

Bible Q&A with Pastor Paul – Episode 36

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Pastor Paul: We're back with another episode of Bible Q&A. These are your questions that you've sent in, and we're going to tackle them today. So let's see what we have for the bunch of questions we're looking at today.

Sue: Alright. Question number one comes from Sherena. She asked, *“There have been recent conversations surrounding hell and eternity whether people will suffer in hell for eternity or will it come to an end? Does the Bible provide insight into hell and whether it is eternal or not? When a new earth and heaven is created, is there still a hell? Thank you so much.”*

Pastor Paul: So, really, there are kind of two questions here. And this is a question, actually, Kirk Cameron and his son were talking on a podcast and raised it. Boy, I tell you, they raised a cloud of dust is what they did. And it brought along a lot of criticism. Honestly, Kirk came on later and said, we were really just kind of asking questions. And there's nothing wrong with asking questions. Just like this question, there's nothing wrong with it. There can be a little bit of confusion when you get on a podcast and ask questions, and maybe make an absolute determination. But one of the passages that I've always relied upon is in the book of Matthew chapter 25:46. Let me read this verse. It says;

Matthew 25:46 (ESV)

And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal

Now, here's what's interesting. This is Jesus talking, and in this verse, he speaks of eternal punishment and eternal life. Well, it's the same Greek word that defines both

the punishment and life. So if somebody is going to say, eternal doesn't really mean eternal, then you're going to have to apply that same understanding to life, the life that we have. So in other words, if the punishment of hell is not ongoing, then life with Jesus is not ongoing. That's my point. So the fact is Bible scholars and teachers have for a couple of thousand years, at least in the Christian tradition, believed that what Jesus said related to the punishment of hell is that it is eternal, meaning timeless and ongoing. So nobody likes to think about that.

Sue: Sure.

Pastor Paul: Nobody likes to ponder the implications of that, myself included, but we're not here to talk about what we feel or what we don't feel or what we want the Bible to say. We're here to talk about what the Bible says, and what the Bible says, according to Matthew 25:46 is that this is an ongoing sort of a deal when we refer to hell. Now, the second part of her question was, is hell going to exist even after the new heaven and the new earth have been created? Again, if the word eternal means eternal, then we would have to say that hell would still be in existence for that reason.

Sue: Great answer. Judy said, *“My question is related to this law of double reference in your message about the churches in Revelation 2 and 3. You said in your teaching that each church represents a particular time period in church history. So then, does our current time period only apply to the Laodicean church? Should we not apply the warnings given to the other churches? I ask this because many of the things that Jesus admonished the churches about are also evident today.”*

Pastor Paul: First of all, for those who may not be familiar with what this question is talking about, the law of double reference is a biblical interpretive law that we have discovered that basically says that a single prophecy could have a reference to

more than one event or person. So the law of double reference comes into play when a prophecy goes beyond a simple single reference. I was making the point in my teaching through the book of Revelation that when Jesus dictated the letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor, that those comments made to each of those churches bore a striking resemblance to the different and successive time periods in church history. What this writer is asking, Judy is asking, does that mean then that we're in one of those time periods now and that that's really the only letter in the book of Revelation that really has any relevance to us? My answer is no. I believe all of the letters have relevance. When we say that the letters in the book of Revelation bear a resemblance to the different periods of church history, we're not saying that, first of all, those letters aren't talking about what was really happening just at the time the letter was given. They are, and they do. We're not talking about the fact that that letter wouldn't have been relevant for any of the other time periods. We're just saying that, by and large....

Sue: There is a parallel.

Pastor Paul: There's a parallel connection. But I think all of the letters are applicable, all of the letters are appropriate, and I don't think we're uniquely in the Laodicean period. I think actually is to come. I think we're starting to see it, but I think we're still seeing the great evangelistic outreach of another letter. So I think that they flop over one another, they overlap, and I think that the letters apply to all time periods as well. Again, it's not a situation where it is a hard and fast connection to a single time period, and then forget it, that letter is no longer relevant.

Sue: That's good. Enna says, *“Can you help me understand the story of David's wife Michal? I just feel bad about her. God forgave David many times. Why didn't God forgive her?”*

Pastor Paul: Michal is an interesting character, isn't she? In the Bible, the wife of David, the daughter of Saul. And a lot of people struggle with this whole idea of Michal and the things that the Lord or the Bible says about her concerning the fact that she didn't have children at some particular point in time. And maybe you would like to speak to that question.

