or perverse vision or something. But anyway, he's revising his vision upwards into the 80's. If it's 30 years, it's behind us. If it's 40 years, it's gonna be 1988, but I don't really know. I do know this: If you go to verse 36, it's very helpful. It says, "But of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of Heaven, but my Father only." So I don't why people keep setting dates because they don't know. And every time I hear somebody do that, I can't believe they will do that. Why do people do that when it says here...I heard a guy the other day say on the television, they were interviewing him...you know, if you're not sick to start with when you stay home, just watch Christian television and you will be (laughter). I mean, you'll really be sick (laughter) when you hear the stuff that goes on on that; it's unbelievable; unbelievable. Anyway, I don't want to get into too much of that. But this guy was saying that the Lord must come in the next two years, you know, just in defiance of Scripture. And so, we don't know when, but the generation that's alive when it begins to come to pass, will be alive when it fully comes to pass cause it's gonna happen so fast. That's one view. The other view is that the ones that are alive when Israel is born will see the fullness of the end.

So, either way, folks, things are happening so fast in our day and age. I'm not predicting when the Lord's gonna come, but man, I'll tell you, somebody said to me, "What has to happen before He can come?" I said, nothing but the trumpet and when that happens, we're gone. Because there are no parts of the puzzle left out...none.

Okay, Bill.

BILL: Why is there death at that time?

JOHN: Why is there death?

BILL: Yeah.

JOHN: Because wherever there is...he's talking about in the Kingdom, the 1,000-year millennium...there will be death because wherever there is physical life, there is death. There are people alive today. Right? We're gonna get raptured and taken out of the world. They'll still be people here, right? So, we're in Heaven; there's still people here. All right. Some of those people are gonna be saved. Right? In fact, Revelation 7 says an innumerable number of them are gonna be saved and the whole nation of Israel is gonna be saved. Great revival in the Tribulation. All right? The Bible tells us that anti-Christ is gonna slaughter those people that are saved. Is that true? All right, it is true. But he will not kill all of them. As best we can tell, the prophets indicate that Satan will kill two out of three. So, in the Tribulation period there are going to be people who will have believed in Christ and escaped the slaughter of the anti-Christ. If you read Revelation, you will find that in the 12th chapter and on, that there is going to be an escape. There's going to be a...these people are going to flee from anti-Christ, anti-Christ's army is gonna chase them, the ground is gonna open and swallow the anti-Christ's army and the people will be saved. Some people feel they'll be hidden in Petra, in Edom. Nonetheless, there will be some saved. Now, when Christ comes at the end of the Tribulation, and He comes to set up His kingdom, He will judge the ungodly, the goats - Matthew 24, [sic] [this is in Matthew 25] and He will say to the goats, "depart you cursed into everlasting punishment." But the sheep, the sheep are the still remaining living saints who have escaped the anti-Christ. To them He will say, "Come, ye, beloved of my Father and inherit the kingdom." Therefore, going into the millennial kingdom are living physical beings. They are the ones, who because they still have a physical body, will have the capacity to die. Now, the change in the environment, in the food and in the pollution and everything that occurs in the kingdom is going to lengthen their life so that if they do die at 100, they die like a baby. But nonetheless, where there is physical life, there is decay and death. So they will die physically. And I just imagine that when one of those people die's they'll just lie down and die and then they'll just come right back again in a glorified body instantly. But there will be death as long as there is physical life and there will be people in the kingdom in physical form. Okay? That's a good question.

Yes?

QUESTIONER: In regards to the millennium, I've often been asked and I don't know how to answer this question. When we're raptured, from the time we're raptured and we come back and we live in

the millennium, will we be living with our families, like, with our children, or what kind of change will take place?

JOHN: Well, when we're in the church and at the Rapture we go to Heaven, there will be the dissolution of all human relationships as we know them...okay?...because there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage in Heaven, but like the angels. So there's no more, you know, of that kind of thing. But it is not going to be the loss of the uniqueness of that relationship, but rather everything that an intimate, loving relationship could be and more than we can dream, will be true with everybody. In other words, there will be no reason to have families because there will be one family. If you can imagine what it's like to be loved by your child or to be loved by your wife or to know the fulfillment of loving your wife and loving your children, then you will only have a small comprehension of what it will be like to be loved and to love in exchange in an infinite capacity with everybody who exists in God's dominion. It's just the full explosion of all the potentialities of love and relationships. So it isn't the loss of anything; it's the gaining of everything in that sense. But there won't be anymore families as such, so you won't be living with your...you might as well make the most of it while you're here. I think we'll be friends in Heaven, but (laughter)...you know, and we'll have a great time.

