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

Bible Questions and Answers, Part 29
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: 70-1

Well, it's your time, so whatever questions you might have in your heart or mind, just come up to the microphone that's nearest to you and stand there and we'll just kind of move along and see if we can't look to God's Word together. Great…boy, everybody's in a hurry tonight.

All right, we'll start off to my right, okay? Give us your name, first of all.

ROSH(?) This question is about Genesis, the third chapter and the first verse and Genesis the third chapter, the fourteenth verse. In what form was Satan when he tempted Eve? It says something in here about cattle, then he was put on his belly to go into dust.

JOHN: Well the form that he was in was a snake. It says, "And the Lord God said unto the serpent," somehow Satan manifested himself through that serpent. Now that's getting into something we really don't know all the details about, but back in verse 1 of chapter 3, it says, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field."

Now to be honest with you, we don't know what form the serpent had in the Garden, we just don't know. There are some who believe that at that point in time, the snake might have been up in the trees or whatever, because when he was cursed, he was cursed to crawl on his belly in the dust, you know, all his days and so forth. Probably there was some distinction between the first serpent and what he was after he tempted man. But that distinction could not be explained by the Fall because Satan was equally evil before he tempted Eve and Adam, as he was afterwards. So we don't know what the change was. But anyway, it says, "Because you have done this, you're cursed above all cattle, above every beast of the field, upon your belly shall you go and dust shall you eat all the days of your life." At least the cattle and the other beasts have their belly up off the ground, propped up by their legs.

ROSH: He wasn't cattle, though.

JOHN: Pardon?

ROSH: He wasn't cattle.

JOHN: Oh no, no, no. He was a snake. He was cursed worse than them because he would crawl in the dirt all his life.

ROSH: Because in those two verses they said something about cattle…so when…

JOHN: He would be cursed above…in other words, the curse impacted all animals. But his curse was more severe than the cattle's curse, more severe than the beast because he was left to crawl in the dirt. Some people think that maybe before that he had legs. I really don't know.

ROSH: Nobody knows.

JOHN: No. But I would think that maybe there was some way in which he was erect, or some way in which he traversed the trees, or whatever. I don't know. But his curse was more severe, just by virtue of the fact that he would crawl in the dirt, a more humiliating stance. And, frankly, if there was…if you were to take a vote on the most unpopular animal in the world, it's quite confident that the snake would win, true? I mean, how many of you are really into snakes? Not very many. It's a despicable kind of creature that slithers around…I don't want to talk about this too much, or we'll lose some ladies here in the second row. Anyway, let's go to the middle.

TOM: HI, John, my name is Tom.

JOHN: Hi, Tom

TOM: I have a question about apostles. In 1 Corinthians 15, starting at verse 4, it says, "And He was buried and that He was raised on the third day according to the scriptures. Then He appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that He appeared to more than 500 brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James and then to all the Apostles. And last of all, as it were, to one untimely born, He appeared also to me…the Apostle Paul. What confuses me is that I've always understood that the Apostles were the Twelve and Paul and perhaps James, so what I find hard to reconcile here is that it says He appeared to all the Apostles, or at least to the Twelve, and then it mentions James and Paul specifically, but it also mentions that after He had appeared to all of those, except Paul, then to all the Apostles. Now why would he mention extra Apostles again there?

JOHN: Right, because I think, Tom, basically it's chronological. He rose a third day and he was seen of Cephas. I believe there's a certain chronological thing. He was seen by Peter and then He was seen by the Twelve, and then He was seen by 500 brethren, and then He was seen particularly by James. Now these two, Peter and James, indicate some private audiences. And I think there's reason for both of them. First of all, I believe the Lord appeared specifically in post-resurrection form to Peter to confirm Peter because Peter was to be so absolutely critical for the future of the church. In fact, Peter is the main character in the first twelve chapters of the book of Acts, and Peter vacillated so much, and Peter denied Christ on three occasions, and Peter, you know, had so many difficulties in

confirming his commitment to Christ that I think there was a special time when the Lord appeared to Peter, all right? So that's noted.

James was the Lord's half-brother. And James here is not James the Apostle, but James the half-brother of the Lord, most likely, who became the leader of the Jerusalem Church. And this probably was an indication of the initiation, if not the consummation of the conversion of James who prior to this, along with the other half-brothers of Christ, according to John 7, didn't believe in Him. So it may have been that special time. And all he's saying is He appeared to Peter, then to the Twelve, then to the 500, then James and then the Apostles again. In other words, it isn't so much…it isn't so much that it's listing all those He appeared to, as it is kind of giving you the flow of a chronology.

TOM: All right.

JOHN: Okay, that's probably the best explanation. You could take it that the Apostles is used here in a very general sense, but I like to think of it as more of a chronological thing. You remember what He said to them? He said when He appeared to them the first time, He said, "No, go into Galilee and wait there till I come and I'll appear to you in Galilee." So He appeared to them in Jerusalem. They went to Galilee later, He went to Galilee and appeared to them again.

TOM: Right, so the fact that He says Apostles again doesn't necessarily mean they're other people.

JOHN: That's right.

TOM: Okay. Thanks

JOHN: In fact, after His resurrection, Tom, He never appeared to anybody but believers…never. And people have always wondered why if the Lord wanted to confirm the resurrection, He didn't appear to unbelievers. And the answer to that question is because Jesus said to them, "I'm going to go away and you're never going to see Me again. If you don't believe what you see now, why would you believe that?" I mean, if they wouldn't believe that He could raise the dead, and they didn't believe when He did all the miracles that they knew He did, what would resurrection mean to them? In fact, when they did face the resurrection, they bribed the soldiers to lie about it. So it's pointless. I mean, to try to bring apologetics to someone who is a rejecter is silly. He that is convinced against his will is unconvinced still.

So what you want to do, apologetics, or defense of the faith, are a way to strengthen the believers who have to go out and evangelize. So that's why if you wanted to pin me down to extrapolate a thought out of this, I don't think apologetics is that strong an argument to an unbeliever whose turned away. I think apologetics strengthens the faith of one who is interested in Christ and one who is committed to Christ.

BOB: John, my name is Bob and I have two questions, both related. During the time of the crucifixion, the Jews were looking for some kind of a knight on a charging horse that would come in and throw the Romans out and kill the Gentiles. But the priesthood, the Jewish priesthood, as opposed to the Jewish people, were teaching the Jewish people this kind of thing. In other words, they weren't looking for a God. So my question to you is, were the Jews guilty of killing a God, or killing a man?

JOHN: Well from their…from their viewpoint, they…they would have been guilty of killing a man, I mean, from their perspective.

BOB: So that then a Jewish mob, that is the mob as we see here in the church, they wouldn't be guilty of killing a God, they would be killing a man.

JOHN: Well, it's one thing to…

BOB: Priesthood, I'm sorry, the priesthood is guilty.

JOHN: Yeah, no, let me sort it out, I see what you're saying. When you see in the gospel of John and the Jews cried this, and the Jews said this, and the Jews said we will not have this man to reign over us, and the Jews said, "Crucify Him," and so forth. John uses the Jews, those two words, primarily as an epithet in reference to the religious leaders.

BOB: That's what I thought.

JOHN: It is not dominantly used of the people. In fact, most of the people hailed Him as the Messiah when He rode into the city, it says the Jews stirred up the people, the religious leaders stirred up the people and there was sort of a mob thing. But it was not primarily by the large consensus of the population of Israel, but rather by the Jews themselves, who in John's terms refer to the leaders.

BOB: Sure. My second question is related and it's short. What are the Jews looking for today? And we're now speaking of the Jewish mob. What are they looking for in terms of the Messiah?

JOHN: The Jewish people, most Jewish people today…well, there's three different groups of Jews. You have what are known as…well, four different groups…you have Hasidic Jews. Hasidic Jews are very, very orthodox, they're Pharisees, they are the modern Pharisees and they're as Pharisaical as the Pharisees were. I mean, they have all the same kind of approach as the Pharisees.

Then there would be the Orthodox, a little less…and by the way, there are all different sort of branches of this and sects. Then you would have the Orthodox who go strictly by the Old Testament law, and the traditions. Aren't quite as legalistic as the Hasidics. Then you have the conservatives who would accept the Old Testament as the Word of God. And then you have the Reformed who

don’t even believe the Old Testament is the Word of God, all they have is the tradition. Now all of them are looking for something different. The Hasidic Jews and the Orthodox are actually looking for a Messiah. But they’re in the minority.

