

Bible Questions and Answers, Part 54

Selected Scriptures

70-26

Well this is really your time tonight and we have Jesse over here, and Curt over there to kind of give you a little bit of guidance. As I said this morning, the idea is not to stump me, that would be pretty easy. The idea is maybe help you a little bit to understand some things, to bring the Word of God to bear upon them. It's not limited to Bible interpretation, how do I interpret a certain verse here and there. I brought my MacArthur Study Bible so I have all the answers here. In case...somebody said to me this morning, you know, there's a statement in John 17 such and such and such and such, what do you think that means? I said I don't know, but I'll go home and read my notes in the Study Bible and I'll tell you tonight. I don't remember everything I wrote in there, you understand that. And going over it and over it and over it as often as I do, I still need to be refreshed. So it's a good companion for me to have along.

I spent this afternoon, just as a footnote while somebody comes up to ask a question because that would be a good way to start....I spent the afternoon reading through the latest volume of commentary material, and this is the second volume in the gospel of John, I finished it a few months ago, it was an agonizing process to get it down because I preached the gospel of John I think the first year I was here.

And so basically when I write a commentary, I write it off of the original sermons that I preached, they're typed up, they come to me quadrupled spaced and I use that as the basis and then I fill in between all the lines and add and change things. It was a very painful exercise because...now that was the second volume, I had already done the first volume, but in both cases it was done so long ago and in the first year I was here, I really thought I was deep. But when I looked at what I preached back then, from this vantage point, I wondered why these even allowed me to continue to preach here.

So I had to do a lot of extra work. I think the two volumes come out to about 800 pages on John and I found probably about a hundred pages worth in what I preached in 96 messages on the gospel of John many years ago. But for me, it is a profound catharsis to pour all that truth back through me and to go into the book and search it out and develop it and write and rewrite and edit and add and delete and enrich and do all of those kinds of things. What an immense privilege.

So even though I'm not preaching it to you, I'm full up to my ears with the truth of the gospel of John. And what a marvelous, marvelous epistle it is. I think, and I always felt like this would be the worst of all the commentaries because it was coming off of material I preached at the beginning of my ministry and it wasn't as well informed, and I thought it would end up being the worst. But I think at this point it may be my favorite two volumes in the whole series because of the astounding wonder of Jesus Christ who is the theme of these two.

So I was studying the gospel of John and it was as fresh to me as if I never had preached it. And even though I preached it many years ago, I've preached the contents of it again and again through

the years. And yet every time I go back to it, it's a special joy. So I'm like you, in a sense, some people might give me more credit for a good memory than I deserve and I need sometimes to read my own commentaries to find out what I believe about things. And I have my Study Bible handy. So we'll see whether I need it or not.

Now maybe that's enough people for the time being, so that people don't wind up standing there for a very long time. Why don't we begin over here, just give me your name so I know who I'm talking to, then you can ask your question.

PHIL: Hi, John, my name is Phil Holland and I've been with you for 31 years and still...

JOHN: Thank you for your ministry.

PHIL: And I just have one quick question that I've...it's been on my mind for quite some time. Both my wife and I live in Burbank, we have a lot of people from the Watchtower Society come to our door.

JOHN: Right.

PHIL: And I have such a great compassion for these people that I actually invite them in so we can talk and I can get a chance to share the gospel. And my question was, out of, of course, John's second epistle in verse 10, "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house and do not give him a greeting," and then John goes on and on. How would you respond to that? And....

JOHN: Well we have to respond...good question, Phil,...we have to respond to that in its context, okay? In the period of the New Testament and after and before, there were itinerant teachers. Basically people travel around and taught and preached. They were dependent upon the care and the reception of people in the towns and villages where they went to receive them into their homes to give them lodging, to give them food. That's the context here. What John is saying is, when an itinerant teacher comes to your town who is not faithful to the gospel, do not provide for him a home, a place of reception. That's the context here. It does not mean that you should not have a conversation with somebody with the objective of communicating the gospel to them.

In fact, Jude tells us that we need to snatch people like brans from the burning without getting our own garments burned or we need to reach down for people who are corrupted without staining our own garments. So, you remember perhaps the best illustration of this, of course, on the positive side would be Jesus sending out the 70 in the New Testament and saying, "Wherever you go where people receive you into their home, you know, give peace to that home. Where they spurn you, you know, shake the dust off your feet and go somewhere else," that's a picture of the itinerant preacher moving around the countryside going from village to village, that's how they plied their trade. It still goes on to some degree in parts of the world today. But it would be the idea of a welcoming reception.

If in the Jewish kind of social world, having a meal with someone was tantamount with acceptance of that someone. That is exactly the way they viewed that because that's why the leaders of Israel condemned Jesus, they said He eats with sinner. And the Pharisees, you remember, wouldn't eat with anybody but a Pharisee. So the idea of opening your home, receiving somebody in, having a meal, giving them hospitality, caring for them, meeting their needs which is aiding and abetting their enterprises is exactly what it's talking about there, I don't think that it is specifically referring to the

fact that we should not have a conversation with these people geared to communicating the truth to them. I think we should.

Now having said that, you have to be very, very careful that if you're going to engage yourself with a Jehovah's Witness, or with a Mormon, or with any other person that comes along denying the truth, that you take the position of the offensive. It's very easy for them to twist and manipulate a new believer who can get tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine. So someone as mature as yourself, I would say they have no idea what they just stepped in to, and that's a good thing. So keep it up, Phil. Okay...okay.