Bill, did you have somebody who was gonna ask a question?

BILL: _____.

JOHN: Yes?

QUESTIONER: Yeah, hello, John.

JOHN: Hi.

QUESTIONER: It's good to be in the house of God.

JOHN: Yeah.

QUESTIONER: But coming back to Matthew 25 (laughter)...

JOHN: I think I'm sentenced to Matthew. Okay.

QUESTIONER: There's a passage here that's really been troubling me because it speaks of ten virgins.

JOHN: Right.

QUESTIONER: And it said that they went to meet the Lord.

JOHN: Right.

QUESTIONER: And that they were together. And then they got drowsy and they fell asleep. And then it was a great shout. Praise the Lord; the Lord came. But then it speaks of the five wise virgins and the five foolish virgins.

JOHN: Right.

QUESTIONER: And the wise had oil.

JOHN: Right.

QUESTIONER: And the other didn't. But what puzzles me is that then the Lord came, so the other five that didn't have the extra oil went to the other five who had the oil and asked them to give them some. And then they told them, well, we don't have enough for you. We have for ourselves. We can't give it to you. So then, anyway, they went to the feast and the other five then miss the feast...

JOHN: Right.

QUESTIONER: ...and the Lord came. And then later on, it seems like they got the oil, but when they went back to the Lord, the Lord told them I never knew you.

JOHN: That's right.

QUESTINOER: So, it's really...

JOHN: Well, the point is this. There are plenty of people who are religious, but they're not saved. These are people who procrastinate and procrastinate and put it off, put it off, put it off, put it off and they're religious. They're just like Matthew 7. "Many will say unto Me, Lord, Lord," Matthew 7: 21-23, "we did many wonderful works in Your name and we prophesied and we cast out demons" na-na-na-na, and the Lord says to them, "depart from me, you workers of inequity; I never knew you." In other words, there again, you're right back to the broad road that people think is the road to Heaven, but it isn't. So you've got ten virgins symbolizing spiritual purity, symbolizing religious vows. I mean, a virgin, devoted to God, you know, not even...you might liken this to a priest or a nun in a Roman Catholic system or to a monk, a Tibetan monk in some mystical part of Hinduism or something, whose whole life is prescribed religiously. But the problem is they don't have the oil. Now, the oil is probably a good symbol of the Holy Spirit. And the presence of the Holy Spirit, is that not the affirmation of our salvation? Do we not know we are redeemed because of the presence of the Spirit? Hasn't He given us the earnest of the Spirit that we may know we belong to Him?

All right. So here are these and they're religious, they're circumscribed, they've got their religious activities and the Lord comes, but they're not really ready because all their religious activities are outside and there's no oil in their lamps. And then they go running and they want somebody to give them their oil, but salvation isn't like that. You receive your oil from God and God alone, not from anybody else. I used to...I have a little thing I do with kids. I can't show you cause I don't have any scissors. But I take an 8 1/2" x 11" paper and fold it all over and I tell kids this is their ticket to Heaven and my ticket to Heaven. And I say to them, "Do you have a ticket to Heaven?" "No, we don't have a ticket to Heaven." "Well," I say, "I'll share my ticket with you." So I just cut it up one side and I cut it up the other side and I got a pile of pieces that just fall out. And I organize all those little pieces and they spell "Hell." And then I say, "You see, you can't get to Heaven on anybody else's ticket." And then I unfold what's remaining and it's a cross and that's the only way you get there.

And that's the picture, you see. You can't go and buy somebody else's religion or say, "Hey, share with me your virtue. Share with me the Holy Spirit." You get it directly from God. And so, at that point, the Lord says I'm sorry, I have no relationship with you. And they're shut out. And I think the point that He's making there is, there is a time when it is too late. Back to the pre-flood people, the antediluvians, God said, "My Spirit will not always strive with man." Constant rejection means you come to the point where you can't receive. So that's another tremendously powerful statement by Christ that you can be religious and be lost. Okay.

Eddie, did you have one back there?

QUESTIONER: Do you have any thoughts as to how the Rapture will be explained after we're gone?