BOB: A God, or a man from God.

JOHN: Probably a man from God.

BOB: They’re not looking for a God even now.

JOHN: You say “a god,” they only believe in one God.

BOB: That’s the problem. That’s the whole crux of it, John, they believe in only one God. See and Christ is a second God, and that’s the way they look at it, I suppose, I could be wrong.

JOHN: No, they would see the fact that we claim Christ to be God, to them is…to some of them is a blasphemous statement because now we have two gods. And, you know…yeah.

So they would be looking for a man who is a deliverer. They’re looking for a David. They’re looking for a Moses. The conservatives, some of them are looking for, I suppose some of them could look for a real Messiah, but most of the conservative Jews today are looking for a messianic age, they’re looking for an Utopia, they’re looking for a world where their nation is the Messiah. See, the way they read Isaiah 53 is that it refers to the nation, not to a person. So they’re looking for the messianic fulfillment, the messianic Kingdom, not necessarily for the Messiah. The Conservatives are. The Reformed aren’t looking for anything. They don’t even believe it. So it depends on what group you’re talking about. Okay?

BOB: Thank you

JOHN: Thank you

RAY: Hell, John, I’m Ray Mitchell. I have a question here in Malachi chapter 2…

JOHN: This is not “stump the pastor” now, you realize that.

RAY: No, I’m not trying to. It’s been bothering me for quite a while.

JOHN: Okay, it may bother you for quite a while yet. But go ahead.

RAY: In verse 11, it talks about the people of Judah who have divorced the wife of their youth and have married the daughters of a foreign god. And it goes on into chapter…er, verse 15 where it says,

you know, the people have done this, not one of them have had any remnant of the Holy Spirit. And what I was wondering, how does this carry over into the New Testament as far as a person who claims to be a born-again Christian would be, you know, if they were to do something like this, this thing that they never really were saved to begin with? Or…

JOHN: Not necessarily. You see, what he is doing here is pronouncing judgment upon an ungodly, unregenerate people for the most part. Because over in chapter 3 there's a very interesting statement made in verse 16, after all these pronouncements of judgment, it says then, "They that feared the Lord spoke often one to another and the Lord hearkened and heard it and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that fear the Lord and thought upon His name and they shall be mine," he says. In other words, the Lord knew out of the nation who were the true believers. And He says, "They'll be Mine in the day that I make up My jewels and I will spare them as a man spares his own son and serves him," and so forth and so on.

But the other people are going to be judged. In verse 1 of chapter 4, "When the day comes, it burns like an oven," and all of that kind of stuff, and so forth. So He's sorting out the wicked from the saved, the wicked from the redeemed, if you will. And when he writes all these indictments and there's a whole bunch of indictments for different things. Back in chapter 1 you notice in verse 6 he says, "You know, even a son honors his father, and even a servant honors his master, why don't you honor Me?" He is therefore revealing these people as unregenerate people. They don't honor God. And the priests despise My name.

And then you say, "What way have you despised My name? You offer polluted bread upon Mine altar." In other words, they were giving lame sacrifices, instead of bringing the first of the flock, they were bringing some crippled lamb, or some diseased lamb that they wouldn't eat anyway and offering that to God. And then further, He talks about some of the other things they had done and He comes down into chapter 2 where you are, verse 11, and says, "Another thing you've done, you have committed an abomination by profaning your marriages."

In other words, you have divorced your wives and gone off to marry the daughter of a foreign god. You've married pagans. And again He is marking out these as those who don't honor God, those who offer polluted sacrifices, those who have defiled hearts. So He's talking about unredeemed people and that's what He means down in verse 15, just like you said, when He says, "None of you possess the Holy Spirit," is one way to translate that verse. So He's talking about unregenerate people.

Now, having said that, let me say this. This is characteristic of an unsaved person, but it doesn't mean that a Christian couldn't do the same thing, because any sin that could be committed short of denying God and denying Christ could be committed by a Christian. Right?

RAY: Right

JOHN: I mean none of us is completely invulnerable to committing any sin. I mean, we would respond differently to the committing of that sin than this person would, and we might repent and turn from it. But any Christian could commit that sin. So divorce is not a sin that when you see it being committed you can say, “Well that’s not a Christian.” Not necessarily true.

RAY: Thank you.

JOHN: Okay. I’ll tell you another illustration to prove it to you. The Corinthian church was full of people, it says, that you…he calls them saints in chapter 1, 1 Corinthians. “Saints, holy ones, you come behind in no gift of the Spirit, he says. You lack none of the Spirit’s ministry. But many of you, he says, have committed fornication and some of you, he says in chapter 5, have even committed incest with his father’s wife.”

So those kinds of sins can be committed by believers. And that’s why we’re warned in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 not to join ourselves to a harlot because if you join yourself, you join the Lord to a harlot because he that is one with the Lord is one flesh in a union…let me say it another way, if you’re one with the Lord and you unite with a harlot, you’ve made the Lord one with that harlot. That’s to say then that a Christian could do that.

RAY: (Inaudible)

JOHN: Yeah, right…right. Well, the Lord is undefiled. It’s kind of like, I’ve used the illustration of a sunbeam shining into a dump. The sunbeam can shine into the dump but the dump isn’t going to affect the sunbeam. So a Christian could commit any sin but these people in Malachi were definitely people to be judged by God because they were dishonoring His name in unbelieving people. Yes.

MARK: Hi, John, my name is Mark. There’s a very popular charismatic TV program that promotes the law of reciprocity as far as tithing goes, giving money to the Lord. In effect, that whatever you give to the Lord, you’re going to receive it back while you’re on earth. I just want to hear your views on that.

JOHN: Well, I don’t know how…you know, there’s a lot of things I could say about that. Okay, so they teach that if you give something to the Lord, you’ll get it back. Yeah, so…

MARK: In greater amounts.

JOHN: Yeah. Open your Bible to a very important portion of Scripture that has to be considered in any discussion like this on that question, and that is 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and 9 because this is where the issue is discussed and the principle that is laid down here has to be brought into thought. The whole section of 8 and 9 is talking about giving. By the way, there’s nothing in here about tithing.

There's nothing in the New Testament anyplace to advocate tithing. And just as a starting point, before we look at this, tithing…you're familiar with that concept of tithing, give ten percent to the church, you know, that kind of thing. Tithing basically is never ever advocated in the New Testament. It is never taught in the New Testament ever. It is referred to a couple of times, that's all, as a historical fact, talks about tithes being offered by Abraham to Aaron, you know, in the loins of Abraham, it says, Aaron paid tithes to Melchizedek. It's just a historical reference. It talks about the fact that Abraham gave tithes also of a tenth of the heap which he took in the battle with the kings. So it's only a historic reference.

And then in the gospels, it talks about the fact that the Jews tithed to their government, again a historical reference. No place in the entire New Testament is it ever advocated for us to give tithe. That is to give a ten percent to the church.

You say, "Well what was it in the Old Testament?" Every year a Jew had to give ten percent of all of his crop and all of his produce and all of whatever he had, he gave ten percent which was called the Levite's Tithe. And what you have to understand is that the nation Israel was a theocracy. That is it was ruled by God through priests. There were 24 different orders of priests with thousands upon thousands of priests. They were the government officials. They were the senate, the congress, the whole thing, only they didn't have to vote on anything, they just sought God and God told them what to do, so it was a theocracy ruled by God and that rule was disseminated through these people.

Well since they were the agents of the government, they had to be supported. You remember the twelve tribes were each given land? But they split the tribe of Joseph into two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh to make up twelve because Levi was taken out because Levi was the priestly tribe and they owned nothing. So they had to be supported by all the other tribes. They were given cities in the locations of the other tribal areas and people had to give money to support their livelihood. Part of their sheep, part of their crop, and everything had to go to support Levi's tribe because they were the ones who represented God and the government. So when you gave your ten percent each year, you gave it to the government for the care of the country, the nation.