Sue: I really would, because I have heard this come up multiple times in women's Bible study circles, and I agree with Enna. She says, I just feel bad about her. I do too. Michal is the poster woman for a marginalized woman in life, born as a princess, if you will. I mean, she was the daughter of Saul, and she fell in love with David. They were obviously together in some sort of the same space that she knew who he was. She fell in love with him. Saul said, you can have her for a wife if you do this vigorous battle.

Pastor Paul: Test.

Sue: Yeah, test that I put you to and David did. They loved each other. Saul gave Michal to David as his wife. And then we know that Saul was a psychotic. So this trouble came between David and Saul, and David had to flee. Michal helped him flee. And there she is left with her psychotic father. Her husband has had to flee from the situation. That's a tough situation on people.

Pastor Paul: Wasn't she even eventually given to another man?

Sue: Well, listen, then Saul is bugged, so he gives her to another man. Paltiel is his name. So now she's got a husband, which it doesn't say whether she loved him or not. In fact, do you want to know a little thing I discovered? When it says that Michal loved David, it's the only reference in the Old Testament to a woman loving a man.

Pastor Paul: Really?

Sue: Yeah, it's the only time. You're not going to find Sarah loved Abraham or anything.

Pastor Paul: Obviously, she did. But it's the only reference she is saying.

Sue: They did. It is recorded.

Pastor Paul: Recorded reference.

Sue: So, anyway, she's given away to another man. And as things unfold, David and Jonathan are killed on Mount Gilboa. So now she's left alone. She doesn't have her father. And then there's this political thing. And David, and I think it's one of his guys, I can't remember. Amnon, maybe, I don't know. They say, I want her back. So she's taken away from her new husband, sent back to David. And the poor guy who was her husband, he's crying all the way after and nobody cares.

Pastor Paul: It's pathetic.

Sue: It is pathetic. And we have to remember the Bible narrates, the Bible doesn't tell us the moral underpinnings all the time. It just narrates what happened. This is what happened. So now she comes back to David, and she's not the only wife that he has now. He's got multiple wives now. So that's why I say she is a marginalized woman. The course of her life has been tragic and difficult. And then we get to this point where Anna's asking about where David brings the Ark into...

Pastor Paul: Jerusalem?

Sue: Jerusalem, and he's having a great time. He's happy. He's proud of his accomplishments as you could be, but she's carrying all the bitterness for the difficult life that she's had. Bitter people tend to lash out and she lashes out at David. And instead of showing kindness toward her, he lashes out back at her. So what we have in this situation is a marital fight, a big one. It's a big blow up.

Pastor Paul: Now, there's a note in the narrative, and this is what causes people some consternation. It says that after that point, Michal no longer conceived. And I think a lot of people assume that that's a curse from the Lord.

Sue: I've heard that God punished her basically for disrespecting her husband. No. Look, in that chapter, I think it is Samuel 2:6. She's referred to as Michal, the daughter of Saul, three times. The reader is supposed to be holding a tension through this story between the house of Saul, whom God rejected, and the house of David. But David had a wife, and now again has a wife from the house of Saul. So the reader should be asking the question, what's going to happen? Will there be offspring between the house of Saul and the house of David? So three times we are reminded she is the daughter of Saul, not the wife of David, the daughter of Saul. So the reader's to be thinking about those things. So after this blow up, what happens is they never recover. They don't go to bed together again. So there's no children. The text does not say, so God struck her.

Pastor Paul: No, it doesn't.

Sue: It does not. It merely says she had no children to the day of her death. Now, this happens a lot. Why is that narrated to us? I think we're supposed to resolve what's in our mind. Will there be offspring between the house of Saul and the house of David?

Pastor Paul: And the answer is no.

Sue: And the narrator says, no, you can stop wondering about that. It's over. David's reign will not be complicated by offspring from Saul.

Pastor Paul: So there's really no justification for saying that God was punishing Michal...

Sue: Absolutely not.

Pastor Paul: In the sense that he closed her womb and no longer allowed her to conceive, because there's no evidence of that sort of a thing at all.

Sue: No, this isn't any sort of a punishment on her, and at least the text isn't telling us that. It is just simply stating they never had relations again. There was never any children. The house of Saul is done.

Pastor Paul: Good point.

Sue: It is interesting when we go through Scripture not to assume things.

Pastor Paul: Yeah, it is very.

