

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

Bible Questions and Answers, Part 51

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 70-23

Well, things are open tonight to whatever questions may be upon your heart. There is a pastor, an elder at each of the microphones to kind of filter out the questions a little bit and help you articulate them. I don't think the lines need to get any longer for now. Unless you want to make sure you get your place; you can get in line. But we'll refill those lines as we go. Just give me your name, ask the question as briefly as you can, and I'll do my best to give you an answer. Okay?

HILARY: Hi, my name is Hilary.

JOHN: Hi, Hilary.

HILARY: And my question is I thought I became a Christian 22 years ago. But if I'm more aware of my sin now than I was then, does that mean I'm not a Christian?

JOHN: That's a good question, Hillary. And it does not mean that you're not a Christian. I'm more aware of my sin now than I've ever been. And it seems that every year I live, I become more and more sensitive to my sin. I had nowhere near the sensitivity to sin when I was first converted that I have now. That's part of spiritual maturity. God has a total aversion to sin, and so as you grow spiritually and you become more godly, as you become more like Christ, you have an increasing aversion to sin.

It isn't that...it isn't that you for the first time want forgiveness. It isn't for the first time you recognize your sin. But it is part of spiritual maturity to have an increasing animosity toward sin. That goes with spiritual growth. In fact that stimulates spiritual growth. If I never felt worse about my sin, I'd be content with where I am, right? So it's not only the positive side of learning more about the Lord and wanting to love and worship the Lord. Growing spiritually means becoming more and more aware of how bad I am as I become more and more aware of how glorious He is. Okay? Good. Go on.

QUESTIONER: John, first I want to thank you for being 33 years a pastor here.

JOHN: Thank you.

QUESTIONER: I pray that God will give us at least another 33 year.

JOHN: If you don't mind a babbling idiot up here. When I get to be about a hundred or so, I don't know what I'll be doing. But, anyway, I appreciate it, my friend.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. I have a short question. I don't know how the answer is. I know you're longwinded.

JOHN: This is true. Just ask the question; don't editorialize.

QUESTIONER: I have a debate going with another believer that people who die, believers who die and go to heaven, that they're watching over us. Now, is that something to do with the great cloud of witnesses?

JOHN: Yeah, let me answer that question. Believers who die, there's nothing in the Bible to indicated that they're watching over us. There's nothing to indicate that they are even aware of what's going on down here. Nothing whatsoever. In fact, there's every reason to assume they know nothing about what is going on down here. They are, to put it in the words of the old hymn, "lost in wonder, love and praise."

Once they have entered into the presence of the Lord, you know, absent from the body, present with the Lord, to depart and be with Christ. Once they've left here and entered into the presence of the Lord, there is absolutely a total disconnect from this world. There is no indication in Scripture that they have any further knowledge of or awareness of the things going on in this world. If, in fact, that were the case, that would invade their perfection with imperfection. That would invade their holy environment with sin. That would invade their perfect fulfillment with dissatisfaction. So there is no...nothing in the Scripture to indicate that is the case and everything in the Scripture to indicated that when you leave here you go into the presence of the Lord in which there is fullness of joy forevermore, and your fellowship is with the Church triumphant.

In Hebrews chapter 12, he talks about the fact that we are encompassed about by a great cloud of witnesses. Now, if you understand that, you need to only look at the cloud of witnesses that are identified in the prior chapter. Hebrews 11 lists all those people...the heroes of faith, we call them...from Abraham and Sarah, which is a long passage in Moses and all the way down to the prophets Isaiah and etcetera, etcetera and Gideon and Barak and Jephthah and all those heroes of the faith. In what sense are they a cloud of witnesses? They're not a cloud of witnesses in the sense that they are sitting around witnessing us. Some preachers used to preach that they're like filling a big heavenly stadium and we're running the track down here, and they're all rooting us on. That...that is not the image there.

The picture there is that they are witnesses to the validity of living by faith. They don't witness us. They witness to us about the validity of faith. In other words, they chose faith over everything.

Abraham chose to believe God over his own common sense. Moses chose to disdain the court of Pharaoh and to believe God through his own suffering. And many of those others are listed there who stopped the mouths of lions, who were sawn in half like Isaiah, who, you know, yielded up their lives to death and were martyred. And they are all witnesses to the validity of living by faith in God. And so what we have in that cloud of witnesses is the whole Old Testament history of all the people who were benefited and blessed because they lived by faith. Their testimony is to the power of a life of faith. It's not that they are watching us. Okay?

QUESTIONER: Thank you.

JOHN: Yes. Go ahead.

MARISA: My name is Marisa Hernandez. And my husband and I are missionaries to Arabs and we've been approached by Christian Arabs in this congregation with this question. Allah is the name that thousands and millions of believers in Jesus Christ use for God. As an Arabic speaker, I sing many praises to Allah in the name of Jesus. I was missionaries to Muslims in the Middle East for four years, and I led Muslims to faith in Christ by explaining to them the true character of God, Allah, as explained in the Bible. Will you clarify why you say, "Allah is another name for Satan," without any explanation or disclaimer that all translations of the Arabic Bible use Allah as the name for God?

JOHN: Yes, that's a very good question. Allah is another name for Satan because the Allah, the Allah of Islam, is not the true and living God. When you...you have to be very careful when you go into a missionary effort with people. By taking their deity and somehow turning that deity into the true God, you create a confusion.

The fact of the matter is all false religions have a god or gods. And to call some entity of your own manufacturing or some demon or Satan himself "God" doesn't make it so. And the Allah of Islam is not God. It is not the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It is not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now if you use...if you speak in their language, Al-Elah, the God and you take the uppercase letter down and you say let me introduce you to the real God who is not the god of Islam, now you're getting on a right footing.

God, the true and living God is not Allah. That has to be made clear. We are not talking about the same God. They are monotheistic, they have one god. But their god is not a trinity. That is not the true God. They do not believe in God as a trinity, therefore that's not the true God. They do not even believe that he is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They believe he is the God of Abraham, whose true and legitimate heir was Ishmael, so they rewrite the Scripture. So he is not the triune God, who said, "Let us make man in our image." He is not the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is not the God incarnate in Jesus Christ. They say that is blasphemous. And they call him Al-Elah. Then they call him the god, but that is not God. And I think it's much more important to identify the true and

living God than to somehow tweak the god, the false god and sort of transform him into the true God. You know what I'm saying?