?????? Good evening, John. I just want to tell you I love you.

JOHN: Thank you...thank you. I'll take that any time. Thank you.

?????? In regards to particular redemption or some would call it limited atonement...

JOHN: Sure.

?????? I love your teaching on that the last year and a half or so, I appreciate it. In 2 Peter chapter 2 verse 1 it says, "But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you who will secretly introduce destructive heresies even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves." Can you tell me how that verse reconciles with the doctrine of particular redemption? You know, the fact that Christ didn't die for people who will never be saved...according to...

JOHN: Well apart from the rather extensive note in the Study Bible, there is a very extensive note there on that because it's a very important issue...and I think...what I've said here, and I will read it because I think it's important. The terms which Peter used here are more analogical than theological, speaking of a human master over a household, the Master bought slaves and the slaves owned the Master allegiance as their sovereign. Where God in Deuteronomy has said to have bought Israel though they rejected Him. Doctrinally this analogy can be viewed as responsibility for submission to God which the false teachers had refused. We're not talking about bought in a redemptive sense. We're not talking about bought in a ransom sense. We're not talking about bought in a salvific sense. We're talking about being bought analogically. And in this sense, every human being that comes into the world has an obligation to God. And as I see it, that's the best way to understand that. If you take...what he's asking, of course, is if you take a limited atonement view, that is that Christ actually provided a real atonement for all those who would believe and for no one else, then you cannot say about an apostate that the Lord bought them. So that's the question. But here it does say that and I feel the best response to that is that this is analogical. That is to say, every human being has an obligation to God as sovereign master. And to fail to fulfill that obligation, look at the human responsibility side, brings about swift destruction. It clearly says they deny the master...they deny the master. And that's where you draw the analogy part of it. They are guilty of rejecting their responsibility to the sovereign who is over all men. And consequently they exist in a position of disobedience and rebellion for which they are culpable. Okay? Good question.

DAVID: Hi, my name is David...and I was running into a cult member and I said, the Hare Krishnas, and I said, "How often do you folks get together and share meals and their fellowship together?" And they said basically almost every day with meals. And then I look at Hebrews 3:12 and 3:13 it says, "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God and encourage one another daily for as long as it is called Today so that none of our hearts get

hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” And I look at our pattern and I look at cult’s pattern, even the cult down the street, and we have a tendency to not meet as much as they do. Can you shed some light on why we have our pattern and how it was established?

JOHN: Well sure, and I can go as far as I can go. Let me say this. I spend an awful lot of time with Christians. I married one. So far I’ve raised four, they married four and I’ve got fourteen more coming along. My whole life is surrounded by the people of God, every day of my life, wherever I go, I’m in fellowship. It is a very rare day in my life, even if I go away somewhere in the world, or somewhere in the country that I’m not in fellowship with God’s people. What you’re dealing with, with Hare Krishna, is communal living which is a kind of socialism, it’s a kind of communism. It’s the same thing with the Buddhist temple down the street. We have in recent months, as Rick was talking about, I guess it was back in December, gone down there and talked with them and spent...essentially Rick gave them the gospel, I don’t know if you knew that. Majesty...was it? One of the singing groups at the Master’s College went down because they were interested in finding out what Christian Christmas music was like, so we put on a concert. Rick went and preached the gospels to the monks inside the temple. And they were saying they wanted to come to the concert but there were certain limitations upon what they could do. They had to wear their orange robes. They kind of work in a collective kind of environment. And if they came here, they would have to come in that garb and they were under authority. And it’s turned out they didn’t come.

But that’s a very different thing. It’s a very circumscribed communal socialistic living where people who...it’s like Buddhist priests and these people, they give up all their freedoms, they give up all their ownership. They step into that kind of communal environment. That is not to say Christians aren’t responsible to spend more time with each other. But I don’t think there’s a biblical mandate about that. I think the family is the unit in Christianity that is the primary unit. That is where...and you can go all the way back to Deuteronomy chapter 6 where parents are told to lead their children to talk about God every day when they stand up, walk in the Way, rise up, lie down. The family is God’s unit by which righteousness is passed from one generation to the next. We saw an illustration of that tonight in baptism.

So we are not a communal society. In the book of Acts, early in the book of Acts that was not communism, it wasn’t everybody selling everything they possessed and taking the money and pooling it and doling it out equally to everybody, such as in the Communist or Socialist structure. It was merely families, individuals willing to make sacrifices to give money to the elders that could be disseminated to the people who had need. That was all discretionary. In fact, in Ananias and Sapphira’s case where they sold a piece of land, it wasn’t that they didn’t give it all to the Lord. It was that they said they gave it all to the Lord and they lied. And you remember, Peter said to them, “You didn’t have to sell it and you didn’t have to give it all. But the Lord’s not going to tolerate your lies.” So there’s no biblical justification for communal living, for any kind of socialism, any kind of communism. I mean, that’s...that’s a lot of answers to the question, but I appreciate it, David. But I am saying this, where believers know someone has a need, they need to open their hearts and open their homes and embrace those people and meet those needs, right? How can you say you love God if you see your brother in need and close up your compassion to him? Okay?

And you know what? One of the reasons we have a Sunday night service is because we want to be together more than just on a Sunday morning. Most churches don’t even have that. And during the week, I would be interested to know how many of you people sitting here tonight meet at least one other time other than on Sunday with other believers during a given week, put your hands up. There we go...there we go. Grab one of those hands and they’ll take you to their next meeting.