Secondly, you gave another ten percent every year which was for the festivals and the religious complications of the nation. In other words, all of the big things that were held in Jerusalem, all the things that had to be done to prepare for the feasts and so forth in Jerusalem, and all the holy days and all the Sabbaths and all the everything else that went with it. So you paid ten percent to the Levites to support them as they operated on behalf of God and the government. You paid ten percent to take care of the national festivals which were many, many. And then you paid another ten percent every third year which went to the poor and the widows. So if you broke that down, you're about 23 and a third percent per year.

Now what that was was an Income Tax system. That was a system of taxation to fund the government and its religious activities and its welfare needs. So when people today say, “We want to tithe now like they did in the Old Testament,” they can’t stop at ten percent, they’ve got twenty-three and a third to start with. In addition to that, you paid a half shekel temple tax every year. In addition to that, if you had a field, you had to harvest the field in a circle and leave the corners open for the poor, it was a profit-sharing plan. If you dropped a bale of hay off your wagon on the way to the barn, you had to leave that for the poor. So you start adding that up and you’re looking about 25 percent of their income went to fund the national entity of the government.

Now when you get into the New Testament, the Jews were still doing that because they still had a nation. They still had…even though they were an occupied nation, they were still a nation. They were occupied by the Romans but they weren’t run by the Romans. They had their own religious hierarchy, they had their own school systems, they had their own festivals and all that stuff. So they had to take care of that. They had their own priesthood, it all had to go on. That’s why Jesus said, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s,” in other words, pay the Romans what they ask, “And render to God the things that are God’s.”

So just to clarify that at the very beginning, when you’re talking about a tithe, you’re talking about the taxation. Now when you translate that over into our time, it’s kind of interesting to me that the base tax system in our country is about twenty percent. You add sales tax to that, you probably get another five percent. We’re on about the same level they were then, about twenty-five percent of our income goes out to taxation, if you’re in the normal tax bracket and with normal deductions, unless you’re, you know, really doing well. But then they get you in different ways cause the more money you have, the more things you buy, the more things you buy, the higher sales tax you pay. So, you know, maybe it comes out even harder for people who have more.

Nonetheless, that’s taxation, okay? Giving was always something different. Always you gave whatever you wanted, like when they built the tabernacle, and God said, “Let every man bring whatever he purposes in his heart, let him do it willingly whatever he wants to give.” And they kept coming and bringing so much that finally they said, “Stop, don’t bring anymore, that’s enough.” So giving is always a free will. It’s always an expression of love and appreciation, whatever you want to do.

Now you come to 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and you learn how the church gave. The church knew there was a need, so the church gave. How did they give? Well it wasn’t ten percent. It says, “The churches in Macedonia,” chapter 8 verse 1, “gave abundantly out of deep poverty.” It says, “Their deep poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality.”

In other words, here was a very poor church in Macedonia, very poor. But they gave generously out of their hearts liberally. In fact, verse 3 says they gave beyond their…what?...they gave beyond their

ability. They gave more than they should have given, more than they could have given. And the reason they did that was in verse 5, “Because they first gave…what?...themselves.” I mean, when you give yourself then everything you have belongs to the Lord.

And so, Paul is saying to the Corinthians, if you want a lesson in giving, look at these people. Out of deep poverty they gave everything they had. In fact, they gave more than they should have. But they did that because they already had given themselves to the Lord. Now you have the key motive in giving. What is the right motive in giving? It’s not to get anything, it’s in that whole hearted abandonment. They gave everything. And I worry about this charismatic health and wealth prosperity business where you’re just simply saying, “Well I’m going to give my money so I can get it.” That is not the spirit of the Macedonians. They didn’t even have enough to give what they gave, but they gave it anyway because they had already given themselves to the Lord. Their whole program was a “give myself away” program, not a “get for myself” program. And we are suffering today in Christianity from an absolutely pervasive greed. Our contemporary Christianity is so self-indulgent it boggles the mind. That’s why we don’t reach out to people because we’re consumed with feeding ourselves. And it’s a mentality that all of us fall prey to. A guy in our church told me the other day he was meeting with a group of Christians and all they could talk about was their latest investments. And you look around you and you see people all around the world, you know, who have need, and I was talking to Mitch and he was telling me there are about 30 thousand people in the city of Los Angeles who are homeless, 32 thousand people in the city of Los Angeles who are homeless. We’ve been strategizing the last few days about what we’re going to do about that. Some people are, you know, talking about how they can get another Mercedes, and then there’s some people who are trying to get up out of the gutter to feed their family, you know. So we have a mentality. And, of course, what we’ve done see, we’ve justified our materialism by developing a theology to accommodate it, you know. Now Jesus wants you healthy, wealthy…you know. It’s like…there was a book called Prime Time Religion, about Oral Roberts, and it showed how he’s become a multi-millionaire by the way he works things. In the book it points out, for example, he’d write a book, he writes a book or has somebody write it for him, and then he publishes it with his own publishing house, it describes all this, one of the guys in his staff wrote the book, unhappily for them. And it shows how he publishes the book and then sells it to the Oral Roberts Evangelistic Association, sells them about two million copies so they can send it out to all the people on their mailing lists who send them twenty-five bucks. Only he sells it to them for a dollar profit on each book. So he writes the book, publishes the book, makes a buck profit selling it to his own organization, pockets two million dollars and then they distribute it.

Now that’s…those are the kind of people for the most part who are on television begging you for your money and telling you God’s going to make you rich and so forth. So there’s a theology that has developed and then what they do, trying to live with that is very difficult, so in order to live with that kind of thing you develop a theology that says, “Jesus wants you wealthy.” And that’s how you deal with your conscience, see. God wants you rich. I mean, you read in a magazine…and we were in Israel, we find people who go over there on these tours to lead tours to Israel, demand thousand-

dollar a day rooms, they demand limousine service everywhere. They demand…they go into these little shops where they take their tourists to buy things, and they want…one guy told me that one group went in there and the leader wanted twelve thousand dollars' worth of jewelry, you know, to bring his group to their store. And then these are the people who develop this kind of accommodating theology, Jesus wants you wealthy, Jesus wants you rich, Jesus wants you prosperous, He wants you healthy and all that kind of thing. And I really believe it is a backdoor means to justify a materialistic attitude. And the Lord needs to deliver us from that.

These people gave out of their deep poverty. Not because they wanted anything back because they were so abandoned to the Lord. Having said all of that, all right, this is a long sermon, having said all of that I want you to look at chapter 9 verse 6, "But this I say, he that sows sparingly shall real sparingly, he that sows bountifully shall reap bountifully." And in this sense, you have to admit, they have to have a kernel of the truth because if you sow a little bit, you reap a little, if you sow a lot, you reap a lot. And it is true that when you give to the Lord, He does give back. But if that's your motive, it's warped. It is true that He does that. But if you come to the Lord's work and you say, "I'm going to put this in because I know I'm going to get back multiplied," then you're giving is illegitimate. But if you can do it with a free, clear conscience, and even though you have to fight yourself, you know, sometimes you say, "Boy, I know the Lord's going to return this but that's not going to be my motive," and you kind of go back and forth. But if you have a clear conscience about that, then it's okay. So if you sow sparingly, you reap sparingly, you sow bountifully, you reap bountifully. There is the fact that God will bless. Matthew 6…no, Luke 6:38, Jesus says, "Give and it shall be…what?...given unto you, pressed down, shaken together and running over." That's a great statement. Pressed down, shaken together, and running over, it will be given. Do you ever buy a box of crackers and shake it and open it and you've got about a third of a box of crackers? But that isn't how it's going to be when the Lord gives, it will be pressed down, shaken together, and still running over. He'll give.

Now you say, "Yeah, I know what will happen to me, I'll give all my money and the Lord will give me back all spiritual blessings." That might happen, but in verse 7 it says, "Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly nor of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver and God is able to make all grace abound toward you that you always having all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work. And He will minister, verse 10, he that ministers seed to the sower will minister bread for your food and multiply your seed sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness." Verse 10 is really key. He says He'll not only give you back what you sowed, He'll give you back bread for your food, He'll take care of your physical needs when you give. And He'll increase the fruit of your righteousness. It doesn't say "I'll make you wealthy" though, does it? It says He'll meet your needs and He'll fill your life with righteousness.

So maybe that gives you some answer. I hope.

MARK: I did notice that most of the verses they use to promote this were out of the Old Testament.