I think you have to make a clean break with that. And I think that that is very important. I wouldn't go to somebody worshipping an idol and say, "Well, let me tell you who this god really is." What I would say is, "That is a demonic substitute for the true and living God. That is not any representation of the true God." Call him what you will. Everybody calls him, "god." The Hindus have millions of entities that they call, "god." None of them are God. None of them.

And the apostle Paul, when he went to Mars Hill could only identify one idol in that environment that he could identify with the true God, and that was the God that didn't have any name or any identity. He didn't say, "Well this god over here by the name of such-and-such is really the God of the Bible. Let me tell you about him." He said, "This God that you admit you don't know, the unknown God, that's the true and living God. Let me introduce him to you."

You cannot take a god, an idol, out of some religion and sort of tweak him a little bit and shape him into the true and living God. I think you have to have a clean and total breach. I understand that it makes...I understand that it makes...I want to say some sense to attempt to do that because of the monotheism and because they believe that their god, Allah, is the Creator god and that he is...that he is sovereign; they're very strong on the doctrine of sovereignty. In fact, they believe in a god who is so sovereign that nothing that man does can in any way alter his will. Everything is the will of Allah. It's a kind of a deterministic sovereignty.

I understand that there are some parallels. But, you know, that's...that's the subtlety, and that's the seduction of it. Even the clock that doesn't run is right twice a day. That's the deadliness...that's the deadliness of false religion. They come in and find points of identification. You can't accommodate yourselves to those points of identification, or you give too much away. I think it's critical to say Allah doesn't...the name Allah, the god of Islam is in no way, shape or form connected to the true and living God. None whatsoever.

MARISA: I agree with you 100 percent, and the Arabic believers in this congregation stand with you 100 percent with what you've said, but what do we do with a god whose name is Allah in the Arabic Bible. What...what do we do? When we sing?

JOHN: You...you can say there is the true and living God who is not the Allah of your Bible.

MARISA: But it's okay that we're using the word Allah?

JOHN: Well, if that's...in the Arabic language, Al-Elah means "the god."

MARISA: Right.

JOHN: If you translated it, it means "the god."

MARISA: Um-hmm.

JOHN: So what you have to say is, "The god of Islam that you know as Allah is not the true God." You just have to make that clear. I understand that. It's the same problem you have in any religion that has a god, because their language has a god. If you were to go to a tribe in Africa as a missionary and find that they are worshiping a god, their word would be for god. And you would not say, "Well, let me tell you who your god really is." That's not the right approach. Let me tell you who the true God is and you have to abandon the one that you've been worshiping.

MARISA: Do you believe that Arabic Christians should use another name for Allah, for god?

JOHN: Well, yeah, I think the safest place to go is to call Him what the Bible calls Him. And the way He's identified in the Scriptures, the names of God are very clear. But I think one good way to do it in an Arabic environment would be to identify him as the triune God. I know in Arabic, there's a word for trinity.

MARISA: Yeah. El-thaluth. Yeah.

JOHN: Yeah. Okay. He is the El-thaluth Al-Elah. He is the triune God. That's not the god of Islam. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; that's a clear distinction. He is the God of Israel. That in itself is a clear distinction. He is the God...He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Those are biblical names for him. You could use, you know he is El Elyon, El Shaddai, El Makadeshkim, you know El Kanu, the God of righteousness. You can use any biblical terms you want, but it is His triunity, it is His covenant name as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, it is His name...saving name as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who's _____ with Christ. Any biblical names because just calling him God may not convey to them that the God you're talking about is distinct. So, whatever it takes to modify the terms to explain that it's not Allah, as you know him, is important.

MARISA: Thank you.

JOHN: Thank you. Wonderful question. Okay. Are you ready, Stuart?

STUART: I think so. I almost forgot part of my question. After your second preaching on the salvation of babies I was walking out to the parking lot, and I overheard two college girls walking out to their car. And one college girl was telling the other that because babies couldn't comprehend sin and the law and election and stuff like that, that no grace was needed to take them to heaven. I was

wondering how you would respond to that.

JOHN: Well, yeah, that's...I hope I made that clear in the few messages that I gave. And I'm sorry if I didn't, and if they might misunderstand me. Nobody ever goes to heaven apart from grace. Babies who die go to heaven by pure grace, whether they understand it or not.

STUART: Do they have to be born again?

JOHN: Well, the terminology, "born again," yes, I mean they have to be regenerated. They have to be...they have to be made into new creations. But for the baby that dies, that...that cannot be separated from glorification. In other words, it's not like they have to be regenerated and then later on, you know, sanctified and then later on, glorified. Their regeneration occurs at the time of their glorification. At the time they die, I think they are at that moment regenerated by the grace of God, the sheer pure grace of God apart from all or any work.

It is all grace because they are all sinful. They are all culpable. They are all guilty before God. That's why death is a reality in their lives. But it isn't necessary for them to comprehend any of that because that's the very point; they can't. And so it is sheer grace, which makes it such a wonderful illustration of how all of us are saved, by the same kind of grace. Only in an adult case, God by that grace, effects repentance and faith in our hearts. Okay? Good question.

ROCHELLE: Hi. My name is Rochelle.

JOHN: Hi, Rochelle.

ROCHELLE: A few weeks ago I was witnessing to a Mormon friend of mine.

JOHN: Good.

ROCHELLE: And we were discussing the Book of Mormon, and I brought to her attention that if she...she claimed to believe in the Bible, and if she did so then she couldn't hold the Book of Mormon on the same authoritative level because of Revelation 23:18-19, which in paraphrase states that no one can add or take away from this book.

JOHN: Without receiving judgment from God.

ROCHELLE: Without receiving judgment. And her response to me was that if that was true and if that meant that revelation from God was done and over, then how do I explain Deuteronomy 4:2, which says, "You shall not add to the Word which I command to you, nor take from it," since a lot of books were written after Deuteronomy.

JOHN: Well, that's a good question. And that's...you know, you need to have a good answer for that. And the answer in both cases is this. The answer in both cases is when God has finished giving His Word, you can't add to it. It is very obvious that the Word of God was not finished with the Law of Moses. It wasn't finished. That principle is still true. We also know that with the book of Revelation, written by the apostle John, the last living apostle, who wrote that in about 96 A.D. And most of all the other apostles are long dead. You have the last apostle writing the last letter about the final end of the entire universe and God ends the Scripture. At that point...at that point then you apply the Deuteronomy 4 passage, and you apply the Revelation passage. When God is finished that's the end. That is the meaning of that.

