

Bible Q&A with Pastor Paul - February 2025

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Sue: All right, this is our February Q&A, and the first one is from Taylor. Taylor says, *“I've been watching Pastor Paul's videos for over a year now. I speak to the Lord through prayer many times throughout the day, but I'm not clear whether or not to talk to Him as a friend and Father as my God. Also, I wonder whether or not the things I watch on TV can have an influence on my walk with the Lord. I'm currently watching a popular show called The Walking Dead, but as I do I wonder if it is somewhat of a sin.”*

Pastor Paul: I'm sure The Walking Dead is just fine. I've never seen that movie. Let's take these one at a time. First of all, Taylor's talking about prayer and kind of saying, I'm a little confused to whether I should address God as my God or my Father.

Sue: Well, he said, as a friend relationship or as more of a father God relationship.

Pastor Paul: And I can imagine that we have to remember a couple of things, and I'm going to be putting some scriptures up on the screen here tonight. But in Matthew 6:9 Jesus taught us to say, "Our Father, who is in heaven..." And when Paul wrote to the Galatians, he said, (Galatians 4:4-7 ESV) But when the fullness of time had come, God set forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you're no longer a slave. You're not talking to a master. You are a son talking to a Father, and he says, and if a son, then an heir, through God. So these scriptures help us to understand that our relationship with God is a close and intimate

one, and we are to refer to him as Father and to address him as Father. But I think there's also a balance, I think understanding that He is my God, He is my Savior, He's my redeemer, and holding those things in tension just seems like a wise thing to me. We do talk intimately, and we talk personally to God, and that's wonderful. And I'm so glad that we have that ability and that invitation to really get personal with God. It's funny when I hear in more religious settings. And somebody starts to address God, thou, God of the universe. And you know how people will do, they talk in a very religious tone and it kind of puts God in this far off distant realm where it's like, wow, do you have a relationship with him? That's not the way I would address a friend, or, frankly, even my father. But at the same time, I necessarily wouldn't address him with one of my children. There's respect, there's honor, there's that deep reverence and awe, but that personal intimate element at the same time, and that's difficult. And I understand the question being a challenging one to approach, but I think there is some both of that. I wouldn't talk to God like I would the president the United States. I would be more formal, I suppose with someone like the president, but with God, I talked to him like I'm his son and he knows everything about me.

Sue: Now, about what we watch, about the movie watching.

Pastor Paul: That's the next part, isn't it? So it's a two part question. I would say to Taylor and everybody else, be very careful about what you put in your heart. The Bible says, above all else, guard your heart, for it's the wellspring of life. And we forget sometimes that what we're putting in our hearts, we're planting and is going to come up. If somebody writes to me and says, I'm not so sure watching this program is good. That tells me that they're already being directed by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's already talking to them. Otherwise they wouldn't be asking.

Sue: Anyway, the point is, I think you're exactly right. Sometimes when we type a question, we kind of know the answer. We don't have to wait for someone.

Pastor Paul: I think a lot of people ask questions knowing what they think is probably the answer, but they're looking for confirmation. If Taylor's wondering about whether The Walking Dead is a good show, it's probably the Lord saying, yes, don't do that. The Lord will speak to you in one way or another about stuff like that.

Sue: Christopher says, *“Hey Pastor Paul, I was reading John 1:25, and notice the Pharisees asked John the Baptist, “why then do you baptize?” It seems the Pharisees already knew about baptism before John. Is there anything in the Old Testament about baptism and was baptism a thing before John?”*

Pastor Paul: The baptism was a thing before John. So they weren't completely unfamiliar with it. We have a passage in 1 Kings. You remember there was a Syrian commander, like a general, who became leprous.

Sue: Naaman. Is that right?

Pastor Paul: Ya, Naaman, and he was told that there was a prophet in Israel, which was Elisha, and to go to Elisha to see what he would be told him, he was told to go wash in the Jordan seven times. Remember, after he got over his pride because Elisha didn't even come talk to him, he sent a servant out to tell him what to do. And Naaman got all puffed up and upset, but when he finally decided, it was worth giving it a shot. He dipped in the Jordan seven times. And that idea of dipping into the water, that's Baptism. That's really what the word baptism even means. There was also the situation we remember that Jesus healed a man. There were several people waiting to be healed at the pool of Bethesda. And they had this belief that an angel would come down and stir the waters and the first one in would get healed, which I think was total superstition. Can you imagine God doing a thing where, here's the deal, I'll send an angel first one in, and you're talking to crippled people? I mean, that's cruel. Anyway, but they believed it. So how long was that going on? Could

have been a long time that was happening. So there was that belief as well. I've read that there were other Jewish groups, throughout the years, that incorporated some ritual baptisms, but it's not in the Bible.