JOHN: Yeah, it's very popular doctrine, see. People want to be rich. They want to be wealthy. The hottest new cult there is Teri Cole Whitaker, I don't know if you've seen her. She's nothing but a slick Doris Day type Reverend Ike. She's in it for the money. She comes out of Science of Mind. She's manipulative. She's figured out how to make a fortune. And she's milking it for every dime she can get out of it. And she can do it because people will do anything to get rich. People do anything for two things: money and health. And if you can promise people health and wealthy, they'll follow you to off the end of the pier. Believe me, they will. Why do you think Jesus told the disciples when He sent them out? "Take no money when you heal." Because if they had taken money, they could have become instant millionaires. People will pay any price for healing. And they could really do it. They could really do it. And they'll pay any price. They'll invest anything if they think they can get rich. You see, this is what Reverend Ike did for years. What he did was, he told these people, you send me money, you might get rich. And he told story after story after story about it and what this company did was at random they'd pick out people off their mailing list and deliver a new Cadillac to them. And they do that to a hundred people, two hundred people a year with the millions that were coming in and then they'd have them get up and give a testimony, how that one day there was a new Cadillac delivered in front of their door. And it becomes a lottery system. That's all it is. It's like buying a ticket in a raffle. And you know raffles work, and people are gamblers, look at LasVegas.

So if people think there's a way to get health, or wealth, they'll do anything. And that kind of doctrine will be popular and people will send money to it like gang busters. Oral Roberts has been doing that for 30 years. He's been telling…you ought to read his letters. "If you will send me $25 today, right today, the day you get this letter, I'll promise you that Jesus will give you back $250 within the next six months from an unexpected place." Very typical letter. And, you know, you're liable to get $250 bucks back somewhere you didn't expect it, right? Your old aunt died, or you got an Income Tax return, or, you know, you got a Social Security check you didn't expect, or whatever. And so, you know, in the long run it hooks people. So it's really tragic.

MARK: Thank you.

JOHN: I think we're going this way.

FRANK: Hello, John. My name is Frank and my question is from Exodus 3:2 and I'll read it to you. "The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire in the midst of the bush, and he looked and the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed."

My question is, why do some people older in the Lord say that the angel of the Lord is…it is Jesus Christ? That He is Jesus Christ.

JOHN: You want to know why some people say the angel of the Lord is Jesus Christ?

FRANK: Yeah.

JOHN: Oh, I have to reach back and pull so many things. There are many places in the Old Testament where the angel of the Lord is mentioned. In many of those places, he appears in a form and accomplishing a mission that is so unique to deity that it appears that he must be deity. And if in fact he is deity, then he must be that person of deity who is manifest in some element, maybe in fire, maybe in a human body, or whatever. It is due to the fact that his appearances seem to be the manifestation of deity rather than a created being, even an angel and the unique holiness, the unique deliverance mode, the angel of the Lord often is seen as a Savior or a Deliverer. And there are some passages that may be even more explicit than that. Those are what we call Christophanies. That's a technical term, but it means a preincarnate appearance of Christ.

You shouldn't have a problem with that because we believe that Jesus Christ is the second member of the Trinity, always existed, right? And there's no reason to believe that before He was incarnate in human form and came into the world, He may have…He certainly was busy doing something, why not these kinds of things? The word angel should not trip us up because angel simply means messenger and sometimes it can be used in a technical sense referring to an actual angel, a created angel. Or sometimes it can be used in a non-technical sense, referring to a messenger, such as many believed it's used in the second…in the first chapter, rather, of…and the second and the third, actually, of Revelation. So it would just be by a virtue of the form, the power, the holiness of this being that He appears more to be deity than He does to be a created being. Okay?

FRANK: Yeah, just one more. Does God punish the redeemed people…this is a question I just found out yesterday that it amazed me because my Bible study leader said that He does not punish redeemed people, and I always thought that He did.

JOHN: Well, yeah…it depends on what you mean by punish.

FRANK: The Bible says to whom the Lord love, He scourges, so He chastises them.

JOHN: Oh yeah. He scourges, He chastises. I don't think anywhere that the text translates the word punish, but it's basically the same thing in one sense. It's not a final punishment. The best way to say it is in terms of Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." There will be no ultimate punishment. The ultimate punishment has been already given to us…where? On the cross. Okay, so to say that we had to be ultimately punished would be to say that Jesus Christ had inadequately borne our punishment.

FRANK: Temporal punishment, not…

JOHN: But here, yes, 1 Corinthians chapter 11 talks about the fact that the Lord chastens those who defile His table. Hebrews chapter 12, which you're referring to, says, "That whom the Lord loves He chastens, every son He scourges." And then in 1 Corinthians 11 it says, "If we would chasten ourselves, we wouldn't be chastened by the Lord." So yes, there is a…we'd like to call it a remedial chastening, rather than a punitive or condemning chastening. In other words, it's to conform us more to Christ. It's remedial in the sense that it instructs us not to do that. So yes, the Lord does bring chastening into the life of a child of His. In fact, if He didn't, it would be tragic because we would go off on some tangent of sin and we'd never want to turn back because we'd never feel His chastening.

FRANK: He said that there was a difference between chastise and the punishment.

JOHN: Okay, then he's making a distinction that he can make if he explains what he means. There's no final, ultimate damnation, obviously. But there certainly is chastening.

FRANK: Thanks

JOHN: Yes…

WAYNE: Hi, John, my name is Wayne. In James 5:13 to 18, where it told about anointing with oil, my question is kind of a four-part question. Is this for the church today? And if so, when it is appropriate for someone to call the elders of the church? And what kind of sickness is this for? Is it only for sin sickness? And finally, how does someone at Grace Community Church call the elders of the church if a serious circumstance should come up?

JOHN: That's very good, Wayne. Thank you for asking that question and thank you for your card. I got a card from your family today. Yeah…it's great, very encouraging.

Well, it says…yeah, I think it's for us. I don't want to get into some kind of dispensational thing and throw out the book of James. It says, "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing Psalms. Now is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up and if he's committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

Now that last statement is the hook that this whole thing hangs on. I believe this has a reference to those sicknesses which are directly related to unforgiven sin, not unforgiven in the sense of ultimate forgiveness at the cross, but unforgiven in the sense of our immediate relationship with the Lord. In other words, all your sins are covered in Christ, and this is back to what you were saying. That's why there's no ultimate punishment. But there are sins in our lives right now that aren't dealt with and we'll

be chastened for those, those need to be treated, too.

So where you have a believer who has sin in his life, there is the potential of sickness. And if you don't think so, you haven't read 1 Corinthians 11 because if you're sick because of your defiling of the Lord's Table, many of you are weak and sick and some of you are dead, he says…the ones who were dead obviously weren't able to hear what he was saying, but the others did. So, yes 1 John even talks about a believer who goes beyond the point of being recalled back from sickness because of his sinfulness. So…so yes, I really believe that the fact that this is tied in to the sins and then it says in 16, "Confess your sins one to another, pray for one another, that you may be healed. And the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. And then Elijah was a man subject to like passions, as we are. He prayed earnestly that it might not rain and it rained not on the earth…and so forth…so he prayed again and heaven gave rain," and so on. So he's simply saying that prayer on behalf of one, prayer before God on behalf of one who is sick due to sin, God hears when the prayer is offered and the confession is offered.

So I believe that those are the circumstances. And the fact that it says, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick," such a gilt-edged promise with no conditions, that it would have to be referring to a sickness related to something that could be dealt with. And as soon as it was dealt with, the sickness would be removed.

Now the question about do we do that at Grace Church? Yes we do and we have for all the years I've ever been here. Every Sunday morning we meet over here in the prayer room at eight o'clock for a half an hour of prayer and very frequently we have folks come in who want to be prayed for.

Now the one element here that's kind of introduced into the text, it's a little difficult for us to understand is the anointing of oil. There are two possible explanations for the anointing of oil. Explanation number one is that the oil was a symbol of the Holy Spirit. And that is true in the Old Testament. On many occasions kings were anointed with oil, priests were anointed with oil as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, just a way to identify that it was if the Holy Spirit was touching that life, special anointing. In fact, anointed is a beautiful word in the Old Testament, a priest was anointed, a king was anointed, as if God was putting a touch on him. So it's very possible that that is a symbol of identifying the fact that this person is…we desire the Spirit of God to do a work in the heart, a work in the soul, a work in the body of healing.

