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

Bible Questions and Answers, Part 30
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: 70-2

We want to have some time tonight because this is just a kind of a special family time and we want you to feel like that tonight. I know that many of you are new in the Lord and some of you are growing in the Lord into new dimensions of spiritual experience. Some of you have questions on your mind. And we've learned through the years that as our church continues to grow and minister, we have new people coming in all the time and it's hard to keep them up to speed. You know, you get here now and you didn't hear what we taught a month ago or a year ago or three years or four or five years ago. And those of us who have been around a long time tend to forget maybe that you're not in on all those things that we've already learned and are beginning to build our lives on. And so, we like to stop periodically and have a...just an open time with our church family where you can ask questions related to the Word of God and the Christian life.

And that's what we want to do tonight.

And we know that many people are away. And this is an extremely busy time. And so we take a little bit of a break and not wanting to go on in Romans and miss the folks who couldn't be with us...this way we can have a very special evening of question and answer. We're going to be done and dismissed right at 7:30 so we have just about an hour for you to ask your questions and hopefully get a biblical answer. There should be three microphones somewhere in the aisles. I'm going to ask three of our men if they'll go...Bill and Dennis and Roy. And they're just going to be there to assist you in articulating your question and you can give the question to them so they'll know what you're going to ask and we'll allow you to ask it from there.

We hope we can cover as much ground as possible. It helps us if you kind of keep the question to a question and not start out with a long background. If it's absolutely necessary to clarify it, that's fine. But we want you to just feel free to come right to the issue. You may want to ask a question about the Bible. You may want to ask a question about the church and its ministry, about me and my ministry...or something in your own Christian life you don't understand. We wish that it would be a time when you ask the question that's really on your heart. As I've said before, it's not stump the pastor. That's not too difficult. You're not trying to think up one that you know no one can answer. But to ask a question that is on your heart so that we can deal with some of the important issues. So if you want to just step up behind one of these three microphones where they are and feel free...we shouldn't have the line anymore than maybe four or five people in each line so that you don't wind up standing there for a prolonged period of time. All right?

Okay. Dennis, we'll start right over there with that side.

Tell us your name first.

QUESTION: Okay, my name is Todd Draa and, let's see, in the Bible when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, I've been reading about that and then Hebrews 9:27, I saw that it said, "And inasmuch as it is appointed men to die once and after this comes judgment," how could we explain that because Lazarus was dead but then had been raised from the dead, so that would mean he would have to die a second time?

JOHN: Yes, good question, Todd. The question he's asking is how can it be that the Hebrews 9:27 passage is all inclusive, "It is appointed unto men once to die," if Lazarus in fact died twice?

I'll ask you a question, Todd. What about Enoch? He didn't die at all. So you've got at least one person who never died at all, and you've got Lazarus who died twice and you have not only Lazarus but a lot of other folks who died twice. In fact, anyone who was ever raised from the dead died twice. When Jesus died on the cross, it says the graves were opened and all kinds of Old Testament saints came back to life, so they had to die twice.

Then you have the people that Jesus raised, the son of...the daughter of Jairus and the son of the widow of Nain, you have the ones who were raised by Elijah the prophet from the dead. All of those people died twice. Then you have to answer the question of what about the Rapture, a whole population of Christians aren't even going to die once. They're going to be raptured to heaven.

So what we assume then from all of that biblical data is that the statement of Hebrews 9:27 is a general statement to which there are by God's design certain exceptions.

And we need not fear that. It's still true that it is appointed unto men once to die. That is the norm...men die. It is extremely unusual when they don't die. And we can count on death. In fact, in history you can count the history that didn't die by just counting Enoch and maybe Elijah was translated in a whirlwind, but there are less than a handful...out of the millions and millions that have died. And of those who have died twice, that's also a very small group of people who were raised from the dead. And yet in the future there will be a whole group of Christians who will miss death because of the Rapture. We'd like to be in that group, wouldn't we? But we just know that the principle of Hebrews 9 is still true that men die and they die once and then they face God's judgment. So we take it as a general principle in that regard. Good question.

QUESTION: Hi, John. My name is Willy. Before I ask my question, I just want to point out two verses, otherwise I know you'll cut me off before I get them in.

JOHN: I didn't hear that, fortunately.

Q: Okay, the first verse is John 3:6, it says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." And the other verse is Matthew 22:30, "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels in heaven." Now my question is about Genesis 6:4, and I know you've answered this before but I'm wondering in reference to those two verses how you would fit the spirits, the angels, well, not the angels but the demons cohabiting with women on earth and could not that verse also mean that the sons of God would be godly men and the daughters of men would be ungodly women?

J: Well, there's several problems with that. Genesis 6 says that the sons of God cohabitated with the daughters of men. Some would like to believe that the sons of God refers to godly men and that the women are ungodly women. Of course they wouldn't be very godly men, would they, if they cohabitated with ungodly women? Others say that the sons of God there refer to fallen angels who cohabitated with women. That tends to be the view that I take based upon 1 Peter and Jude in which you have angels who left their first habitation. And he identifies them as being at the time of Noah when the flood came which is when Genesis 6 identifies that incident.

Now, the question he's asking is, if this is true that these fallen angels cohabitated with women, how do you explain the Scripture, "that which is born of the spirit is spirit," that is angels are spirit beings, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," flesh are human beings, and if those two are distinct, how can spirit beings and fleshly beings come together? That's basically your question.