So you don't want to make too big an argument...and that's what this person is pointing out to you...you don't want to make too big an argument about where that statement is placed in the sequence. We all know that there are 39 books in the Old Testament, which were inspired by God. But once that was finished and the canon was closed and completed and unarguably affirmed to be the true canon, God had spoken. And when He was finished speaking, you don't add to that.

But God himself wasn't finished, even if at the end of the Old Testament canon, as the writer of Hebrew says, "God, who, at sundry times and in diverse manners _____ time passed by the fathers to the prophets is now spoken unto us by His Son." So you have the whole New Testament in which God presents Christ. The Gospels tell the story of Christ. Acts tells the story of the spread of the Gospel of Christ. The epistles explain the meaning of life and ministry of Jesus Christ and the punctuation point is the book of Revelation which details the second coming and the establishment of his eternal glory. Those verses simply mean that when God is finished speaking, that's the end. You can't add to what God has said.

Joseph Smith is one of those "yous" who can't add to what God has said and neither can anybody else add to what God has said.

Just a little footnote...I was talking to the elders a little bit about this on Thursday night because everybody gets into these kinds of apologetic arguments with people, and I want you to understand something at the very outset. It's very...it's very good to give people answers. It's good to give people reason for faith. But understand this: unconverted people have no capacity to process that information. They have no capacity.

If we know anything about an unconverted person that is absolutely true and definitive, it is a biblical definition of their condition. And the biblical definition of their condition, in Ephesians, is that they are dead in trespasses and sins. Dead people don't think clearly about anything. I think we would all agree on that principle. They have no capacity to think clearly about things.

In Ephesians 4, they walk in the emptiness of their mind, their understanding is darkened and they are alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart. That is a profound condition. Let me just go over that. They are futile in their mind. What that means is they can't think right. They can't...if you don't have a Christian biblical worldview, you can't think straight. Because fallen people, though they have reason, that reason is profoundly affected by their selfish sinfulness and so convoluted that their thinking is futile in terms of grasping truth. Their understanding is darkened further. They are alienated from the life of God. They are ignorant, and they are blind in their heart. They are past feeling. I mean it goes on.

So you're dealing with someone who has basically no capacity, that's why when you talk to somebody or argue with somebody, you get so frustrated because it's so clear to you. Right, everything's so clear to you. You say, "Why don't they get it? Why don't they get it?" If we give them just reasonable stuff here, if we just lay...don't they have the reasoning capacity to grasp this and to sort it out and to come to a proper conclusion.

Answer...no, no they don't. Unless the Spirit of God awakens them from the dead. If people don't believe the Bible, your clever arguments aren't going to make them believe the Bible. If people don't believe the Gospel, your clever arguments aren't going to make them believe it. If they don't believe doctrines affirmed by the Scripture, you can argue till you're blue in the face. They do not believe because they are blind. They are ignorant; they are empty in their thinking. You have to just keep giving them the truth.

And remember this...it's more important that you proclaim the truth than that you somehow try to reason them into believing it. Okay? Proclamation is the thing. Proclaim the truth. And if the Spirit of God wants to do the work of awakening them from the dead, the proclamation of the truth is all that's needed. That's all that's needed. I've learned that through the years, and I was telling the elders this, and I mentioned it, I think here, a week or so ago...whoever knows the Bible best is the best defender of the faith. It's not the person who's the most philosophically acute, not the person who's sorted and figured out all the rational arguments. Whoever knows the Bible best is the best defender of the faith because the way you defend the faith is to proclaim the faith. The only way people will ever believe it is when the Spirit of God, under the proclamation, quickens their heart to receive it.

So, just keep proclaiming the faith. And what I do with people like that, whenever I have the opportunity to talk with them, is to push them toward Christ and encourage them, unaided by some of their, you know, abhorrent material, to read the record of Jesus Christ in the New Testament in the four Gospels and let them reveal the reality of who Jesus Christ really is. Exposing them to the Word of God is the key. And, I say again, the way to defend the faith is to know the Bible and to simply proclaim it. And the Spirit of God can quicken the heart of people to believe the Bible even though they have all kinds of arguments not to believe it, and you can argue with them and show them

reasons and they never to respond. And all of a sudden the spirit of God awakens their heart and instantly they believe the Bible. I've seen it happen all my life. All of a sudden they believe the Bible. I get letters like that, of coming to grace to you constantly. I just read one the other day. You know...a man said I believe in evolution, I believe in evolution. God awakened my heart, all of a sudden I believe in creation. It's in the Bible. It's like a resurrection; it's an awakening.

So I just say that to encourage that. Just keep proclaiming the faith. Make Christ the object of your proclamation. Trying to reason with those people is difficult because they don't have the capability that you have because you exist with a Christian worldview and a biblical paradigm and you think the way God wants you to think. They don't. Okay?

JIMBO: Hello, Dr. MacArthur. My name is Jimbo.

JOHN: Hi, Jimbo.

JOHN: Hello, sir. Dr. MacArthur, seeing that Christianity is the only true religion, and God only accepts worship from a heart, a clean pure heart as the Psalms say over and over again, clean hands and a pure heart. Why would you say it is that we're constantly told, even from the pulpit, that we have wicked hearts? And if we don't, if we do have new hearts, as the Bible teaches, could you clear that up for us?

JOHN: Sure. That's one of those things that has a simple and yet profound answer. No true Christian will say that he has no sin. Right? I mean if you're truly a Christian, you're not going to say that you have no sin unless you've been led astray by somebody who's told you that mistakes and sins are different. And there are some theologies that espouse that.

We all, as we were talking about earlier with Hilary's question, we are all very much aware, even as you grow in Christ, of our sin. To say that you enter with clean hands and a pure heart is simply to say that sin is as much as is possible being confronted and dealt with in our lives. It can be illustrated in the words of Jesus, who said, "If you have something against your brother, make it right, then come and worship." It isn't that you'll never again have anything wrong with your brother. It doesn't mean that you have to be a person who never offends anybody. But if you know something's wrong, then you go make it right, then you come and worship.

In Hebrews, we were quoting some things from Hebrews early in the morning service today and there is...there is a call in the book of Hebrews to a cleansing of one's own heart. Hebrews, chapter 10, it says, "Having boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus." Well I have to go into the holy place by the blood of Jesus because I'm a sinner; I don't have any access there unless I go because Christ has made the way for me.

