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

Bible Questions and Answers, Part 35
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: 70-7

Tonight is kind of a special night at Grace Church. It's a time for us to share together as a family. You know, in the book of Acts it says the Apostle Paul reasoned with the people out of the Scripture. And the Greek word is dialogo, he dialogued with them. Throughout the nearly 19 years that I've been here at Grace Church, one of the things that we have done frequently is dialogue out of the Scripture. And it kind of puts me on the spot a little bit, but you always hear what I want to say and I need sometimes to hear what you want to know. And so, through the years we have had many, many hours of time around God's Word in a "question and answer" session and that's what we're going to do tonight.

Well, it's really your time. I have a few things that I want to say tonight and if I don't get an opportunity to weave them in, I'll save them for the end. But what we do is have three microphones, you see them there, and before you get up to go to those microphones, let me just say this. We want you to make your question a question and try not to preface it with a lot of dialogue and try not to just make a statement unless it obviously leads to a question. Try to direct questions that you feel are very needful for you to know and might be effective and helpful for others to know. And we want you to ask what's really on your heart. And the idea is not "stump the pastor." You can do that if you want, that's easy to do. But we want to know what's on your heart. And I try to listen to what you say so that I can sort of feel the pulse of what's happening.

You may have questions about God's Word. You may have questions about the church ministry. Whatever the question on your heart, this is a time for us as a family to spend about 45 minutes just dialoguing about the things that are on your heart.

So what we'll ask you to do, there will be a pastor at each of those microphones, if you want to just step up to a microphone, don't get the line longer than three people and wait till it's down to three and then you can kind of add yourself to the line.

Okay?

So, if you want to just step up, Fred and Chris will go to the other two microphones. And since Daniel is already over there, we'll start. Give us your name first, and then your question.

QUESTION: Hi, I'm Gloria. Welcome home, John.

JOHN: Thank you, Gloria.

Q: I would like to know what your opinion of a biblical definition of the word "integrity" is.

J: Humph. What is a biblical definition of "integrity"? Well, simply put, integrity is living what you believe and living what you preach. That's as simple as I can put it.

In other words, it's conducting yourself in your behavior in accord with what you say you believe. The lack of integrity comes when a person proclaims to believe something and does not live up to that.

I give you a good illustration, it's not a biblical one, but we could talk about the biblical things. I think Paul hits it on the head when he talks about having a clear conscience. In other words, what he's saying by that is my behavior and my belief are in accord, so my conscience is not wounded.

But let me give you an illustration that might help. And I've used this some years ago. Imagine we're making bread. Now you have to imagine that I'm making bread, I've never made bread in my life so I'm guessing at this. But let's assume we had a big pan and we want to make bread. We take flour, right? Put some flour in there, and then water, I think, and put some water in there. And then maybe you want egg bread so you put an egg in there...just drop an egg in. And...see, I told you...okay, French bread, what do I know...but let's assume that...let's assume you put a little salt or sugar, whatever, but you just put in flour, put in water, put in yeast, put in an egg, and take it and stick it in the oven. What are you going to have?

Q: A mess.

J: You're going to have a mess, a warm mess. You left out one thing. What was that? Mixing it all together. Your life has a lot of components. You have integrity when every component touches every other component, that's integrity. When every part...every ingredient touches every other ingredient, you make bread. And when every ingredient of your life, what you believe, what you say and what you do, all touch each other, that's integrity. And I believe it's best...it's best delineated in the sense that you have a clear conscience...it's best, I should say, affirmed in the sense that you have a clear conscience and you know that what you have said is in fact the way you live. Okay?

Q: You think that's the same as secular, or Webster's definition?

J: Yes, I think the definition in the dictionary of integrity is a person who lives what he believes. Yeah.

Q: Okay, thank you.

J: Thank you, Gloria. Yes, Chris, you introduce him to us then go ahead.

QUESTION: My name is David Gabriel and regarding to Romans 12:10 it says, "Be devoted to one another," and John 13:13 about washing our feet and God washing our feet, for what example did He do that, and John 13:34, "This command I give you to love one another," are...what is, first of all, what is God trying to tell us and are we doing that at the current rate of one or two meets a week?

JOHN: Humph...good question. He's asking what is the Lord trying to tell us about loving one another, washing one another's feet. Let me give you just a simple answer. I believe if you look at John 13, maybe we ought to do that for just a brief moment, the whole illustration there has to do with love because in the very first verse of John 13 He says, "Having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them to perfection," this is an illustration of love. And Jesus is going to show His love, the love of God through Him to His own.