The only way that could be possible would be in the event that demons were able to take over some kind of human form. All right? And I believe there is indication in Scripture that both holy angels and demons can indeed do that. If you remember in the Old Testament you will remember that Jacob wrestled with an angel. You will remember that two angels came to Sodom in Genesis 19 and there the homosexual population of Sodom tried to attack those angels which were in enough of a human form to appeal to them in a lustful way. You will also remember that it says in Hebrews 13:2 that people have entertained angels unaware, that is that they have appeared in such human form that they were indistinguishable...they were not distinguishable as angels. A classic illustration would be in the eighteenth chapter of Genesis where Abraham serves a meal to God and two visiting angels because they take on a form. Now if angels can eat a meal, then angels can take on a physical form. They are spirit beings, but there are times in the Old Testament such as Jacob wrestling with an angel, when angels have taken on human form...holy angels.

We can assume also that fallen angels can appear in a human form. Satan...there are illustrations of Satan appearing within someone, controlling someone, to what extent we don't know. It may well have been that in that time there were human beings who were so totally possessed by demons that

they in fact were the ones who were engaged in that.

But I really don't think that violates the idea. Spirit beings are spirit beings, human beings are human beings, spirit beings by illustration in Old and New Testament times can take on human form, can appear in a human form and that way be visible to men and in contact with men.

Q: Okay, so are you saying that in this situation in Genesis 6:4 that they took on a form of humans or that they possessed a human?

J: I don't know. I don't know how it happened because there's not any information about that. I don't think they can just go...snap...like that and take on human form as such, it's not a magic thing. They have access to human form. I don't know whether they took on a human form that was distinctly given only to them, or whether they possessed certain people and totally dominated that form. I really don't know the answer to that. I do know that they left their first habitation, that they became something that was not true to their nature and therein was their condemnation, according to Jude.

Q: Okay, thank you.

J: Uh-hum.

QUESTION: In the genealogies of Matthew and Luke, on the surface there appears to be some difficulties. And I'm dealing with that right now. In Luke chapter 1, how can we be assured that Luke is tracing the genealogy of Jesus through Mary's decent. And also, can you recommend a book that deals in depth with the genealogies of Matthew and Luke and attempts to harmonize them?

JOHN: Matthew gives the genealogy in chapter 1. Luke gives it in chapter 3. We believe that Matthew gives the genealogy of the Lord through the line of Joseph. Okay? And that the best explanation of the line of the genealogy of chapter 3 of Luke that it is the genealogy of Mary.

Now, the key thing is you have to study those in detail.

There are many, many good sources. I would suggest to you that if you're looking for a good source, William Hendricksen's commentary on Luke is excellent. He has an excellent section on that particular genealogy. The real problem with it, you go all the way...it's different than the genealogy of Matthew 1, right? it's different. There are different names. So we know that it takes a different turn. You have to realize this. Joseph is in the line of David and so is Mary. But Joseph came down through a different family. In other words, you have David here and off of David children and off of them children, so you've got a lot of ways you could still be a son of David or a child of David or in the Davidic line.

Joseph comes through one of those channels. Mary comes through another. We know that because the names in the genealogy are different. So they're coming down through different lines.

The reason we assume that the Matthew genealogy is indeed the genealogy of Joseph is because that's exactly what it says in verse 16. Jacob begot Joseph. So it tells us it's down to Joseph.

Now when you come to Luke, what is most interesting is that the genealogy of Matthew starts, you know, with David and goes to Joseph. The genealogy of Luke starts with Mary and goes backwards, tracing it the other way. But what is intriguing is that it never says Mary. And that's where the confusion comes.

It says in verse 23 of Luke 3, "And Jesus Himself began to be about 30 years of age, being as was supposed the son of Joseph who was of Heli, who was of Matthat," and then it starts going backward.

Now, what you have to recognize there is genealogies, for the most part, do not incorporate the name of the woman. And the reason that Joseph's name appears here is because it is normal to place him in the line through his father. Mary is not mentioned because it was not normal to trace that through the woman. But, what is stated here is very unique because it says Jesus Himself began to be about 30 years of age being as it was supposed the son of Joseph. So this genealogy does not trace it through Joseph, it says he was only supposedly the son of Joseph. And so we believe that such a statement is a statement that is attempting to be consistent with the male genealogy and yet demonstrate that in fact it is not Joseph that is the issue here, but Mary. And she, though unnamed, is there in the implication of the fact that he was only supposedly the son of Joseph.

Q: Very good, thank you.

J: And the difference in the two fathers, you have Jacob begotting Joseph in Matthew and you have Heli begotting the one who begets Jesus. So you have two different fathers. So we're sure this is the genealogy of Mary. And what's marvelous about it is that Jesus Christ is the one who should rule every way you look at it. He comes through the Davidic line by His father, He comes through the Davidic line by His mother.

You say, "Is that important?" It's extremely important in Jesus case and I'll tell you why. Because you've got your right to rule through what member of your parents...what parent? Your father...your father gave you the right to rule. I mean, that's the way it is. And so, Jesus then had to be the son of Joseph legally but He could not be the son of Joseph physically because Joseph was in a part of the Davidic line that came through a man named Jechoniah and Jechoniah had been cursed and it was said that no son of Jechoniah would ever reign. And so he had to be in that line but he couldn't be of that line. In other words, you couldn't be born of the heritage of Jechoniah but He had to be in that

line to receive the right to rule. So Joseph gave Him the legal right to rule without giving Him the polluted line of Jechoniah. So He got His genetic right to rule through Mary who was also of David and His legal right through Joseph. So every element of those genealogies is essential to Christ's right to the throne.

Yes?

QUESTION: Hi, John. My name is Wayne. There seems to be a big problem in the church today concerning the doctrine of eternal security. Most Christians, Charismatics and even evangelical believe you can lose your salvation. Now one of the arguments they use is Revelation 3:5 which says, "He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments and I will not erase his name from the book of life and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

Now they point out two things. Number one, that "overcome"

is in a present tense and that means you have to work in order to keep your salvation. And they also say that God has an eraser and He will use it to remove your name from the book. Now please comment on this verse and also explain what Moses meant in Exodus 32:32 when he said, "But now if Thou wilt, forgive their sin and if not, please blot me out from Thy book which Thou hast written."