The other possibility is that it has reference to medicine. Oil is a very general term and could have been used regarding medicine. So it may be that what James has in mind is pray for the person and tell him to take his medicine. Either way, I'm not sure.

But since we can't resolve that, we customarily through the years here on Sunday morning have anointed people with oil when they request it. And just done as the Scripture says. Not only that, very

frequently groups of elders go to the hospital and do this very thing whenever someone calls us and says, “Would you come and do that?” We do that. All you have to do is call the church office, ask for any pastor and they’ll set it up and do it. I mean, if we can’t figure out what the oil meant, we can still be obedient to it. Okay? Thank you. Yes?

GINA: Hi, John, my name is Gina. I have two questions. One is, how do you know when you’re being tempted by Satan or tested by God? And the other is, Knowing that all children belong to God, during the Rapture, what’s going to happen to all the children?

JOHN: Okay, question number one, how do you know when you’re being tempted by Satan and tested by God? And the answer is, they’re one and the same. If you fail, Satan succeeded in tempting you. If you pass, God gets the victory for seeing you through the test in a sense. Now there are some things that aren’t a test by God at all, but are just purely a temptation. It depends on where you are. It’s hard to define that. The word “temptation” and the word “testing” are the same word, *peirasmos*, same word, no different. It depends on how you respond. For example, if someone…if something comes on the TV that’s evil, it will either demonstrate my strength or demonstrate my weakness, true? So it’s either a test by which God is able to show me my strength, or it’s a temptation by which Satan shows me my weakness. It depends on what I do with it.

So you just…it’s hard, and that’s an oversimplification, in a sense, but you understand what I’m driving at. The trying of your faith works patience, and patience has its perfect work...wants to have its perfect work, James 1. So the Lord’s going to bring trial, trial, trial. Now none of those trials is a direct solicitation to evil. A direct solicitation to evil is not included in those and that’s why in James 1 it says, “God tempts no man.” The Lord will bring trials into your life which if you fail those trials will turn into temptations. But the Lord will never bring a direct solicitation to evil.

So having said what I said initially, when trials come in your life, if you fail them, they turn out to be temptations in which Satan is victorious. If you pass them, they turn out to be victories in which God was trying and strengthening you. But a direct solicitation to do evil is always from the enemy, never from God. Okay?

GINA: And the other question?

JOHN: And the second question was, what happens to children in the Rapture? The Bible doesn’t say anything. But whatever happens to them, God will be absolutely loving, and absolutely fair, and absolutely just, and right, and gracious, and merciful, and all that.

So, you know, I personally believe that every person has the opportunity to come and know Christ. I believe God gives each person that privilege and God does not condemn people to hell for an

ignorance. He didn't create people to populate hell. People go there to a place prepared for the devil and his angels, not even prepared for people, but for the devil and his angels because they choose not to believe at one point or another. And so, even if it's at an early point, they're not led to the fullness of the truth. But in the case of children, the Lord may take the children of believers, the Lord may leave them and allow them to come to the age when they can make the right commitment. And if you worry about that, remember that the greatest period of evangelization the world has ever seen will be in the time right after the Rapture, even though it will be the hardest time. The lines will be drawn so clearly that there will be so many people saved, it says in Revelation 7, they won't even be able to be numbered. And if heaven loses count, that's a lot of folks. So we only have to trust that to the Lord.

GINA: Thank you.

JOHN: Uh-huh. Yes?

MELISSA: Hi, my name is Melissa. I was just wondering, I know you're supposed to have only one wife, you know. Why is the reasoning by Solomon having six hundred, and…?

JOHN: Just plain stupid. (Laughter) Just plain disobedient.

MELISSA: But God still blessed the man, you know, that had more than one wife, you know, like Abraham.

JOHN: What you have to understand is God never blessed anybody for having more than one wife. All it did was bring cursing. There were other reasons why God blessed him, that wasn't one of them. And when you study the Old Testament, you find that out. You go all the way back to the beginning in Genesis and it says, "One man, one woman, for life." And that's the way God always wanted it.

Now have you sinned? I don't want to be personal? But have you sinned? Me, too. Are you alive? Me, too. Are you blessed? Me, too. Get the picture. Yeah. We didn't get blessed for that though, did we? Not for our sin. We got blessed in spite of it because God is a loving, gracious God. So we don't want to conclude that because David committed adultery with a whole bunch of women, adulterers get blessed. We want to conclude that in spite of that, God was gracious to him. And there were periods in his life and times in his life when he was obedient to God and God blessed him for those times, and God was patient in the other times. So God's standard never ever changed. And if you want to really find out, you just find all the polygamists in the Old Testament and watch the pain they went through. Everybody thinks Abraham had it good. No he didn't. He had a very painful life. He had a disastrous life. I mean, the very fact that he went in there and had a child by Haggar and produced Isaac…not Isaac, Ishmael, I mean, the Jewish race ever since Abraham has been upset that he did that because that produced the Arabs. It's true. And the Jews, you know, if they go back, they don't

like the fact that he did that. And the Arabs, the children of Ishmael have always claimed the right to the land, as the sons of Abraham. That's what the conflict is all about.

So, you know, God blessed Abraham, He didn't bless him for that. And God blessed David but He didn't bless him for his many wives. And God blessed Solomon in parts. But when you read the book of Ecclesiastes, you get a feeling that Solomon went through some times in his life when he was anything but blessed. That's written by a man in deep pain. So you don't want to miss the picture there, all right? Good.

LYNNE: Hi, my name is Lynne, and I'm attending Cal State Northridge and trying to finish up this paper, it's due tomorrow.

JOHN: I see.

LYNNE: My paper's on Lutheranism and I'm a believer now, I had to write this down so I wouldn't forget. I was brought up Lutheran and now through this paper I've been kind of examining the Lutheran faith, it's an investigative paper. And it kind of appears that there's inconsistencies in Luther's Small Catechism in relation with the Bible, primarily baptism and communion. So my question is, if Luther …

JOHN: Interesting.

LYNNE: If Luther was truly a man of God, and the Lutheran church is really following him, why is the Lutheran church today so liberal and so caught up in man's tradition?

JOHN: Martin Luther, if he was alive today, wouldn't be a member of most Lutheran churches. So we don't want to blame him for what they are today. They have come so far from Lutheran theology. They have developed…well let me go back to Martin Luther.

Martin Luther was obviously God's anointed man in many ways. No man is the reservoir of all truth. Martin Luther was a product of years and years and years of Catholicism. It's a work of God that he could ever see through it at all because it was so absolutely oppressive and overpowering. But he started to read the Bible and he wrote a commentary on Romans. And when he got through Romans, he realized that the doctrine of salvation was all fouled up in the Catholic Church and they were teaching salvation by works and he hated it. They were buying their way, you know, into heaven through the indulgences all that stuff. And so Martin Luther basically was used by God to develop what theologians call Soteriology, the doctrine of salvation. Okay.

He was a Soteriologist and the truth of the matter is, Martin Luther, the Reformation was a soteriological Reformation that never touched the field of ecclesiology, or the doctrine of the church.

And that's why the hot bed of Lutheranism Germany went completely liberal and produced a guy like Hitler, because though his soteriology was right, it never had…he didn't live long enough or whatever, God could only use that man to fight one battle. My grandfather used to say, "If you do one thing well in your life, you'll be ahead of most people." And that's right. He did one great thing extremely well in understanding the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith, the just shall live by faith, right? And it never really impacted all of ecclesiology, it never really impacted the church at its widest possible range and definition. And consequently, there was the potential of its disintegration in the system. You know, Martin Luther never even got out of the Catholic Church. He was a Catholic, he was a priest. So we don't want to fault Luther. Luther did what Luther did. And we can all be grateful for that. And those people who understood Luther, understood that he was saying something about salvation that had never been said…but, at least in their experience in the Catholic Church.

Now having said all of that, and it's important to point out, Luther's basic emphasis in soteriology never really touched very much else…it never really did. And so the Lutheran church that developed had weaknesses built into it. Two of those you pinpointed. It's interesting that your paper, you came to the baptism and the Lord's Supper because they came up, they never quite got over the baby baptism thing. They never got out of that. They never followed to a logical conclusion what Luther was really teaching. And today, there are many Lutherans who, in fact, most Lutherans, I would think, believe that their place in the Kingdom was initiated by their baptism as an infant. And then confirmed at the age of 12, or whatever.

