Bible Questions and Answers, Part 55
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: 70-27

JOHN: Well, this is always an opportunity for us to get acquainted with things that are on your heart. It's the preacher's greatest fear that he is telling people everything they don't care to know and this is the opportunity to tell you what you do care to know. Through the years it's been a part of our church to reason with folks from the church with Scripture and just kind of have a little bit of dialogue.

A couple of microphones out there, one in the aisle over here, one in the aisle over there. I think Bill and Kevin are there and we'll meet you and greet you and help you shape your question in a brief fashion. Don't let the line get more than about five deep or so, or some of you are going to end up standing there for a while. No...go ahead, you're already up and at 'em, that's fine, go ahead. You can sit down in an adjacent seat so you aren't uncomfortable because I've been known to give fairly long answers to questions.

But any way, this is your opportunity. The idea, of course, is to clarify something that is of concern to you on the spiritual level. So we'll begin over here, Kevin, with the gentleman there and give me your name and your question.

QUESTION: Yeah, I had a question about justification on concerning the timing of Abraham's justification, I thought you could help me with. My question is, was Abraham justified in Genesis 15 or by faith when he obeyed God to go to another land in Hebrews 11?

JOHN: That's a question that I can't specifically answer except to say that in the chapter which discusses Abraham's justification, Romans 4, his justification is associated with believing God regarding the promise of Isaac. So the promise of Isaac was the promise that God began to give to him in Genesis chapter 12 when He told him that he would produce out of his loins a great nation and that would have to start with one child and at that point he and Sarah were barren. To some degree, Abraham responded to God and believed enough to obey God to leave Ur of the Chaldees and start on the journey that God had promised him. But Romans 4 is the definitive chapter on the faith of Abraham and it associates his faith with the promise of Isaac. So I think that's the safest place to sort of set the justification of Abraham.

Justification occurred by faith, and that's the point. Abraham believed God and it was accredited to him for righteousness. And as I said, in Romans 4 that act of believing is connected to the promise of Isaac. So you're certainly safe there. If he was actually justified prior to that, you don't have a specific

scripture to lean on. Okay? Good question.

NATHANIEL: Good evening, John, my name is Nathaniel. My father was saved as an adult and later led his parents to the Lord. I grew up in a Christian home. I grew up in the church. By God's grace He blessed me with a godly wife that comes from a second and third generation Christian home. We've seen our children make a profession of faith and bear fruit. What are the...are there unique challenges and opportunities in raising and ministering and shepherding multi generational Christians and if so, what would they be?

JOHN: That's a very good question. Fine...and I think there are challenges in raising multi-generational Christians. In fact, there has been a lot of discussion about the fact that first generation Christians are the passionate, committed, devout, energetic, sacrificial, enthusiastic Christians because they know what they've been saved from, because they have something to compare it to. And there is a zeal and a joy and a sense of wonder over the grace of God that rescued that first generation. And that second generation of Christians raised in the church never really knowing much other than the church, brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, coming to faith in Christ at some point loses something of the wonder and the awesomeness of conversion because they lack the experience of a dramatic transformation. It takes, I think, children raised in that environment, young people raised in that environment some years to engage in adult life to find out the wonder of what they've been rescued from because they usually have to find it out from somebody else. And they don't really see that when they're in the church. They're in a Christian family, a Christian church.

In our society today, however, it becomes pretty apparent very early because of the exposure to the things that are outside the church that once Christian families could insulate their children from and no longer are they able to do that. There is some indication among some people that the third generation of believers seems to drift toward a certain kind of apathy and indifference. Familiarity breeds a certain contempt.

This would be particularly true, and I think I have to say this, and not in a self-serving way, but because it's true, this is particularly true in an environment where there is no real stimulation of their hearts and minds in the things of Christ and the Word of God. What is really hard is second-generation, and even harder, third-generation Christians raised in a sort of insipid, superficial, shallow church experience that lacks penetrating conviction, that lacks clarification of the Word of God, where the Word of God is not continually taught and exposited and brought to bear on their lives in all of its unending richness and beauty and magnificence. It's easy to become familiar with the same old, same old, same old.

Many people were raised in churches where they heard an evangelistic sermon with a very little variation week after week after week after week. Second generation young people raised in that kind of environment find it very boring and it lacks the penetrating stimulation that they need to really grow.