JOHN: Good, and that's very concise, Wayne. Thank you. I love that verse in Revelation 3:5, that is the greatest verse. That's one of the best verses in all the Bible on eternal security. I don't know how those people can do that with that verse. And people say, "Well, you see right there, you're liable to get your name blotted out of the book."

Now I want to explain that verse. In Revelation 3:5 it says, "He that is overcoming..." He that is an overcomer. Now how do you get to be an overcomer? Who wrote Revelation?

Q: John.

J: John...so we ought to ask John. "John, what is an overcomer?

What are you talking about? What do you mean by this?" Well, John will tell us that we have overcome, verse 4 of 1 John 5, John says, "For whatever, or whoever is born of God is overcoming the world." So the overcomers are the people born of God. "And this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our...what?...faith." So saving faith makes us an overcomer.

Saving faith makes you an overcomer, you're born of God.

So now in verse 5 of Revelation 3 we know what he's talking about...the one who is a Christian who by faith in Jesus Christ has been born again, has overcome the world. The world is no longer his

master. He is an overcomer. That's the definition of a Christian. So he says the one who that is an overcomer, the same will be clothed in white raiment. Is that conditional? Is there any other condition except being an overcomer? No. If you are an overcomer and you overcome by your faith and you are born again, then you will be clothed in white raiment. That is an absolute fact. There are no other conditions to that. The day will come when you enter into the glory of the presence of the Lord and He will clothe you in the brilliance of pure and holy reality forever and ever. "And I will not blot his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

Now what the Lord says here is not that He will blot our name but...what? That He will not. Now how you can get eternal insecurity out of that, I do not know. He says I will not do that. Now where did he get that? This is written to the church at Sardis and Sardis...they had a basic principle in terms of the city and citizenry that many cities in the ancient world had.

When you came into the city, you were written on the rolls of the city. And you were identified as a member of that city. And that was an honor, you belonged to that place. But if you committed some criminal act, or if you discredited yourself, or if you dishonored the city in any way, brought reproach upon it, they would erase you out of that city roll and you then would be dispossessed and disinfranchised, you would be--if you will--a man without a city.

And what God is saying is they may do that to you in Sardis, but I'll never do that to you no matter what you do, if you have put your faith in Me and are by virtue of saving faith an overcomer, you will be clothed in white garment which was used for very honored people in the city for the highest honor the city could give. I promise to do that and in no condition will I ever do to you what men do to men. I will never blot you out but I will affirm you, I will confess you before My Father and before His angels. This is a gilt-edged guarantee that you can't lose your salvation. So when they pick on that verse, they're in real trouble.

Now you're asking about Moses. And Moses is saying, "O Lord, if You don't do something with this people, blot my name out." He is really saying essentially the same thing Paul said in spirit in Romans 9 where he says, "I could almost wish myself accursed for the sake of my kinsmen, my brethren, right?

Israel." In other words, I could almost come to the point where I say, "God, I'm so concerned about the salvation of Israel that damn me and save them." Well, that's really what Moses is saying. It isn't necessarily that he's articulating some theological concept, what he is saying is, "O Lord, my passion runs so deep, I have such a great concern for this people that I wish you'd do something for this people. And, O God, if You're not going to do anything for this people that I love, I can't bear the burden, just eliminate me." This is the outcry of an impassioned heart. And you don't...you don't find the doctrine of insecurity in that outburst of passion. There's nothing Moses says there about whether or not that could happen, he just is pouring out the emotion of his own heart.

And when you want to affirm the doctrine of security, there's two passages that I would recommend to you that are unanswerable. John 10 and Romans 8...in fact, we did a series, a rather protracted series on Romans chapter 8 on the security of the believer. Anybody, I believe, who could sit and listen to that entire series and not believe in the security of true salvation has an unwilling mind. And that may be the problem.

And then I think part of the reason people do that...believe in insecurity is because they can't explain certain people's behavior. In other words, they say, "Well, what about my Aunt Ethel, she came to church for a long time and then totally bombed out." And they don't know what happened, so they explain it as the loss of salvation. The Bible explained it as never having had it, right? First John 2:17, "They went out from us because they were not of us, if they had been of us they would have continued with us but they went out from us that it might be made manifest they never were of us." So I don't think...I don't think that Revelation 3 does anything but affirm the fact that the Lord's going to do for us what He promises, a white raiment, He's going to keep us in His book forever, confess us before God and angels and men may blot people out, but God doesn't do that.

Okay? Thank you.

QUESTION: Preach it, John. Hi, this is Carla. I have a few quick questions. I hate to admit that I still don't understand the significance of the covenant of circumcision in the Old Testament as opposed to ear piercing. And also, I'd like your comment on pregnant women that go to practioners that perform abortions for their pre-natal care and deliveries, please.

JOHN: Okay, the first question has to do with circumcision.

What is the purpose of circumcision? The best way to say it is this. We learn by object lessons, okay? Especially in a more primitive time in the unfolding of God's revelation in the Old Testament, God gave His people many, many object lessons, didn't He? I mean, just...just their whole religion was a series of object lessons. Life was filled with ceremonies and ceremonies and ceremonies and ceremonies, ritual upon ritual upon ritual.

There was this thing to do and that thing to do and the other thing to do. And this was symbolic in so many, many cases.