LYNNE: Yeah, Confirmation.

JOHN: Yeah. And that's what we call sacramental Christianity as opposed to personal Christianity. It's that you're there because of the sacrament. The second thing is, in communion, Luther made a quantum leap because the Catholic Church taught Transubstantiation and Transubstantiation says that in the Mass the what they call the host and whatever, the cup and the bread are by the priest literally transformed into the very body and very blood of Jesus Christ, so that what is left has to be protected and cared for and put away and all this because it's the real body and the real… Well that made Luther angry and so he moved away from that to a view called Consubstantiation which you probably read about. And what Luther said was, "No, it has the spiritual presence of Christ and the spiritual body of Christ in the cup and the bread."

Well that's nothing. I don't know what that is, but it was a big step away from where they were. But he wasn't all the way to where we are today where we say it's only a remembrance. So we don't want to fault Luther. He made some tremendous steps. And theology coming out of the Dark Ages, from 500 to 1500 when he pinned his thesis on the Wittenberg Church door, coming out of those Dark Ages, I mean, that was a massive step for him. And he went as far as he could and it's been taken beyond that. Unfortunately some of the Lutheran people are more concerned with holding on to their roots and holding on to Martin Luther, they'll quote him more than they will the Bible. And he was limited in

his understanding because he was so much of a pioneer coming out of that kind of theology.

LYNNE: Thank you.

BILL: Hi, my name is Bill McCauley. Occasionally you'll mention in one of your sermons, and especially when I listen to a few tapes when we lived back in Florida that you would leave a word or a particular verse out. An example being in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, I think, the fourteenth verse, or somewhere around there, you said was not in the better manuscripts. What are the better manuscripts and how do we determine which manuscripts are better than others?

JOHN: Bill, you're going to have to trust some other people on this one. This is such a difficult issue, not difficult for me to understand but difficult to communicate to you in a way that's going to be understood because it's such a long drawn-out thing.

You have in your hand a Bible. Maybe you have, like I do, the Holy Scolly, Scofield's notes, you know, "My hope is built on nothing less than Scofield's notes and Scripture Press, or Moody Press," I guess. So you have the New American Standard. Some of you have the NIV. Some of you have the Amplified Bible. Some of you…I don't know what all you have. Some of you may even have an old Confronternity Version, or Douay Version you got from your Catholic days with an Apocrypha in the middle. You may have a Living Bible which is not a Bible, but a commentary on the Bible, paraphrased. But, you know, there are all kinds of things like that. Some of you have a 1901 American Standard, all these various things, all right?

Now the Bible that you have is just…it's in our culture, all right? In Latin America they have Spanish Bible and it's going to be translated out of the original languages into Spanish. Okay? In Europe they're going to have a French one, going to have a German one, going to have an Italian one, all…you go to the Orient, they're going to have a Japanese one, a Chinese one, a Korean one, okay. So these people who come along and say that the King James is the only right Bible. I mean, they just don't…that's not even thinking clearly because that's an English translation. What are we saying? I mean, that's almost like Hitler's doctrine of the supreme race, as if we've got all the corner on all the truth and the rest of the world is limping along without the full revelation.

Okay, let me just back up from that by saying this. All the Bibles that we do have are basically translated into the languages in which we read them from manuscripts. The Bible was written in the Old Testament in Hebrew with the exception of several passages in Aramaic, which is a Hebrew-type language. The New Testament was written entirely in Greek, not classical Greek like Caesar's Gaelic Wars, but *koine* or common Greek which is a street Greek.

So what we have to do then to find out what the scriptures really say is to collect the ancient manuscripts, all right? Okay. Point one, we have no original manuscripts, we have none. We don't

have the original Isaiah, we don't have the original John, the original Acts, the original Romans. What we have is copies and we have copies and copies and copies and copies because once the Scripture was given, everybody started to copy it. But it was a perfect opportunity for people to change it as it went copying along and they could put in something here, put in something there, maybe a scribe made a mistake. I mean, sitting down to copy the whole Old Testament would be a tough job, right? Especially…do you know what they did to help themselves? They took out all the vowels, took out all the punctuation, all the paragraphs, and all the spaces and just wrote consonants in big long strings of that. So scholars have to come back in and it's not hard to do if you know Hebrew well. But any way, they wrote and wrote, and wrote, and wrote. In fact, they said Ezra could write the whole Old Testament from memory, he was a scribe, without error. And many of them would write one letter, they were so precise, they would write one letter and wash their pen and write another letter cause they didn't want to change one single letter.

But there were some who were more careless than that. Through the years of history, we have had scholars that are working in a field that is known as lower criticism, that's just what they call it, who have collected and studied all the groupings of these various manuscripts. And they have come down, basically, to two groups of manuscripts. One group, our English Bible and all the rest of the Bibles, come down basically to…and they're very, very similar, but these two groups of manuscripts, one of them has produced the King James and the other has produced all of the other modern translations. That second group that's produced all the modern translations has had the benefit of all the years of study since 1611 when this came out…1611? Yeah, when this King James came out. And in those, well, three hundred years, there have been many other manuscripts found which we now know where the better manuscripts because there's a science of comparing them.

They know, for example, if you find two manuscripts and one makes something very difficult, like one manuscript says, "It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than a rich man to get into heaven." And this manuscript family says, "It's easier for a thread to go through the eye of a needle than a rich man to get into heaven. Which is the right one? The camel has to be right because a scribe would change a camel to a thread but a scribe would never change a thread to a camel. So one of the laws of lower criticism is you always take the more difficult rendering because you assume people would try to make it easier, not harder.

So there are many, many principles that they use in the study of lower criticism. And what they've come up with is these two families of manuscripts. The King James was based upon the best available stuff in 1611. But now the stuff in the NAS and others have based upon the NIV is now manuscripts that are older than the King James manuscripts. And the further back you get, in most cases, the purer you're going to be, right? So that's why from time to time we say that the better manuscripts indicate such-and-such, and the newer manuscripts have the benefit of all that was in the other set and all that's been added to that since that time. And you can thank the Lord that there are men who spend their whole life just fussing around with these manuscripts. Okay?

BERNIE: Hi, John, my name is Bernie and I have a question about sounds like pneuma(?) works of the Spirit.

JOHN: Sure

BERNIE: Okay, it's about…okay, I have a scripture here from chapter 14:5…I mean, verse 6. "And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily so that he…" my question is this, the Holy Spirit came upon Samson, the question is, I've been dealing with some people, was the Holy Spirit indwelling in the people before Acts chapter 2? I also have another question referring to the same thing in John…the gospel of John, chapter 20 verse 22 where …

JOHN: "Breathed on them and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Spirit.'"

BERNIE: Yeah, and only eleven of them received Him. So did they receive this…for instance right now, this eleven disciples, did they receive the Holy Spirit?

JOHN: I deal with that in my book on the Charismatics, by the way, in one of the chapters, but no. In the Old Testament you have many, many occasions where it says, "And the Spirit of God came upon So-and-so, the Spirit of God departed, the Spirit of God came and the Spirit of God departed." Let me see if I can make it as simple as possible.

No person at no time now or then could ever do anything that would please God apart from God's power. I mean, if we are weak in the flesh, they were weak in the flesh. Understood? In the flesh, you can't do anything. No flesh can be justified in and of itself. In the flesh we cannot please God. And that's why the Old Testament says, "Not by might, nor by power, but…what?...by My Spirit, says the Lord." So in the Old Testament, for anything that was done of a divine nature, the Spirit of God had come and do His work. Now this is simply an indication of how the Spirit of God worked. The Spirit of God came and went and moved in these ways.

Now when you come to the key verse, you come to the gospel of John because in the transition the Lord gets together with His disciples and…let's see, chapter 14, it says in verse 16, "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever." Now that's the new part. Okay? He came and He went, did His thing, moved in a unique and marvelous and miraculous way in spiritual intervention. But now He comes to abide with you forever. Even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot perceive because he sees Him not, neither knows Him not. Here it comes, "But you know Him for He dwells with you but shall be…what?...in you." So I see that as the distinctive.