Sue: Alright. The next question is from Sue, *“How did Lucifer decide to rebel against God if angels weren't created with a freewill?”*

Pastor Paul: Obviously this question carries the assumption that angels weren't created with a free will, and I'm not exactly sure why people come to that conclusion, but they do, and quite frequently. I think the question answers itself. If they chose to rebel against God, then they obviously had the freedom to choose, and that is a free will. So it appears, we don't have any biblical record of the creation of angels. There's never a passage in the Bible that says, and God created the angels on this day or something like that. And we're not told all of the implications of that creation. So we have to just go with what we know, and we know that the angels chose. So we assume at that point, and I think assume correctly, that angels do in fact have a free will.

Sue: Alright. Melanie says, *“What would be the most helpful Bible passages to explain the sinfulness of sex outside of marriage and after someone living in sin*

has been made aware of what the Bible says, how long of a grace period should they be given before further action is taken?”

Pastor Paul: There's really predominantly a single Greek word that is used in the Bible to describe sexual immorality of all different kinds. It's a very general word, and it's the Greek word porneia. And one of the definitions, or one of the ways that word is translated contextually, is fornication. And fornication is sex outside of marriage. So one of the best ways to communicate to someone about the sinfulness of sex outside of marriage is frankly to define the biblical word porneia. And in the context of sex outside of marriage, it's called fornication, and it is constantly referred to as a sin. Now, her second question here is how long of a grace period should be given before you kind of expect them to fall in line? I don't think you give a grace period, even though people like to throw up a lot of excuses about why obeying God is going to be really hard. Obeying God can be challenging to come up with solutions, because we've settled into this life of convenience, and it's more convenient for my girlfriend and I to live in the same apartment and have sex before marriage. And if then this pastor comes along and says, hey, that's a sin, and you guys need to repent. Well, repent means to change. It's a change of mind that follows with a change of action. How long before we need to be out of the same apartment? How about today? Now, as the church, I think it's a good idea for us to give people options. Hey, listen, we've got a single guy in our fellowship, and you can stay with him while you're looking for another place. Or there's a single gal in our fellowship, and she has got an extra room. We should have options for people. I've had people say, we're living together because we can't afford to get married. And I'll says, what is it you can't afford? And I've actually had some people say, we can't even afford the marriage license. I'll offer to buy it for them. I'll say, I tell you what, tomorrow morning, we'll go down and we'll get you a marriage license, and I'll pay for it. And

will you guys get married then? We can do the wedding right in my living room, and you know that we've done that...

Sue: We have.

Pastor Paul: A few times. So I think you expect people to walk in obedience right away if they're serious about walking in obedience.

Sue: Sure.

Pastor Paul: If they're going to be throwing up excuses, kind of like a Balaam situation from the book of Numbers, then you've got a problem. You've got a problem. So I expect people to respond, and to respond right away.

Sue: Good. Ankith says, *“Which verses in the New Testament talk about financial blessings for the believers, if any? Do Galatians 6:7 and Luke 6:38 speak of financial blessings? Do believers receive financial blessings for obedience?”*

Pastor Paul: This is a good question, and part of this comes from the health and wealth kind of prosperity doctrine. Galatians 6:7 and Luke 6:38 both speak of the law of sowing and reaping. Let me read these very quickly. Galatians 6:7 says,

Galatians 6:7 (ESV)

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

And then Luke 6-38 says,

Luke 6:38 (ESV)

...give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

Again, both of these passages, in a slightly different way, are speaking of the law of sowing and reaping. And that is a law that God has put into place that is just like the law of gravity. When you throw something up, it's going to come back down. God also said what you sow or what you plant in this life, you will also reap in this life. Now, I know that prosperity preachers love to use these passages as a promise of wealth, but there's nothing in these passages to suggest that these blessings are necessarily going to be a specific kind of wealth or a specific kind of blessing. Yes, there is a blessing. Yes, the law of sowing and reaping is real. Yes, this is a fact. God did not say if you sow \$10 into the ground, or when I say that metaphorically, you're giving it away to someone perhaps who needs it, that you're going to reap \$100 or \$1,000 back in a certain given time. There's no guarantee of that. God will bless if the gift is given with a sincere heart. I have my serious doubts about gifts that necessarily are given with a wrong heart.

Sue: Sure.