JOHN: Yes, I do. People say, well, when you're all just gone, phwwtt, taken out of the earth, won't everybody say, oh, you know, we all believe; we all believe? No. And I got an insight into this from a very obscure situation and I've told you about maybe before. A guy came to my office one day and he says, "I'm a new Christian and I've been saved out of the occult." And he said, he said, "I'm a musician in the rock industry. I came to Hollywood to write a rock opera called Louisiam 1990"...I'll never forget the name of it. It was supposed to be, like, a sequel to Superstar, Jesus Christ Superstar, which he claimed was written by a medium spirit through automatic writing by a demon. And that's what he claimed. Anyway, he was to write this thing called Louisiam 1990 and he got involved in the Schirmer...you ever heard of Schirmer Music? Well, both of the Schirmers, the biggest music publishing company in America...they publish even church music...the Schirmers, both of them are mediums connected with the occult. They're very highly involved in what's known as the Mark Age Society, which is an occultic thing that meets in Santa Monica in a big, old mansion, you know, very spooky.

But, anyway, I'll see if I can shorten this down. This guy got involved in Schirmer Music and was contacted to write this thing. He started to write it and all of the sudden, these demon spirits took over. A witch was assigned to him. He met with this witch regularly and he would sit down and he would write this stuff and he didn't even know what he was writing, but he'd wrote this entire thing. He brought me the whole thing...this massive rock opera. And he said, during the process of this he got involved in mediums and demons and he was going to the Mark Age Society. And he said they gave him a book and I said, "Well, let me see the book." He brought me this book and in this book was an explanation of the Rapture. And this is what he told me they told him. And he gave me the book to read so, I mean, it was...the book explains how there are mediums in the U.N. and demons in high places and how they're in key points in the government and just like, you know, the Prince of Persia in Daniel, you know, how demons infest leaders of government and all the gods of the nations are demons and all this stuff. It was amazing stuff.

Anyway, he said that they told him that all the while they were saying, you know, the biggest hang-up in the world are Christians. We've got to get rid of Christians because Christians hold back society from ascending to the next level of spiritual consciousness. And they told this guy...he didn't know anything about the Rapture. He said to me, they're planning to remove all the Christians. And so we got to talking about the fact that when the Rapture occurs, at least if you're in that circle, it's very explicable. The demons will have claimed to remove those who are retarding society from reaching the next level of spiritual consciousness.

But believe me, Satan is way ahead of us in anticipation of these things. He's had a long time to think about it and to get his plans together. And he knows there's gonna be a Rapture. He can read the Bible. He's heard plenty of sermons, too (laughter).

So there are some...there's no indication at all, biblically, that there'll be a great revival afterwards. In fact, I believe that immediately after the Rapture...and this is just a personal belief...that the two witnesses of Revelation 11 will begin their ministry. And what does the world do to them?...kills them, kills them dead and lets their bodies be on television so everybody can gloat over it and have a party and give each other gifts, they're so happy they're dead. There's no revival. So there'll be some explanation for it other than the truth. Okay?

BILL: Right here, John.

JOHN: Yes?

QUESTIONER: Hi. I would like you to comment on the credibility of Howard C. Estep as a teacher. And also he has taught, and many other people have taught that between verses 1 and 2 of Genesis 1 that there's an indeterminable amount of time where there were beings on earth...

JOHN: Right.

QUESTIONER: ...and a flood which would, of course, been prior to Adam and Noah. Could you comment on that, please?

JOHN: I do not believe there's any biblical evidence for a gap theory. The Gap Theory, basically, was the brainchild of a man named George Pember who wrote a book called *Earth's Earliest Ages* and was pastor, I think, at Calvary Baptist Church in New York back in the late 1800's or early 1900's. And George Pember came up with this idea and, basically, it's not defensible scripturally. They like to stick a gap between verse 1 and 2 of Genesis 1. It's a good place to stuff a whole lot of stuff like the fall of the angels and all kinds of stuff you don't know what to do with. Some people, I think is it Unger or somebody, believes that the gap is before verse 1. But there's no biblical evidence for anything between those two verses. You're really pushing hard. So I don't accept a gap theory. That's a...there are a lot of good things being written today to show that that probably is not true.

As far as Dr. Estep is concerned, I think he's genuinely, or generally, I should say, pretty solid, biblically. He's on T.V. on "The King is Coming," and I think you could pretty well trust his...he may not agree with every little nuance...