Third generation Christians find it even harder to do that.

But I think all of that aside, first generation, second, third, fourth or whatever it is, in my case fifth generation Christians, if they are exposed regularly, systematically to the church as the church should be and to the Word of God as the Word of God should be, when the Word of God comes to bear on their lives, it erases, it cancels out all of those issues because it has the power to penetrate. I don't think even third-generation Christians should find the Word of God boring. I think when they're led into the deep things of God and when they're drawn to think deeply and widely and to consider the greatness and the glory of God from every facet of the Word of God, it only enriches, enriches and riches them.

It's still a challenge. I think if you ask the guys in the youth ministry, they would tell you that kids that are saved in Christian...in non-Christian environments, non-Christian families, come to Christ in high school or come to Christ at the university and the college ministry, they have a freshness and a zeal and an eagerness that is unique to that. And sometimes the kids that are raised in Christian families don't have that same passion because they take these things for granted. But again, the answer to that is the power of the Word of God to take them to a knowledge of God, an understanding of God that is new and fresh week after week, month after month in their lives. That's why it's so important in the church that we cover the whole Scripture so that God gets full exposure in all His glory to all generations of believers. Okay?

AMAD: I want to thank the Lord for Grace Community Church because this is the place where I was saved, so thank you.

JOHN: Thank you, Amad, were you a Muslim?

AMAD: I was born in Muslim and I became atheist actually while I was in Germany, the Lord brought me here and during three months of the FOF class I became a Christian.

JOHN: During FOF class you became a Christian?

AMAD: Yes, sir.

JOHN: We're thrilled, we're thrilled. Yeah, let's welcome him to the church. All right, what's your question, Amad?

AMAD: Of course, all the praise goes to the Lord.

JOHN: Yes, I know, but we're just thanking Him. That's right, we're thanking Him.

AMAD: My question is, Dr. MacArthur, what happens to us when we are in heaven and like we do have the Holy Spirit in us right now, would we have a need for the Holy Spirit in heaven. Also, if yes how about the Old Testament saints? They do not have the Holy Spirit, would they have it?

JOHN: Yes, good question. In the Old Testament the Old Testament saints did have the Holy Spirit, they did. No one could be saved without the Holy Spirit. Salvation is the same in every age, in every era. No sinner can raise himself from death. No sinner can raise himself from ignorance. No sinner can by his own power escape Satan's clutches, that's a divine work of God done by the Holy Spirit. You get an illustration of it in the creation where the Spirit moves over the waters and creation begins to take shape.

In Genesis it says, "My Spirit will not always strive with man." So you have the Spirit striving with the sinner, bringing the sinner to conviction. Same thing in John. John 16, "The Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment."

So, the work of salvation has always been the work of the Spirit, always been the work of the Spirit. David acknowledges this. "Take Your Spirit...Don't take Your Spirit from me, restore to me the joy of Thy salvation." The Apostles understood it this way. They said this, Jesus said this to them, they're talking about the Holy Spirit and Jesus said, "He is with you, He shall be in you." There wouldn't be any salvation in the Old Testament apart from the Holy Spirit. So the Holy Spirit was with them. The Holy Spirit ministered to them.

But in some new and full sense, He is in us. So it's not a question of the reality itself, it's the question of the degree of that reality. The Holy Spirit has always been with the people of God...always. And when you think about heaven, there will be no need for the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit. There will be no need for the Spirit's work of conviction. There will be no need for the Spirit's work of instruction. There will be no need for the Spirit's work of illumination, as far as we know. In the sense that we know it now. There will be no need for the Spirit to show us Christ. Remember Jesus said when the Spirit comes, He will show you all things concerning Me, because we will see Christ?

And yet, the Spirit of God will function in some way in the glory of heaven to direct us into that form of service which God intends for us to do. But it never refers to believers in heaven having the Holy Spirit in them. No scripture in that regard. So when we go to heaven, we will be perfect, we will be like Christ. That doesn't preclude the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit, you remember, ministered to Christ. So there's some sense in which the Spirit of God will be part of even, I think, our eternal service, but in a way different than we experience now because we will have entered into spiritual perfection and Christ's likeness in heaven. Okay? Good question.

QUESTIONER JOHN: Happy father's day, John.

