

Bible Q&A with Pastor Paul - July 2023

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Pastor Paul: Hey everybody, welcome to our July Q&A. This is when we take your questions, fielded from emails and from YouTube and who else, who knows where else and personal notes. I'm Pastor Paul and I'm here with my lovely wife, Sue, and we're going to tackle this month's questions and the things that came in.

Sue: We have a lot, I think it going to be great.

Pastor Paul: Okay, good. Well, let's dive in here.

Sue: Okay, well, this first one comes from YouTube. Ice Queen asks, *"Isn't it true that all souls go back to the creator when we die according to Ecclesiastes 12?"*

Pastor Paul: Yes, there is a statement in Ecclesiastes, chapter 12, verse 7, that says, in part, the spirit returns to God who gave it and that is a fundamental, generalized view of death, but you have to remember something about Ecclesiastes. First of all, the revelation in the Old Testament about these matters was not as significant as what we have in the New Testament and Ecclesiastes was Solomon's attempt at understanding life, as he called it, under the sun, meaning really apart from God. And he's trying to make sense of life down here and see if there's any purpose or meaning to it. And so, for that reason, Ecclesiastes is a really, really bad book to draw doctrine from about life after death.

So this is an extremely generalized statement that just simply says, when a person dies, the spirit returns to God. Well, because it doesn't go in any detail about whether that person is saved, whether they die in faith, whether they die in unbelief and what happens related to those two dynamics. And so, this general statement is one that I

would really caution believers from pointing to, as any kind of a proof text for what happens after we die.

Sue: That's good. Larissa said, *"In your study of Genesis back in 2012, you made the point that if Adam and Eve had resisted Satan as the serpent, that they would have been forever 'locked in' in righteousness. Does that then override free will with Adam's children/generations to come?"*

Pastor Paul: No, it doesn't, any more than us being born sinners, overrides our free will. Larissa is taking one side of the equation and saying, if we were born in righteousness, rather than under the curse of sin, would that violate free will? Well, no, and the fact of matter is, right now we're born in sin, we're born with a sinful nature and again, that does not take away man's free will, neither of those options.

But I understand that this is a challenging question. It is very difficult for people, well, it's very difficult for me, when I say people, I'm including myself, it's difficult for all of us to understand this whole idea of being confirmed in something. In other words, when I say that, it means, you are that way and you can't change it apart from God. And so it's a challenging topic and I think in my study back in 2012, I was viewing this as a what if. What if Adam and Eve had said to the serpent, "Get behind Me, Satan!" like Jesus later did and Satan was forever defeated right there in the garden, prior to a fall? What would life have been like? And that's where Larissa question really comes from.

Sue: It's difficult to know the what ifs.

Pastor Paul: It's very, very difficult. I was laying it out there in a way of really not having the facts.

Sue: Well, Dale from South Africa asks about generational curses. *"If parents believe in foreign gods and make a covenant with those gods and their children*

become born again believers, can the gods have a hold on the children, even though they now have received the salvation in Christ and walk faithfully Him? Children/generations to come?"

Pastor Paul: That's a good question and I think it probably depends on what this individual means by a hold. When he or she says, would they have a hold on those who are in Christ? Well, possibly, but not as it relates to salvation. There could be barriers, there could be hurdles that the person has to get over because maybe they were raised with this idea that these gods affect certain areas of life and that you have to accommodate them.

Well, sometimes, when we are new believers, we hold on to the things that we learned when we were young. Paul had to deal with this in his early letters, like for example, to the Corinthians. Many of those people had been raised with the idea that a piece of meat or an animal that had been sacrificed to a demonic spirit, or as they said, an idol, if you were to consume that meat, that it would somehow defile you. They believed very strongly that, to take that meat into their body would be in a sense taking in that idol, or the spirit behind it and Paul had to address those issues. Because people who are given to superstition and superstitious beliefs, often bring those into their early life in Christ until they learn to get past it and to ignore many of those things.

So, could this past belief that this person is talking about, and of course we know that there are no gods, these are demons that people are making a covenant with. Could this have a hold on them? Well could have a hold on their mind or their thinking because they haven't had their thinking sanctified yet.