So I go, in a sense, recognizing that a sacrifice had to be made for me to even enter that place. I go through a new and living way which He consecrated for us through the veil, that is His flesh and having the high priest over the house of God let us draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith and in this, having our hearts washed from an evil conscience; and our bodies washed with pure water. In other words, whenever you come to worship, you need to be going through a heart examination and seeking that the Lord would cleanse your heart. That's what it's all about. That's the clean hands. There's no unconfessed sin. There's no sin in my life that I'm holding onto, that I'm harboring, that I'm entertaining, that I'm indulging in. That is unacceptable to God.

The fact that I'm a sinner is reality. If I'm going to come and worship the Lord, then I need to do what Hebrews 10 says, I need to draw near with a true heart, having my heart washed and my body washed, make sure that I have brought myself before the Lord for appropriate cleansing, and that's confession in the sense. Okay?

JIMBO: Thank you.

JULIA: Hi, my name is Julia. I have a question about the Church of the East and the Aramaic translation of the Bible. I've been reading that they claim that those are the literal words of Christ, rather than the Greek or/and English translation of the Bible. And I was wondering if you could comment on this.

JOHN: Well, it's likely that Jesus, when He lived on earth, spoke Aramaic. It was the common language of the people. And sometimes in the New Testament you have Aramaic names, or you have a quote, some Aramaic that's translated for us. It's even translated by the writer of Scripture. But, that's irrelevant. What is relevant is that when God inspired the Bible, He inspired it in Hebrew, the Old Testament, with huge sections, which are in Aramaic. And He inspired the New Testament in Greek. That is to say, when Matthew wrote Matthew, he wrote it in Greek. When Mark wrote Mark, he wrote it in Greek. When Luke wrote Luke, he wrote it in Greek. When John wrote John, he wrote in Greek. When Luke wrote Acts, he wrote it in Greek. And then when Paul and Peter and John and James wrote their epistles, they wrote them in Greek. And when John wrote the Revelation, he wrote it in Greek. All the manuscripts going all the way back affirm and attest to the fact that they were all written in Greek.

That is to say the inspired text of Scripture when God inspired it in the original autographs was given in the Greek language, not in Aramaic, though Aramaic was the common street language, the common language of the day of Jesus, very likely spoken by the Jewish people in Israel. That is not the language that God chose, obviously because He felt that Greek was a more expansive language, with more nuances for the theological clarification the New Testament demanded. God chose the language of Greek.

To say that we should reject the Scripture in favor of some Aramaic record of Jesus is tantamount to denying the Bible's inspiration. Serious issue. It doesn't matter what language a given conversation might have been in. I'm sure when the apostle Paul in the book of Acts was having a conversation with Agrippa, with Felix, or when He was talking to Roman soldiers there might have been different languages used when he got to Rome and when he was a prisoner in Roman jails, they weren't talking Aramaic. It's immaterial what the language being spoken was. What is material is that when God inspired the writers to write, they wrote in the Greek language, the New Testament. And to say that the true record of Jesus is some lost Aramaic manuscript or something is, in fact, to deny the Scripture, the inspiration. Okay.

SALLY HAYES: Hi John. I'm Sally Hayes.

JOHN: Hi Sally.

SALLY: I've got a question for you. Last week in your message, "Can God Bless America and Preserve Its Reputation," you've often mentioned in the past that you believe that America is under the judgment of God. Is that right?

JOHN: Yes, I think the judgment that's defined in Romans 1.

SALLY HAYES: Right. Now, I know there's tons of wickedness and evil around us. But, sure, it seems to me there's a lot of godliness. Look at the people who are here. There's hundreds of thousands of dedicated Christians in America. And don't you believe that right now we are seeing some of God's blessings on America, i.e., and I want to get some of this off, Bush barely got in by the skin of his teeth. That was due to Christians praying. I mean, that's what I think. Look what we're doing to the Taliban. Bush is surrounded by godly men. You know, the missionaries gotten free. Who would've ever thought the missionaries would have been freed? So, tell me your opinion, it seems to me that God is blessing.

JOHN: Well, I will respond this way. God will always bless His people. He will do what He wills for His people but He will show Himself faithful to His people. Those girls over there, who would've said if they would've been killed by the Taliban, that God had a purpose and took them to glory; that would've been the greatest blessing possible. We could conclude that for His own Glory and to show Himself faithful and to show that He's a God who hears and answers prayer. God has been glorified in their release. It's also true there were six other people released and we could conclude that this was a testimony to the faithfulness of God to His people. But the issue is does God somehow have some obligation to a nation as an entity? And the answer to that is no, certainly not this nation. And certainly not a nation that is dominated by the evil that we are dominated by. I mean, understand this, God is going to bless George Bush, who is His child. God is going to...and I really do believe that God

allowed him to be here for such a time as this. I don't want to get political either. But I would hate to see the Clinton core trying to run the world at a time like this. I would hate to know what the whole Al Gore would have looked like at in a time like this. We need mature men, men of stature, men of statesmanship, men of vast experience on a national level to provide what needs to be provided in a time of crisis for the sake of our national safety and that's fine.

But I don't believe in any sense that God has done anything that I could interpret as a categorical blessing on a nation of unbelieving people who have done everything they could, worked very hard to make sure God is completely out of the public discourse. But I do believe God will bless His own as He sees fit to bless His own. He will do that in any time. He will gather His own as the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi says, "In the day of His judgment He will collect His own. He will gather His jewels," he says. "And that day and no judgment will fall upon them." And as God blesses certain of His own children in effective places, in high places, in significant places, the blessing may spill over on others. It's like being married to a believer; a nonbeliever married to a believer, in I Corinthians 7, "is blessed in the household of the believer," because of the spillover effect.

But don't for a minute think that because you are seeing a sort of groundswell of interest in God that this is tantamount to some real turning to God. I don't see that. I don't see that happening. God will always bless His own people, but when you look at the spiral in America, you're not going to see a change; at least predictably I can't see anything that's going to change.

When the war cools down...and I don't know that it's God that's defeating the Taliban. I mean, whoever's got the biggest guns and the most bombs is going to win that one. And whoever's up above when you're down below is in the catbird's seat. So, there are very obvious human factors for that. But I believe that when all of this quiets down there are now silent, immoral leadership and influence group of this country, including the media, are going to rise right back into the same place there were before and the old agenda's are going to just be reasserted again. I would like to think that's not going to happen. We just need to be faithful and continue to proclaim the truth. But know this, in the midst of all of this...God for us is a shelter in the time of storm. He is our rock. He is our defender. He is our shepherd; He leads us in quiet places, by still waters and green pastures. And He brings us to our eternal home. We will be blessed in the midst of all of this. Okay?