DAVID: Do you think food would facilitate fellowship a little better, like rolls or something?

JOHN: Yeah, David, let me put it this way. There is no fellowship without food. (Laughter) It never happens. I don't know...I don't know how coffee got into the Kingdom of God, but it's certainly there...as we know when we have to spray wash the church patio every Monday from the coffee. Okay.

JESSICA: Hi, my name is Jessica, I attend the Master's College...

JOHN: Hi, Jessica.

JESSICA: I was greatly encouraged by the Truth in Life Conference.

JOHN: Good...good.

JESSICA: And I had a question regarding that. I know that God's Word is God-breathed and infallible and I believe that He is faithful in preserving His Word throughout the translations which is why I was concerned when you were speaking about the word *doulos* and its faults in the translations. So I was just wondering that our English translations are not fully reliable unless we look back at the original language. And are there other places that are mis-translated?

JOHN: This is a very good question. Some months ago I talked about *doulos*, the word slave, which the English translators inevitably have translated servant or bondservant which is kind of an invented word. And I talked about how much we have lost because the word is slave and it should be translated slave and that's a paradigm that really helps us understand what it means to be a Christian, *kurios*, *doulos*, Lord, slave...there's no such thing as a Lord who doesn't have slaves, no such thing as a slave that doesn't have a lord or a master. And I laid that out. And one of the sad realities of New Testament translation is that the word which means slave is so often translated servant. A servant is somebody who works for a wage. A slave is somebody who is owned. That's a big difference. The idea of slavery is a paradigm which makes sense out of the New Testament.

So her question is, why would God permit this word in the English versions? Is He not protecting His Word?

The answer to your question is, He is protecting His Word because we know without question what the original is. We know it without question. Everybody has always known it. We haven't lost the Word of God at all, we know exactly what it is. The text is pure. It is *doulos*. In fact, none of the *doulos* passages that I know of, and there are almost a hundred and fifth of them in the New Testament, are disputed. They're all clearly *doulos*.

Now your second question is, are there other things that are obscured? I've never come across anything like this before. That's what's been so remarkable about it. And by the way, we have a new assistant baseball coach at the college and after I spoke on this the other night, Christ Bando, you may know the name, he played in the major leagues for ten or eleven years, a wonderful, wonderful Christian man, his wife and his sons, part of our college family now, Christ came up to me after I did that and he had a fresh new Greek translation of the New Testament by Jay Adams. You know who Jay Adams is? And he had been faithful to translate *doulos* slave all the way through. So maybe this is making a resurgence. There are definitely some historical things that find their way, and I don't know of anything anywhere close to the breadth of this. It's the only one I know of. But the text has not been corrupted. And I don't know everything about every other language in the world and how they deal with that word, but God has protected His Word. Occasionally translators are unfaithful to

that. But we know what the original says.

And anybody..that's why I'll say this, Jessica, that's why it's so important for people who teach the Scripture to deal with the original languages. Even English sometimes misses the nuance. If you use the word "servant" for example in English, that would translate at least six and maybe seven Greek words that all have a different nuance. That's the value of digging in to the original languages.

JESSICA: Thank you.

JOHN: Good question...thank you. See how insightful the Master's College students are. Great question.

BARTON: Hello, sir, my name is Bro(??) Barton. I praise God every day for your faithfulness over the years.

JOHN: Thank you.

BARTON: I just had a practical question. I've heard before, a couple of times, about the way you apologize to people, so this is just a practical wisdom question for me to grow from. I just would like to know do you've got like a policy...I've heard just as an example, Dick Mayhue said that he had a lady write you and say that she had appreciated your ministry but she was going to stop supporting it because she had found out that you were stealing all your material from her pastor.

JOHN: Yeah.

BARTON: And you wrote her back and apologized.

JOHN: Yeah. That's one of my favorite letters. This lady...this lady wrote me from the Midwest and she said, "I've been listening to you for years and I have now figured out, you're using all my pastor's material and you never give him credit." I don't know how she figured out I even knew who her pastor was. But I just wrote her and said, "Ma'am," I didn't want to say the obvious, I didn't want her to lose confidence in her pastor, so I just wrote and said. You know, "If I've ever done that, I ask your forgiveness. I'm just grateful you have a good, faithful pastor," something like that.

Yeah, first of all, I can't keep up with all my critics. So I learned along time ago not to try to defend myself. Just to write back some kind of a letter that says thank you for the criticism, thank you for pointing these things out. If there's been anything that I've done that offended you, I'm sorry for that. Pray for me. And just go on.

I just don't think you...I never want to be backed into a position of being defensive. Because if the truth were known...Look, I'm not perfect, I know that. And if you happen to pick the wrong thing to criticize me for, you could just as well have picked the right thing to criticize me for. So who am I to defend myself? I will defend the people around me. If people come to me to criticize the people I work with, they're going to find me an unwilling hearer. I don't take people's criticism of the people that serve the Lord with me or in the circle of faithfulness. I don't take that very well. I will defend them. I will always defend them until I have reason not to. But when it comes to myself, I...you know, it's kind of like the Old Testament, "Let your praise be in another man's lips." I'm not going to spend my whole life trying to defend myself.