And you remember the story. The disciples had come to eat a meal. In those days when you ate a meal you reclined, in a sense. Your feet were either muddy or dusty because it was either dry or wet and there were no roads and they worn sandals.

And so it was a common custom when you came into a meal because you tended to recline at supper and you stayed a while and so forth, your feet should be cleaned. And somebody at the door would do that. Now that would be the lowest level of slavery, to wash feet. Whoever the foot-washing servant was was the bottom one on the rung.

Apparently in this particular situation, as the disciples came into this occasion, none of them had had their feet washed.

There was no slave there to do that. And none of them would do it because if you compare other passages, it seems as though they were having a debate about who of them would be the greatest in the Kingdom. And while they were arguing about who was to be the greatest, none of them was willing to stoop and wash somebody's feet and sort of assign himself to the low place. So it was a typical situation of the disciples sort of wrangling with each other about their own prominence and none of them had done this.

And then Jesus wanting to demonstrate love, removed His outer garment, girded His loins with a towel and went about and began to wash their feet. And, of course, Peter didn't want Him to do it until He explained to Peter its significance. And Peter said, you know, wash my head and my feet, and so forth. And then Jesus summed it up by saying, "You call Me master and lord, you say well for so I am, if I then your lord and master have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you."

I don't think Jesus here is advocating foot washing in itself. I think He is advocating loving service. And biblical love is self-sacrificing service. And this is a classic illustration of it. The supreme illustration of it is indicated in the words of Jesus when He said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man would...what?"

Q: Lay down his life.

J: Lay down his life. It's one thing to wash feet. It's something else to die for someone. But those are all expressions of love. Biblical love then is demonstrated in the self- sacrificing of a person who stoops to serve another person.

Let me take it a step further. At the end of the chapter in verse 34 and 35, He says you're to love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another. Now how had He just loved them? He had just loved them by washing their feet. Why did He do that? Because they needed that.

In other words, loving service at the point of need. Okay?

Now let me take it a step further, just to clarify. I don't believe that biblical love is an emotion necessarily. I believe that biblical love is self-sacrificing service in behalf of one who is in need. And when the Bible talks about loving one another, it's not just talking about feeling emotional about people in a kind of an earthly expression of affection, or even in a godly expression of affection. It's talking more about self-sacrificing service. "God so loved the world that He...what?...that He felt emotional?" No, that He gave. And I think that the biblical definition of love within the fellowship is that of meeting a person at the level of their need no matter how humbling such a meeting might be.

Now having said that, I don't think that necessarily love occurs in the corporate assembly of the church. It can and I hope it does, but love doesn't wait for us to all get together and sort of feel something. Love can be exercised all through our week, through every day as we reach out in the name of Jesus Christ to wash the feet of someone in need. And that's how we can express that love. And we are to do good to all men but especially those of the household of faith, showing them the love that we have for them. Okay? Thank you, Chris.

QUESTION: Hi, John. My name is Payton Hill...excuse me?

JOHN: Go ahead, I said Chris, I meant Dave. Go.

Q: My name is Payton Hill and I have a question concerning the first and the second resurrection. In Daniel 12:2 and in Revelation 24:4 and 5, we have descriptions of how many who are asleep will hear the voice of our Lord and be raised from the grave to an immortal body. How does these statements harmonize also with the statement of our Lord on the cross in Luke 23:43 when He says, "Truly, I will

say to you, Today you shall be with Me in paradise," and also with the parable in Luke 16 where the two men, the rich man and the poor man, both died and one found himself in the bosom of Abraham and the other one was buried and he found himself in Hades in torment. Through the latter two statements, one would lead to believe that you are risen immediately, whereas in Daniel 12:2 and Revelation 20 we see "asleep" and then being risen for the first resurrection when our Lord calls.

J: Right. Good question. I think the question you're asking is, what is the idea of this "sleeping"?

Q: Yeah, how do they harmonize the two? And what is this "sleep"?

J: Right. The best way to answer that is I'll add a couple of other Scriptures, okay?

Q: Yeah, there's many that I missed.

J: In Philippians...Philippians chapter 1, Paul says, "Far better to depart and be with Christ." That's instantaneous, depart and be with Christ.

Q: Right.

J: In 2 Corinthians, isn't it in chapter 5 where he's discussing the anticipated hope and he says, "Absent from the body, present with the Lord?"

Q: Right.

J: Okay, so I'm adding those to affirm the fact that when a believer dies or when an unbeliever dies, they do not go into unconsciousness. They go immediately into the presence of the Lord or immediately into the torment.

Q: Right.

J: The distinction comes in the bodily aspect. In other words, the Old Testament saints' spirits, I believe, the spirits of the saints went into the place of blessedness. The spirits of those who were not related to God, had never put their trust in God, went out of His presence into a place of punishment. Okay?