Every animal that was ever sacrificed was a symbol of the ultimate sacrifice of Christ, right? Every cleansing, every washing of a pot, washing of a pan, washing of the hands, washing of the feet, every ceremonial washing they went through was a symbol of the inward washing of the heart. In the Old Testament economy God was always giving out outward symbols to identify what He wanted to say about inward responses and inward attitudes.

Now circumcision is one of those very same things. And circumcision was a symbol of cleansing. And when a child, a baby was born, at the eighth day, the foreskin was removed and it was in a way a symbol of the removal of sin from the life. In other words, God was saying to them...and you do it all the time, all the time...it's painful, it's bloody, and so forth and so on...and the picture was what God is doing here is giving you a symbol of what He wants to do in your heart. And that's why the Bible says circumcise your hearts, you know, cut off that which contributes to your uncleanness, cut that off so that the outward symbol is only a sign or an indication of what God wanted done in the heart. And H makes that very clear throughout the Old Testament. Circumcise your heart...circumcise your hearts, comes the cry of the Old Testament. And so, circumcision was just another one of God's symbols. And it was a very dominant one.

Every child that was born went through that and it was a way to constantly remind the people that there was an inner reality of cleansing that God was after.

Q: Okay, so excuse me...so was the idea of having some picture of cleansing and being cut off and not necessarily some kind of physical identification, that was sort of like...

J: It was a physical identification because of the fact that it was unique to the people of God.

Q: But it sort of came because of the cleansing issue.

J: That's right, it was a symbol of cleansing.

Q: That wasn't the main issue, the identification.

J: No, there were many main issues. Every animal sacrifice was also an identification of a child of God in the Jewish era, a covenant child.

Q: Okay, that helps.

J: There were many of them. They, you know, grabbed on to that and that became the mark. I think that was more...by the time you get to the New Testament, that was more an aberration of God's intention than anything else because they had lost the meaning of it and they were just doing it and it became for them a symbol of God's blessing no matter how they lived. And so what they did was, they never did bother to circumcise their hearts.

They never did bother to take care of the inside. They thought themselves to be right with God based upon what they did on the outside. And that's why in Romans chapter 2, Paul says in verse 28, "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly and circumcision is of the heart in the spirit and not in the letter." See. So

what they had come to was just a symbol without any meaning...without any impact. And so the basic symbol was a symbol of cleansing, that's right.

Now your second question had to do with abortion.

Q: Well, I would just like your comment on..on pregnant women that see practioners that perform abortions for their prenatal care and delivery.

J: Oh, I see, you mean going to a medical doctor not to have an abortion but going to one who does abortions.

Q: Yeah, who in a sense is kind of schizophrenic.

J: Well, let me put it as bluntly as I can. They're murderers.

They're just absolute wholesale murderers. I don't...they may have licenses and so forth and so on, but killing a child in the womb is murder. And God defines it as murder. We're going to get into that, by the way, in the month of January when we get into Romans 13. It is murder. There's no question in my mind.

And there's no question in the mind of the Scripture writers that it is murder. And we'll point the reasons out for that.

I suppose we could make it very crass and say, "If you want to go to a murderer for your prenatal care, that's your choice."

I would find it very difficult to do that. I believe with all my heart that the taking of an unborn child's life is murder, it is a prerogative we do not have, that is a creation of God. You can argue all you want about how much that person is a person, but I'll tell you this, it is a creation of God and that is unarguable. And once there is a creation of God and you have taken that life, that's murder.

Now, people say, "Well, it isn't a full person." Yeah, but if you leave it alone it will be all a person could ever be, but you're stopping that process. I believe also, as I'm going to point out in a few weeks, that God's going to judge this nation.

I think we're on the road to the end of what we've known as the greatest of our land and I think much of it is related to our abortion rate. You see, in the Old Testament you have myriad of passages where the Bible talks about how God says there must be blood for blood, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life, and what we've done in America is murder millions and millions of persons that God has created with no retribution, with no punishment, with no justice. And so what we have is a bloody nation, blood on our hands. We have an absolutely escalated blood guiltiness before

a God who demands a life for a life and I believe we are in such deep debt of blood guiltiness that as it says in the Old Testament, "The ground cries out for thy brother's blood." Cain and Abel and it says later on the land is polluted with the blood of those who have been murdered, unrequited blood, that our think our nation is under the sentence of God for blood guiltiness. I think it's a very severe thing.

And I don't think there's anyway around it. Now there may be some doctors who don't understand what the Bible teaches.

There may be some people who advocate therapeutic abortion, or whatever, but plain and simply from a scriptural definition, taking a life is murder. And I would have a very difficult time entrusting the care of any living thing to a person who would do that. Okay?

Q: Yeah...amen. Thank you.

QUESTION: Hi, my name is Beverly and I wanted to ask, does a Christian have an old nature?

JOHN: Does a Christian have an old nature?

Q: Yes.

J: Okay, back to Romans 6:7, all right. It's a hard thing to just explain this briefly, but I'm going to make a stab at it, Beverly, all right?

I believe that you have to start with this...the Bible never uses the term "old nature," but that's not a problem it never uses the term "new nature" either. So we have to realize those are artificial terms that we have sort of conjured up. But when you say, does a person have an old nature, what you're basically saying and most of us have come out of that background if we've been Christians for very long, that you used to be just an old nature, that's all you were...sin, sin, sin. And then you got saved, you got a new nature. Now you have a new nature and an old nature and they fight each other, right? Like the black dog and the white dog, and they used to tell me the black dog is the old nature, the white dog is the new nature and the one will win...the one you say, "Sic 'em" to will win. So say "sic 'em to the new nature, the white dog and so forth and so on.

Well, there is a rather severe what we would call epistemological problem inherent in that view. The problem with that view is it makes salvation addition. In other words, when I get saved, nothing happens to my old nature, I just get something else. So salvation is not transformation, it's addition. In other words, I was an old nature, I'm still an old nature, I just got something. So nothing changed, just something new was added.