Mmm?

QUESTIONER: _____.

JOHN: The Gap Theory, yeah, but that's, to me, that's not heresy or something. That's just a personal preference. He wants a gap between verses 1 and 2. I mean, who can argue. Right? There's nothing there for sure anyway in my Bible, but if you want to stick something in there. As long as...you know, he simply takes the fall of angels and certain things that he wants to explain...the problem with it is this. Basically, in the past, some Christians have felt that you've got to have somewhere, a long period of time, to sort of bend to the evolutionists. And so they find a convenient place to stick it. I don't think you need to do that. And I think more and more, modern science is showing that we don't need any of that stuff, that the evolutionist is the guy who's out to lunch. You know, they don't even want to debate us anymore because they don't have any answers. And science is really on the side of the creationists.

But, you know, I wouldn't think...I think anything he would stick in the gap would probably be some biblical event that you could trust so I wouldn't be concerned. I think he's a good man. He rightly divides the Word.

QUESTIONER: _____?

JOHN: Howard Estep. He's written lots of little books on prophecy and things like that.

Eddie?

QUESTIONER: Yeah, John, I'd like to know about how I could approach a person who believes in faith healing and tongues? And I've been trying to work with the couple, you know, and they just seem to fall off the subject...

JOHN: Yeah.

QUESTIONER: ...and I want to approach them in a, you know, good way.

JOHN: Yeah, I think first of all what you have to do is build a relationship with them before you come down on them on something like that. You know, he who is convinced against his will is unconvinced still. I've found that the people who love me are more prone to believe me. And so you've got to earn the right to be heard, especially on something as touchy as that. But I'll tell you, you of course, can give them my book on that or some other book, you know, and then I'll get more letters (laughter).

I think, you know, when I was home Sunday night, I wanted to watch 60 Minutes, which I never get to see. And it just so happened that they did a thing on Oral Roberts which was very interesting; very interesting. There's a new book out called Give Me That Primetime Religion written by a guy named Jerry Scholls who was a key man in the organization who was the set-up man and a writer for Oral and involved in it and he just debunks the whole thing from top to bottom, every bit of it, just every bit of it. But they interviewed his brother, Oral Roberts' brother, which I thought was very interesting, and they said to him...and his brother had set up all his tent crusades, you know, and been with him all through the years...he said to him, "Can your brother Oral's hands heal?" He said, "Hands, heal? No." And that was it. He can't heal. Everybody knows it. And Jerry Scholls' whole book, he knows it. He talks about the people who get up out of their wheelchair, walk a few steps and they can barely get them around the back to get them back in a wheelchair. It's, you know, when you get into that thing, you know, people are living in a dream world. And to me it is the ultimate charlatanism because you're catching people at the point of their greatest distress and you're promising them things that they never can get. So I just...but, you know, I don't like to get into that with somebody cause, you know, they get mad at you. You're trying to help them and they think you're being unkind. I think the safest thing to do is to force them to respond.

So that's the thing. You're dealing with a very emotional area. And as I said, I think the best way to deal with somebody like that is to win them as a friend and then expose them to the truth on the basis of a friendship so that they know you're not trying to rack up a convert, but you're trying to help

somebody you love. And once you've established the relationship, then you can share. And it's been amazing, you know, how people do respond. Really! When...I do believe there are real truth-seekers that God touches and if we put the truth in their hands, it's helpful.

The thing that grieves me...I'm not...I don't have an axe to grind with that movement. I just don't like people to be living in an illusion when there's so much reality. I think I closed the book, you remember, with the dog who was looking over the bridge into the river and he saw another dog with a bigger bone. And so he dropped his bone to get down and get that other bone. And he gave up the reality for the fantasy. And I think this is what happens. While all the while they're chasing the fantasy that is never there, they forfeit the reality, you know. And then it's ludicrous to stand back and say, well, I can tell you one thing, his ministry will never be blessed until he gets the baptism. I mean, what the...I mean, if I got anymore blessed, I couldn't stand it (laughter). So...and I'm not defending myself, I'm just saying it's an illusion. And then you have people who claim to heal and claim these things when you know it isn't true. I mean, it doesn't make any sense. You can't...you can't equate illness with non-spirituality. I mean, you sound like Job's friends. I keep thinking I ought to write them and say that, you know, is your name Bildad? Well, how do you come off telling everybody who's sick that they're carnal or fleshly? You know, what about the blind man who was sick for the glory of God? Give a few of us a break. I was thinking a lot about that when I was sick (laughter). I don't know.