SALLY: Thank you.

JOHN: Good question.

QUESTIONER: Pastor John, I have a question. I had the opportunity this summer to hike up in the John Meere Trail with Ray Meringer and so we had many, many miles of theological discussion. I have a personal question for you. Ray and I talked about it, but you've said in the past that you don't really concern yourself with the breadth of how God blesses the ministry through you and through this

church but your concern is in the depth of your ministry and your personal growth with God. And I understand that and I just kind of wanted you to kind of expound a little bit more. What do you do to focus on the depth of your ministry and how do you balance this with the other many responsibilities you have, including your relationship with your wife and family?

JOHN: Well, I think by God's design, the deeper my commitment to Christ, the better my family likes me. You know what I'm saying?

QUESTIONER: Yes, I do.

JOHN: I mean, I'm a better husband and a better father and a better grandfather and a better counselor and a better spiritual guide and guardian and a better servant the more devoted I am to the Lord. So, I don't...I can't compartmentalize my life. I can't say I have to study and I have to preach. And I do that and then I go over here and try to ask like a husband and go buy four books on how a husband should act. My role as a husband, my life as a husband, a father, whatever it is, a friend, is nothing more than the spillover of my life before the Lord. And so when it comes to ministry, it's much the same. When I say I don't concern myself with the breadth, that means I'm not...I don't spend my time and energies trying to extend the ministry, trying to get a bigger church. I'm not spending my time to figure out ways to advertise Grace Church or ways to build up Grace Church in public image; or ways to creatively draw crowds or get money or somehow reach more people. I'm not; I never have worked hard to expand our radio into more stations and more stations and more. That has never been, in fact I haven't given in my entire life an hour to that collectively. My concern is always to do what I need to do to rightly handle, proclaim the Word of God, live out the Word of God and make sure that the Word of God is rightly represented in the people that are around me.

It's an old story you know, I've talked to young people about this. If you occupy yourself with success, you will ultimately fail. If your goal is to succeed, you will fail. If your goal is to be excellent, you will ultimately succeed. I don't care what you're doing. If you're working with wood if all you want to do is ultimately succeed, you'll ultimately fail. If what you want to do is produce something excellent, you will ultimately succeed. And that's true spiritually. It's...it's...my life is spent, all my energies for the most part, are driven toward truth, understanding the truth, dealing with the truth, implementing the truth, evaluating people to pull around me, people who have tremendous responsibility around me and making sure they have the same level of commitment to the truth, making sure they stay sharp on the truth, making sure that I serve them, nurture them, help them, strengthen them, confront them if need be, though that's a rare occasion. The same they'd do to me. That's what I mean by spiritual excellence. All my focus goes toward the Lord and toward the truth and being the man I need to be, the preacher I need to be, the friend I need to be, the husband I need to be and what God does with that is really up to Him. But I have long ago learned that spiritual excellence is the goal, not success.

And I think I first started learning that when I was a football player. When I was a football player in my university days...football can be a very frustrating sport because you have to depend on other guys. It's much easier to do something where you don't have to depend on anybody else; you sort of rise and fall on your own merit. You know, like golf or something like that, nobody but you. But in football you've got these people and they can be very disappointing and it can be a very difficult situation. I learned several things, however, playing football. I could never determine the outcome of a game; I could only determine my own effort. I could never tell you how the game would end. I could only control my own effort. And if I gave the maximum effort that I had within me, not only would I do everything I could do to win, but I would set a tone for everybody around me. And hopefully pull them up. So even in those days when I was a captain because God was already working in me leadership responsibility, I would try to do everything I could for the sake of doing all that I could alone, but also for the sake of saying, "Guys, this is how you play the game," and try to pull everybody to that level. All we could do is make the maximum effort. We could never determine the outcome. And that was really good to learn that.

So my responsibility became to give the maximum effort myself so that that becomes the standard for everybody around me to follow. And if I ever diminished my effort, then they would find a reason to diminish theirs. So the consummate effort then becomes the standard that others around you see. And when everybody gives that kind of effort, then you have to leave the ultimate success to God who determines outcomes. I don't determine outcome. I can only determine effort. So that's what I mean...does that kind of personally explain it? So, for me, it's to be the best, to preach the best I can, to handle the Scripture the best I can, to provide for the people the best ministry I can, to provide around me the best leadership I can and then let God take it where He wants to take it.

And it's...the wonderful thing that you can bank on in this is that the Lord's work never returns void but it always accomplishes what He intends it to accomplish. And I'm convinced that He honors His word. I am convinced that if you're faithful to the proclamation of His word, He'll take you places where you never expected it to go. And...I mean, I am just boggled by what happens every single day.

I got a letter I think three years ago from a guy in England who is a pedophile, the grossest of all humans in some ways, who wrote me to tell me he was converted and delivered from this through listening to me, preach on the radio. I'll never meet this guy this side of heaven. All his friends are in prison, they were all arrested, and he somehow missed being arrested. He couldn't give up his pornography on his own. He had so much pornography; he had more pornography in his home, he said, than any...than I think anybody in history in England, contributing to this stuff. And he never could stay off of it until somehow he was smitten with a disease related to his sexual deviancy that made him blind. Then he wrote to tell me how the Lord had saved him and he wanted to thank me for the radio ministry that goes out of London.

Well, I can't control that. I have absolutely no control over that. But what I can control is what I preach. And he responded to my sermon on Psalm 107, in which I told the story of a guy in our own congregation, Robert Loggerstrum, who was one of the leaders in the Gay Pride community in L.A., who was converted here on a Sunday. When I read Psalm 107, baptized right here, and I told the story on that tape and I explained the Psalm in relation to how God could deliver people from these horrible things and actually it's an illustration, that's like the last couple of days. But that comes regularly. And again I see time after time, day after day, the work of the word and so I know that where I want to spend my life is in the word. That's why it's so ridiculous for anybody in the ministry to do anything else. All these counselors that work real hard to be big and successful miss the point. In the end they fail. In the end, on the spiritual level, they fail. It's the depth that God wants and He'll take care of the breadth.

QUESTIONER: Thank you Pastor, appreciate it.

CHARLES: My name is Charles. I was baptized many years ago by your grandfather, Pastor Harry MacArthur.

JOHN: Is that right? Charles, you're still here.