That is very difficult to defend scripturally, that salvation is addition. Everything I read about it is that if any man be in Christ he is...what?...he is a new creation. It's got to be metamorphosis, it has to be

transformation.

And so, what I believe then is that you, your old person, your old man, your old nature is transformed, it is eliminated in the sense of...in the reality of conversion. And you become a new creation. Do you have an old creation? No, no, not in the sense that your old one is still there fully intact just like it was and now you've got a new one side by side with it. No. But your new nature still has a problem and that is sin that is in you in your flesh, in your humanness.

So, let me say it this way so I'm not misunderstood. The people who have the idea that you have a new nature and an old nature postulate that idea because they want to acknowledge that sin is still in our lives. And sometimes when I talk about not having an old nature, people go...you know, into hysterics and they say, "Oh, MacArthur doesn't believe you have sin in your life." I didn't say that at all...just don't call it an old nature, just call it what the Bible calls it, sin that is in me that is in my flesh. So as long as I have humanness, I have sin.

But I am one new creation, a creation in Christ.

So, the answer to your question is no, we do not have an old nature. Yes, sin is still there. But let's use biblical terms and let's not say we're an old nature and a new nature, and make conversion look like it was addition rather than transformation.

Okay?

Q: Okay...thank you.

J: You're welcome.

QUESTION: Hi, my name is Brett. And I wanted to ask you, in the Bible where it says no man can see God and live, Isaiah says that he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up. And I wanted to ask you, how can he see God?

JOHN: Right...well, what it's intending to say in the...you're talking about Exodus chapter 32 and 33 where Moses is calling for a vision of God and the Bible says, "No man...God says...no man can see Me and live," and that is true.

What Isaiah saw was in a vision. It was not in reality the full glory of God. If you read that text you'll see that. "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord high and lifted up and His train filled the temple," and so forth and so on. And Isaiah is seeing a vision, that is a vision of God which he was able to see and still live. As I have said many times, a vision of God is somewhere between a dream and reality. It's not just a dream and it's not full reality. But he has this incredible and marvelous vision of God.

Now, the only thing we can say in reference to the Exodus passage is that he didn't see all there was to see or he would have been consumed. Now that's not inconsistent with Exodus either because you remember God says to Moses, "No man can see Me and live." So then God takes Moses, and if you keep reading in that passage in Exodus 32 and 33, He tucks Moses in the cleft of a rock, you remember that? And He says, "You stay in that rock and I'll let My glory pass by." And I cannot...He says, "I cannot show you My face, but I will reveal to you," and He uses the Hebrew term that means back parts, "I will reveal to you My back parts." In other words, there is a part of Me which you can see and live, but the fullness of My glory you could see and it would consume you. So whatever it was that Moses saw was not fatal, it was not the fullness of His glory.

Listen, when Christ came into the world, did He come in His full glory? No, He came in veiled glory, right? Veiled in human flesh. When He comes the second time, He comes in blazing glory and people scream for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them to hide them from His consuming presence. So it's only a question of a controlled revelation of God.

Listen, the Bible is a revelation of God. The Bible is God revealed, right? It is a veiled revelation. When you came to Christ, the Holy Spirit came into your life, that is a revelation of God. And if the Holy Spirit came to you in the fullness of infinite glory, you'd be consumed too. So all the revelation of God to man in a way is veiled so that man is able to deal with that. And what God is saying, if you saw My face, that is the fullest expression of who I am, you'd be consumed. Okay?

Q: Could I ask you one more?

J: Uh-huh.

Q: Okay, so if you saw God you would die instantly. Right?

J: Well, here was Isaiah and he only saw a portion of God in a vision and he felt like he was dying on the spot.

Q: Okay. What would...okay, I've been studying a lot about Mormonism, what would a Mormon theologian say about Joseph Smith saying that he saw God the Father? How do they answer that?

That should be really...

J: Well, I'm not sure I know...I certainly couldn't...I wouldn't know how to offer an apologetic for Mormon theology. I mean, it's so screwy anyway, it wouldn't necessarily have to be logical. I don't know what they would say, but they would find some way to give you a defense or an apology for it. I really don't know how they would do that. I don't want to put myself into their situation, but they would just say, you know, Joseph Smith was given a special dispensation to see God, or else they might

even say like we said here, well, he saw God in the same way Moses saw God in a limited way so that it didn't destroy him.

I don't know what they'd say. But I'll promise you one thing, Joseph Smith didn't see God.

Q: Oh, I know that.

J: He saw something, but it wasn't God.

QUESTION: Hi, John. My name is Jeff and I have a question from Ecclesiastes chapter 9. And I'll just read verse 5, it says, "For the living know that they shall die, but the dead know not anything." And then down in verse 10 it talks about almost the same thing. "Whatsoever the hand findeth to do, do it with thy might for there is no work, nor knowledge nor wisdom in the grave where there goest."

There are those who have espoused the doctrine of soul sleep or annihilation of the dead and this is their proof text. How do we reconcile that with other doctrine in the New Testament.

JOHN: Yeah, it's a good question, Jeff. Let me give you just a little background. The book of Ecclesiastes is a very interesting book. And you have to understand some very basic things about Ecclesiastes, okay? Ecclesiastes doesn't always tell you the truth, are you ready for that? Did you get that?

Q: Yes.

J: You say, "Oh-oh, heresy." Well listen, Ecclesiastes doesn't always tell you the truth. Listen to this, is this the truth?

"Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Is that the truth? Is everything emptiness? Is everything uselessness?