JOHN: Thank you...thank you. I tell you, I'm a blessed father because God has given me so many wonderful children...grandchildren.

QUESTIONER JOHN: Amen. Well my name is John and I have a question for you. We were in Bible study this morning discussing 2 Corinthians 13 and specifically verse 5 where it says to "Examine yourself whether you are in the faith." Well I guess my question is more pastoral. How do we navigate between the gravity of that verse, one that we should always be mindful of and also 1 John 3:20 where it says, "For whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart."

JOHN: Yeah. That's a very well put question and I think the answer to it is you navigate it this way. You ask the question and you rejoice when the answer is affirmative. Right? You ask the question...there are times in your life when you ask the question and then having asked the question, when you run the test and you find that all the test validates the reality of your faith, then you rejoice. And then you are beyond the condemnation. The text is not holding us captive to some endless condemnation that can never be overcome. It is simply saying...ask the question. And the question can be answered.

What do you do to examine yourself whether you're in the faith? You look at evidences of salvation. It's the direction of your life, not the perfection of it. Simple things and basic things like do I love Christ? Do I desire to honor Christ? Do I resent the sin that is in me? Do I want to be with the people of God? Do I love the truth of Scripture? Do I love the Word of God taught and understood? Does it bring me joy? Do I love to praise the Lord? Do I love to sing the hymns that exalt and honor Him?

These are the evidences of a transformed heart. Those are the questions you ask. It's not about perfection, it's about direction, it's about what you desire, what you want, what brings you joy. Do I live with hope of the life to come? Do I trust in the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Do I believe those things are true?

And having answered those questions then you have risen above the condemning heart. So it's important to ask the question, that's why the Lord's table says, "let a man examine himself." It needs to be done repeatedly every time the church does that because there's always going to be people who need to have the question answered. But you don't spend your whole life trying to answer the questions.

There were times earlier in my Christian experience where I would examine myself to see whether I was in the faith. Every time I would press the test home, I would find failure and sin in my life but I would pass the test because I would have to ask myself...where did these holy longings come from? Where does this hunger for the Word of God come from? Where does this desire to honor God come from? Where does this desire to serve Christ? Where does this hope of heaven come from? Where

does the strong desire to avoid hell come from? This is not normal to me. Where does this desire to be with the people of God, to fellowship with them come from? I would a hundred times rather be with the people of God than with a group of unbelievers in some activity that they're engaged in. Where does that come from? My heart belongs to the things of God. My heart belongs to the Kingdom.

So, you process those questions and you look for evidences of God's work in your life. And one great evidence in your life, and this is where you rehearse this, is how does your faith do in severe trials? That's why Peter says "The testing of your faith is so important because it produces endurance." Hey, I've been there at the edge of the disaster. I've been there on the brink and my faith did not fail...it held. And so God has given me a faith that can prevail in the most difficult situations. And when I examine myself, I can look back and say, "I remember this event, when human faith would not hold up but my confidence and my faith was strong and so it's a faith given by God."

So you examine by looking at your longings and looking at the history of God's work in your life. And once you've taken the exam and the answer is in the affirmative, then you don't allow your heart to condemn you, then condemning heart is simply a temptation. Okay? Good question.

ANDREW: Hi, Pastor, my name is Andrew.

JOHN: Hi, Andrew.

ANDREW: I'm very grateful that you're back safe and sound from your recent travels. And I'll be praying for your safe return with your next state of travels.

JOHN: Okay, thank you.

ANDREW: Psalm 36:6 says that God cares for people and animals alike. Proverbs 12 says that godly people care for their animals. And Scripture also says that the lion will lay down with the lamb. My question, Pastor, is that for those of us who are animal lovers, or pet owners, do we have any biblical hope to reassure us that we'll see our pets in heaven?

JOHN: No. But there are people who are gardeners and they're not going to see their plants there either.

ANDREW: Plants don't fetch, Pastor.

JOHN: What?

ANDREW: Plants don't fetch.

JOHN: No, I understand that. And there are people who are rock collectors and they're not going to see their rocks there either. So there are just a lot of things in this world that God has given us for enjoyment in this world. God does preserve man and beast, Psalm 36:6 does say God preserves man and beast. God has filled this world will all kinds of wonderful and rich benedictions and blessings. And animals do bring a joy into our lives. I know my precious wife, Patricia, is a lover of birds and that's kind of a wonderful pet to have, I think, because they never come inside and all you do is put seed out there and they just arrive and fly all over the place. And if you want to get rid of them, just don't put any seed out there and they'll go somewhere else. But we love the creation of God. We enjoy the creation of God.