I've got to tell you a funny story. Is Melinda...are you here? Where are you, Melinda? Yeah, my daughter, Melinda. Some years ago she went to work at Grace To You. Now she thought...she comes to Grace Church, she thought everybody liked her father. You know, because nobody stands up here and criticizes me or protests, it's pretty...pretty loyal group here, that's why you're here. And she thought everybody liked my father.

Well she came to work at Grace To You and they put her in the responsibility of...was it?...taking e-mail off the computer, or whatever it was, you were getting messages coming on the computer, all this anti-John MacArthur propaganda was coming like a flood and she had the job of taking all this stuff off the computer. And there were all kinds of websites that were sort of anti-John MacArthur websites and all this. She just didn't get it.

Well she didn't say anything. She just started firing back at these people. (Laughter) Stuff like this, "How dare you, you don't know my father. I know my father and he does not do that." (Applause)

So finally, as it all began to mount, that's like pouring gas on a fire, you know, you do that. It came even hotter. And finally she told me about it and I said, "Stop doing that. That's what they want. Are you kidding? You've just fed the monster. They've got John MacArthur's daughter reacting to them. That's what they're after."

So I just don't think...I don't think there's any virtue in that. You just keep teaching the Word. You know, I've said this many, many times, time and truth go hand in hand. Given enough time, the truth about a person will be told. And you just keep doing what you do, do it faithfully, do the best you can do. Don't defend yourself. Just encourage people if they criticize you, thank them and say, "Pray for me." And just move on and let God be your defender. And let time and truth be your defender. I mean, that's a better way, as far as I'm concerned. Okay? Good question.

AMY: Hi, Dr. MacArthur, my name is Amy.

JOHN: Hi, Amy.

AMY: I want to thank you so much for your ministry. You've impacted so many people, including myself and my family. My question is, what is the relationship...how does the Bible define the relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit, especially during His ministry on earth?

JOHN: Good question.

The best way to understand that is this, that when Christ emptied Himself as it says in Philippians 2, and took upon Him the form of a servant, He yielded up His own personal will. He said over and over, as we have noted many times, "I only do what the Father shows me to do. I only do what the Father tells me to do. I only do what the Father does. I only do it when He says to do it." And it comes to the crux in the garden when He says, "Not My will, but Yours be done," which means He is completely submitted to the Father's will. So He goes through life, not that His will is in disagreement with it, but He yields up His own prerogatives to do the will of the Father.

The self-emptying, however, is more than that. It is more than just a willingness to do the Father's will in the Father's time. It is a yielding up of prerogatives within His own power. For example, He said if I wanted to I could call a legion of angels. Right? But I won't. He yielded to the Father's will and He yielded to the Spirit's power so that if you, and this comes out in Matthew chapter 12, if you said of

Jesus He does what He does by the power of Satan, that's what the leaders said, He says you have blasphemed the Holy Spirit. Which is to say what He does He does by the Spirit.

You see an illustration of that, several illustrations of that, early on in the gospel of Luke. You can remember the Holy Spirit leads Jesus into temptation. The Holy Spirit empowers Him as He goes into Galilee, empowers Him to preach, empowers to do miracles so that He in His self-emptying does the will of the Father in the power of the Spirit. So to assign what He does to the devil is to blaspheme the Spirit who is really the one doing it. This comes into clear focus, if you understand from the very beginning, that He was conceived in the womb of Mary by the Holy Spirit. He was at His baptism being baptized by John the recipient of the Holy Spirit in a symbolic way when the Spirit came like a dove and settled upon Him. This was a demonstration of now that He's going to launch into His ministry, it's going to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. So that's the way to understand that.

Now Jesus said in that last night in that Upper Room with the disciples, He said, "When the Holy Spirit comes, He will speak of Me." So the ministry of the Holy Spirit now is to point us to Christ. In His humiliation, Christ pointed to the Holy Spirit as the source of His power. In His exaltation, in His saving work, the Holy Spirit comes to point us to Christ. Okay? Good question, Amy.

AMY: Thank you.

CHRIS: Hi, Pastor John, my name is Chris.

JOHN: Hi, Chris.

CHRIS: I know that you've spent a large portion of your ministry and even your life to training men for the ministry. I think the building right to my left is a testament of that. So I have a two-part question for you.

First of all, what would you say to a young man who was aspiring to be in full-time ministry, who strongly desired it but wasn't quite sure that he was called by God? And secondly, what are some major pit falls that same young man should be looking out for.

JOHN: Sure, I think I know who that young man is. (Laughter) That's wonderful, Chris. Look, you're in the same place everybody's in. I never had an epiphany, an angel never showed up. I never heard a voice out of heaven. When I looked at my own life and said, "What do I want to do?" There were no supernatural events. There were NO supernatural events.

All I could look at was a desire. And I think that fits perfectly the New Testament pattern. First Timothy 3, "If a man desires the office of an overseer, or pastor, he desires a noble work." The assumption there is that this is the normal way that God indicates the calling through desire...through desire. And as that desire flourishes and strengthens, it becomes a singular desire.

All I can tell you is there were times in my life when I thought I would be a preacher. Then there were times in my life when I hoped I would be a preacher. Then there were times in the progression of that when I knew I would be a preacher. Then there were times when I knew I couldn't be anything other than a preacher or a pastor.