Sue: Right and just their culture in terms of what they walk in agreement with. A lot of cultures just walk in agreement with demonic influences.

Pastor Paul: Well, you and I had lunch with someone from South Africa just this week, or last week, that shared with us how some of the beliefs in Africa incorporate superstitious beliefs into their Christianity. So do those things have a hold on people? Well, yes, is it going to affect their salvation? Well, if they believe in Jesus Christ, if they really come to Christ, the Bible says that, when we come to Christ, we're a new creation, the old is gone, the new has come, 2 Corinthians 5.

So in that sense, they are believers, they're children of God. But those past beliefs can affect them until they learn to grow past them, until they mature in Jesus Christ. But generational curses do not have to have a hold on people. When we come to Christ, those old ties are broken and the only thing that keeps us connected to those, is us, not those spiritual ties.

Sue: When I hear people talk about generational curses, I usually get the vibe that they're talking about something you have no control over. It's almost like it's reaching out for you, no matter what you do.

Pastor Paul: And I get a lot of emails from people who tell me that in their church, for example, they're told that unless they do this, and do this, and do this, that generational curse will not be broken. Well, I totally disagree, when we come to Christ, that generational curse is broken, because we are a new creation. The old is gone, the new has come. So, people have learned a lot of very conflicting things about generational curses.

Sue: And then, as Paul said, then walk worthy of the calling that you have received. What we do means a lot. So our next question is a kind of a throwback to a conversation from last month about women teaching, women pastors, and Stargazer asked, *"But if the woman is unmarried* (in this situation, hypothetical situation) *there's no risk of her teaching someone to whom she must submit in the home.*

And does this also mean that women should not be managers or supervisors of men in the workplace?"

Pastor Paul: Well, we talked about this, as you said, last week, and or last month, rather, in our Q&A. And we talked about the fact that the reason that Paul said, a woman, I do not allow a woman to teach and have authority over a man is because it was a violation of the principle of the man's headship in the home, and that we were not going to do anything in the church that was going to create a contradiction or become a violation of what God had established for the home.

The fact that this person is bringing up the question, well, what if she's not married? Well, it doesn't matter whether she's married or not, if she's teaching men, it is still conveying a contradiction of what God wants there to be in the home. So, and then the second part of the question was essentially, does this mean that women should not be managers or supervisors of men in the workplace?

No, that's not what Paul said. He said, I don't allow a woman to teach and have authority in... and he's talking about in the church. He's not dictating what happens in the workplace, there's no problem with women being managers or leaders of men in the workplace.

Sue: Matthew from Kenya says, *"Please explain the idea of seven heavens that I heard people go to depending on their relationship with God."*

Pastor Paul: Well, I can't do that because the Bible doesn't mention anything about it. So, Matthew, I'd love to explain it to you, but it's not in the Bible and people don't go to different levels of heaven. That's a pagan belief and it is embraced by some cult groups, but it is not part of Biblical Christianity.

Sue: We had 2 questions, almost the same question came from different people in YouTube. One of them phrased it this way, *"Why does God "harden his heart" in*

regard to Pharaoh? (talking about in Exodus) Why would God harden anyone's heart?" And then Abigail said, "In Exodus 10:1, God demonstrates His sovereignty to harden Pharaoh's heart. If God chooses to harden someone's heart, how can He marvel at their lack of faith as it's mentioned in Mark 6:4-6?"

Pastor Paul: Jesus did marvel at people's lack of faith, He also marveled at their faith. But both of these questions from these two individuals come from a basis of misunderstanding related to God hardening hearts. Paul explains this in Romans chapter 1, where he talks about people being given over to their choice, to their choosing, to the condition of their heart, which they chose to walk in and whether that's a behavioral thing or an attitude or whatever.

So I would encourage both of these people to really go through Romans chapter 1, because in the Bible, where we read about God hardening Pharaoh's heart, that comes only after we read that Pharaoh hardened his heart. So what you have in the Bible is a situation where Pharaoh hardened his heart, Pharaoh hardened his heart, Pharaoh hardened his heart, and then finally, God gave Pharaoh over to the hardening of his heart. And it does say that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, but that's because God was giving him over to the choice that he had made related to resisting God, resisting His Word and hardening his heart against obedience to God.