Q: Okay.

J: But the body remains in the grave until the final resurrection so that the eternal state, the final state of the righteous and the wicked will be their spirits joined to a resurrected body yet to be resurrected. Okay?

Q: Okay. So then what you're saying then, or I guess in my understanding, how do the second resurrection of the dead for the second death and the immediate judgment of an unbeliever when he dies fit together in harmony?

J: Well, the point is, when an unbeliever dies, I believe he goes out of the blessed presence of God.

Q: Right.

J: Okay. He goes into a place of torment, as happened to the rich man in the parable in Luke 16.

Q: Right.

J: He says, "Dip your finger in water and cool my tongue for I am tormented in this flame." So I believe that when an unbeliever dies, he goes immediately into torment. But that torment is a spiritual one. It is a dimension of torment that is not the same as the final dimension of torment when he has a resurrected body. Revelation tells us that the bodies will rise.

In fact, John 5, Jesus said there's a resurrection to life and a resurrection to damnation.

Q: Right.

J: So, what you want to separate is this, there is no resurrection of the spirit because the spirit never goes out of existence. When an unbeliever dies, his spirit goes out of the presence of God into punishment. When a believer dies, his spirit goes into the presence of God. There's no resurrection of the spirit. The resurrection is of the body to join that spirit for the final hell and the final heaven.

Q: Thank you very much, you've been most helpful.

J: Okay. You're welcome. Thank you for asking.

QUESTION: Hi, John. My name is Ken. I've got a question from Acts 2:38. It says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." It seems like Peter is indicating you've got to be baptized to be saved, yet the Bible teaches we're saved by grace through faith.

So I am wondering, what did Peter mean by being baptized and why did he say it?

JOHN: Well, first of all, you want to take Acts 2:38 in the context of the whole of Scripture. And it's very obvious and very clear that the whole of Scripture teaches that we are saved by grace through faith. If you read Ephesians 2:8 and 9, it says just that, "For by grace are you saved through faith, that

not of yourselves, it is the gift of God not of works lest any man should boast." You also have in Acts chapter 8 the illustration of Simon, you remember, who wanted the Holy Spirit. He was baptized and then Peter said to him, in effect, you are an unbeliever, you're in the gaul of bitterness, in the bond of iniquity and I just, you know...obviously baptism didn't save him. Obviously the lack of baptism didn't damn the thief on the cross because Jesus said to him, "This day you'll be with Me in paradise," even though that, of course, was a pre-church situation. So, that the whole of Scripture teaches salvation by grace through faith.

But at the same time, the first and initial act of obedience in the early church, the first and initial act of obedience was a public confession of that faith. And I believe that public confession of faith came forth in baptism so that baptism is linked with repentance. "Repent and be baptized" is to say repent of your sin and make public confession. It may be very much like Romans 10:9 and 10, "If you believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead and confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, you'll be saved."

So, I believe that baptism was God-ordained as a first step of public confession of a repentant believing heart. It was so inseparably linked to salvation as to be spoken of, if you will, in the same breath. I believe, for example, in Ephesians 4 when it says, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism," it's talking about water baptism because that water baptism was such an immediate visible expression of a heart of faith that they were tied together.

So, "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin" simply takes the confession and the faith and puts it together. One is the heart and the other is the outward acknowledging. And I think it puts them together.

Some would take the word "for," the preposition "for" and translate it "because." I've...I've gone through that myself.

That's a possibility, but...in other words, it would read, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ because of the remission of sins," adding that baptism is there because your sins have been remitted. But I don't really think you need to force it to say that. It's simply that baptism was so inextricably linked to the inward attitude of the heart as the way that the confession was made that they're tied together.

And you see it in verse 41, "They that gladly received His word were...what?...were baptized."

Now, you don't want to come up with a baptisimal salvation because that would strike a blow at the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith which is pervasive in Scripture. So you want to see baptism for what it is, the outward confession of the inward belief. Okay?

Q: All right, thank you.

J: Thank you.

QUESTION: Hi, John. My name is Richard. I have a question on Matthew 18:15 through 17, it has to do with confronting another brother.

JOHN: Sure.

Q: And there are three steps that are outlined in those passages.

J: Four steps, actually.

Q: Yes.

J: The final one being putting them out.

Q: Okay, the first, go to your brother in private and try to win him over. The second, if he won't listen to you, take two or three witnesses so that every word may be established. The third, if he won't listen to you in a group, go to the church and tell him. And if he won't even listen to the church, then you are to treat him as a Gentile, or a tax gatherer. I just...how do we treat Gentiles, or tax gatherers?