Sue: Next question is from Ina, *“Dear Pastor Paul and Sue, I was wondering if you can give us a short outline of the various original Bibles and where they are kept - those which survived up to the current days at least.”*

Pastor Paul: I talked about this actually on Sunday, but I thought I would go ahead and answer it again. There's no such thing as an original Bible. There are manuscripts that have been left behind, but they're copies of copies of copies of copies. So the Bible was compiled, but there's no such thing as an original Bible. And I think some people just get confused about that. And there's some important things that you can learn, if you do some studying about how we got our Bible and how the Bible was compiled and stuff. It's very interesting, and I can't go into all of it tonight. But the thing I shared on Sunday is what I'll share again, and that is that just because we don't have the original writings of the New Testament authors doesn't mean that they're not authentic, or that what we have isn't authentic. I mentioned it on Sunday. I'll mention it again, that in the New Testament, anyway, the documents, the manuscripts that we have, are the most well attested documents in all of antiquity. In the mid-40s, we uncovered Old Testament documents that took us back 1000 years. I'm sure you heard of those. Those are called The Dead Sea Scrolls. And it's funny, because The Dead Sea Scrolls were found by a young kid. He was a teenager, and he was out just herding sheep or whatever he was herding, and he was throwing rocks like kids do into these cave openings, just pitching rocks to see if he could hit the opening of the cave, and he heard pottery shattering when he threw a rock. So he went in to investigate, and he found all these big pots with scrolls in them, and The Dead Sea scrolls were discovered. That was 1946, 1947 something like that, at that

time the most recent Old Testament document we had dated was 1000 years older than what we found. Because The Dead Sea Scrolls dated back to 100 BC. So if you can imagine Bible scholars, suddenly one day, you have the ability to compare Old Testament writings on in one hand that were probably about 900 AD, and in the other hand, you've got documents that are 100 BC, and you can compare them. You can say, what happened in 1000 years? You know what happened in 1000 years? Nothing of any significance. There were some spelling differences, an example, like the way we spell the word color, and the way Canadians spell the word colour, they throw a 'u' in there. Those were the kind of differences that they found, nothing significant, nothing that changed doctrine at all even though we don't have original Bibles.

Sue: I will say this. So I think sometimes people might loosely say original Bibles, but we use the term original manuscripts. We know it's not the very first one written, but what we're saying is the oldest ones that we have. So that's a good question, we have of the oldest ones that we have? Where are they kept? Who owns them? Who has them?

Pastor Paul: Like I said, there's copies of copies of copies of so a lot of people have them, and some of the documents were found. The Catholic Church had preserved documents.

Sue: Remember when you and I went down to an apologetics conference and we saw a Hebrew, what book of the Bible was it?

Pastor Paul: I think it was Isaiah.

Sue: I think so. So that was one of the, what someone might say, original manuscripts. It was just one of the many.

Pastor Paul: Ya, one of the many, but you have to also understand that they didn't have photocopiers back then, so they had people who were scribes, or copyists. And these people were painstakingly accurate with their copies, and if they would make a mistake, they would pitch the whole thing and start over again. They were incredibly careful about what they were passing along.

Sue: It's amazing how God preserved all that for us. Michelle says, *“Does the teaching in Mark 13:16-19 only refer to AD 70 or will these also apply to the tribulation time period?”*

Pastor Paul: Well, let me explain. First of all that AD 70 is the date that Jerusalem felt to the Romans and Jesus did talk about that. He talked about the destruction of Jerusalem under the Roman army. Mark is one of the passages where he did that. Mark chapter 13:16-19 (ESV), is one of those passages where Jesus is talking about terrible times that are coming. And he says, ...and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that it may not happen in the winter. For in those days there will be such tribulation and as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now and never will be. You can tell there that you've got a dual prophecy going on. You've got this law of double reference being used. How can you tell that? Well, he's talking about the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. But then he makes a statement and says, for in those days, there will be such tribulation that has never been since the beginning of creation. As bad as AD 70 was, there have been worse things since then, but there's something coming that's going to top them all, and that's going to be the Great Tribulation when God pours out His wrath upon the face of the earth. So you know here that you're talking about something beyond AD 70, something beyond the fall of Jerusalem, which was terrible. The Romans came in and just decimated the place. But there's something

worse coming. And the thing we have to remember is the reason Jesus spoke. When we read these passages, and Matthew even records Jesus saying, Pray that your flight that it's not on the Sabbath, and that tells you that he's talking to Jews. But we have to remember something. The Jews are going to go through the tribulation. The Jews, who are unbelievers, they will, Israel will go through the tribulation. We have to remember that. And that's one of the reasons why Jesus likened the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 to as a foreshadowing of the coming Great Tribulation.