So God gives people over when they choose to go that way, repeatedly, over a protracted period of time. So how can the Lord marvel at someone's lack of faith? Well, it's because that's where it begins, it begins in their heart: hardness, lack of faith, unbelief, it begins in the human heart, and God only gives people over to what they eventually wanted.

Sue: Isaac asks, *"What does the Bible say about situations such as Roman Catholic apparitions of Mary and Jesus and how should I respond to Roman Catholic*

friends who use instances of eucharist miracles as "proof" of Jesus' body really being present in the eucharist?"

Pastor Paul: It's very difficult to respond because these aren't biblical Christian things, these are superstitions. These are centered around superstition, they're not centered around the Bible. So I would encourage Isaac, to not try to refute what his Roman Catholic friends or relatives believe, but simply to speak the truth of God's Word. If I successfully refute someone who's Roman Catholic and who happens to believe in apparitions, the apparitions of Mary for example. If I successfully refute a Roman Catholic person who happens to believe in the Eucharist miracles, but I don't share about the cross of Christ, what have I done?

Sue: You've won an argument.

Pastor Paul: I've won an argument and that's all, right. So I would really encourage this person to just let it go. If a Roman Catholic comes and says, I believe and here's why I believe because of this apparition of Mary or this miracle regarding the eucharist, I would just say, interesting, let me explain a little bit more of what the Bible says about what Jesus did on the cross and just bring it back to the gospel.

Sue: That's a good lesson in life, just let it go and return to the gospel. Trish said, *"I was brought up in a Lutheran church according to their teaching, a person will go to heaven just by faith alone. This is hard for me to explain but I attended a Baptist church for a while where we were taught, yes, faith is one component, but that we needed to believe that Jesus died for our sins, and for forgiveness for our sins and receive Him in our hearts as Lord and Savior and then our names are written in the Book of Life. My son-in-law is a Lutheran Pastor and we disagree on this. God Bless your ministry"*

Pastor Paul: Well, what Trish has done is she has misunderstood what basic Lutheran doctrine was talking about when they said we're saved by faith alone and then she went on to explain what she learned in the Baptist church, which is what the Lutheran said they believed in.

Sue: Applying faith.

Pastor Paul: It's what they're applying faith to. So there's no contradiction between what Trish heard in the Lutheran church and what she heard in the Baptist church. Again, when the Lutherans say that we are saved by faith alone, they mean faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, receiving Him in a person's heart and having their name written in the Book of Life. That's how our names get written in the Book of Life, by faith alone, we believe in what Jesus did. So, I would encourage Trish to understand that there's no contradiction going on here, what she just learned in the Baptist Church was more details.

Sue: Sure, that's a good way to put it. Faith is what activates God's grace and His mercy in life. Matthew got 2 questions I think in here, another from Matthew from Kenya. *"Do I have to have a wedding or a ceremony in order to be married in God's eyes?"*

Pastor Paul: Yes, that's a good question and I get this quite a bit. What do I have to do? What do I have to do to be married in God's eyes? I actually wrote about this on my blog and in my book and the Bible doesn't say, specifically, here's what you need to do to be married in God's eyes. Do you know that? It's really interesting, people wonder about that.

In fact, I had somebody write me recently who had just gotten married and she had been told by a relative that because she didn't get married in certain ways, with certain people officiating, then she really wasn't married. And that was really sad

because the Bible doesn't say anything about an officiant or someone to officiate a marriage, it is interesting.

I've officiated at many, many weddings over the years, I don't know how many, many, many but the Bible doesn't say, if you don't get married in front of a pastor, you're not really married. In fact, the Bible doesn't say anything about getting married in front of a pastor. It doesn't say anything about the way we do..., everything that we do related to getting married today is pretty much tradition.

Except there is one thing, the Bible does talk about getting married in front of witnesses. Every contract that the Bible speaks of, and marriage is a contract, it's an agreement between a man and a woman. Everything in the Bible was established through witnesses.