J: I don't know, how do you treat...? Well, what you have to understand is those are basically terms that reflect an outcast.

Gentile is used here not in the sense of a racial slur, but in the sense of an unbeliever, someone outside the covenant. In other words, treat them like an unbeliever. And a tax collector, a tax collector was the most despised person in the nation of Israel.

See, what you have to understand is Rome had taken control of Israel. And Rome made Israel into a province and, of course, put Pontius Pilate in there to sort of be the Roman governor and exact Roman order and Roman law. In order to carry out the Roman occupation, there was a tax collecting process. And what happened was, the Roman government sold franchises to willing Jews to exact tax from their own people.

That's what Matthew did. He was what the text calls a "little mokesh," who was a...he was a tax collector. And what the Hebrew would call that. And he was a man who in behalf of Rome took taxes from his own people. Well, the oppressed Jews under the yoke of Rome literally thought that was the epitome of being a traitor. Here was a Jew buying into the franchise to collect taxes from his own people to pay an oppressing government in their view.

Furthermore, they oppressed the people in taking those taxes. You remember the story of Zacchaeus, don't you? And you remember that when Jesus came to his house he made all kinds of vows and promises that he was going to pay back four-fold everything he had taken, and he had extorted from the people and overcharged them. And he was going to do it all, give it all back multiple times. And then the Lord said, "This day has salvation come to this house." So the people literally despised the tax collector because in a sense he had sold his birthright as a Jew to Rome for money and was exacting taxes out of his own people which they saw as oppressive and invasive.

So, when Jesus says treat this person as an heathen and tax collector, He means treat him as somebody that doesn't belong and somebody who is an outcast.

Now, if a person's in the church and they follow up in sin and sin and sin and they won't repent when you go through the process, you treat them like an outsider. You treat them like someone who doesn't belong. You don't let them come in. First Corinthians 5, a little leaven does what? Leavens the whole lump. You don't want them around. You want them to be treated as if they were heathen and as if they were an outcast.

Now furthermore, let me go a dimension beyond that. I believe also that we have to treat people who are heathen and tax collectors or outcasts with some consideration for what they need to be. So I would see in that even the implication that you might pursue them that they might cease to be a heathen and cease to be an outcast. So I think there might be even an evangelistic intent in that, that we go after them as we would an unbeliever.

Q: Okay.

J: How do you treat a heathen and a tax collector? Hopefully you don't curse them, hopefully you compassionately call them to salvation. Okay?

Q: Thanks a lot.

J: Good.

QUESTION: John, a special situation here, this is Darryl Orkell(?), he's got a quick biblical question to ask you and then an issue question I think would be of interest to everybody, so I told him he could go ask both. All right?

JOHN: Okay...whatever you say.

Q: My first question is, did Jesus violate the dietary laws in the Old Testament when it says in Mark 7:19, the last clause, "Thus He declared all foods clean?" Is that a violation of the dietary laws?

JOHN: Jesus never violated anything. Jesus wrote it and had the right to edit it any way He wanted. What verse did you read?

Q: Mark 7:19, it's the last clause.

J: Yeah...7:19?

Q: Yeah. This is brought up also, I might add, by a lot of rabbinical antagonists to the Christian faith.

J: Yeah, you're asking that incident about Jesus saying don't be concerned with what...with what you eat, in effect. It's not what goes into the man that defiles him, it's what comes out of the man that defiles him.

Q: Well, not only that but specifically it goes on to say that He declared all foods clean. It's specifically that statement that they cling on to.

J: Uh-huh, oh, the statement purging all foods.

Q: Yes.

J: No, that's not even a proper understanding of that text. It enters not into the heart but into the stomach and goes out into the draft which means that the toilet, in effect, purging the food as it goes through the body. That has nothing to do with setting aside the ceremonial system, I mean the dietary system. But again, I think what you have to keep in mind is that Jesus here is saying that dietary laws are no longer...well, they're not really the heart issue at all, it's not what you take in that defiles you, it's what comes out of what's inside of you that defiles you. So I don't think that that has any reference there.

In Acts 10 Peter definitely sets aside the dietary laws when...or God does in the experience of Peter. The sheet comes down with all the clean and unclean things, and you remember in the vision, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat. And he says, Lord, I've never eaten what is unclean. And the Lord says, Call thou not common what God has cleansed...uncommon what God has cleansed,"

and so forth. So I think the dietary laws are set aside clearly in Acts 10, I don't think there's any statement regarding Jesus where He overtly sets aside all of that. That's not until the book of Acts.

Q: Okay.

J: And what was the second question?