A beautiful garden in our yard is always filled with many birds because she's so careful about putting up all these different little receptacles full of seed so that we can enjoy them and feeders for humming birds and things like that. And God has filled this world with wonderful beautiful creatures that really we don't ever shoot them, we don't ever eat them, so they're not there for that purpose. They're there just to display God, that's all, just to show His love of beauty and color and a kind of music and wonder. These are the things that God has given us for this life. They are not everlasting or eternal. When they die, they do not go to heaven. So there is no indication that there will be animals in heaven. Somebody will say immediately, "Well, doesn't Jesus come out of heaven in Revelation riding a white horse?" Well there may be one white horse in heaven. But whatever it is, it's not a horse like any horse you've ever seen or I have ever seen. So there is no indication of that about heaven. Heaven is only a place for people in terms of how Scripture describes it.

But that's true of so many things in this life. There are many, many, many things that we enjoy in this life that the Scripture doesn't say has a counterpart in heaven. Okay? Good question, Andrew.

ROBERTO: Hello, Pastor, my name is Roberto.

JOHN: Hi, Roberto.

ROBERTO: I've been wanting to ask you this question for a long time because you have a habit of looking at things more deeply than other pastors. As the body of Christ, are there any insights that you have extrapolated that we might gain from the fact that woman was the only living being that was not made from the dust, but that was made from man who is the obvious bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh? Is there something maybe that you can share with us that is a little bit deeper than that.

JOHN: Well, the series I did in Genesis, I covered a lot of those kinds of things. I would simply say this. Woman is the direct creation of God and she was made with dust in a secondary sense since Adam was made from dust. She being made from Adam was made from the same stuff that he was made from and so we don't want to make too big an issue out of that. But what is clear, and it must be understood, is that woman was created for man because man without her was incomplete...obviously.

You can't procreate. But procreation wasn't even the first issue. The first issue was companionship. So woman is the one who completes man. I don't think we want to draw any conclusion that because she alone was not created from the dust, she is something higher than man, nobler than man because bone is more exalted than dust. But I do think what we want to understand is that man is incomplete without woman.

There is a temptation to make a case for woman's inferiority because she was the one who was deceived and brought the race down. Adam was not deceived. I don't think you want to go there either because Adam was completely agreeable with the iniquity which Eve was engaged in.

So I think it's simply the design of God rather than creating a man and woman out of dust and bringing them together, to make the point that rather than being viewed as absolutely and always equal, man is created as the head clearly and woman is then later created from man to be his helper. And this is the divine order, as God is the head of Christ and Christ is the head of man and the man is the head of the church...of the woman. So I think it's trying to show us that it's critically important in marriage that there be a man who is in charge and a woman who is there to help. And then, of course, out of that comes procreation.

In our society today, of course, that has been literally obliterated by the Feminist Movement. And now the latest assault on family, lesbian marriage, or homosexual marriage...by the way, you've seen that happen now in the state of California. It isn't going to change a lot now because in countries where they've allowed homosexual marriage, only about ten percent of homosexuals ever get married. They don't want to get married. That isn't the point. They do not want to get married. Only ten percent of them, as I said, do get married. They don't want to get married, they just want to have sex with somebody of their own sex. That's what they want to do. It's a very small group that wants to get married. But what they do want is legitimacy for their behavior. And this gives them that.

But when a state or an entity says that marriage is a coupling of two people on any term, it has completely denied the biblical kind of marriage because biblical marriage is not a coupling of any two people for sexual reasons. It is by God's design of coming together of two people to produce families. That's what it's for. And the exception is barrenness. But the pattern that God ordained was a man and a woman to support that man and the bearing of children to produce families to pass righteousness from one generation to the next. So as soon as you eliminate children, and we've already seen that of a wave of people wanting to get married but not have children, then you come to the place where homosexuals and lesbians can come together and be called marriage, you know that marriage has been redefined now as a coupling of any two people of any sex for sexual purposes and nothing else, and it has lost its identity, its biblical identity, its true identity as a means by which people can bear children in well ordered societies.