When God was confronting the nation of Judah in the Book of Malachi and confronting them because they were putting off their marriages, they were getting divorced, the Lord said, I am rising up as the witness and I'm speaking to you about how you've put your marriages away, you've divorced your wife.

Well, why did He say, I'm rising up as the witness? Because that's what witnesses were supposed to do. They would witness the vows between a husband and a wife, and they would call them to account if those vows were ever violated. So God was calling them to account and saying, hey, your vows are being violated, you made a promise here. So the Bible does speak about witnesses as it relates to marriage but it also speaks of a man and a woman coming together and being faithful to one another.

Now, that's part of what we promise in our marriage ceremonies and there's nothing wrong with that. I believe that if a man and a woman want to be married in God's eyes, what they need to do, is they need to come together in front of witnesses and

they need to make promises in front of those witnesses and before God and then when that man takes that woman into his home, they are a married couple.

Now, they may not be married in the eyes of the state, that's a different matter altogether. We're not asking, what do you have to do to be married in the eyes of the state? Is there anything wrong with getting a marriage license? No, nothing wrong with it at all but that's not what makes us married. When I get a marriage license and get it signed, that doesn't mean I'm married in the eyes of God, I married in the eyes of God when I make a promise of fidelity, faithfulness, honor, and love and I do it before witnesses. Those are really the biblical elements that come together for an individual to be married in the eyes of God. Does that answer the question for everyone?

Sue: I think it's a really good answer, I applaud you. Michelle said, *"I read that the observant Jews avoid pronouncing God's name, which is why we really don't have Scriptural reference to the pronunciation of God's name. So, if the Jewish people avoided using God's name out of respect to reverence, why do you use the name Yahweh? What gives us the right? Why don't we just say, God?"*

Pastor Paul: Well, what gives us the right, well the Jews were never told not to pronounce it, they simply did it out of respect. It was their decision, it was their personal decision. So, there's nothing in the Bible that says it's disrespectful to attempt to pronounce the name, Yahweh or Jehovah in the Bible, and frankly, what Jesus said, trumps it all. Because when He taught us to pray, He said, we are to address God as our Father, He said, come to Him and say, our Father, which is in heaven. And so we're told to make it more personal to speak of God, as Yahweh, or even by the title God and God is not a name, God is a title. So it'd be like me coming to you and saying, hey misses. That's not very personal, it might be respectful, but it's not personal. Jesus taught us to be very personal, to refer to Him as Abba, Father

and that's a very tender, intimate, loving, relationship minded approach to addressing God and that's how I think we should think about it.

Sue: Good. YouTube viewer Tangled Brava asked, *"In the parable of the Prodigal Son, do the brothers represent born-again Christians, where one becomes backslidden and ultimately repents and the other who's trusting and works-salvation, or are both brothers supposed to represent unbelievers?"*

Pastor Paul: Just as a reminder, the parable of the prodigal son is one that Jesus told where two sons were working and living with their father and one of the sons, the younger son, asked for his inheritance before his father passed away, whatever his portion would be. And he went out and spent it on riotous living, and later came to his senses and then returned home to his father. And then, of course, the other brother was jealous of how gracious the father was in receiving the wayward brother back and so this question is asking, what do these two brothers represent?

And one of the biggest dangers that I find when people are reading and trying to understand parables in the Bible, is assuming that every element of the parable is reflective of something or someone and absolutely has to have a meaning attached to it. Because many times parables are simply meant to convey one idea, or one truth, or one lesson. And in the case of the prodigal son, it's really just how the father feels toward those who have become wayward and return in repentance and humility. That's the message, that's the point of the prodigal son. I don't think it's necessary, in fact, I think it can be dangerous at times to try to attach a meaning to every element.

Sue: Or to definitively categorize them: this is a believer, this is an unbeliever because sometimes as we're reading the Word, the Holy Spirit will just say, you are the brother in this situation and begin to minister to us and if we have pre categorized them, we might not hear that very well.