Q: If you don't mind, John, could you clarify this issue with the blood and this church in Canoga Park who is having all these seminars against you?

JOHN: Sure...yeah. I received this morning...thank you for asking...I received this morning, I think Patricia was looking at it, about six pages of stuff that one of our members received in Japan that was being distributed on the heresy of John MacArthur.

And it actually had, I think, about 20 different tapes, maybe 15 of which were on the heresies that I supposedly teach. And one of the major ones that I've been accused of teaching is the denial of the blood of Christ.

Let me...I don't know how to approach it because it's so bizarre, but let me just say this. I believe that Jesus was 100 percent man. And as man, He had human blood. And I believe that when He died on the cross He shed that blood. I believe it came out in His forehead, it came out in His side, it came out in the open wounds in His hands and His feet. And I believe He shed His literal blood on the cross. And I believe that the blood that came out of His heart and the pericardium around the heart when it says blood and water came out in the piercing and so forth was indicative of the fact that He was shedding His blood. And I believe it was essential that He die a death that included bloodshed because He was the perfect antetype of all the Old Testament pictures of the sacrificial animal in which blood was poured out.

If you understand in the Old Testament, it says the life of the flesh is in the blood, then the pouring out of the life is indicative of that the life...the pouring out of the blood is indicative that the life is flowing out. The shedding of blood is a very graphic way to see the life flowing out.

I recently went hunting and I shot, the only thing I've ever shot, was a big elk. And I went over and watched the elk die.

And you have this...at least I did...this tremendous sense that life is going out as you watch that blood come out of that animal. That was the picture in the sacrificial system. And that was the picture on the cross that Christ was giving His life being poured out symbolically, in a sense, as His blood came out, His life came out...not just symbolically, but really His life came out when His blood came out since the life of the flesh is in the blood.

So, I believe in the literal death of Christ, the literal shed blood of Christ, that He was fulfilling the pictures and symbols of the Old Testament in dying a sacrificial death.

Now what I said some years ago was that I do not believe that there was something in that blood itself that saves people.

In other words, in the chemicals of it...that's what I said. I don't believe, for example, the Roman Catholic transubstantiation where, for example, the cup is turned into blood, you drink the blood and it ministers grace to you. I don't accept that. I don't accept something magic and nobody else has in the history of Christianity that's been in the mainstream of the doctrine of soteriology. We see that the death of Christ was an atonement for sin, He died a sacrificial bloodshed death but there's nothing in the blood to save or Jesus could have bled on people and not died...He could have cut His finger and that would have been enough, if it's just the bleeding.

So, I said that some years ago. And then it was taken out of context. And it was put in a magazine that I didn't believe in the blood of Christ and that was just enough for people who wanted to attack me to have some ammunition. Now you have to know the bottom line. I was told some months ago that there was a prayer meeting held by the faculty of a certain institution.

And in that prayer meeting, the major prayer request is, "Lord, help us find some way to discredit the ministry of John MacArthur," that was the prayer meeting. And they set about to find a way to discredit the ministry. And so they came up with that and they have spun that thing all across the country, now all around the world. And I believe exactly what the Bible teaches about the shed blood of Jesus Christ, no more and no less. But I believe we are saved through the sacrificial death of Christ for our sins as our substitute, a death in which He shed His blood. And I, every time I celebrate the Lord's table and take the cup of communion, I praise God for the shed blood of Jesus Christ. I don't waver on that one bit.

But again, you have to understand this is a conspiracy, folks, from beginning to end...this is a conspiracy of people who want to discredit this ministry for whatever reasons, I'm not sure. But that's what's behind it.

Q: All right. Thank you.

J: Okay? Thank you for asking.

QUESTION: Hi, John. My name is Elaine Lodotay(?) and, Lord willing, if...if it works out, I have an appointment on the twentieth to share the gospel with a Roman Catholic priest and I was wondering if you could give me some Scriptures that I should concentrate on, sharing with him?

JOHN: You know, let me suggest this, Elaine. We have some tapes in the tape room that would really pinpoint that on how to present the gospel to someone who is locked into that situation.

But I would even encourage you...you remember a couple of weeks ago when I gave a message on which way to heaven? You might even get that tape and just kind of digest it in your heart and see if

those tapes aren't available tonight in the tape shack that deal with how to present the gospel to someone who is locked in to the Roman system. And you need more than I can give you in just a brief moment. Okay? God bless you, we'll have to pray that the Lord will have...go before you and have that be a special time.

Q: Thank you.

J: Thank you.

QUESTION: Hi, John. My name is John Dirsten(?). My question is, obviously we all believe that Jesus must be Lord for us to be saved, to have salvation. How does that fit in, cause we hear so often about carnal Christians, what is a carnal Christian? How can, if Jesus is Lord, then how could we be living a fleshly life?