"What profit has a man if all his labor which he takes under the sun, one generation passes away, another generation comes, the earth abides forever." Is that true? The earth going to abide forever? "The sun rises, the sun goes down, it hastes to its place. The wind goes toward the south, turns to the north. The rivers run to the sea yet the sea is not full. All things are full of labor. Men can't utter it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing. The ear is not filled with hearing. The thing that has been is that which shall be."

You know what that is? That's a cynic caught in the cycles of life without God. See. Ecclesiastes is a book written from the viewpoint of a cynical man without God. It stands alone in all the Bible as a unique book articulating how a man approaches the cycles of life without God. And he goes on to talk about all the emptiness and all the vanity and he said, "I'll try...in chapter 2...I'll try parties, and I'll try

mirth and I'll try pleasure and it was all vanity and I said about laughter it is mad and about joy what good does it do. And I decided in my heart to give myself to wine." Is that true? Should we do that?

Go get bombed? So, "I tried being a drunk and I planted vineyards and I made gardens and I made orchards and I made pools of water and I got servants and maidens and had servants born in my house and had great possessions of herds and flocks and I had silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces and men singers and women singers and the delights of the sons of men and musical instruments and all sorts and I was great and I increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem. And my wisdom remained with me and whatever my eye desired, I kept not from them. And I withheld not my heart from any joy. My heart rejoiced in all my labor. And this was my portion of all my labor."

I got it all, he says, and I looked on the works my hands had wrought and on the labor I had labored to do and behold, it was nothing. There's no profit under the sun.

You know something, this sounds like it was written by Ernest Hemingway. It does. It's cynical. It's a...it's the musings of a man who is caught in the trap of the cycles of life without God.

Q: And so that's the obvious conclusion he comes to then without a proper view of God.

J: Yes, and he comes to the view...what he is saying is grab it in life, man. He's saying grab it in life because you're not going to get it in death. And you might as well do it now, and say it now, and have it now cause you aren't going to do it and say it and have it then. And it's just a man without God who sees nothing in the grave but darkness. It's very insightful.

And, of course, the...there's a turning, we believe, in verse 1 of chapter 12 where he says, "Remember now...what?...remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth."

I mean, while you're young get God in there because if you don't, you're going to be a cynical old man and it will all seem like nothing to you. See. So this is not a good book to go to defend. If you're going to defend that, you're going to have to defend every other thing in this book, see.

Q: Okay, thank you.

J: Thank you, Jeff.

QUESTION: Hi, John. My name is Mark. And I have a question about Romans 5:13 says, "Until the love...until the law sin was in the world but sin is not imputed when there is no law." My question is, before the law was given did people like Adam become eternally separated from God because of their sin?

JOHN: Yes they did. Sin always separates from God. But that's because in a real sense the law was always present. You remember in the second chapter of Romans he says, "Even those who are without the written law have the law of God written in their hearts?" And what Romans is simply telling us is that where there is no law there is no imputation of sin. But the truth is, there is nowhere where there is no law, really.

Now it is true that in the Old Testament time when the law was not as fully revealed and was not as sophisticated as it was in later times, God was more patient with men. And God overlooked some of their evil and withheld His judgment and His wrath because it was a primitive time, or a more primitive time as the law was still unfolding and men were still coming to grips with the things of God. But basically the verse is simply intending to say of Adam, by one man's sin entered into the world. Well, it came by Adam, he must have sinned. And sin is separation from God. And the proof of it is he was kicked out of the garden, right? God said, "No longer will you walk and talk with Me in this garden of paradise, you're gone." And He put a flaming sword in the hand of an angel at the east of the garden to keep him from coming back in there because he had no right to fellowship with God anymore.

So, yes he was separated from God. And through him death came on all men. But God withheld, or God withholds any punishment where there's no law. But the truth is, all men understand in conscience or in revelation the law of God. That's a simple explanation for you. Okay?

Q: Thanks.

J: Good question. And the tape I did on Romans 5 will cover that in more detail. If you'd like, you can pick that up, stop at the tape room out there and tell them I told them to give it to you as a gift, okay?

QUESTION: Hi, John. My name is Fred. In light of the teaching in Matthew 5 with regard to turning the other cheek and love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you, I'm wondering if you would care to comment specifically on the recent suit of Reverend Jerry Falwell against Larry Flint.

JOHN: Sure.

Q: And secondly, and in generally...if you wouldn't care to do that, that's okay, too. And generally in the area of we as Christians using the courts, I'm not talking about Christian against Christian but Christian against others where we feel someone has harmed us in some way, what should be our attitude to using legal...?

J: Yeah, I would just answer generally, first of all. I don't feel there's anything in Scripture that requires, encourages me, or either one, requires or encourages me, to sue anybody for anything. Okay? In other words, it is not presented in Scripture as a righteous act. It doesn't matter what it is. I

don't see Scripture saying you deserve your pound of flesh, go for it.

What Scripture does say is in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 that I am not allowed to sue another believer, right? Okay, people say, "Well, boy, thank goodness this is not a believer." Right?

And...don't stay away from them, don't you dare give the gospel to those people, I'm not done with them, see. You get them saved, you'll mess up my case. So, we are definitely forbidden to do that.

Now personally I don't find anything in Scripture that says you are not allowed to sue an unbeliever. I don't find anything in Scripture that either mandates me or encourages me to do it.

My own personal heart feeling is that I would never do that. I would never do what Jerry Falwell did. I would never sue Larry Flint for...what?...45 million dollars, or something like that?

I would never...for the simple reason that I would commit it to God. And what it says in Romans 12 is I think right on target, give place to wrath. In other words, give the rightful place to the wrath of God.

Would I rather have me deal with that sinner or God? I'd rather have God deal with that. So, I think I would not do that.