Sue: Jason says, *“Does “taking refuge” in the Lord - as mentioned in the Psalms - mean the same thing as “resting in” Him, or is there some type of nuanced difference?”*

Pastor Paul: This is a great question that really got me thinking, because I'd never thought about this before, so I had to kind of look into it and ask the question, what are the differences? I think there are differences, but I also think they're first cousins. The whole idea of resting in the Lord versus taking refuge in the Lord, taking refuge as I looked up the references in the Bible, particularly David. He talks a lot about this. It usually is finding a place of safety in the midst of a storm. In fact, let me show you on the screen, Psalm 61:3-4 (ESV) David writes for you have been my refuge, a strong tower, in other words, a place I can retreat and find safety in against the enemy. And then he says, let me dwell in your tent forever. Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings, so that is more of that reference. But resting is something where we take what God has promised us and we put our faith in His Word and that promise to carry out His plan and His will for our lives. And the reason I connect resting with that is because you'll remember when God brought the nation of Israel to the border of the Promised Land under Moses, he sent in the spies. The spies came back with a bad report saying, we can't do this. So God sent him back out in the wilderness. Here's what's interesting. We have one Psalm in the Psalms that was

written by Moses at Psalm 95 and he recounts that very experience. And it's interesting what he says, let me put this on the screen, Psalm 95:10-11 (ESV) for forty years I loathed that generation and said, "They are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways." Here's the Lord talking. Therefore I swore in my wrath, "They shall not enter my rest." Isn't that interesting? Now we just got done with the book of Joshua. We know that going into the Promised Land wasn't super restful, because once they got in there, they had battles and wars and difficulties. But by the same token, God refers to that as entering his rest because it means you're going in where I've called you to go. In other words, in the center of my will. You'll hear people say, sometimes there's no better place to be than the center of God's will. Now that doesn't mean the center of God's will is going to be without conflict or difficulty or challenge or hardship, but you're in the center of God's will, and that means you can trust him, and what you do then is you rest in his ability to take care of things. In other words, you're in the center of God's will. When you are going doing and living where God wants you to go live and do, then if something happens you can say, God called me here. He called me, I'm here. I'm here because God told me to come here. He didn't say it was going to be easy, but he told me to come here, and so I'm going to rest in his will, and I'm going to let the Lord work this thing out. It's one of the things I've said to young pastors, when they start in the ministry, they'll sometimes ask me, what's the most important thing starting off in the ministry? Knowing you're called. That's my answer every time, know that you're called. Why is that so important? Because you're going to go through hardship, and you need to know that you know that you're in the center of God's will, and when you know that, you rest. So it's interesting how the New Testament author picked up on what Moses wrote in in Psalm 95 and he applied that to salvation. Let me show you this Hebrews on the screen from Hebrews 4:1-3 (ESV), therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest

any of you should seem to have failed to reach it, for good news came to us just as to this. He's referring to the Israelites when they came to the Promised Land, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For we who have believed enter that rest. And that's the point he's making. He's using the picture of the nation of Israel entering into the Promised Land and the faith to go in there as a picture of our faith in Jesus Christ. And when we believe the Word, we enter into the rest of the Lord. We cease from our own labor and we rest in Him. So that's the difference.

Sue: Those are two really good concepts - refuge and rest.

Pastor Paul: They really are.