Now we'll tell you what will happen. When you define marriage as any other thing than for the purpose of bearing children to be raised by a father and a mother so that society can be protected and preserved by well ordered families, you will see a massive increase in delinquency, crime and all kinds of mental disorder. And it's going to get worse and worse and worse because children who are exposed to those kinds of environments are going to be so warped in the future as to have no bearings morally or socially. And that's what's coming and it's going to come like a flood.

So I think the point of Genesis is that God made the man as the head, and the woman as the helper, and the purpose was to raise families, to bear children and fill the earth and to pass righteousness and order down through society. When that family is disintegrated, society literally flies apart at the seams. Okay?

QUESTIONER: Good evening, John. I wanted to thank you, first of all, for your years of ministry. My first experience with you is back at Hume Lake in 1966.

JOHN: Those were fun days.

QUESTIONER: Yeah, they were great days. My question for you tonight comes from the gospel of John, the tenth chapter, and just to preface out why I'm asking is, I think God has given me my life mission of just trying to bring this one friend of mine to the knowledge of Jesus Christ and he is a Jehovah's Witness. It seems, and maybe this will be useful to everybody here who has to deal with Jehovah's Witness is no matter what subject you get on when you start narrowing it down, the subject they always want to return to is John 10. And just to set the stage, it's Christ when talking about being the Good Shepherd, and it says just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father, I lay down My life for the sheep. I have other sheep who they claim to be the ones, the other sheep. And my references and study and different commentaries that I've read never really seem to narrow it down very well...at least to my satisfaction, to who Christ was referring to as the other sheep.

JOHN: Yeah, in verse 16, "I have other sheep which are not of this fold, I must bring them also and they will hear my voice and they shall become one flock with one shepherd."

All that's talking about...some people say aliens on other planets, that's another popular interpretation of that. Gentiles, plain and simple...Gentiles, non-Jews. He is simply saying that I know My sheep, My sheep know Me. I lay down My life for the sheep. He's talking concerning the Jews. And I have other sheep not of this fold of Israel and I will bring them as well and both will come to be one flock. And this becomes the theme of Ephesians 2 where the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile is broken down, they become one body in Christ. So that's what He's talking about, Gentiles.

It's a very simple, simple understanding that this salvation is not just for the Jews, and He had already made that very evident by revealing His Messiahship, first of all, in the fourth chapter long before this

to a Samaritan woman, a half-breed outcast. And so that's what our Lord has in mind, the sheep of another fold are the sheep of the non-Jews, those who come to Christ from the Gentile world. Okay.

RICK: Hi, John, my name is Rick.

JOHN: Hi, Rick.

RICK: I just want to say on behalf of me and my family, we thank your for your ministry to us. It's changed our lives. My question is about marriage and divorce.

If woman is regenerate and has no official biblical grounds for divorce and departs from her husband, would she be under church discipline?

JOHN: Yes.

RICK: Okay. Cause we've talked to people that have intimated that that was not always the case, that may not always have been the case here and we didn't think that was correct. But...

JOHN: No, if someone leaves a spouse, divorces...a believer leaves a spouse, a believer, that's a sin.

RICK: If they promise not to get....I'm sorry, they said, "I promise I'll never get remarried." And to my wife and I, we said it's still sin.

JOHN: Yeah, it doesn't change anything.

RICK: Okay, thank you.

JOHN: Sure.

JOE: Hello, my name is Joe.

JOHN: Hi, Joe.

JOE: I was wondering, in heaven as Christians when we get to heaven, do we forget about those non-saved friends and relatives in heaven?

JOHN: Right. It's a question that is often asked...how much of life in this world will we remember in heaven? And the answer to that is heaven is...I think the best way to describe heaven, Joe, is it is sheer joy, it is unbounded, limitless, unhindered joy, undiminished joy.

I would conclude that, that would preclude anything that would be sad, produce remorse, no more tears, no more crying, right? So I don't think heaven is going to be a place where we have all these vivid memories of the people who never made it. I think all of that is behind us. I think all of that disappears. And we are so swept up in the thrill moment by moment by moment of heaven's glories that there's no room for any such things. I think all that fades away, all that diminishes and disappears and only things that produce joy occur.