Pastor Paul: In the parable, the older brother is said, concerning what the Father said about him is, and you're always with me, and of course, we know that this brother was faithful. But he had a dim, he took a dim view of this wayward brother coming back and being celebrated for his returns and so there's a message there too about how we view those in the body of Christ who've lived a sinful life and now they've returned and how does the Father view those people? Well, He delights in them. Well sometimes we don't, we get a sour attitude. Well, you finally made it back, huh? Did you enjoy yourself out there? And here the Father is rejoicing and He's like, my son is returned, he was dead and he's alive again. And there's just some important things to see there in the reactions without necessarily attributing, saying this person is the... and this other person is the....

Sue: Fight like a boxer asks about 1 Corinthians, chapter 8. *"Concerning laying down my rights (1 Corinthians 8) I understand the issue of meat sacrificed to idols, but do we do this with everything? (Here's an example) What if my friend doesn't feel comfortable with me wearing makeup or jeans? Should I not do those things either? Or is it just whenever I'm with that person who's bothered by those things?"*

Sue: I understand this, like how far does this go?

Pastor Paul: Well, it has come up even in our church about things like, if somebody has a tattoo, how much should we bring them into ministry if there are people in the body who object to people getting tattoos? What if a man has a piercing? Should he be allowed in any sort of ministry, if there's anyone out in the congregation, who objects to a man having a piercing? So it's something that really needs to be prayed about. This is one of those gray areas in scripture.

Paul does address the issue of meat sacrifice to idols, because it came up and what his counsel was with people is, when you go to their home and they invite you over for dinner, don't ask questions about what you're eating, or where it came from, just eat what's put in front of you. He explained that an idol is nothing at all and that eating meat that was sacrificed to an idol is not going to harm you or defile you in any way.

But for the sake of your brother, when you're with him, well, that was the situation there. Now, honestly, this could get taken to extreme lengths where our lives are literally squelched from any sort of freedom that we have in Christ, because there's someone in our life who objects to pretty much everything we do. Whether it's putting on lipstick for a woman, or wearing pants instead of a dress, or something like that and whenever we come to these areas, it is necessary that we bring them before the Lord in prayer and we say, Lord, what would you have me to do in this situation?

Sue: Because we should apply this into our modern life, we should take the concept into our modern life. But it's almost the same thing as, Lord do, you want me to speak right now or not? And it just requires, like you say, a lot of discernment. What does God want me to do in this situation?

Pastor Paul: And it's been referred to as needing a sanctified conscience before the Lord. Is my conscience clear going about and doing these things that I have liberty in Christ to do if there's a brother or sister who might be offended? Here's the question I think that really needs to be answered. If a woman says, if I wear lipstick in front of this individual who objects, am I going to stumble them? We're told not to do anything to cause a brother or sister to stumble. So are they going to get mad at me and throw a legalistic fit? Or, am I genuinely, potentially going to stumble that person? That's the question that really needs to be answered.

Sue: That's good. Francisca asks, *"Will the Jews get to build a 3rd temple in Jerusalem before the 2nd coming of Christ?"*

Pastor Paul: Well, we believe so because the Bible makes reference during the tribulation period of the anti-Christ establishing his image in the temple and demanding the worship of the world. And so, it is because of that and other passages that make reference to the temple in the last days or during the Great Tribulation, that we believe that the Jews will be able to rebuild the temple. My personal feeling is, that the anti-Christ will be the one who will make it possible for them to rebuild the temple during the first 3 years of the Great Tribulation.

Sue: No better way to get on the inside. Beth has a tattoo question. *"I've heard someone say that Isaiah 44:5 says that God has tattoos, and that God is okay with tattoos. Can you explain this verse?"*

Pastor Paul: Well, Isaiah 44:5 doesn't say anything about God having a tattoo. What it says is, and this is a verse that is speaking of the last days, when people will come to the Lord and become children of God, and it says, this one will say, I am the Lord's. In other words, I belong to the Lord, and another will call on the name of Jacob, and another will write on his hand, the Lord's. In other words, he'll write on his hand, I belong to God, I belong to Jesus or whatever and name himself by the name of Israel, that's what that verse says. It says nothing about God having a tattoo. Jesus made it very clear when he had his meeting with the woman at the well that God is Spirit and so, as a spirit, He is incorporeal, and He can't have a tattoo in that sense. So that's a matter of great confusion in this question. The question of whether or not believer should get a tattoo is another issue altogether, but I would say to this person, no, there's nothing in that verse that says anything about God getting a tattoo.