Sue: It was a good question. Adriano says, *“Hello Pastor, I understand that I’m saved through Jesus and kept saved through Jesus, but when I mess up in sin, does it delay the process of God wanting to use me for glorifying His name or allowing me to touch more hearts through the gift he's given me?”*

Pastor Paul: I thought long and hard about this question, and I need to start by reminding Adriano and everybody else who might be wondering the same thing, that God uses imperfect people. And he talks about here, about messing up and sinning. We all mess up and sin, and none of us is without sin, and none of us are without mistakes. But his question is essentially, will God put me on the shelf or not use me like he would have otherwise, if I mess up and sin? Well, the answer is maybe, but if he does, it's always going to be for your good. There was a time in our lives where I didn't understand how family entered into ministry. I was still a very young man. We had two small babies, two small kids at home, and I just didn't understand how. I kind of thought, I'm in the ministry. I'll just pour myself into it, and God will take care of my family. And God needed to correct me on that, because it put you guys

in danger. So you'll remember that the Lord took us out of the ministry for a season so that I could get a handle on that particular issue. I was messing up as it relates to understanding the family. So that can happen, it can limit your ability, but it depends on what messing up you mean.

Sue: I would probably say, he mentioned, but when I mess up in sin, when I read that, I think about a willful sin that I want to do, maybe something that's like you're referring to, it's much more general for all of us, is a training season, and that's really what the Lord was doing for us. I don't think you were messing up in sin.

Pastor Paul: I was misunderstanding ministry and family.

Sue: We needed training. And sometimes I think the Lord will pull us aside for further training. The sin thing too, so there's a couple aspects.

Pastor Paul: So if somebody's dealing with a besetting sin, and what I mean by that is a sinful habit, and they're continually falling to it, the Lord may very well call you to the sideline in order to focus on getting that issue under control. Because if he doesn't, the enemy is just going to beat you up over it and eventually, can do a lot of harm, both to you and to the ministry that you're doing, and can cause others to stumble because of it. So when somebody just says messing up or sinning, you kind of have to define that. Like I said, we all mess up every day. But if there is an ongoing issue where I'm struggling with an area of sin that could disqualify me in the ministry, or could cause great damage to the people to whom I am ministering, the Lord may very well pull you out for your own good and for the good of others.

Sue: All right. The next question comes from John, ***“Hey Pastor Paul! My name is John. I am a 22 y/o ex-mormon. My question is from the book of Ecclesiastes 7:16-17. It speaks about the dangers of being “overly righteous” and “overly wicked”.***

How can increasing in holiness and righteousness be “self-destructive?” Thank you so much for your teaching! Sending love and prayers from Utah!!”

Pastor Paul: To be honest, this is a challenging passage. When I taught through Ecclesiastes, I had to constantly remind myself and the people that I was teaching, this is a book where Solomon is seeking wisdom about life under the sun, meaning apart from God. So if you will, much of Ecclesiastes is kind of the wisdom of the world because that's what he was trying to do. He was trying to see if there's any sense, if life makes sense, or if it adds up to anything under the sun. So you have to keep that in mind when you're studying through the book of Ecclesiastes, because he'll make some statements that can make you cock your head and go, what did he say?

Sue: Is that supposed to be in the Bible?

Pastor Paul: Ya, is that supposed to be in the Bible. He makes a statement like, who knows whether the spirit of man goes up or down? He says that in there. And I've had people write to me and say, wait a minute, what is he so we can't know? No, you can't go to Ecclesiastes and get doctoral information like that, because he's looking at life under the sun as man sees it, apart from God. This is the thing you have to understand when you're first of all looking into it. And he's mentioning Ecclesiastes 7:16-17. But the context of that statement is really in the previous verse. Let me show it to you. It's in verse 15 (Ecclesiastes 7:15 ESV), he says, in my vain life. And by the way, vain is used to mean empty, meaningless. In fact, some Bibles say it that way, in my meaningless life, I've seen everything. There's a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there's a wicked man who prolongs his life and evil doing, and he's kind of like what's up with that? There's a righteous guy who dies in the midst of his righteousness, and then there's this evil guy. He lives this long fruitful life. And he's not the only person in the Bible to take issue with that,

the Psalmist did too. So it is based on that observation that he says then in 16, so don't be overly righteous, or don't be overly wicked. So he's saying, don't make yourself too smart or too righteous or whatever and end up causing problems for yourself. It's like, just live your life. Again, this is life under the sun. This is not living for God. This is not living for the Lord. Anyway, you got to be careful. I'll end by saying that you got to be careful reading through the book of Ecclesiastes and looking for doctrinal statements.

Sue: That makes sense.

Pastor Paul: You got to know why the book was written.

Sue: And that's why I really like, every time you start teaching a book, you give us that background, it's like, what is this? Is this a prophetic book? Does this show us the character of God? Ecclesiastes does not fall into that category at all.

Pastor Paul: No, not really.