I know there are people who think that when we get to heaven we're going to remember, you know, our dog and we're going to remember the house we lived in and we're going to remember our neighbors, and we're going to remember the things that we enjoyed in life and hum some of the same songs we sang when we were down here. I don't see anything in Scripture to indicate that at all. I think this world gets completely left behind, completely. And I think we enter into a new level of knowledge and a new level of experience and a new kind of transcendent joy that can't even connect with the best of what we experienced here...to say nothing of the worst, okay?

SHELBY: Hi, I'm Shelby Sinclair.

JOHN: Hi, Shelby.

SHELBY: In Joshua, was it wrong for Rahab to lie to save the two spies? Some Christians I talk to disagree about lying. Some say that God sees your heart and if you lie for a good reason, like if you're having a surprise party and someone asks...Are they having a surprise party for me?...and you say...No, they're not having a surprise party for you." Is it always wrong to lie, say even to save someone's life?

JOHN: Let me tell you something, Shelby. I'm going to ask you a question. Does God need a lie to accomplish His will?

SHELBY: No.

JOHN: I don't think so. What would have happened if Rahab told the truth? If God wanted the spies to escape, and Rahab told the truth, would the spies have escaped another way? Sure...sure, because look, God doesn't need your lie. God doesn't need your lie. They ask the same question, this is touching on some sacred ground, remember the story of Corrie Ten Boom who as a Dutch lady who was hiding Christians in her house when the Nazis came? Now there's no overt lie, you don't have to tell everybody everything. You don't have to say to the person, "Hey, by the way, did you hear about your surprise party? I know you'd want to know about it." You don't have to say that. You don't have to go outside your house and say, "Hey, by the way, Gestapo, we have some Christians in here under the floor boards." You don't have to tell everybody everything. You don't have to if they don't ask you. But I'm convinced that if you are asked a specific thing that you can tell the truth and trust that God

can still accomplish His purposes without a lie to help Him. He doesn't need that, okay? Good question, honey, thank you.

JOHN: You could also say this, Shelby. You can also say, "I'm not going to tell you." Okay.

QUESTIONER: Good evening, Pastor... My question is about the order of Melchizedek. He was a most...he was a priest of the Most-High God, as Jesus, and he had many of the names that Jesus had, King of peace and so forth. And I specifically have a question about Hebrews 7:10 where he's talking about Melchizedek, he says, "For he was yet in the loins of his father when the Melchizedek met him." So there's all this mystery about Melchizedek and I would like to know if you'll share with us whatever you have to share with us.

JOHN: Well, yeah, he's a real person. Okay? He's a real guy back in Genesis. He's a king and a priest to God before there was an Aaronic priesthood, before there was an official priesthood along with the Mosaic Law. This is a priest. What is a priest? A priest is someone who takes people to God. Here is a man who knew the true God. Here is a man who had approached and believed in the true and living God. And he could tell other people how to know God, how to approach God, he's a real priest.

He is outside the Aaronic priesthood so he is a priest of another era. This makes him in some ways analogous to Christ who is also outside the Aaronic priesthood. He's outside the Levitical priesthood. Christ, as you know, is not of the tribe of Levi, He's of the tribe of Judah. So the writer of Hebrews wants to show that Christ is of a superior priesthood to the Levitical priesthood. The Levitical priesthood came to a screeching end at the crucifixion. Christ is a priest to the Most-High God, but of a different order. He's a priest of another kind. And Hebrews is being written to Jews. And the question that Jews would be asking is, "Well what other kind of priest is there?" And so He is analogous to another priest that they would know about in Genesis named Melchizedek, who interestingly enough appears without ancestry, which is analogous to Christ, in a sense, who has no prior priestly family from which He comes.

So Melchizedek is a priest who is kind of a stand-alone priest. He is a priest without genealogy, Hebrews 7 says, doesn't have beginning of days or end of life which almost makes him appear sort of like an everlasting priest which again is analogous to Christ. And so he's simply a way to illustrate to the Jews there's a such a thing as a priest other than Levitical priests and that this is not an inferior priesthood that Jesus belongs to but a superior priesthood.

And the verse that you commented on has to do with Abraham paying tithes to Melchizedek, ascribing honor to him and worshiping him and paying his tithe to God to this priest. And the writer of Hebrews makes the point that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek in the loins of Abraham.