CHARLES: I wanted to affirm your comment on the Koran. I've read portions of it. It is a satanic lie from beginning to end. It denies the trinity. It denies the divinity of Jesus Christ and it has plagiarized portions of the Old Testament.

JOHN: Right, that's true.

CHARLES: Specifically, Abraham, Abrahamic story and the story of Joseph. Now, my question is, _____ your sermon on "Can God Bless America?" I understand the doctrine of special and general grace. And my question is to you, Pastor, is, a curse by the way, has the ring of finality. If this nation had been cursed by God, has He lifted His hand of general grace from us?

JOHN: Well, I think that's essentially what it is. Now, the question is to what degree? And is it recoverable? If you read II Chronicles 7:14, "the principle of My people called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face, then I'll restore them." Psalm 81, "If My people will listen to My work and walk in My ways, then I will deliver them from their enemies and I will feed them with money from the rock," and all of those kinds of things. I think there's every reason in Scripture to indicate that even when a nation is under that judgment of abandonment and the nation has had restraining grace removed that if there is a wholesale repentance, turning to God and obedience, that that certainly can be restored. I think that that's indicated in Scripture. Otherwise, there would be futility. Why would God call Isaiah, for example, to go out and preach after having anointed him in Chapter 6, why would he tell him to go out and preach unless there was the possibility that there was

a remnant who would hear and believe and be saved? And God knows how large that remnant might be.

I don't know what the future of America is. God is not obligated to sinful people. If God deemed it to His glory and if it is His eternal plan to do so, God could bring about a great revival in America and people could turn to God and any sinner who turns to God ever at any point in his life and honestly, genuinely prompted by the spirit of God, repents and believes will be saved. And if that happens in a large scale and many people are then saved and God begins to bless those people, then there will be a spillover of blessing, as I was saying earlier that falls on the people, such as the principle of I Corinthians 7. But...I...go ahead.

CHARLES: Meantime, Christians cannot abandon the _____ of life.

JOHN: No. This is the time...this is the greatest time to preach, the greatest time to proclaim the gospel, the greatest time to call for repentance. The sad reality is you have somebody like I mentioned earlier like Franklin Graham who stands up and says, "Islam is evil." And the MSNBC say, "And no Christians agreed with him." That's not what the world is doing; to me it's what the church is not doing. This is what is so grievous and at the same time that we need to step up and deal with these issues the church becomes more trivialized and marginalized by its desire to be popular.

CHARLES: Thank you.

JOHN: You're welcome Charles. And than you. And what a great thing to know you were baptized by my grandfather. My grandfather was Harry MacArthur was the head telegrapher for the Canadian Pacific Railroad in the day that they used telegraphy. He was the chief telegrapher of the Canadian Pacific Railway in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. And his family had come from Prince Edward Island, a railroad family. His family drove the first locomotive on Prince Edward Island. They came over from Scotland. But he was converted to Christ up in Canada and he packed up his wife, my grandmother, and his two kids, my aunt and my dad and he came to southern California because he wanted to attend what was then the Bible Institute of Los Angeles down in downtown L.A. And he came down here and went to school and became a preacher and that's...he had a great impact in this city way, way back, even before I was born. He died in 1950 actually in his fifties from cancer. So he had a short ministry life, but he had a great impact on many people. In fact, probably the most lasting contribution that my grandfather made is a little booklet that he wrote, called, "Why You Can't Rub Out the Jew." And it was a testimony to God's faithfulness to his covenant to save Israel some day and it still circulates, I see it here and there. So, he was a faithful man of God. Thank you for remembering him to me.

Yes?

KEVIN: Hello Pastor MacArthur, my name is Kevin.

JOHN: Hello Kevin.

KEVIN: And this question comes from my father. I was trying to look it up earlier out of Isaiah 35, but he was wondering when the second coming of Christ comes that the desert will...is supposed to bloom and blossom with flowers and vegetation.

JOHN: Right. This is true. What's going to happen, if you read, we won't go into specifics, but if you read the prophets, they say that there's going to be a valley created called the valley of Jehosaphat in Jerusalem. It's going to be an east west valley. The Mount of Olives is going to be split and that the valley created and a river is going to run through that valley down the hill. Back of Jerusalem goes way down. You know, Jerusalem is almost a mile high. The Dead Sea is what? Fifteen hundred feet plus below sea level. It's just a severe drop and the water's going to run out into there and flourish and call the desert to blossom like a rose.

Deserts are a part of the curse. Deserts are part of the fall. Eden was a place of beautiful vegetation and the desert came about because of the fall. And when paradise is restored in the millennial kingdom of Christ, I think deserts disappear, certainly in the land of Israel. For certain they do and God turns it into a garden again.

KEVIN: Thank you.

JOHN: Okay. You're welcome.

JOHN: Hi, my name is John. This morning you said in the sermon a couple of times it's not what can you get but what can you give to the church and that makes perfect sense to me but if you could help me out. I was listening to one sermon by a pastor, he preached here at Shepherds' Conference last spring and he was saying he kind of took that thought to another level and said that there is nothing we, as simple people, can give to God. But we can give to Him by receiving from Him and getting from Him. In reference to Isaiah 55:1 where God says, "Come, you who have no money..."

JOHN: Sure John.

JOHN: But I have no money, how can I buy?

JOHN: Right.

JOHN: So...

JOHN: Well, just to harmonize that. If we couldn't give God anything, why are there so many commands in Scripture? The one thing we are told to give Him is whatever he asks for. True?

JOHN: Right.

JOHN: And He tells us to worship Him. He tells us to adore Him. He tells us to praise Him over and over and over and over. He tells us to honor Him. He tells us to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. He tells us to love our neighbor. He tells us to serve Him. He tells us to confess our sins to Him, to repent. I mean, those are commands. Every single command, everything you obey in the Scripture is an act in which you are rendering to God something God asks from you.

David said, "I will not give the Lord that which costs me nothing." David said, "I understand that whatever I give to the Lord has to be sacrificial." David understood that you give to the Lord. I think you can get caught up in a bit of a semantical game. You know in taking everything to its philosophical end. Ultimately, we don't give God something in the sense that He lacks it. Our giving is simply a recognition that He lacks nothing. We are giving Him not to fill up what He doesn't have, but to show appropriate respect to who He is and what He does have. You know what I'm saying?

JOHN: Yeah. Yeah. So in encouraging someone else toward church membership, I can say that, "You need to give or God needs something from you?"

JOHN: God doesn't need anything. He demands some things.