Sue: All right. Robert says, *“In Exodus 35, Israel was told not to kindle a fire on the Sabbath. Was this a prohibition against food preparation or heat? They couldn't throw some logs on the fire to keep warm? Thank you. Rob Hopkins Harrisonburg Virginia.”* So what's the point? Do not kindle a fire. What's that all about?

Pastor Paul: Well, it was about work and when he says, don't kindle a fire, the Lord was just saying, don't work to start a fire. Interestingly enough, this is the only place in Exodus 35 that it's mentioned one time in the whole Bible. But that's okay. God was telling the people when they were getting ready, this was a time when they were in the wilderness but it was a command for later on as well. He was basically saying, if you're going to do your food prep, kindle a fire on the day before the Sabbath and do all your cooking, so you've got leftovers to eat during the Sabbath, so you're not

working, and that's all that was about. But remember, kindle a fire means start a fire. So I think Robert was a little offended for the people of Israel thinking, it's cold out. I can't even put some logs on the fire. Of course, you could. Because he said, don't kindle a fire. Don't start a fire. So if it's cold outside, you'd start a fire the day before and just keep it burning. And it's not work just to throw a log on the fire. By the way, this is still considered a work by Orthodox Jews today, and that means they follow it to the degree that not only do they not kindle a fire, but they believe kindle a fire also means lighting a pilot light or turning on a gas stove today. So it's something that they still follow.

Sue: All right. The next question is from a YouTube follower, *“I have a question on the creation of animals and man in Genesis. Did man and the dinosaur co-exist? Modern scientific evidence states that man and dinosaur do NOT co-exist. And is a “day” just as we know a day to day?”*

Pastor Paul: Two questions here. Did man and dinosaurs co-exist? Here's what's interesting. I don't know if you know this, I think probably most of you do. The word dinosaur is not very old. It was first used to get this in 1842. Before that the word dinosaur didn't exist and it was used by Sir Richard Owen, and it comes from two Greek words. The first of them means terrible, and the second one means lizard. So you've got these terrible lizards that now are called dinosaurs. These are by the way Greek words. So terrible lizard. Did they exist when man existed? It depends on who you ask. I remember living up in Seattle when we were up there, back in the days when newspapers were big. Back in the old days, just after Noah got off the ark. I was looking through the Seattle Times, I think it was even a Sunday edition, and it was deep in the thing, I found this little, tiny article about how the bones of dinosaurs had been discovered on the same strata as modern man.

Sue: I think we still have that little article.

Pastor Paul: Are you serious?

Sue: When I was looking at things here a couple weeks ago, I think I saw that.

Pastor Paul: You're kidding. I've been looking for it.

Sue: Let's go find it.

Pastor Paul: I remember cutting it out because I thought this is big, because the article ended, and it was not a long article, but it ended by saying, this changes everything we once believed. And you know what, it went away after that. Nobody talked about it. Archeologists found dinosaur bones on the same strata as modern man. Anyway, you know I'm not a conspiracy theorist. But in this case, I do believe that when people when finds are made, discoveries are made, that might possibly contradict the popular narrative related to millions of years and how animals and particularly dinosaurs, were around millions of years before man, I believe those discoveries get ignored and censored in favor of the popular narrative of millions of years. Somebody might even ask and say, why is this even important? Why can't I believe in millions of years and still be a Christian? You can still be a Christian and put your faith in Jesus. You know what, you're basically admitting that you really don't believe the Bible in some respects. And the reason is because the Bible teaches that death came as a result of sin. Let me show you that it's on the screen from Romans 5:12 (ESV), Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned. Paul says, right there, the death got started. It came into the world through one man. Now, that's what the Bible teaches. So to believe that dinosaurs and other animals lived and died millions of years ago, you have to say, I don't really believe that. I don't believe death came into the world through one man. I believe death was around long before man ever got here. And what you're saying when you say that is that you believe God