JOHN: You ask these big issues...these big questions. Well, let's start with one point, okay? Let me ask you a question. Is Jesus Lord?

Q: Yes.

J: Yeah, okay. Well, we don't need to debate that, right?

Q: Right.

J: People say all the time, "Well, you know, I made Jesus Lord,"

and I just go...wait a minute, you didn't make Him anything...you didn't create Christ. He's Lord...period. Let me ask you a second question. Can you obey Him?

Q: Yes.

J: Can you disobey Him?

Q: Yeah.

J: Does that change whether He's in charge?

Q: No.

J: No. So the lordship of Christ is a clear-cut thing in Scripture...very clear. And I believe there's no way to divest Christ of His lordship. Now I know there's a big debate about whether kurios means deity and deity alone, or whether it implies authority. I don't think there's any question that it implies

authority.

I was having lunch with a professor one day and he said, "Well, I believe that all that kurios (that's the Greek word for Lord) all it means is deity." I said okay. I don't agree with that because otherwise Thomas wouldn't have said, "My Lord and my God." That's redundant if they both mean deity. "Lord" must have meant something to enhance the thought of God...deity. So I said, "Let's assume, however, that Lord only means deity." Then I said, "What does that mean? Are you telling me that doesn't mean He's in charge? Are you telling me He is God, He is just not in charge?" So you don't gain a thing by that.

The Bible is clear that Jesus is Lord and if Lord means God, then God means He's in charge. So I believe that when you come to Jesus Christ, He's in charge of your life. Where this carnal Christian thing came in, I think where it was sort of pop...became popularized was through a little book that Campus Crusade put out a number of years ago, we used to call the Blue Beard Book. It had three little circles. In circle number one you had an unbeliever, self was on there. There was a little circle and there was a throne in the middle and self was on the throne...and chaos in the life. That's an unbeliever.

Then you had another circle which was called the carnal Christian. You had a throne and self was on the throne. And the Lord was in the circle but He was over in the corner. And that was the carnal Christian.

In other words, he believed but he was still in charge of his own life.

The third circle was the spiritual Christian. The little throne had the Lord on it and self was in the corner. And everything in the life was orderly.

And what that conveyed was that when you become a Christian you can go into any of those two circles, right? You can be a self-controlled Christian, or a Lord-controlled Christian. And that's what...that's what I react against. I don't believe there's any such thing as a Christian with self on the throne. I think there are only Christians with the Lord on the throne, some are obedient and some are disobedient. Okay?

And what is a carnal Christian? Well, if you mean a fleshly one, that's a disobedient believer. But that has nothing to do with whether the Lord is on the throne or not. He is the ruler of your life. He is the master of your life. It's only a question of whether you're obeying Him. Okay?

Q: Okay.

J: Does that sort of simplify it little?

Q: A little bit.

J: Now let me tell you one other thing. I believe that when a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ, they don't have the option to accept Him just as Savior and keep self on the throne. See, that's the argument with the carnal-Christian idea is that you can be saved and not necessarily have a changed life cause you're still running your life. In other words, it's as if salvation is only forensic. In other words, it's just God writing your name on the list and saying, "Well, he's saved," nothing changes.

Q: Cause along that lines I heard a teaching that we can't lose our salvation but we could lose our sanctification. How does that relate at all?

J: Well, lose is probably not the right word. You can't lose your salvation, but you can...

Q: Not your....you can't lose your salvation, but I heard a saying that you can lose your sanctification, your holiness, your set-apartness, is that...would that be being disobedient?

J: Well, you can be disobedient, yeah. Just keep it simple. When you're saved, it's a total transformation, Christ is on the throne of your life and you're either obedient or disobedient. If you're disobedient, you're not holy...if you're obedient, you are. Okay?

Q: Okay. Thank you.

J: I'm...I'm trying to write this book and get it finished, so you keep praying for me and it will cover a lot of these things.

Okay?

QUESTION: Hi, John. My name is Dennis and in Revelation 7 there is a listing of the twelve tribes of Israel. And they left, the writer John left out the tribe Dan and Ephraim, and I was wondering why he did that, if you knew? And before you answer that, I'm not asking this as a mere technicality, a rabbi brought this up and he apparently thought it was a big problem.

JOHN: Good...Here's what I want you to do. I want you to go to the tape room...after this service...

Q: Oh no...

J: And you tell them I told them to give you the tape for nothing. Okay? Because that's something that's very, very important. And there's a clear explanation of that, okay? And I'd like you to get it in the context of the whole lesson. Will you do that? Just ask for the tape on Revelation 7:1 to...or 4 to 8.