JOHN: Right.

JOHN: It's not like, "Okay, God, I know you're hurting in this area. I know your church is weak and you need a few good folks. I'll be one." No, it's not that you're filling up something God lacks. It's that you're doing what He command you to do. That's what you're doing. And by that you are rendering Him the proper respect. You are acknowledging His absolute and utter sovereignty over your life. And you're giving Him the glory that He is due.

My children when they're growing up and little, they can't give me anything I don't have. Even at my birthday, my wife bought everything. Worse than that, she used my money to do it. My children can't give me anything that I lack but when they give me something it is a demonstration of the depth of their love and their affection and their respect and their honor for me. Okay?

JOHN: Thanks. _____.

RICHARD: I'm Richard Lundh. I have a question regarding the Lord's table. You made reference this morning to a perhaps perhaps not taking Lord's table if they haven't been baptized. We have the

admonition that we should examine ourselves, and then afterwards there's a warning about not judging the Lord's body correctly. You made reference tonight to Hebrews 10. Sometimes I've heard a person say that they didn't take communion because they'd be like there's something wrong, and they wanted to fix it, or they wanted to do something about it and others say that the reason we examine ourselves is to be as honest as we can about our sin. But if...as long as they've confessed it, then we really...we're all needy, and we can't moral rectitude of ourselves before we take communion. So, how would you apply those things?

JOHN: Yeah. Good question, Richard. I would say what you can do something about; do something about before you take the table. If you can do something about it to make it right, do that. There are some things that you don't need to do anything right about. I mean, you just need to stop doing wrong. But when there is something that can be rectified, some place where restoration can occur, that needs to be done.

RICHARD: And how does that apply to the warning about not judging the Lord's body?

JOHN: Well, I think it's the idea that if you know that there is some breach that you can make right, there's something that you can do that is right, some act of obedience like baptism, some terrible offense against someone or you know someone has against you. You can go and make it right. That's important because if you don't do that, you have trivialized that to some degree and you've trivialized the Lord's table and there may be chastening in that.

RICHARD LUNDH: Thank you.

JOHN: Okay.

MARIO: Hi John. My name is Mario.

JOHN: Hi Mario.

MARIO: My question has to do with the Word of God. In Hebrews 4:12, we're told that the Word of God is powerful, active and living. My question to you is does the word to save and sanctify a believer's life rest in the word itself or is the Word of God the instrument by which the Holy Spirit regenerates and sanctifies an individual.

JOHN: Yes. That's a correct way to understand it. It is the truth, not on the page, but effectively operative in the life by the spirit. So it is the Word and the Spirit. The Word's sitting on the page doesn't display the power. It displays...and that's proven by the fact that you can go to a liberal seminary where people aren't Christians but they're Bible scholars, and it has virtually no impact on their life.

You can take a person who's a brand new baby Christian and they read a verse of Christian and it has a profound effect upon their life because of their conversation and salvation and the spirit of God being resident in their life. So that is a correct way to understand it. Is the word empowered and energized by the Divine Spirit? Good.

Ought to better stop with these folks or people are going to be out of time. Make them really quick if you could. Where are we? Over here. Quickly.

RYAN: Hi, my name's Ryan.

JOHN: Hi, Ryan.

RYAN: In light of Hebrews 9 what is the purpose of the sacrificial system in Ezekiel?

JOHN: What is the...you mean the millennial sacrificial system?

RYAN: Yeah.

JOHN: In the time of the millennium, you have the picture of the millennial kingdom of Christ in Ezekiel 40 or 48. That when we get into the millennial kingdom after the Lord comes and establishes His kingdom, there's going to be a sacrificial system of some kind going on in that millennial kingdom. In the light of Hebrews 9, what He means by that is since Christ is the one offering who satisfied all requirements and the sacrificial system has ended, why does God bring back the sacrificial system in the millennial kingdom? The answer to the question is simply this. The same reason we have the Lord's table today. We have the Lord's table in which we take the body and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we go back to that in the picture, in the drama that's played out on the Lord's table as a memorial and a testimony to that. And I believe that the sacrificial system as designed by God and the deal through Ezekiel will be in the millennial kingdom for the Jews a memorial feast with the same kind of idea as the communion is for us. They will then, every time they offer those sacrifices, be seeing the one whom God sent to be the final sacrifice. So, since their connection is to the Old Testament, God will reinstitute those as a drama, as a memorial drama to demonstrate and dramatize that Christ is the true lamb pictured in all those sacrifices, just like every time we have communion, some people say, "Don't you just repeat the dying of Jesus?" Well, not really, we just continually memorialize and remember the One sacrificed. We, in the communion service, look back at it. They, at that time, will carry on the sacrifices that in the Old Testament look forward to it.

RYAN: Can I just ask one more, and it's real quick. Will the gentiles keep place in the ceremonies as well?

JOHN: Well, I think so. Because I think we have the word of the prophets that the Jews are going to be bringing the Gentiles to Jerusalem. Ten Gentiles hanging on the robe of every Jew and they'll be taking us to that place and I think there will be participation in those things.

RYAN: Right.

SHANE: All right John, my name is Shane. My question is how should we theologically classify passages like Psalm 139:19-23, in light of the New Testament teachings to love our enemy and those who persecute us? Since many times God's enemies are, in fact, or become our enemies. How do we answer someone who quotes passages such as these and claims that the Bible is guilty of the same hatefulness that is found in the Koran?

JOHN: Right, and this is a...this is coming up all the time now. People are picking up on the imprecatory Psalms, where the psalmist is praying for God to destroy his enemies. The difference is a very clear difference...in the Koran it's people being called to kill for God. In the Bible it's people asking God to destroy those who are destroying His people. One puts the power, the Jihad in the hands of the people. The other puts the vengeance where it belongs, with God.

But it is true that there is imprecatory Psalms, which call down damnation on the enemies of God. That is an appropriate kind of praying. It doesn't allow us to take vengeance into our hands, but it's the same thing in Habakkuk how long oh Lord, how long? It's the same thing in Revelation. The martyrs under the altar, how long oh Lord, how long are you going to let this go on? You're people are being massacred all over the world. How long before you're going to step in and stop the bloodshed and honor your name and vindicate yourself?