created death and called it good, because you'll remember in the book of Genesis, you have all the days of creation. After which God said, and it was good, it was good, it was good, it was good, it was good, it was good, it was good. In fact, the only thing he said wasn't good was just the man being alone. That was it. So you're basically believing then that that dinosaurs, animals and so forth, lived millions and millions of years before man ever came onto the scene, and God allowed them to die because he factored death into his creation. And it was good. It had to be good. Well, you guys see a scripture up on the screen from 1 Corinthians 15:26 (ESV), and Paul says that death is an enemy. He says there very clearly the last enemy to be destroyed is death. See people who believe in millions of years, they don't believe this. It's like, no, no, no, no, no, death isn't an enemy. God created it, it was good. It had to be, it had to be created by God and good. If animals and dinosaurs lived millions of years before man, you've got a contradiction, and you've got a really troublesome contradiction. So people say, I hear what you're saying, Pastor Paul, but what about all this? And this person even mentions it scientific evidence. What about all the scientific evidence? And what they're referring to is carbon dating. It's funny people hear about carbon dating, which is the dating of carbon 14 elements and their decay process and so forth, as it relates to carbon 12. You got to get into it to kind of figure. Most people hear about it, and they never even learn anything. They just assume, carbon dating is an accurate way of dating things. And by the way, you can't carbon date rocks. It's only like deceased animals. Anyway, they hear about carbon dating, they say, they carbon dated it and it's 18 million years old. What people don't understand all the assumptions that go into carbon dating. Because what they have to do in order to reach their conclusions is they have to make assumptions. And one of the assumptions is that carbon atoms decay at the same rate back then as they do today. We don't know that. They weren't back there millions of years ago. They weren't even back there 6000 years ago. So there's no way that they can prove. It's

an assumption, and if carbon dating happens to be incorrect, if there are assumptions about the decay process of carbon 14 happens to be incorrect, guess what? You're going to have incorrect dates. But this is one of those things and I know this isn't Bible stuff per se, this gets into more science stuff. But I'm not the kind of person that likes to divorce science from the Bible and Bible from science. So that's the situation there. What was the second part of the question?

Sue: Is a day, just a day? And what I think he means is when the Bible says a day, is it what we think of today? Is it 24 hours?

Pastor Paul: Is it a 24 hour period? See, this can get you. I believe it's a 24 hour period. Now, having said that, I will admit that there are passages in the Bible where it speaks of days or a day that isn't just a 24 hour period, like the day of the Lord. The day of the Lord encompasses the whole process of time. Really, that's kind of the coming of the Lord. So there are times in the Bible that you can see that that it's not limited to just a 24 hour period. But the context helps you always to see that when there is no other context. And the Bible says there was evening, there was morning, the first day. Well, the context is a 24 hour period. The only reason you would interpret that as millions of years is because you're trying to jive with evolution, and guys, evolution is atheism's religion. Honest, it's the way I see it. It's the religion of atheists. And evolution and the Bible do not mix. And I don't think you should try to make them mix. I really don't.

Sue: All right. The next question comes from Neda. She says, *“Hi Pastor Paul & Miss Sue, thanks for continuing to teach the Word. My question is about Deuteronomy 4:19 where it says... “And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the hosts of heaven, you will be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, things that the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.” Does this mean*

that God assigned them to break his law and they are doomed? I'm highly confused about predestination.”

Pastor Paul: So are a lot of people. Let me put this passage up on the screen, the same passage that she's talking about here. And the reason I want to put it up is I want to, I want you to see where she has gone astray on this passage, because the way she's interpreting it, the way she's reading this verse is, first of all, there's a warning, beware lest you raise your eye to the heavens. In other words, look up in the sky. You see the sun, you see the moon, you see the stars, all the hosts of heaven and you bow down to him. Well, that's what pagans do. So he's basically saying, beware lest you enter into paganistic thinking. But here's the last part that she's stumbling over, things that the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven. And what she's seeing in that last phrase is that people who are unbelievers are allotted to that kind of a belief. And she's basically asking, and that's what she says, does this mean that God assigned them this belief and that they are doomed and there's nothing they can do about it. In other words, she's seeing it in this, in the light of predestination, which is really more predetermination, that God has determined that some people are going to look at the stars and the sun and the moon and worship them, and there's no choice they have in the matter.

Sue: She sees the word allotted, almost as appointed. Some people have been appointed to worship the created, rather than the Creator.

Pastor Paul: There's nothing they can do about.

Sue: And when I read that, I'm just like the created has been given to all people on earth.