In other words, this is a Jewish concept. Adam sins, we all sinned in Adam. Abraham paid tithes, Levi who is in the loins of Abraham also paid tithes to Melchizedek. Therefore if Abraham and Levi in the loins of Abraham pays tithes to Melchizedek, Melchizedek is a superior priest to Levi. So this is consistent with Jewish thinking and it's all analogical to show that the Levitical priesthood is not the only nor even the superior priesthood, but that there is a greater priesthood, the priesthood of Christ which is analogous to the priesthood of Melchizedek. Okay?

QUESTIONER: Thank you.

JOHN: There is more about that in the Study Bible, I wrote a lot about that, or in the commentary that I wrote on the book of Hebrews where you can dig a little deeper. Okay?

QUESTIONER: Hi, John, happy father's day. I have a question about your opinion on your Christianity and culture. There's Christian rock that has a hard sound what you might call hard rock, and I'm specifically interested in representations in film and television and theater, how rough can you get in the representation of an unredeemed life and still maintain the purpose of a Christian presentation? In other words, is there...is it possible to have a mature audience for a Christian movie, play?

JOHN: Well I understand what you're saying...David, right? I can't see back there. Yeah. And that's really a very good and a very practical question. How rough can it get? How edgy can it get and not pervert the message, or corrupt the message? It's a very difficult question to answer.

First of all, from my viewpoint, I have to honestly say that there's a generational issue here and so I'm probably not the best person to ask that to because I like simple things. You know, I can handle the content, I don't need to be overpowered by a lot of other stuff. I mean, even at the Resolve Conference, I'm working harder than ever to worship because so much stuff is going on there for me. I can...just give me the words and I'm good and I can handle that.

But I really think some of it is generational. I also think that mature Christians can be offended by things that immature Christians are not offended by. On the one hand, there are...and this again opens up the question we talked about a little earlier...immature people in some ways can almost handle anything unless they were converted out of it. If you take a person who was converted out of a profane life, drugs, etc., hard music, and then you put that all in a Christian media presentation, film, theater, and sort of baptize it as if it's okay, that person might be deeply offended who was rescued from that.

On the other hand, if you're talking about a third generation Christian teen-aged kid who is a little bit bored with the church, he might think that's really cool because it gives him a little taste of what the

world is pulling at him about anyway. It's a really delicate thing.

I think the purity of content is the essence of it. I think you can portray sinners acting like sinners. I think there's a lot of latitude in where you can go musically. But I think you can cross the line where it's so much of the world that it's impossible to penetrate to the truth and have the truth really protect it. But it's a delicate thing and people have been working on that for a long, long time. And sometimes they go over the line and sometimes they don't, even musically.

I have been exposed recently to Christian rap. I thought that was something you did at Christmas. But I have been exposed to it and what is really funny is I've heard lots of Christian rap songs with me in them. They take parts of my sermons and turn them into rap rhythms and this is a new experience for me. I know it's my voice, but I can't understand what I'm saying, that's the problem. And so my response is, get rid of the music and you get the message. But I understand the world is changing and I understand all these genres are out there.

You can't dishonor the Lord. You can't be profane. You can't be perverse. You can't be base. You can't be overly sexual. There's some delicate areas there, but I think a mature Christian, a sensitive Christian can lean on the Spirit of God to produce some things that are reflective of a society we live in without being purient(?) in any sense and we can show honestly the way things are in the world. But the things your heart will do because of your love for Christ and you desire to honor Christ, your first and foremost is going to protect that. And I think that's the heart of a Christian to do that. I think there are immature people who get into this kind of thing and don't have the discernment, go over the line and it can become offensive. Okay. I know it's kind of a wandering answer but it's a tough question.

CAESAR: Hi, Pastor. My name is Caesar and I was just wondering about my salvation cause I was a heroin addict for a lot of years and I always wanted to stop heroin and I never could do it on my own strength. I get really emotional.

JOHN: That's okay.

CAESAR: So one day I really got tired, I got on my knees and I asked God...You know, God, I don't have any control...

JOHN: Step up to the mike a little bit, Caesar.

CAESAR: I told Him, "Lord, I've got no control over my life, if You can control it, control it." And I started crying and it was at my mother's house. So after that, I went to a home, I stayed there a year in a Victory Outreach home. But there was something missing in my salvation that I couldn't understand. So during that time I was searching and searching for some sound doctrine and that's

when I heard R.C. Sproul and then I heard you, John MacArthur. And I was visiting churches because I couldn't catch it. I could see a lot of the emotion. People would actually get up on the church and run around the whole thing. Wait a minute, what's going on here?