So, I think it's a...it's not that we, as martyrs hate those who kill us. It's not that we hate our persecutors. Quite the contrary, we love them. It is that we want our God to be vindicated. We want our God to be honored. It is like, like the Psalm, I think it's Psalm 66 where it says David said that, "the reproaches that fall on you are fallen on me. The zeal for your house has eaten me up." And then Jesus quotes that. Jesus is the one who said love your enemies, but Jesus is the one who made a whip and quoted that Psalm, "zeal for you house has eaten me up. The reproaches that fall on you are fallen on me," went in there, turned over the tables and started slashing people with a whip. It had nothing to do with personal self-defense. It had nothing to do with whether He loved his enemies or not. It had to do with the vindication of the glory and honor of God. But only Jesus did that. He didn't authorize the disciples. He didn't send them out and say, "Now go preach the gospel and throw over people in the temple and you know, pick fights and be tools of vengeance." That was unique to the nation of Israel. The only holy wars, legitimate ones in all of history.

So I think it's a matter simply of recognizing that we have every right to pray that the glory and honor of God be vindicated and that sinful men be thwarted and that righteousness prevail in the world.

SHANE: Thank you.

JOHN: You're welcome.

CINDY: Hi, my name is Cindy Hernandez.

JOHN: Hi.

CINDY: I'd like to know how to respond to a Catholic who, when asked why they're going to heaven, whether it's their relationship or because of religion or good works. They say because of their relationship with Jesus Christ. Yet they choose to participate in the sacraments. I'd like to know how to respond to that, if they're in sin and what should I say?

JOHN: Well, I think the thing you want to do Cindy is just to say to them, "Define for me," you know, just keep probing, "Define for me, what do you mean by your relationship with Jesus Christ? What do you mean by that? Explain what you mean. Is there anything that you are doing that contributes to that salvation?" The only thing you just have to poke and probe that. Don't let them get away with saying, "Well, it's because of my relationship to Christ. Okay, define that." Don't put words in their mouth. Let them define that. What is your relationship with Christ? What do you mean by that? And explain, what I like to do with people like that, is explain to me the gospel. Explain to me your relationship with Christ and how you got that relationship. How did you get that relationship? I mean, just keep probing until you get to the core reality of whether or not they are truly believing that they are saved by grace and faith alone or whether there's any contributing work that they have done. And I think the only way to get there is don't let them get away with a superficial answer.

CINDY: And do you think that there in sin if they do participate in sacraments?

JOHN: I think people could be truly saved in a Catholic environment and still participate in the sacraments occasionally. I don't think...I think it's possible to be a Christian and do that. I think it's ignorant to do that. If you really understood Catholic theology, but you know, one of the unstated tenants of Catholicism is to make sure the people don't understand anything. You know, you keep them in mystery all the time; only the elite at the top will understand the stuff. It's possible that people could be well intentioned and doing what they're doing. You know, it all depends on what they see in it. It's wrong to see in that that the real body and blood of Jesus Christ. As to whether or not it's an overt sin against God, if someone is ignorant about what's going on, I wouldn't want to press that issue. Okay?

CINDY: Okay.

JOHN: Good Cindy.

JEREMY: Good evening Dr. MacArthur. My name is Jeremy Kitter. And I was talking to my friends have been discussing the last couple of weeks...do I exercise faith as a result of the fact that I'm regenerate or does God regenerate me as a result of the fact that I exercise faith?

JOHN: A. You exercise faith because He awakened your dead heart.

JEREMY: And how would you show that to someone in Scripture if they didn't want to believe that?

JOHN: Ephesians 2. Ephesians 2:1-3.

JEREMY: Okay.

JOHN: Well, Ephesians 2:1-10. The whole chapter. Okay.

SCOT: My name is Scot Joeling and I wanted to know what you thought of Harry Potter?

JOHN: Well, to be honest with you it really never enters my mind, so I don't have a lot of thoughts about Harry Potter. You know, first of all, you could say that is silliness, foolishness. Fantasy is folly to me. Of all the things that could be learned in the world that are helpful, fantasy doesn't fit into that category. I am not even much of a devotee of people like C.S. Lewis and the "Chronicles of Narnia," and Tolkien and others that have some kind of Christian overtones. Just give me a good dose of reality. You can forget the fantasy. I really can't build my life on a fantasy. I have to build my life on reality. People have asked me through the years if I want to write novels. You know, why do I want to write fiction? Who needs fiction? I don't want to write fiction. I don't even like to marry fiction with fact or reality with nonreality because I think that's confusing. So from that standpoint, just a common sense standpoint, it's silly, it's Superman at best. You know, the Green Hornet was big when I was a kid. It's Spiderman; it's anything that's not real. Where you have certain element of miracles and then you add the more serious matter that you're not dealing with a world of spirit _____ and you're now in the fringe of the demonic realm. And I think that's a very serious thing. I don't think that's helpful. I don't think that that's necessary. You know, you could sit back and say that this Rowling gal is a good writer, very, very clever. You don't sell millions and millions of books unless people like reading them. And she's a very talented writer and you could sit back in a critical way...I could read those things and appreciate art for art's sake.

But I think for young children to be exposed to that kind of fantasy world. For young people to get lost in all of that is really in a way to check out of reality. And the more and more people that check out of

reality, the less and less likely we are to have an influence on their lives. And I don't think people need to get caught up in it. Whether it's Star Wars or any of that hocus pocus stuff that deals with fantasy, I don't think it's helpful to people. And I think particularly children don't need to think that there's some mystical spirits moving around in the world. Even if Harry Potter in the end is a good guy. I think there is spiritual reality in the world and they ought to know what the spiritual reality is, forget the fantasy. Okay? Is that a narrow view?

SCOT: Yeah.

JOHN: Do you agree with me? Okay.

SCOT: Thank you.

JOHN: Atta boy. Okay.

MARGARET: Hi, my name is Margaret.

JOHN: Hi Margaret.

MARGARET: I was taught before, when I used to go to a different church, but once you become born again, I mean once you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, you can never lose your salvation. But it seems like after listening to all your preaching that being a Christian is not just saving by grace, you have to constantly work hard to be a Christian to obey. Does that mean the Christians would still go to hell?

JOHN: No. No, they were right at your other church. Once you become born again, that's it forever. We're not talking about working hard to be a Christian. We're talking about working hard to honor God as a Christian. Just a simple analogy. If I'm born into a family, I don't have to work to be a son. I'm a son. My parents would like me to be a good one, a useful one, a helpful one, a respectful one, an honoring one. And that's what we're talking about. We're talking about living your Christian life to the glory and honor of God and to your own blessing and eternal reward. Okay?

MARGARET: Okay. Thank you.

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