And I think it's that desire that grows and develops. And what grew it in me was not so much the nature of ministry itself, but my undying passion for the book. When I went to college, I'm not going to

give you a whole lot of useless information about my past, but my whole life I got notes that I had to take home about how bad I did in school. And “Johnny could do better” notes, you know? My mother was always saying to me, “We know you can do better...” And I was always trying to convince her, “No, no, this is it, I’m maxed out (Laughter). I’m giving it my best shot, that’s all I can do.” “No, you can do better...you can do better.” And the teachers would say Johnny could do better.

The point is, I was no scholar. I was no academic. That was true all the way through high school. And in college, I didn’t let my books get in the way of my education either. I went through college from one event to another event, student life, athletics, every sport...I played every sport in my college days. I was involved in all kinds of activities.

As I got toward the end of my college years, I think it was my junior-senior year, the Word of God took on a whole new depth for me. And what it came down to was this need to know what the Bible meant. That’s what drives me, by the way. It’s not you that drive me, it’s this that drives me. I really became a preacher of the Word of God because I didn’t want to do anything in my whole life but that because I wanted to know it and I wanted to share its glorious truths with others.

And so, it just kept developing in my heart. And I remember when I went to seminary, remember now, I had convinced my mom that I had maxed out with, you know, Cees and Bees, and I went to seminary and I remember the first time I showed her my first semester report card. She just...”I knew you hadn’t been telling me the truth all these years.” I went through seminary and I did so well and I graduated with honors and all of that. And there was one driving reason, I was doing what I really loved and the passion was there.

The other components of that, the desire, the growing explosive desire in your heart that eliminates anything else, the next thing that comes along was confirmation from the people who were saying, “You want to teach? Let’s hear you teach.” And that’s fine as far as it goes. But if you say I’m called to teach and everybody says, “Oh no you’re not,” maybe you ought to think about that. But where there’s affirmation of your giftedness and where there’s confirmation by the leadership of the church that your character and your giftedness fits this, so you have the laying on of hands like in the case of Timothy. But all the way along, sure there’s a certain sense of “Is this what I really what I ought to do.” Why, because there’s this nagging unworthiness, there’s this reality that how am I going to survive? How am I going to be faithful? You just take it a day at a time.

I will tell you, it is the greatest joy, continues to be the greatest joy of my life. But it continues also to be more important than it ever has been in the past, it’s a growing joy that I have. So there’s a certain sense in which it’s a desire, a flourishing, developing desire. Eventually you can’t do anything but that because that begins to completely capture your heart. Then you have to look at your giftedness, response, affirmation from spiritual leaders around you, set aside your fallenness because the only kind of people the Lord can use are broken vessels, because that’s all there are. Okay?

And when it comes to that, and I tell young guys this all the time, all ministry, all ministry comes back to this book, all of it...all of it is informed by this book. So when you want to get trained, get the tools to understand this book. And then when you’ve gotten that foundation, you can go take whatever field you want, whether you want to teach, whether you want to be in a university, what do you want to teach in a seminary, pastor a church, or be a missionary. But the end of the day, all ministry is a dissemination of divine truth, right? And that’s what you want to make sure you grasp.

If you’re young enough, if you still have a little bit of doubt about whether this is what you ought to do,

and I can honestly say I had no idea when I went to seminary what I was going to do, I just was driven to dig into the Word of God and I loved it. I don't think I even knew till I finally got to my third year where I would go. But I think you can start there and if the Lord continues to make that desire flourish that you're going to find that you're in the right spot. My guess is, if that's already a passion for you, that's the work of the Lord in your heart. Okay? Good.

MARK: Hi, Pastor MacArthur, my name is Mark Nielson, how are you?

JOHN: Good, thank you, Mark.

MARK: My question is, in Romans 11:26, Paul says, "All Israel will be saved," who does he mean exactly as far as we can tell from the Scriptures as who all Israel is?

JOHN: It's pretty clear if you put that together with the whole picture eschatologically. All Israel will be national Israel in the future...in the future. All Israel will be saved at some point. Right now, individual Jews here, there, but as a people they have not come back to their Messiah. In the future, God will sovereignly save the nation. That will be essentially the Jews collectively as a people will believe in Messiah, Zechariah says, they will look on Him whom they've pierced, mourn for Him as an only Son, a fountain of cleansing will be opened and they'll be washed from their sins and they'll receive the Kingdom God promised to them in the Old Testament. That is after, according to Isaiah, two thirds of the rebels...two thirds of Israel rebellious purged in judgment during the time of the Tribulation. So in the period time of the Tribulation, there's going to be a salvation of national Israel. It encompasses twelve thousand from every tribe. They don't know their tribes now, God does know them. Constitutes 144 thousand Jews, then they become evangelists to the world. The revival seems to start to take effect, the salvation of Israel in the city of Jerusalem, Revelation 11, at the end of the chapter where the population of Jerusalem begins for the first time after the two witnesses to glorify God. So that's talking about a future generation of Jews at the end of the age that the Lord will redeem as a constituted people and give to them the Kingdom which was promised in the Old Testament.

MARK: Does that literally mean any Jew who would be alive at that time?

JOHN: Right.

MARK: Okay, great. Thank you.

BRIAN: Hi, John.

JOHN: Hi.

BRIAN: My name is Brian.

JOHN: Hi, Brian

BRIAN: How you doing? Let's see, I consider this a privilege being able to ask you...you don't know how many times in my own personal studies I've always thought...Boy, if I could only ask Mac about this thing." You know. And so now what I've been graveling with lately and it's kind of a trivial thing. In Leviticus 11, I guess God didn't give me the gift of speaking in public, just as a side note....