Pastor Paul: Look at the very end, she goes, does this mean that God assigned them to break his law and they're doomed? And she's saying, I'm really confused, and she's

very troubled about this idea of predestination, which I would be too, because you basically are toying with the idea that God is very cruel, that he creates people just to send them to hell, which is not what predestination is even about. Predestination is applied, first of all to believers, but second of all, predestination is how God views us through the eyes of his eternal nature, because with God, there's no passage of time. He dwells in perfect eternity, and he sees things that have happened, are happening and will happen in this simultaneous view of eternity. So when he speaks of us and believers as believers, he speaks of us as predestined and predestination is a real thing, but it doesn't mean that God chose this person to go to hell and this person to go to heaven. That's not a correct view of predestination, and that's what she's struggling with, because it doesn't sound like the nature of God to her, and she's right, because the Bible says God is not willing that any should be lost, but that all would come to repentance. God is not willing that any should be lost. That verse makes zero sense if God predestines people to go to hell. If he creates people to go to hell and then says, but I don't want him to be lost, but I made him that way. That's ridiculous. It is absolutely ridiculous. So that's why she's struggling with these sorts of things and you should. People who believe in that form of predestination have a lot to answer for as it relates to the nature and character of God.

Sue: I'm glad she wrote in with that. Sometimes we have to be careful when we see something that troubles us, I always think sometimes it's good to package it, put it up on the shelf for a while and keep pressing through the Word because, like you always say, let the Bible interpret the Bible, and we'll often figure out our answer to those troubling spots but it's very good that she wrote in and that's your answer.

Pastor Paul: It is good. And the other thing we often say is, when you run up against something that you don't know, fall back on what you do know. And there's a lot we do know about God's heart toward the lost.

Sue: Sure. @TruthTeller1985 says, *“Can you help me understand the difference between “The body of Christ” and the “Church” in Matthew 16:18? Thank you and God Bless.”* And that's a good question.

Pastor Paul: It is a good question.

Sue: I like that one.

Pastor Paul: And Matthew 16:18, I'll put it up on the screen. We just went through this a couple of weeks ago, and on this rock, he said, I will build my church. And this is the Greek word Ecclesia. Ecclesia is really how it's supposed to be pronounced. And it simply means an assembly. That's it. It's an assembly. It's a gathering of people. So from a technical standpoint, there's no difference between the church and the body of Christ, even though people like to make a lot of differences, the term Body of Christ is really just a different way of referring to the assembly of believers, but when we talk about the body of Christ, we're talking about those who have come to Jesus, received Him by faith, and have received the blessing of eternal life. Having said that, they're essentially, technically the same thing. I believe that it's possible for people to be in the assembly and not be a part of the body of Christ. In other words, they're coming and hanging out with the assembly.

Sue: Well, Jesus taught that parable.

Pastor Paul: He did.

Sue: The birds will build nests in the shadow of it.

Pastor Paul: Yeah, he did. So we've got that idea. Are there unsaved people in the church in the Assembly of God's people? Yes, there are unsaved people. Are there any unsaved people in the body of Christ? No. So in that sense, there's a difference, but we only kind of make that as a technicality.

Sue: We got two left. Another YouTube follower said, *“Good day Pastor Paul. thank you so much for your teaching. When you forgive a person, can you do it privately in your heart and before God, or do you need to personally tell that person that you've forgiven them? Greetings and blessings, René.”* I think we get this question a couple times a year.

Pastor Paul: I believe that it is certainly possible to forgive someone privately. But I guess the question that I would ask René or anyone else asking the question is, does the other person need to hear that you've forgiven them? Sometimes they don't, and frankly, sometimes they may be gone.

Sue: They may be gone, or they might not even know that you had an offense, that you built up an offense. You might have. This happens in life. Like, we conjure up an offense from that somebody did to us. Well, it wasn't really real, and we're holding something against them, so then you can create a lot of problems by saying, by the way, I haven't liked you for 15 years, and it really bugged me that you did this and that. So I just want you to know I'm going to forgive you, and the other person's like, what did I do? So there's all there's a big spectrum. Don't you think?

Pastor Paul: I had somebody do that to me, although it's slightly different. It was a long, long time ago, and this person came in. I was an assistant pastor in Montana, and this person came into my office and said, I need you to forgive me and I said, what for? Well, it's because I used to think you were a jerk. I was like, thank you. And it was one of those situations where it probably would have been better to just go before the Lord and go, I just misread, Lord help me not to make judgments or whatever, and then leave the person out of it. Because it didn't help me necessarily to know that this person once thought I was a jerk.

Sue: So it could be a strong case on either side. It takes discernment.

Pastor Paul: It takes discernment. That's why I said, does the other person need to hear?

Sue: That's a good way to put. That's a good question to ask. It's like I've forgiven this person. I'm praying for them. I feel released. Do they need to hear that? Or do they not need to hear that?