That's my personal feeling for the simple reason that I don't find that that is presented in Scripture as a virtuous act. I do believe that Scripture very clearly does say vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord. And as we have been learning in what you read in Matthew, you know, is whatever they do to you, don't do back to them. Don't play their game. And then as I just quoted out of the twelfth chapter of Romans, it says recompense to no man evil for evil. Don't give back evil for evil. Live peaceably. Don't avenge yourself. I mean, that's clear to me.

Don't avenge yourself.

The only thing I know in Scripture then that does relate to the matter of suing an unbeliever is that Scripture. And so that restrains me from it. So there are several reasons why I wouldn't do it. One, I don't see that it's scripturally provided for me to do it. Secondly, I would rather leave the vengeance to God. Thirdly, it has a very depreciating impact in the eyes of the world on Christians. What in the world do we gain when someone slanders our good name by receiving 45 million dollars?

What does that say? That we want money? Does money compensate us? See. But the only thing you can get in a lawsuit is money...that's all there is there. I mean, that's the whole point. So I find it difficult to understand that kind of thing.

I don't want to second guess Jerry and I don't want to sit in judgment on him. You asked me my feeling and that's it.

Q: Thank you.

QUESTION: Hi. My name is Tanya Wilson. I have a question about the abomination of the desolation. When Antichrist comes into power, is it going to be something that's going to be blatant and out in the open or is it going to be subliminal and really subtle, I mean, something that people aren't really going to know about?

JOHN: You're talking about Matthew 24 where it says in verse 15 that when the time of the Tribulation there will be the abomination of desolation? Taken out of Daniel the prophet?

Q: Yes sir.

J: Yeah, Daniel points to the period known as the Tribulation in the future and he says in the middle of the seven year period of the Tribulation the Antichrist is going to do that which abominates and desolates. And we went through that in Matthew 24 and we saw that basically that means that there will be worship going on in the temple in Jerusalem. The Jews will be back in their worship, back in their religious activity. The Antichrist who makes a pact with them for a brief period of time makes peace, it says in Daniel 9:27. He gives them back their worship.

And in the middle of that period of time as they think it's all going well, all hell begins to break loose and it's initiated by one great event. The Antichrist sweeps into the temple, desecrates the temple, abominates the place, pollutes it.

Now I believe personally that will be an outward overt act.

I don't know exactly what kind of an act it will be. If it's anything parallel to the act of Antiochus Epiphanes during the inter-testimental period, it would be slaughtering a pig on the altar and jamming pork down the throats of the priests. That's what he did.

Now I don't know all of the details of what it will be but I do think it will be a noteworthy act, it will be a reportable act. It might even be an act you can get a photograph of and put in a newspaper.

Q: And could you suggest maybe some more reading that I could do on this?

J: I didn't hear you, you'll have to speak a little louder.

Q: Oh, could you maybe suggest some more reading I could do on this subject?

J: More reading?

Q: Yes.

J: You know, you could listen to the series I did. Did you hear the series I did on Matthew 24?

Q: No.

J: If you listen to that tape series on Matthew 24 and just go to the tape room, tell them that I told them to give you those tapes on Matthew 24...Merry Christmas...and just take them and listen to them. Okay? And I think that will really explain it.

And if you come out of that with more questions, write me a letter and I'll send you a bibliography. Okay?

Q: Thank you.

J: All right.

We only have about eight minutes, and so as many as we can cover in that time and then we're going to break because many of you, I know, are going to go over to somebody's house tonight and eat all that stuff that you've been collecting for the last week, right? And I don't want to...I don't want to break into your fellowship tonight. So, we'll just take a few times...

QUESTION: My name is Willard. And after that comment, I have a question on all of Hebrews....

JOHN: Ha-ha...I know what you want, my commentary, right Willard? Do you have my commentary?

Q: No, sir.

J: Well, go to the bookstore, tell them to put it on my bill.

My wife is independently wealthy. No, do that, will you, I wanted to give you one anyways, so go over to the bookstore and tell them to put it on my bill. Okay?

Q: In Hebrews chapter 12...

J: Whoever is in the bookstore, see what he looks like so you don't get 42 people coming in there...okay, go ahead.

Q: In Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 17, we're told that Esau could not get repentance even though he sought it with tears. I have three basic questions. Why did he not get repentance, or why was he

not given repentance? Number two, can a man sin away his day of grace? That's what it's called, I guess. And number three, is how do I deal with a person that believes or feels that he has sinned away the day of grace?

J: Well, I think...I think there is a sorrow that is not unto true repentance. I think...that's where we have to start. You know, Paul talks about that in Corinthians. He says there is a sorrow not unto repentance, but there is a godly sorrow. I think there is a sorrow that says I wish it hadn't turned out the way it has turned out. I don't like the effect of my sin. I don't like what it's brought to me. I'm sorry I did it because I'm sorry it hurt so much. That's not a godly sorrow. That's the sorrow that comes to one who bears the circumstance or the consequence of his sin.

A godly sorrow is not the sorrow that says I hate my sin because of what it does to me, a godly sorrow is the sorrow that says I hate my sin because of what it does to God. See. And I don't know in the case of Esau but it seems to me that he was an utterly secular man. And everything we know about Esau is that he was hopelessly secular. He wasted away his birthright as we know. And when he sought it, it seems to me that his seeking was always a self-seeking. It was a seeking with tears to recover what he had unwittingly and stupidly forfeited and the loss was his own rather than seeking it for what he had done to the plan and the promise and the hope that was given to him of God.

So I tend to think of this passage not so much...although there is that implication, but initially anyway, a man whose repentance is an illegitimate kind of repentance.