JOHN: You're doing great.

BRIAN: In Leviticus 11, God gave to Aaron and Moses the commandment about cleanliness, unclean animals in hygiene and such. And there was food that was forbidden, to kind of go along with the food and fellowship thing. A lot of that food that was talked about then is part of our cuisine now. How do we address that?

JOHN: Sure, that's good, very good question.

The critical thing for God dealing with Israel was this, they were to be repository, the national repository of divine truth, okay? They were the...they were the sole monotheists in a polytheistic animistic world, okay? They were the true worshipers of the true God. They were an island in a sea of polytheism, animism, whatever kind of false religion...multiple gods.

How was God going to protect them and insulate them? The food and fellowship thing comes into play. They couldn't dress like the other nations. They couldn't eat like the other nations. And basically all social contact, as it still does, is built around the dining environment. So what God was doing was isolating them.

They had cooking laws. They had certain animals they could not eat. There were ways they had to prepare the food. They couldn't mix milk and meat, that's still part of being kosher today. But all of that had no real purpose other than isolation, just a way to separate them. This was part of their cleanliness so that they just couldn't go over to anybody's place and interact with them and therefore be influenced. God was designing a peculiar people.

Another way to view it on the big picture side was no matter how the other nations did it, the Jews did it different. No matter how they dressed, the Jews dressed differently. No matter what they ate, the Jews ate differently. No matter how they prepared the food, the Jews did it differently. They had all kinds of laws with regard to Sabbath, ceremony, worship, all that isolated them. The design of God was to isolate the community for its own holiness, separation...separation.

At the same time, they were challenged to proclaim the truth but with in inability to interact with the other cultures to protect them from evil influence. And God was protecting the people to protect their future so that the Messiah would come from Abraham through the line of David that that would still be in existence. So that was part of the insulation and protection.

Once the Messiah came, all that part of the law goes away. And that happens immediately in the book of Acts. Peter has a vision, remember that in Acts 10? He sees a sheet an din the sheet are all kinds of animals, clean and unclean. And the Lord says to him, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." All that's gone...no more.

And his response is, "Wait a minute, I've never eaten anything unclean." And the voice comes back and says, "Don't dare call unclean what God has cleansed." That whole part of the Old Testament law, that ceremonial part is gone. That's why in Colossians Paul says, "Don't let anybody hold you to a new moon, a festival, or any kind of food." And he goes on to talk about it a lot that we're no longer under Old Testament dietary laws. So they're gone. So you can feel free to eat anything.

There were some issues in the past that in some of the elements of their diet were designed to protect them from diseases. There's a wonderful book written about 35 years ago, it first came out called None of These Diseases by McMillan, a medical doctor. He showed how some of those laws

in the Old Testament, even circumcision was a way to prevent certain diseases as God protects His people in a very unique way. But in the New Testament, all of that element of the Law is set aside and what remains is the moral and theological elements of the Law, okay?

BRIAN: Thank you.

????? I have a question about if you've given God authority over your life and you've been praying for something and doing everything in your power to make it happen, and it's not. At what point can you say, "Okay, this is not God's will," or at what point do you continue trying?

JOHN: That's a good question and I think the answer to that is you never really want to say this is not God's will if what you are seeking and praying for is for His glory. That's the question. I don't know what this specific thing is you're thinking of but when you're...for example, let's take you're praying for somebody to come to salvation. You...you don't ever want to get to the point where you say, "Well, I've been praying for I don't know, a half an hour here, and or I've been praying for 30 days or I've been praying for two years," you don't ever want to assume that it's not God's will to save someone. That's presumptuous.

You can assume, however, that it's not yet God's time. I think the thing that has to cover your prayer at all times is, "God, if this is Your will, do this," and you pray and you keep praying and you keep praying and sometimes you pray for a long time, many years, decades. Since you don't know God's will, you can't say it is God's will, nor could you say, "Oh well, it's not His will."

I had a very prominent preacher say to me, somebody you would all know, say to me, "I have a child that's not elect."

I said, "What? What do you mean you have a child that's not elect?"

"I have a child that's not elect."

I said, "Well why would you say that?"

"Well, because this child has not come to Christ and it's been a long time. And the direction of the life of this child is opposite."

I was very surprised by that. By the way, that particular child is now in Christ and serving alongside that father. So I teased him a little bit about his inside knowledge of who's elect and who's not. You just don't want to get to the point where you decide that God's going to act in your time or you're going to think it's not His will.

So, depending on what it is. If you're praying for God's will in a certain situation, keep praying, God hears you just because you're faithful, that's called importunity, you know, like the guy who knocks and knocks and knocks and knocks and if somebody is going to do what you want just because you keep banging and he's irritated, what will God do for you when you keep asking and He loves you? So don't give up. Okay. Yes, sir.

ANDREW: Well, Dr. MacArthur, my name is Andrew.

JOHN: Hi, Andrew.

ANDREW: Is the New Testament Lord's day Sunday in any way a replacement for the Jewish Sabbath? And to what degree then should Sabbath principles and also specific laws apply to how I spend Sundays?

JOHN: Very good question. First answer...no. The Lord's Day is not a replacement of the Sabbath, no. Secondly, there are no Old Testament Sabbath laws that apply to Sunday.