Pastor Paul: Some people need to hear that they are forgiven, just so they can see godliness in you. I've seen some, and I'm sure most people have seen some powerful testimonies of family members who are facing like someone who murdered their one of their family, and they get up in court and they say, I just want you to know I forgive you. That's powerful.

Sue: You remember, we would train our little kids to say, I forgive you when somebody would kick them or whatever, and one mom says say, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. And the natural thing that little kids is just they're gonna say, it's okay. And we would stop our kids. We say, no, it's not okay. You need when they say, I'm sorry, you respond with, I forgive you.

Pastor Paul: And just because forgiveness is important.

Sue: It's important, and that's a good training ground on this and the other little kid needs to hear that. Because they can measure like, did I mean it when I said I was sorry? It can add another layer of understanding to them.

Pastor Paul: And that's a good reminder for when someone comes to you and says, I need you to forgive me because I was holding a grudge, or I did this or did that, rather than us responding and saying it's okay, don't worry about it. That's kind of almost refusing their request to be forgiven.

Sue: I think socially, it can feel really awkward when somebody comes and says, I wasn't truthful with you about not being able to come to your event, would you forgive me? It's socially super awkward to say, yes, I forgive you. Or they come to you and say, I'm sorry, I forgive you. Those are important social things biblically for us to learn to do.

Pastor Paul: I had a lady write me a letter just this last week and ask my forgiveness for something that happened 20 years ago and people just need to hear.

Sue: And I think in that case, it was important for her to do the communicating.

Pastor Paul: And it wasn't so important for me because I wasn't holding anything against her, but it was important for her to just simply say, I was wrong and I need to ask for your forgiveness. Like I said, for me, there was no forgiveness really to offer, because I wasn't holding a grudge or anything. Anyway, it's an important thing. Forgiveness is an important thing. And when somebody asks for forgiveness, we should grant it, because it's important. And when we go to someone and say, I forgive you, we need to discern whether or not the other person needs to hear that.

Sue: All right. The last one has a political undertone. Are you ready?

Pastor Paul: I know. I thought really seriously about not putting this one in.

Sue: It's @jazzed2b says, *“Do you think that Trump's plan to remove citizens of Gaza might be a fulfillment of Zephaniah 2:4?”*

Pastor Paul: And the reason I decided to put it in is because of the reference to Zephaniah. Let me put that on the screen. Zephaniah 2:4 (ESV) says, for Gaza shall be deserted, and Ashkelon shall become a desolation; Ashdod's people shall be driven out at noon, and Ekron shall be uprooted. I'm willing to bet that this person

asked this question because someone got up and said, what President Trump is doing is a fulfillment of prophecy.

Sue: Sure, they give a prophecy update.

Pastor Paul: I'm not so sure. Personally, I wouldn't say that. There's things in that prophecy that just don't jive. For one thing, it talks about Ashdod's people will be driven out at noon. That noon was the time in those Middle Eastern cultures where people were resting. They'd have lunch and they'd rest their siesta period of time, then they go to work after the heat of the day.

Sue: So do you think that implies like in an emergency?

Pastor Paul: Well, it's something that came upon them suddenly without them being aware. And that's really not going to apply at all. I don't know. I'm not a prophecy person like that. You know that I don't do prophecy updates. And the reason I don't is because when you tell people, I've got a prophecy update, you got to keep giving prophecy updates, and you got to start digging through the Scriptures to find things that you think might possibly connect. And yes, there's a prophecy here about Gaza being deserted. Well, of course, that's not what Trump's planning to do. He wants to build it up beautiful place. And I've had other people write to me and say, what do you think about that? And I don't really think of anything about it, because I feel those are things that you just pray about. You just say, Lord, if you don't want Trump messing in Gaza, then take his hands off there. I don't know. God doesn't confer with me about things like that, so I feel more comfortable just praying about it and leaving it in the Lord's hands. But as for this being a fulfillment of prophecy, I'm very dubious. And I think prophecy experts need to chill most of the time. I really do. I think they end up coming up with stuff that. But people who do

our prophecy buffs, they love that stuff. They flock to that stuff. And I think you can be led astray.

Sue: It's titillating for people.

Pastor Paul: It is. It's sensational, it's exciting. And it's like, wow, we're seeing biblical prophecy fulfilled in our day. Look at this, Trump said he wants to clean out the Gaza Strip and here it is in Zephaniah. I'm not so sure.

Sue: Most of it falls in the maybe, maybe not, we just don't know.

Pastor Paul: Mostly the maybe not, I think.