Basically, you know, I carry...I just thank the Lord for all of you precious people, but I...and I know you, you know, we want to be loving, but I carry a burden in my heart for so much stuff that goes on in the name of Christ and the Bible that just is not biblical. And people get drowned in the sea of this stuff. It's just really sad and then all the money that they send to these things, it's just enough to curl your hair. You just...you know, they were telling about the seminars where they go in and the first day they hit everybody up for money and they set a goal of \$2 million for one of these Oral Roberts seminars and then the next day he heals them, see. Well, you know what people are doing? Well, what do you think they're thinking? I gotta buy my healing, you know. I mean, if I do this thing for God, boy, then tomorrow I'll my healing.

So, anyway, anymore questions? We got a few minutes. Ooh, we got maybe a couple of questions.

QUESTIONER: Okay, this is a two-part question. Is there a commandment in the Bible that says that you have to fight for your country? And in view of the political scene in the Middle East, let's say United States decided to send some troops into the Middle East, you know, for their interests in oil, for that reason, would that be having to fight for your country?

JOHN: The way I answer that is this. I...Romans 13 says that we are to be subject to the powers that be, for they are ordained of God. So if the government of the United States asks me to serve, or my son to serve, I would serve, basically...only in this regard. If we as a nation were defending the rights of an innocent people who were being attacked...a non-aggressive people...we should have fought to

win in Vietnam in my judgment. We should have gone in there. We didn't and now millions of people have been slaughtered. And this is part of the loss of the American reputation in the world. We could have gone in there...at this point, I'm a MacArthur. Right? MacArthur says, if you don't win in Southeast Asia, the whole of the East will fall. Just one after another every single thing he ever said was true. He is my fifth cousin after all (laughter). But anyway, I don't stand by everything he did. He had some problems (laughter). I'm reading his biography right now. They call it...the name of it is American Caesar, you know. William Manchester wrote the book. But anyway, I feel, when we went in there, we were defending an innocent people against an aggressive, murdering, atheistic nation. And if that's what the government chooses to do, I can defend an innocent people. I can defend myself.

If we were to go to defend ourselves against an attack of Russia against our nation and our nation's resources, I think I'd be able to do that. If America ever became an aggressor against an innocent nation for the extension of its own power, that's where I would draw the line. And I think, for example, if you talk to a Russian Christian and they cannot even conceive of being in the military...a Russian Christian...they can't understand an American Christian being in the military because their perspective of the military is an overt, attacking, almost maniacal, power-hungry aggression. I mean, what do they care? Why do they want to slaughter people all over the world? Does it make a Russian leader happier? Does it give him more clothes on his back, more food in his belly, more vodka, what? What does he get? Nothing. It's a mad, demonic, godless thirst for power. That's all it is. And at that point, I mean, if my government said to me, you know, if I was in Russia and they said, now, you fight and go down and attack and slaughter all these Afghans, I couldn't do that. I'd say, I'm sorry, can't do that. But if we are defending the rights of an innocent people against an attack, then that's something different. That's the best way that I have to perceive that.

I think we better stop at that point. Why don't we stand for a word of prayer and we'll let you go.

Father, thank You so much for time together tonight. We feel like we just touched a little of the heart of the people in sharing questions. And it's so wonderful, Lord, and I think of it so many times. Whenever we have a question and answer, we go back to the basics so very often, which mean there's new life. There's new people asking those same basic questions about how to witness to their friends and what's it gonna be like when Jesus comes and how do I tell somebody about this truth or that truth. And, Lord, it's so wonderful to know that the church is like a maternity ward where there's the constant cry of newborn babes and you see that new life coming through all the time and asking those same questions that every new and hungry heart experiences. And we thank You, too, for the strength of those who have been in Your family for many years. And we thank You for the solidarity and the commitment that they give to the Body of Christ and that they can become a means of support to hold the weak and the newborn up, that they might grow and nurture in the admonition of the Lord. We commit ourselves to You, Father, in preparation for the Lord's Day and even in the days intervening, that we might be used in a wonderful way to represent Christ in our little part of the world.

We pray in His wonderful Name. And everyone said Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2015 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright>).