So I was wondering through all that time, was I saved all this time. Or when did I actually become a Christian, you know? And I hear genuinely...you're a genuine Christian or you're not. But when I did say that prayer and I knew that if I died in sin, I was going to go to hell. I knew that much. But through all that time, this was even the church I was in wasn't giving me sound doctrine, but the Lord kept me through a lot of the stuff. I haven't used heroin since, it's been 13 years.

JOHN: Amen.

CAESAR: And when I came here, I learned more in this church...(crying)...it's His grace, nothing else. What I learned from you and R.C. Sproul through messages that it was grace. And that has my word more clear now. But my question was, was I saved back then?

JOHN: Well, listen. I never took heroin but you and I have something in common. I don't know when I was saved either. I don't know when. I can't identify a moment. There never was a time that I had some kind of dramatic...I had a dramatic accident that almost killed me but I believed I was a Christian then. I don't know when God regenerated me. There never was a time I didn't believe. But I don't know of when I became a new creation. How many of you would put your hand up and say, "I don't know exactly when I was saved." Look around, these are your people, Caesar. These are your people because how can you identify that moment? I don't know when that happened. The only thing is, I know I'm saved. Do you know you're saved?

CAESAR: Yeah.

JOHN: That's all. That's what matters, right? And we're blessed to have you here...blessed to have you here, brother.

Now, folks, I don't know how to tell you this, but we've got to do a Seeds concert here. Look at all you dear folks there. So can we...Kevin, will you ask them what their question is real quick, get those four questions, and just give them to me real quick?

JOHN: Okay.

QUESTIONER: Hi Pastor John.

JOHN: Hi.

QUESTIONER: I have a question about the verse on Psalms 37:25 it says, "I have been young and now I'm old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." And in so many years as a Christian I've been involved with supporting missions and everything, and I have met a lot of people, especially servants of the Lord that are so faithful preaching the Word to the point of starvation. How can... can you make me understand why...?

JOHN: Sure. This is just a simple principle that the Lord takes care of His own people. It's the same as Matthew 6, "Take no thought for what you shall eat or what you shall drink, what you shall wear. Don't you know that your Father who takes care of the sparrows takes care of you? Who produces the lilies of the field who don't toil or spin, and yet they're clothed in beauty?" It is simply a true principle to say that God cares for His own people. That is not to say they won't be persecuted some times. That is not to say they won't get into prison some times. It is not to say that some of them may not starve to death when God's time for them to go has come. But it is to say as a general principle, the people apart from God have no divine sustenance. The people apart from God have no promise of divine care. People who belong to God have that divine promise.

And the psalmist is simply saying God cares for His people, God provides for His people. Historically, manna in the wilderness, right? That's a truism. It is not to say that no Christian in history hasn't starved to death because many have in prisons and dungeons. It is simply to say as a general principle, God sustains His own people until it is His will for them to go. Okay? Good question.

Just very quick. I'm only going to take one more question, so you decide, Kevin, which one. Go ahead, sir, on the left over here.

QUESTION: My question is simply, do you believe that C.S. Lewis was a Christian because some people don't believe that. I'm not one of them. I've read his books.

JOHN: I think C.S. Lewis came to a true faith in Christ. Yeah. I do. Okay.

KEVIN: Bill wanted me to ask his question for him. He's been coming here his whole life and he wanted to know how long you've been the pastor of this church?

JOHN: I've been the pastor of this church since 1969 and so...(Applause)...that's a very long time...1969. This is coming up on forty years, next year I'll have my fortieth anniversary. Thank you...thank you, Bill.

We're going to draw this to a conclusion and let's close in a Word of prayer.

Father, we do thank You for just the opportunity, interact and fellowship with and look at Your Word. Thank You for these folks and for the testimonies. We've heard of Your grace tonight, just the joy of

the truth working in their lives. Lord, we would ask that You keep bringing to this church the new in Christ. We celebrated tonight the little babies, new life physically. We also celebrate new life spiritually. Continue to grow Your church to Your glory. Give us a great evening of fellowship out on the plaza. May we rejoice in songs of faith, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2015 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).