Is God okay with tattoos? That's something that you have to pray about. There is a verse in the Old Testament that tells the Jews not to mark their bodies but that is in reference to pagan practices. The pagan priests and pagans would mark their bodies for their pagan deities and God said, don't shave the sides of your heads, don't mark your bodies, but again, that was...

Sue: Don't look like those who are worshipping pagan deities.

Pastor Paul: Don't copy the pagans. So somebody would say, well, I think when a Christian gets a tattoo, they're copying the Jews. No, God was talking about copying their pagan practices. That's the issue there, is that they were taking on paganism. If a believer has nothing to do with paganism, they are worshipping the God of the universe and they get a tattoo, that would not fall under that prohibition.

Sue: Genie has a question *"In Exodus 10 where the Lord is speaking to Moses, God asks, 'Who makes them deaf or mute, who gives them sight or makes them blind?' Is God saying he allows such things or actually causes them?"*

Pastor Paul: He's saying that He causes them and this is one of those difficult passages because we've been taught that God will never ever do anything to someone that I would consider wrong, bad, or offensive or uncomfortable to me. And basically, what they're doing is they're establishing themselves as the final judge of whether or not that's appropriate for God to do that. So when God comes out here in Exodus, and He says to Moses, who makes people deaf or mute? Because Moses is basically saying, I don't speak very well, I'm slow of tongue and so God says, really, look who you're talking to. God is saying, yes He does that, so what we have to do is we have to say, I am going to trust God's character, rather than judge His actions, because I don't understand His actions all the time. But He did tell me that He's good all the time and that in Him is no darkness at all. I'm either going to believe that or

I'm not, even if God does something that I don't understand or I think, umm, I'm not sure that's right. See, then what I'm doing is I'm putting myself in the position of judge, I'm saying, I'm going to judge you God for ... You make somebody mute, well, that was wrong of you. Well, I don't know the circumstances, I don't know the details, God does and so, I will look at things by God's character, not by judging His actions.

Sue: Very good. Marie asked, *"Is it biblical that we can send a host of heavens to do battle for us? I heard this prayer and I'm not sure if it's biblical."*

Pastor Paul: It is not biblical, there's nothing in the Bible that says that we can send a host from heaven to do battle for us. That's God's business to send hosts from heaven to do spiritual battle. We pray to God, we ask for God's help, we ask for God's intervention, He dispatches the angels, we do not dispatch angels.

Sue: Okay, the next question could take a full hour. *"Where does the Bible teach a Triune God?"*

Pastor Paul: Well actually won't take all that long. The Bible doesn't specifically teach a Triune God, it reveals that God is a triune being and the difference there is, I teach about the Trinity by using different verses and that sort of thing. The Bible doesn't set out to teach the trinity of God, it reveals the trinity of God and where does that happen? Throughout the entire New Testament, it is intimated in the old, it is revealed in the new. It is not something that is taught, it is revealed and there are many things about God. So, I want to encourage people not to be messed up by my language. There's many things the Bible doesn't teach us, it reveals those things to us.

Sue: You're so smart. Dorcas gets 2 questions. Number 1, *"During the 2nd return of Christ to establish the Millennial Kingdom, those of us who would have been*

changed to glorified bodies, will we remain in the same form, or will we get our physical bodies back in order to interact with those who are still mortal?"

Pastor Paul: Well, the Bible says that when Jesus returns for His church, we will be changed, we will receive our glorified bodies. What Dorcas is assuming, is that that glorified body isn't going to look anything like a human fleshly body. But when Jesus appeared in His glorified body to the disciples, they didn't really know any different and He showed them His scars and He ate a piece of fish in front of them. So the assumption that Dorcas is making is that we're going to like be glowing, or we're going to be levitating or something like that, when we have our glorified bodies, is not biblically accurate. So will we interact with those who are still mortal? The Bible doesn't say, we assume that we will during the Millennial Kingdom but the Bible doesn't say, we'll find out.