And yes, it may be that there is a time in the life of a person when they go pass the point of grace. In Genesis 6:5 there is that very haunting verse, "My Spirit will not always strive with man." In other words, there comes a time when God shuts off the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. That happened in the pre-flood civilization. And it no doubt can happen again.

I think it's another way to identify an apostate. An apostate is a person who having so long ignored the call of grace, so long sinned against light, reaches a hardness from which the person cannot be delivered, even though as in Esau's case there is great remorse for the consequence of it.

Now I don't know that you can know whether a person has reached that point or not. I don't know. But when you find a person that you think may have come near that point, you need to exhort them all passion. I don't think there's any way to know on their part whether they have if they...unless they continually reject. In other words, the only way you can know a person has passed the point of grace is if they die in that situation. You don't want to say to them, "Well, you're too far gone," we don't know that. But an apostate is one who having had full light and full revelation and full understanding has concluded the very opposite is true. What are you going to say to that person?

What are you going to say to them? If it's just a question of them saying, "Well, I don't know...I don't know...I know I ought to come...I know it's true...and so forth and so on," that's one thing. But an apostate is one who says I understand it all, I don't buy any of it. I reject the whole thing. And that kind of person you may not want to spend a lot of time on. But a person who just resists believing and has not yet turned to condemn that truth as untruth, you may want to do all you can to exhort.

Q: Will repentance result in change?

J: Absolutely...true repentance. Sure. Okay, we have time for just two more. We'll take these two gals and the next time for the rest of you folks....I hate to do that. Thank you for understanding. Yes?

QUESTION: Hi, John. My name is Gena. My question is, Matthew 23:9, it says, "Do not call anyone father," I'm sure it means in a spiritual sense. And then in 1 Corinthians 4:15 it says, Paul is saying you have a lot of tutors in Christ, but I am your father, have become your father through the gospel. Well?

JOHN: Yeah, comparing those two Scriptures...don't call anybody father and yet Paul says I'm your father. Well, we can look at it another way. I think we have to accept what it says in Matthew 23:9, don't call anybody father. What our Lord was saying there was don't look to anybody as if they are the source of your spiritual life. Now in the Pharisaic sense, you see, they believed that they were actually the begetters of spiritual children.

In other words, they were looking at it as a sort of an honor for themselves saying that you are what you are because I have begotten you, I am the one who brought you to faith, I am the one who has brought you into understanding. I am the one who has brought you to God. That basically was not what Paul was saying. Paul was saying I was the one who was used by God in your begetting. And I think that's the difference. It's wrong to call people "father" in the sense that the Pharisees demanded it. It's not wrong to call a person "father" in the sense that they were the instrument of God to bring you to Himself. So it's what's behind it.

And we're back to a very important principle, Gena, that you I'm sure are aware of and you'll see it applied more and more and that is that passages in the Scripture are always interpreted in the light of their context. And the context includes not only the verses around the passage but the historical scene with which you're dealing. And you will find many occasions...the first question we had tonight from Todd was a similar question, he was asking how can it say in Hebrews that everyone's going to die and face the judgment and yet we've got others that don't? Well, you look at the Hebrews passage, you look at the other passages and you see what the context and text is saying. So in the Matthew 23:9 passage He is saying you have abused the privilege of being a spiritual father, you believe yourself to be the source of spiritual life. Whereas Paul is simply saying I was used by God to bring you to the faith. And there's a difference in that.

Okay?

Q: Thank you.

J: Good.

QUESTION: Hi, my name is Becky. And I have a question concerning a verse in Hebrews that says we have a high priest who's been tempted in all things..we are yet without sin. Well, I understand that Jesus was tempted but what I don't understand is if He did not have a sin nature, then how could He have been tempted as strongly as we are?

JOHN: You're looking at Hebrews 4:15, "We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities but was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin?"

Q: Right.

J: Let me ask you this. If you had solid gold, could it be tested in fire?

Q: Uh-huh.

J: If it was tested, what would it prove to be? Gold. Could it pass the test?

Q: Uh-huh.

J: Sure. Does that mean it wasn't tested?

Q: No.

J: Could you take a test, bless the Lord, and get a 100 percent on it? Could you?

Q: No.

J: There's an honest girl. No, I don't mean...I mean could you hypothetically, I mean a real easy test?

Q: Oh yeah.

J: I mean, help me with the illustration, will you? Sure you could, you're very humble. You could take a test and get a 100 percent on it. Does that mean it wasn't a legitimate test? No, it just means that you passed it. The fact that Christ was tempted or tested, that's not a problem. Satan can approach Christ and give Him a test. Because He passes it doesn't make it any less a test, right? So He was

tempted and tested.

In fact, He was tested to extents that we can't understand because usually we fall to the temptation somewhere along the line. And the longer we resist, the harder Satan works. Well, imagine in the case of Christ because He never gave in, He was tempted to the maximum every time. But He passed every test. So the fact that Christ was tested was not to demonstrate that He had a sin nature, but to demonstrate that He was sinless. And because a person is perfect doesn't mean they can't be tested.

It simply means they passed the test.

Q: Okay.

J: So Christ in His absolute perfection passed every trial and test that Satan came...when Satan came and wanted Him to deny God's Word and to take things into His own hands and to obey Satan and disobey God and so forth and so on, those were tests that legitimately were offered to Christ and could be offered to any person, God or man, by the approach of Satan and Christ passed every test. Okay?

Q: Thank you.

J: Uh-huh. Well, as we close tonight, we have a wonderful privilege and what a...we've had a great time, haven't we today?

In looking at God's truth and good questions tonight, boy, just great. I guess I say that because there were ones that I basically knew how to answer, but...I...it's exciting, I really enjoy getting to know what you're thinking. It's very important to me and I rejoice that you're in the Word and you're asking such insightful questions. Really thrilling.

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