Q: So, you've explained that before?

J: Pardon?

Q: You've explained that before on your tape?

J: I've explained it. It's on the tape and if you have any further question, write me and I'll be glad to give you some information where you can follow it up.

Q: Oh, okay. Thank you.

J: I want you to be loaded for the rabbi. Okay?

QUESTION: Hi, John. My name is Mary. My question is in Acts 2:4 it talks...and 1 Corinthians 12...it talks about the tongue as a spiritual gift. My question is, how is the tongue supposed to be used today and how can we misuse it?

JOHN: Chris...can you clarify what...did she say how can the tongue?

CHRIS: She wants to know about the gift of tongues. And how is it to be used and is it being misused, that's the question.

J: Yeah. Okay. Good, that's what I thought she said.

Well, let me say this. It's very clear in Acts 2 that God gave to the Apostles the ability to speak in languages that they did not know. Okay? And as a result, it says people were hearing in all different kinds of languages the wonderful works of God.

Now I believe that the purpose of that gift was to establish the fact that a supernatural presence, a supernatural message was to be proclaimed. It called the attention of everyone who was hearing this. Some of the people concluded that they were drunk because it was early in the morning. But it collected the people around the phenomena of that wondrous ability to speak in those languages which they didn't know. That was a Holy Spirit miracle.

And then when the crowd was all gathered, Peter stood up and preached in a language that everybody understood, or in his own native tongue the gospel of Jesus Christ and three thousand people were saved and the church was born. I see in that then that the tongues were a sign...a sign of the miraculous power of God...a sign of supernatural presence which drew the people together and made the message that was preached more powerful, more acceptable, more authentic in their eyes.

So, in that occasion we see it clearly as a sign that God was speaking and that what...and when they got their...when God got their attention, then came the message of the gospel.

Now, when you come to...and by the way, if you follow that through, I believe tongues probably occurred in Acts 8 even though it doesn't say that but where you have the church moving out into Samaria, and then in chapter 10, definitely occurred when the church moves to the Gentiles, and then later on in 19 when John the Baptist's disciples were brought into the church, you have it again. And I believe in the book of Acts, the reason you have the tongues repeated again is because every time the next dimension of people were added to the church, it was important that they had the same phenomena so they would know they were being added to the same body. So that the sign given on the day of Pentecost was repeated at each new phase of the church.

You remember that it...the gospel was to go forth and they were to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the world.

And when the gospel came to the Samaritans, there was the same phenomena. When it came to the Gentiles, there was the same phenomena. When the...those who followed John the Baptist were brought in, they saw the same phenomena. Peter came back and reported, you remember, to the council that on the Gentiles came the same thing that came on us. So as the Lord built the church, they had this same sign, the same supernatural sign so the Jews would no think they received something special that Samaritans and Gentiles didn't get. So it was a sign gift.

Now you come into 1 Corinthians 12 to 14, it is still a sign gift but it was being perverted in the Corinthian church. And I believe it was being mixed and mingled with a lot of ecstatic speech that was a part of the pagan religion of that day. It was still, if it was used properly, to be a sign gift. Paul then in 1 Corinthians 12 to 14 regulates it. He says how it is to function. He first of all introduces it as a gift in chapter 12. He tells at the end of chapter 12 that it's an unimportant gift.

In chapter 13 he says love is much more important. In chapter 14, edification is much more important. He says women are never to exercise it. It's never to be more than two or three people.

It's never to be without interpretation.

But it doesn't change the nature of it. It was a sign gift...a sign of the presence of God and a sign that God was about to speak so that when the speaker spoke they would know it was from God. In that sense it's a sign that we don't need anymore because when a speaker speaks today, we know whether he's from God or not by how he is consistent with what? Scripture. I don't need a...I don't need signs and wonders to attest to a prophet. If he sticks with the book, I know he speaks for God.

But in that day when there was no New Testament to compare him with, God gave--as it says in 2 Corinthians--the gifts of an Apostle and signs and wonders and mighty deeds, chapter 12 verse 12.

So, tongues was a sign gift. And I'm giving you a condensed version of...again, you can get the book on tongues. I hate to keep saying that but it's there available. If you want one, pick one up on me. But the gift of tongues was a sign gift. Now I believe it has ceased. I believe it has passed away. First Corinthians 13, "Whether there be tongues, they shall...and it uses a reflexive form of the verb...they shall cease by themselves." And I believe when the end of the apostolic era came, tongues ceased. And I believe that you can chronicle through the history of the church the cessation of tongues. They didn't exist except in aberrant forms. And then it was revived in the early part of the 1900's and brought back in as if it were some legitimate gift. It's my conviction that it has no place in the church today...no place. It was part of the signs of an apostle, such as healing and the gift of miracles which I see as dunamis, or the gift of power, that is to cast out demons on the spot at will. So I think it's one of those temporary gifts that passed away, was used to signify the spokesmen for God who were speaking so that the people would know they spoke for God, which we now know by whether they stick with the Word.