Sue: Her second question, *"In most of your studies you have said that sin brings a rift between us and God. What if death or the Rapture happens while there is that rift? Will one enter into the wedding supper of the Lamb? Looking forward to the July Q&A."*

Pastor Paul: Good question. So what I was saying and I've said this many times, is that when we leave sin unconfessed, it creates a barrier in our relationship with God and that we need to resolve that barrier relationally by coming to Him, confessing our sin, and getting that situation taken care of. I have made the point that because you sin, you don't become less of a child of God, you simply have a rift between you and the Lord, because sin still separates. So she's asking, so okay, I die, I get hit by truck, or the rapture happens, and I have unconfessed sin in my life. No, that's not going to affect anything about your salvation because your salvation is not based on you perfectly confessing all of your sins before something happens, end of life happens. It's not dependent upon you living a good life. It's dependent upon your

faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ, that's what our salvation is based upon. So it would not affect someone entering into the wedding supper of the lamb or we could just say salvation.

Sue: *George said, "I was watching your teachings on Jonah tonight and it touched on something that has recently started confusing me. I always hear people saying Jesus rose on the 3rd day and to me it always seemed that he died on the cross on Good Friday and then rose from the dead early on resurrection Sunday. To me that always seemed like two days. And in Matthew 12:38-39 Jesus even said, 'For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.' So was it two or three days?"*

Pastor Paul: Well, I actually responded to George personally on this question, but I wanted to bring, have it here in our Q&A, because this is a common question. A lot of people ask it and I appreciate the fact that he quoted Matthew chapter 12, where Jesus said, "Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." And people start counting, they go, okay, Friday night, Saturday night, that's two nights, so how do we begin to put this thing together?

Well, first of all, you have to understand, really two things. The Jews believed that any portion of a day constituted a day. So that means if I came to visit you in your home and we didn't know, and we were maybe just friends, but I came to visit you and I came about an hour before sundown on a Friday night and I stayed with you for that evening, and I stayed with you all day Saturday and then I left early Sunday morning, just after sunrise, the Jews would say I stayed at your house for three days.

Because once again, any portion of a day constitutes a day, even if it's just one hour, because the Jews believe the end of the day was at sunset, so any portion of a day constitutes a day. That's the first thing to understand and the reason George was being confused about this, like a lot of other people are, is because they're thinking like modern thinkers. We think a day, 24 hours.

So what about the statement, though, in Matthew 12, where Jesus says, just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish and so forth, the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth? Well, you have to understand that it was a common Jewish idiom, to refer to just even a part of a day, as a day and the night and this was common in that day. So the Jews wouldn't have considered this a contradiction at all because this is the way the Jews talked and we're just having to put ourselves in the place and culture of the speaker and the author, when we read these things in the Bible.

Sue: That's good. Craig said, *"Thank you for your Bible teachings. I'm so grateful for you. My question is in regard to the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Assembly of God churches believe the initial evidence of the baptism and the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues 'as the Spirit gives utterance' (Acts 2:4). Is speaking in tongues necessary to be baptized in the Spirit? Thank you!"*

Pastor Paul: This is another common question and I'm very aware of what the Assemblies of God teach on this matter, because I attended an Assembly of God Bible college for a year and I know what they teach. And again, they quote Acts 2:4 and use that as a proof text, that if you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, the initial evidence of it will be speaking in tongues, which is speaking in a supernatural language.

However, they're quoting Acts 2:4, but what they really need to do is back up to Acts chapter 1, where Jesus speaks of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And He says to His disciples, and this is Acts 1:8, He says, "and you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses."

So, Jesus said, the initial evidence of the baptism of the Spirit was power from on high. There are biblical references where people spoke in tongues as that evidence was shown but not always and so I don't believe that speaking in tongues is mandatory. It might be, if you're baptized in the Spirit, God may give you the gift of tongues, He may not. Paul says in 1 Corinthians, do all speak in tongues? He uses it as a rhetorical question that demands a no answer. So, we know that Paul told us that not everybody speaks in tongues and we know that Jesus said, the initial evidence is power. So that's my answer.