Now if you want a fuller explanation, which I think you probably do, this was the whole subject of a message that I gave and I will point you to that message. Genesis 2:2, "By the seventh day, God completed His work which He had done and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done." And then verse 3, "Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."

When I was teaching on those two verses, when I went through Genesis, some of you remember, I gave a great amount of effort and time to that very question. So what I want you to do is call Grace To You on the phone, 1-800-55-GRACE. And when the lovely gal answers the phone, you say, "John MacArthur told me to call, that you're going to send me free CDs on Genesis 2 and 3." Okay? Will you do that? And they will send those. Okay? All right, Andrew.

ANDREW: I also want a copy. (Laughter)

JOHN:: You want a copy? My advice to you is see what you can get away with. Now you understand that if 35 people call Grace To You tomorrow and give that speech, nobody's getting anything. Okay.

CHRISTIAN: My name is Christian ???? My question is about grace evangelism, I've taken that long ago. And in that it forces you to preach Jesus Christ to be God. Now do you really have to preach Jesus Christ to be God when you're preaching the gospel on the street or someone...to someone actually? Because when I look at the Scripture, they do when they teach the gospel, they would say the Messiah, actually, you know, died and resurrected. They don't actually and directly say the Messiah or Jesus Christ is God.

JOHN: Well, sure. Ultimately you have to define who they're believing in. Who is the Savior? Who is God's chosen one? And therefore you're going to have to define who He is. That may not be the first thing you say, but at some point you must preach Christ. And if you're going to preach Christ, then you have to make it clear who Jesus Christ is. It is meaningless to someone to respond to a Christ who in their mind is not the Christ who is the true Christ. You have to explain this is the God/Man. That may not be the first thing you explain. You may start with the Lord Jesus Christ is the Messiah of Israel, the sacrifice for sin on the cross. But sooner or later in every discussion, they must believe that He is God. Obviously if you start in Romans 10:9 and 10, "Believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord," the question is going to come up. What does Lord mean? And you're going to go not only Master but divine sovereign Master, God himself. So yes, in every presentation of the gospel it must be affirmed that Jesus is God incarnate.

Now let me just show you why this is so important. Did any of you happen...December 23 or something, Joel Olsteen was on, and they asked him about Romney and they asked him about whether he accepted Romney as a true Christian. And, of course, he said yes, yes, he believes in Jesus, he believes in the same Jesus I do. I accept him as a Christian brother. He kept saying, "I think...I think..." And then at the end of all that he said, "Nah, I never thought about it." I think I think,

but I never thought about it. That's a perfect illustration of that kind of stuff. I think he is. He talks about Jesus. He talks about the same Jesus I talk about. He loves the same Jesus. I love...

See, that's what Mormons want you to think. That's what Jehovah's Witnesses want you to think. That's what Muslims would like you to think. They believe Jesus is a prophet, a true prophet. So it is essential that we define Christ accurately.

We did a little gospel tract at Grace To You called "Who is Jesus Christ?" Because that's the prevailing question. Okay?

TOYA: Hi, Pastor John, my name is Toya.

JOHN: Hi, Toya.

TOYA: I have a question regarding sacrifice of yourself. Recently...well we've gone through some major issues with our daughter. And they're really started to escalate. But in the midst of it, I feel such a compulsion to want to do something for other people, take care of my family but also do something for other people as well. And I have been a lot of responsibility taking care of my daughter at home and everything, but in the midst of it, really wanting to serve. I don't mind losing sleep a little bit to serve, to sacrifice. But I also know that I need sleep so that I can be well. But it's hurting me that I can't serve because it's such a joy and being able to give. And the desire has even increased. How do I look at it? Do I sacrifice sleep to study more? Or if I can't sacrifice and do my priorities, but to do for others, you know, sacrificing myself and trust that the Lord's going to give me the strength. How do I do that?

JOHN: Just listening to you, Toya, I would assume that you're probably doing exactly the right things. Your heart is coming through. You're struggling for that balance, but...and I wouldn't question your commitment at any level, and you don't need to question your own.

But let me just say this to you. Your priority is your daughter. Now, this is only for a season, okay? This isn't your whole life. This isn't your whole future. This is for now. And there are times in all of our lives when there is someone for whom we have the most immediate priority responsibility, right? And in those times, and in those seasons, we give ourselves wholly to them. God knows that. The Lord understands that. That's your priority. That's where your focus and your energy needs to go.

In endeavoring to reach beyond that, you may cheat that person because you're not getting your rest, you're not getting your sleep, you're not maybe having time in the Word. So this is for now. This is for this season. And I'm convinced the Lord would have you to give the maximum attention and focus. And to get as much energy into that commitment to your daughter as you can, you're going to need to be wise about how you take care of yourself. Believe me, the Lord will cover the basis for you as you cover the priority situation. And you'll find that balance. The very fact that you asked the question tells me where your heart is and that the Spirit of God will direct you in that balance.

And I think what I'm probably hearing is an unnecessary feeling of guilt. You don't need to feel that way. The Lord will take care of the needs of the folks around you while you fulfill the priority of the one that the Lord actually gave you. Okay?

TOYA: Also, I would include her, it would be a teaching thing to her, too. Like I cook...I like to cook for people, and she'd be right there with me and we'll do it together and teaching her about sacrifice and doing for others.

JOHN: Then do it.

TOYA: Okay.

JOHN: Look, you're going to find that balance cause your heart is right. You're going to find that balance, just keep in mind what your priority is. If you can do both at the same time...win/win.