Now I don't know…that is not to say that they didn't have the Holy Spirit. It is to say that in the church there is a fullness of the Spirit that was not necessarily the same as it was in the Old Covenant. The fullness of the Spirit is released. Remember Jesus said, "I can't send the Holy Spirit lest I go to the Father," in the same passage? "When I go to the Father, He shall send you the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, He will teach you all things and lead you into all things." This back to that lady's question about polygamy and all that. That's why God was patient and overlooked some things in the Old Testament that He doesn't in the New, because the ministry of the Holy Spirit is so unique. It is full and complete only after Christ has done His full and complete work. That releases the Spirit to an indwelling kind of ministry in us and that's why He says, "He shall be with you or He shall abide with you forever."

Now, when He said to them in John 20, "Breathe on them and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Spirit.'" I think at that point He was merely giving them a promise. He was giving them a symbolicoHoHolyHolykdkfjslslslsjkhihokihoihlerkjyl;erjhtopjerpt;jv vugyguohiu8ih illustration. I don't think they received the Spirit there, I think they received the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. That was simply a promise of what was going to come because He was still saying in Acts 1:8, "You shall receive the Holy Spirit…but you shall have power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you." And the Holy Spirit, if He said that, couldn't have come upon them already. Okay?

BERNIE: I was just…I was going by, you know, John 20:22 that when in Acts chapter 2 when they received the Holy Spirit, when the Holy Spirit came, you know, it was the people who spoke, you know, the other disciples spoke in tongues. And then it was Peter who preached. I don't see that…well you say that he was also speaking in tongues. What I'm saying is, to me I don't…I don't want to get confused, I kind of go by saying they received the Holy Spirit there so they didn't have to speak in tongues, all they did was to preach like Peter preached. But the other guys, you know, the people who were gathered together, they started speaking in different tongues. But Peter alone, he just preached.

JOHN: Yeah, I don't think you can say that. I think they all spoke languages. I think they were all the 120 including the Apostles and all that.

BERNIE: Well I have some people telling me that they…I like to ask you to pray for me.

JOHN: Get that book on…oh, to pray for you that…what?

BERNIE: That this guy said they're going to pray for me that I receive…

JOHN: Sure, they tell me that all the time.

BERNIE: No, no, no.

JOHN: You've got to receive the Holy Spirit, right?

BERNIE: Yeah, that I speak in tongues again.

JOHN: Sure.

BERNIE: I want to ask another one.

JOHN: I say what Paul did. I thank God that I don't speak in tongues."

BERNIE: Okay. What's the difference between baptism of the Spirit and Spirit-filled?

JOHN: Baptism of the Spirit happens when you're saved. It's placing you in the body of Christ. Being Spirit-filled is simply walking in obedience.

BERNIE: Thank you.

JOHN: The book I wrote on the Charismatics, I make all those distinctions, or try to, we're just about out of time so we'll take maybe a minute for each person that's still up there. And then we'll wrap it up, okay?

QUESTIONER: Oh it's really been excellent tonight. I just hope that my question would be as edifying. In Psalm 119 it says, "Your testimonies are full of wonder, therefore my soul observes them." And in 2 Peter it says, "If moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love are increasing, you will not be unfruitful." So the question is, is the increasing…is the increasing spiritual awareness and meditation of the treasure of God's Word the requirement for a truly obedient walk?

JOHN: I think it is. Yeah, I think…I think that obedience is a direct product of meditation on the Word of God. I do not think that you can behave in a certain way independent of how you think. I do think you will behave in accord with how you think. And you think on the Word of God and you behave in response to that. No question about that. A continual growing meditating on the Word of God is going to alter your behavior. That's the way…as a man thinks in his heart, so is he. That's right. Okay.

PHILIP: My name is Philip Ortiz and I would like to ask a question of the context of Luke 8:16, 17 and 18 where it's the parable of the lamp, as you may know.

JOHN: Okay, what's your question, Phil?

PHILIP: First of all, let me read it, okay?

JOHN: Okay.

PHILIP: “Now no one after lighting a lamp covers it over with a container, or puts it under a bed, but he puts it on a lampstand in order that those who come in may see the light. For nothing is hidden that shall not become evident nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light. Therefore take care how you listen, for whoever has to him shall more be given, and whoever does not have, even what he thinks shall be taken away from him.” This from Luke 8:16-18 NASB. And I would like to ask the meaning of it? Just want it means.

JOHN: Yeah, I’ll tell you, it’s a great, great parable. And very simply, when a guy lights a lamp he puts it out where it can be seen. He doesn’t hide it. Sets it on a lampstand. And I think, in a sense, what you have here is the Lord and you and I are kind of like the lamps and He lights us. And He’s going to someday put us on display. The Lord didn’t light our lamp to hide us. The Lord lit our lamp to put us on display. And it may not be here that we show who we really are, but it will be there. And that’s verse 17. “Nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest, neither anything hidden that shall not be known and come to light.”

What happened to the early church was…what happened to the early believers…what happened to the Apostles was the world didn’t know who they were. And He says the day is going to know…the day is going to come when the light’s going to show and the world is going to see. It’s the same thing He says in the tenth chapter of Matthew. He uses the very same terminology, the very same illustrations, basically, and He says the world may hate you now and the world may persecute you now, but don’t fear that because the day is going to come when the lord is going to reverse everything and the secrets are going to be made known which means that the lights are going get turned on, the world is going to see who the shining lights are that God has lit. And the people who are to be blessed and who are to be rewarded, everything is going to come to be known in verse 17. In verse 18, “So you better listen very carefully because if you’re trying to get it all now, you know, it says for whosoever has, if you have it now, if you have a relationship with the Lord now, if you’re lit now, you’re going to get…your light is going to get brighter. And if you don’t have the light now, it’s going to be just as black then only blacker.” You know.

PHILIP: See I don’t understand that, but I do understand about not fearing anybody for greater is He that is in you then He that is in the world. So thank you for that much.

JOHN: No, you understand that, Phil.

PHILIP: Yeah, what you said. But I’m talking about the whole thing in context because people have different…

JOHN: Yeah, but see, you…I know you understand. All I'm saying is that the Lord didn't light your life to hide it. He lit it to put it on display. Now if the world can't see what you really are now, they'll see it someday and the someday when that little…you may only look like a flickering lamp, but someday they're going to see you're a flame. And if you don't have a light now, you're not going to have one then. If you have a little one now, you're going to have a big one then.

PHILIP: Praise the Lord.

JOHN: Amen. All right.

PHILIP: Thank you.

DEBORAH: Hi, my name is Deborah. My daughter asked me a question and it's out of Joshua chapter 2 and it's talking about Rahab.

JOHN: How old is your daughter?

DEBORAH: She's twelve. She's here tonight.

JOHN: I hate questions by twelve-year olds. Where is this.

DEBORAH: It's in Joshua chapter 2 between the verses of 3 and 7 and then 18 to 21. Her main question is, is that God forbids us to lie.

JOHN: That's right.

DEBORAH: And she says, "Mom, Rahab lied …

JOHN: That's right.

DEBORAH: To the king. And he hid, you know, God's people. But God says it's a sin to lie. Now how do you reconcile the fact that she lied and God honored her life and…

JOHN: No, she sinned and God honored her faith.

DEBORAH: Oh.

JOHN: So you're right back to the same principle again. God did not honor her lies, she didn't have to do that. God would have saved…God would have saved His people anyhow. But she had very little…she had very little information. You know, all she knew about God was what she had heard

drifting along as they moved from Egypt into Canaan. And she heard the exploits of this great God and she believed in the true God. In fact, if you follow the story and you follow it all the way into the book of Matthew where she's listed among the heroes of faith, Rahab believed God. Rahab believed God. She didn't know all there was to know about God, but she believed God. And maybe she didn't understand all there was to the morality that God had identified as what is right. Maybe in her culture, lying was acceptable. But what she did know, she believed and adhered to. And she knew this was the true God and she wanted to stand with the true God against her entire society. God honored her faith. God didn't honor her lie. And if she had told the truth, God would have equally…in fact, more gloriously and wonderfully spared His spies. In fact, I've often thought to myself, if she hadn't lied, and if David hadn't played the fool, and if other people in the Bible had just done what was open, upright and truthful, think of what things God would have done that He was not, you know, able to do because they lied and covered up something. So God didn't honor her lie.