Sue: *It's a good answer. Last question, "After Jesus was raised, Jesus said to Mary, go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God,' (John 20:17) but then Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, makes it seem like our relationship with the Father is impersonal when he says, Bless it be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:3). Is Peter wrong or is my understanding wrong?"*

Pastor Paul: Your understanding is wrong. This question even says, it makes it seem, this writer said, when I read this statement by Peter in 1 Peter 1:3, it makes it seem like our relationship with the Father is impersonal. Whereas Jesus talked about it being very personal, my Father, your Father, my God, your God and then this writer says that, Peter changes his language a little bit, and he makes it seem like no, we're back to more of a formal approach to understanding or addressing God. I don't think that was Peter's impression at all, I don't think that's what Peter was trying to say and I think that this is just one of those examples of personally taking something

a certain way and causing that to reflect on the passage where it really doesn't exist. We see things sometimes and we see things from our own personal perspective and we assume that there's a problem and I don't believe there's any problem that exists here.

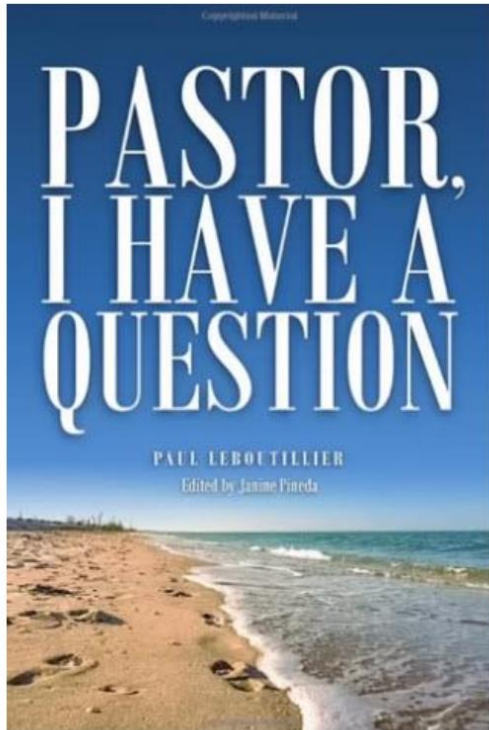
Sue: I also love really how the Lord allowed quite a bit of retention of the writer's personality into New Testament books. So if you were to take Peter and John, for example, and compare them, John's language would be much more relational, much more than would Peters and even in the gospel of Mark, I love how you just get... and immediately. There's this such a fast pace and so perhaps a little of that is in there.

Pastor Paul: Absolutely, the fact that we believe in biblical inspiration doesn't mean that God overruled their personality traits. So we do see personalities of the biblical writers coming out in their writings, even though they were guided by the Holy Spirit. And so, just because there's maybe a personality difference being expressed in the Word, doesn't mean that there's a contradiction in how we address our God.

Sue: Well, that's a wrap, but do you know what we forgot to do? We forgot to bring your to bring your book, you have a book available on [Amazon](#). Maybe we can put an end screen.

Pastor Paul: We'll put it on the screen for you with a link. Well, it's called *Pastor, I Have a Question*.

And we've been putting it together for the last couple of years and it is now finally [available on Amazon](#) around the world. And we'll put a picture of the cover and a [link](#), and people can get it.



It's basically taken from years and years of fielding questions from believers, and we finally put those into book form.

Sue: So it's really relevant to what we're doing right here because you've been receiving questions and answering questions for decades and like you say, in the beginning of the book, you began to see patterns, that people had very similar questions and so you began to answer those and how many, over 150?

Pastor Paul: There's over 150 questions and answers in the book, it's a resource. It's not the kind of a book and I want to encourage people in this, it's not the kind of a book that you're going to open up at the front and probably read to the back. Because like a resource book, you might use it when you need it, or you might refer to it when a question arises. You might want to become familiar with the topics that are covered and maybe even some of the questions, but it's more of a resource than a read from front to back.

Sue: So congratulations.

Pastor Paul: Well, thank you. Thanks so much for joining us for this July edition of our Bible Q&A. And we'll be putting questions together for August and we'll meet you toward the end of August for doing this, once again. So, until we see you again, God bless. Have a good rest of your day. Stay in the Word and take care. Bye.