TOYA: Okay, thank you.

JOHN: Okay, Toya. All right, we're going to have to take a couple more and that's going to be it. So..

CHRIS: Just a quick question.

JOHN: Quick question.

CHRIS: Hi, :Pastor John, my name is Chris ?????, simple question, I don't know if there's a simple answer. I've already looked into Scripture and the different views on it, I just simply wanted your understanding about Sheol and particularly regarding the immediate destination of Old Testament saints...after they die.

JOHN: What happened to Old Testament saints when they died? Their bodies went to the grave and their spirits either went into the presence of God or out of the presence of God. There's no neutral holding tank...as some people have thought. I think, you know, David said, "I will awake in His likeness." So I think the Old Testament saints understood that they would be in the presence of the Lord. So Old Testament saints who died, their spirits either went out of the presence of the Lord or into the presence of the Lord. Their bodies remain in the grave until the return of Christ, Daniel 12. At that time they receive their glorified bodies at the end of the Tribulation when Christ returns to set up His Kingdom. Okay? Good. Yes.

ERICA: Hello, Pastor John, my name is Erica but I have two questions that are related on behalf of Kathy Kemp. I'll read those to you.

JOHN: Hi, Kathy.

KATHY: Hi, John.

ERICA: She says, "How are you?"

JOHN: Great

ERICA: The questions are, when we die, do we wake up in God's presence? And will we know each other in heaven?

JOHN: When you die, you will immediately go into the presence of the Lord. "Absence from the body, present with the Lord," right? 2 Corinthians 5, or Philippians, "Far better to depart and be with Christ." It's instantaneous. It's instantaneous. There's no delay. There's no waiting. It's not waking up because you never really go to sleep. It's absent from the body, present with the Lord. As soon as your spirit leaves here, your spirit never goes to sleep, your spirit never dies. Your body may go to

sleep, your spirit will enter into the presence of the Lord immediately.

And then at the Rapture of the church, you will receive a glorified body and there are no wheel chairs in heaven...none of them. (Applause). Okay? But there's no soul sleep, waiting place, no limbo, you go from the presence here to the presence of the Lord. You'll see the Lord Jesus face to face. When you get to heaven, you will know as you are known, you will have instant knowledge of the Lord, instant knowledge of everybody else that is there.

I wrote a book on heaven. You can go to the bookstore afterwards and get a copy of that book, it has a whole section on that. Okay? Will you do that, Erica, for her?

KATHY: How are we going to know each other?

ERICA: How are we going to know each other? Should she just read the book?

JOHN: Well, you could probably gain a lot by reading the book, or I can just give you the answer and you can forget the book. Either one. Because you're going to have perfect knowledge. You're not going to need...we won't have...to put it another way, not only will there not be wheel chairs, there will not be name tags. You will know because you will have perfected knowledge, okay?

KATHY: I think you rock.

ERICA: She thinks you rock. (Laughter)

JOHN: Thank you, I think you roll. (Laughter) Together we're a perfect combination. Okay. Really quick.

CHUCK: How you doing, Pastor? My name is Chuck Johnson, we go back all the way to the days of Harley and I just want to ask you a question, I keep forgetting to ask you. But it's in regard to actors in the entertainment business. And a lot of churches have high esteem for actors and they sit in a lot of front places in churches. In regards to them taking on roles that we would probably consider ungodly and they use language and they are married and they kiss other women and they drink, but they aside say that it's just work alone. Just what's your take on...

JOHN: Hey, I think you're a Christian twenty-four hours a day wherever you are. I don't care if you're in a movie or not in a movie, you don't sin. You don't sin in private, and you certainly there's no virtue in sinning in public and saying it's only a role I play.

I know what you're talking about and I know some of those churches where those people are high profile. I just think there's a terrible lack of integrity and consistency in a Christian testimony...I don't see how a Christian can do that. I just...I don't think you can use the excuse that I'm only acting because what you're doing is selling sin. That's what movies do. I think it's touch for actors. You know, there are many very good competent actors who find it very difficult to take roles because they are unwilling to compromise. I think that's the right place to go, use your talent where you can use it, use it when it's honest, legitimate, doesn't compromise your testimony, wouldn't bring reproach on Christ. And if there aren't very many of those things, you've got to find another way, the Lord will take care of you. But I don't think there's any justification for someone who claims to be a Christian, acknowledging Christ, to play a role that is ungodly, that is sinful, that would bring dishonor on the Lord and that would advocate and promote sin. It's just not right for a Christian.

CHUCK: Thank you, Pastor.

JOHN: Okay, our time is gone. I think I've kept you too long now. Are you in a real panic mood over here? Okay. This will have to be the last question, I think, Jesse.

HARRY: Yeah, this is a quick one. My name is Harry.

JOHN: Hi, Harry.

HARRY: Matthew chapter 16 where Peter said...or Jesus said to Peter, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood did not reveal this to you." Where he said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus said this, "I also say to you," is that a claim to deity. I also...when God the Father revealed to Him that Thou art the Christ and then He says, "I also say to you.

JOHN: Yeah, what you're saying is, by Christ putting what He says on an equal level with what God says, this is making Himself equal with God. That's a good observation, yeah...yeah. Good, Harry. Keep looking at the Word, keep digging, that's wonderful. And that's enough for tonight. And nobody asked me who to vote for. Thank you very much.

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