Now you say, "Well, what is it that people are doing today?"

Well, I think the people who are speaking in what they call tongues can be explained in many ways. One, I think much of it is learned behavior...just learned behavior. They learn how to do it. They're in a group that does it...in fact, I've heard it in many places around the country and I've listened to it on tape. When I was working on the book I got involved in studying some of the reports of it and it's very interesting that much of it is the same language and the same repeated symbols. It is a non-language. But it is very often learned behavior.

It can also be explained as sort of mental paroxysms where you sort of flip out into some kind of self-hypnotic situation. Some of it can be demonic. So, there are other explanations. But I see that it has ceased from a biblical viewpoint and it has no function in the church today. Okay?

Q: Okay.

J: Thanks for asking.

QUESTION: John, I have a question for you in regard to Luke 22:31 and how that might apply to some of the experiences that Job went through.

JOHN: Okay, you asked about Luke?

Q: That's correct.

J: We're going to take this question, by the way, and then one more and then I have some things to share with you. What is it?

Luke..

Q: Luke 22:31.

J: Twenty-two, thirty one, "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I prayed for you that your faith fail not. And when you're converted, strengthen the brethren." And what is the question there?

Q: The question is is there any relationship between the things that Peter went through and the things that Job went through?

J: Sure. I think there is and it's a good question. I think the only thing that can ever happen to a believer is what God allows to happen. But in the case of Job I think it was distinct. I think...I think Job was assaulted by Satan as a direct expression of the will of God. I think Peter was assaulted by Satan because he was disobedient and there's a difference.

I believe that it is possible that God may allow Satan to do certain things to an individual who is godly, who is virtuous, who is righteous to refine that individual, to accomplish His own ends. That's Job. But I think God also is going to allow a believer, as it were, to make his own bed and then have to lie in it which was Peter's situation. I think obviously what was going to happen to Peter was directly related to his denial of Christ.

Whereas Job never denied God and therefore was attacked by Satan but rather God set out for His own purposes to allow that to happen. And the goal was reached. Job says in chapter 42 verse 6, "I had heard of you of the hearing of mine ear, now my eye sees you and I repent in dust and ashes."

In other words, the purpose of Job going through that was not only to prove his faithfulness, but to give him a vision of God which was greater than he had ever had before. In the case of Peter, it had to do with his sin. Okay?

Q: Thank you.

J: Uh-huh. Yes, one more question.

QUESTION: Hi, John. I'm Mary.

JOHN: Hi, Mary.

Q: Could you please tell me how we can each know what God's special plan is in our lives in terms of how we can use our talents or, you know, how we know when we are using them, you know, in the right direction?

J: Sure. Well, you know, Mary, I think it's simple to answer that by saying, walk in the Spirit and He'll lead you where you need to be. I never plan too far ahead. I just think we need to live in the present tense and the only thing I know about even my own ministry is that I want to do today what God lays upon my heart to do. And I kind of lean on a verse and you know it, I'm sure, very well, "Delight in the Lord and He'll give you the desire of your heart." And I really do believe that part of spiritual life...I don't want to over simplify the situation, but a great part of our spiritual life can be reduced to that principle of Psalm 37:4. It's down to the fact that if I delight in the Lord, then He's going to fill my heart with desire and He's going to fulfill those desires.

When it comes to how do you know your gift? Don't go to a computer and try to figure out your gift. Don't go to an analysis. When you're walking in the Spirit, what do you like to do? And when you walk in the Spirit and you do what you like to do, what kind of response do you get?

If I said, "I'm in the Spirit and I want to preach...boy, I just want to...I just want to teach God's Word and study God's Word," that would be the way God expressed that through me. Now on the other hand, I want to be sure that everybody agrees. I could say, "Boy, I'm gifted to teach, I'm gifted to preach," and everybody out there is saying, "Mercy, mercy, shut him up, get him out." So, you know, you want to have a confirmation on that.

But...but I really believe that if you walk in the Spirit and you let the Spirit control your life that the gifts that He's given you and the ministry that He's placed before you will flow and it will happen. Expose yourself as...to as much opportunity as you can and see where the Spirit of God directs your willing heart.

Q: That's a great answer. Thank you very much.

J: Thank you, Mary. Thank you.

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