DEBORAH: Can I ask you one more quick question? I wasn't raised this way and I was just kind of curious about predestination.

JOHN: Sure.

DEBORAH: I've heard, you know, back and forth, you know, that God had a plan and people…

JOHN: I don't have time to go into the whole thing. Let me just tell you this, are you a Christian?

DEBORAH: Yes.

JOHN: You're predestined. Fair enough?

DEBORAH: Well I'm just curious about my family members that aren't saved. I thought, does God not choose them? Or do they…

JOHN: No. The point is this. When you're saved, you confirm the fact you're chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. Until then, you don't know. So you call on Christ. The Bible teaches both things, predestination and human choice. "You will not come unto Me that you might have life," Jesus said. "How often I would have gathered you as a hen gathers her brood, but you would not. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," you know. So then you have on the other, "Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world." So you have both doctrines. They exist, co-exist together, you leave them there. You try to harmonize them, you get in a lot of trouble. If you try to rationalize it, you find yourself under the bed saying the Greek alphabet. You can't harmonize it, we just have to teach both of them. And, you see, it's like…they're two opposite truths that have to co-exist. It's the same thing you have with Christ. Christ is God and Man. What is He, half-God, half-Man? No, He's all God, all Man. You can't be that, but we believe He is. If somebody asked you, "Who wrote the book of

Romans?" You say Paul, and I say the Holy Spirit. We're both right. If somebody says, "Who lives your Christian life?" You say, "I do, I grit my teeth and beat my body into subjection to live it." Somebody else says, "Not I, but Christ lives in me." Both. See, you have the same kind of divine tension in all doctrine because when you reduce God to man, something's left out and we can't fill in the gap. So all we know is that if we're saved it's because God has chosen us, predestinated us before the foundation of the world and if we're not saved, it's because we refuse Jesus Christ.

DEBORAH: Thank you.

JOHN: Okay. Quickly.

MIKE: John, my name is Mike. And I have a question in relation to Ezekiel chapter 3. Ezekiel chapter 3, God appoints Ezekiel as a watchman over the house of Israel. And he says in verses 18 and 19, "When I say to the wicked, you shall surely die and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet if you have warned the wicked and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity but you have delivered yourself." My question is, in what way, if any, are these verses applicable to modern day believers in relation to our responsibility to tell unbelievers about the gospel and…

JOHN: You have to go on, I think it's the eighteenth chapter of Ezekiel where all of that is kind of flattened out and you have individual responsibility advocated there very strongly. Let me just put it this way. The prophet of God stood in a very unique relationship to God. And with high, high, high privilege comes high, high, high responsibility. It would be much more like James 3:1 than any other thing where it says, "Stop being so many teachers, for theirs is a great condemnation." The more ministry you bite off, the more accountable you are. That's like Hebrews 13:17 says, "Submit yourselves to those who have the rule over you because they have to give an account for what they do."

In other words, you know, when you run real fast to get in the ministry, you better stop and realize what's involved. And here you have a very unique and very special and very personal thing. God says to Ezekiel, "You're a prophet, you're anointed by Me, you're called by Me to a unique office, you better be faithful to that office or you'll be required to pay a price." I don't think he would have lost his salvation. I just think he would have demonstrated unfaithfulness and been severely chastened by God.

Now that is not something that can be extrapolated out of that thing and apply to every believer as if to say that the blood of every unbeliever who dies and goes to hell that we might have witnessed to is on our hands. I think it's a completely different situation. And I think that you'll never find anywhere in Scripture that I'm responsible for somebody else's lostness. The only thing I find in Scripture is I'm

responsible to be obedient to take the message to everyone. But you find in Scripture, if I was responsible for somebody being lost, then I ought to go to hell. But every person is responsible. And that's in the eighteenth chapter. And he clarifies that there so that where we all fit together is different where a distinct prophet of God fits in his relationship to God. Okay? And last…

JESSE: Hi, John, my name is Jesse.

JOHN: Hi, Jesse.

JESSE: My question concerns the end of times. If I understand you correctly, last Sunday you say that the church won't be here when all the events must unfold, take place.

JOHN: I believe the church will be Raptured before the events of Matthew 24, right?

JESSE: Okay, then I have a question for you here. Okay, in Matthew 24 Jesus uses the pronoun "you," referring to all the believers. Who would be around ??? ??? But in one way or another, the "you" in the future has an attachment to the you of that particular period, namely the Apostles. Okay. The question was answering their question, and therefore He says to them, "You," and He exhausts them and encourages them on ????? Okay. And then, to me I see that Christ saw the existing body of believers which later were pioneers of the church as of the same body as those who will be around in the Tribulation time. And second thing, in verse 9 of Matthew 24, Christ says you'll be hated by all nations on account of My name, which purports that this will be Christ's disciples. And in verse 22…or 24, He calls them the elect and in John chapter 11 verse 2, Caiaphas was prophesying and he didn't know it and the Bible says that, that now he did not say on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, the prophet said that Jesus was going to die for the nation.

JOHN: Right.

JESSE: Not for the nation only but that He might also gather together into one the children of God who was carried abroad. And in chapter 10 of the same book, he says in verse 16, "I have other sheep which are not of this fold, I must bring them also and they shall hear My voice and they shall become one flock. Okay. If the church won't go through the Rapture and yet Matthew…

JOHN: Won't go through the Tribulation, you mean.

JESSE: Uh-huh, the Tribulation, that's right. In Matthew 24, has some believers who will be in the Tribulation. How do we separate the church and this people since the Bible has ??? ??? ???

JOHN: I think we only separate them by virtue of the Rapture, that's all. In other words, I think that the people who are redeemed in the Tribulation…the Rapture's not dealt with in Matthew 24 so it's very difficult to stick it in there. I only did that because people would wonder where does this happen? Who

is He talking about? The Rapture is something you've got to deal with. You've got to put it someplace, okay? Definitely have to put it someplace. If you put it at the end of the Tribulation, you've got all kinds of problems because you've got two things happening at once. You've got the righteous being taken out and you've got the unrighteous being taken out at the same time. It doesn't make sense. There's a lot of problems with that. So I think that there's reason to put the Rapture at the beginning.

Now having said that, I think the Lord will take away His church in a restraining influence. He takes away the church. Now, I think He then redeems people on the earth. They are, for all intents and purposes, a part of the one flock, they are a part of the one group. They come to Christ through faith just like anybody else does. There's no distinction there. They are redeemed from out of all the tribes and tongues and peoples and nations, and they're redeemed by the blood of the lamb, the whole process of salvation is exactly the same as its always been. The only distinction I see is the removal of the church during the period of time of judgment on the earth. And out of that judgment there is a group of people redeemed who will be brought together with the other people who are redeemed jut as we've been brought together in the future, yet with those Old Testament saints. The Old Testament saints, you realize now they're spiritually with the Lord, their bodies have not yet been resurrection according to Daniel 12, they have yet to wait the day of resurrection when final judgment comes and final glory for their bodies. Some of them…there's going to be Tribulation saints who have a resurrection at the end of the time.

So I understand what you're saying, and what you're saying is if the church is taken out, then what is this group? I just see them as an extension of God's redeemed people, that's all…that's all. You have Old Testament people, you have people in this period of time. You'll have people in that period of time. Some of them are definitely Jews. Some of them are Gentiles from all over the world. They are a part of the one redeemed people. It's the same as Hebrews tells us in Hebrews chapter 12 where it says that we are also identified with the innumerable hosts, the spirits of just men made perfect. We are all one with that innumerable company in heaven already. So I don't see a problem with that. All I see is that the Rapture unique occurs to remove the redeemed people for the judgment on the earth. And out of that judgment, other redeemed people are gathered together, just as they were in the Old Testament, to be collected all together in one great flock for eternity. Okay? That's a good question. Thank you.

Let's stand for prayer and we'll be dismissed.

Father, thank You for our time tonight around Your Word. What a great time. We thank You for Your love to us and we ask You to bring us back these nights for the concert with hopeful hearts and with our friends so that they can hear the message of Jesus Christ. Bless each concert and bless us on the Lord's Day, we look forward to it with joy and thanksgiving in Christ's name. Amen.

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