Pastor Paul: With the heart only, it's okay, God, now you owe me sort of thing. I think that's going to be a problem in your relationship with the Lord. I remember, Sue, a time when you and I were still fairly new-ish married, probably within our first 10 years. And we were really low on money, and I had been influenced at that time by a lot of prosperity preaching and you and I both know that. I decided that I was going to sow a gift and I don't remember how much we gave. But I remember we gave a specific amount and kind of sat back to say, Lord, how are you going to do this? And I remember it didn't come the way I had assumed that it would. God did not meet my expectations. There came years down the road, a time of even greater leanness, when the Lord just supernaturally took care of us and we had debts like other people. We paid rent, and we had car payments and that sort of thing. And we weren't making much money at all. We were living up in Washington State at

the time. Don't know how we could afford to live up there. But for some reason, God saw us through. And I remember getting to the end of that particularly lean time. And we didn't necessarily look back on it and say, wow, we had this dump truck of blessings that just got poured out on us. But I remember you and I talking about how God just saw us through. He just took care of us. And it was hard to even put our finger on how He did it, but He did it. That's the kind of blessing sometimes. God does not promise to meet our greed's. He does promise to meet our needs. And that's what happened in our lives. And I believe part of that was even a result of perhaps some of what we sowed earlier, but it certainly didn't come in the way that I expected at times.

Sue: Alright. Well, the next question, and I would just butcher this person's name. So I'm just going to say one of our viewers asked, *“Women are supposed to be preaching only to the women and children as to my understanding. What do you think about speakers like Elizabeth Elliott who preached to a mixed crowd?”*

Pastor Paul: First of all, I never heard Elizabeth Elliott speak in person. I've heard little snippets and read...

Sue: I did.

Pastor Paul: Yes, you did. And you took our daughter several years ago. We have to remember the biblical prohibition that Paul gives is that women are not to teach and have authority over a man. So it is a matter of teaching, not speaking. There's nothing in the Bible that prohibits a woman from getting up and speaking.

Sue: Sharing her testimony. I think of Corrie Ten Boom, who went all over the world sharing her testimony, giving encouragement.

Pastor Paul: And that's not to say that Corrie Ten Boom or Elizabeth Elliott didn't ever reference scripture. They certainly did. They wanted to reference the Word of

God as it relates to things that they were talking about. I don't think those ladies necessarily got up and said, open your Bible to 1 Timothy chapter 1, and we're going to go through this chapter, and we're going to see what it says. I think they used the Word of God to speak and to share what God had done in their lives, what God had taught them over the years, and how the Lord had shown Himself faithful. There's no prohibition against women doing that. Again, it is about instruction. It is about a woman sitting a man down and saying, now sit down and be quiet, because I'm going to teach you what the Word of God says. That is not the same thing as a woman getting up and speaking.

Sue: Alright. Our last question is from Fiona, and she is from Austria, *“I've heard you say that just because for someone it is okay to listen to secular music, it might be sinful for others. Does this mean that subjective truth exists in Christianity and that things can be a sin for one person but not for another?”*

Pastor Paul: Well, first of all, let me give the short answer to this question. We're not saying that there's such a thing as subjective truth. Truth is truth, and truth is not subjective. It is objective, and if something is true, then it is always true. Here's the deal. This comes up a lot, this whole thing about secular music.

Sue: I think we just talked about it just a few Q&As ago.

Pastor Paul: We did.

Sue: I think where this question came from.

Pastor Paul: Sure. When we talk about listening to secular music, we're not talking about something that is inherently evil. We're talking about something that is potentially harmful, and there's a great difference between inherently evil and potentially harmful. Take something like eating, eating food, putting food in my mouth. There's nothing inherently evil about putting food in my mouth. There is

something potentially harmful about putting too much food in my mouth. That becomes gluttony, it becomes unhealthy, and it can become a sin, because really, gluttony is the sin. So what is it about listening to secular music that is potentially harmful? Well, some people, it could be different for different people. For some people, it could bring them back in their memory to their days before Christ, their sinful years, and some of the things they longed for, some of the things they lusted after, and it could draw them back into that lifestyle. Some people listen to secular music and the lyrics lead them astray, because they're not listening just to simple love songs. They're listening to maybe violent lyrics or blasphemous lyrics. That could definitely cause some issues. But that doesn't mean that all secular music is inherently evil or sinful. It means that listening to secular music can be potentially harmful. But there are people who make good choices along those lines, and they might listen to a song that's just a simple love song. And that's all they listen to along the secular realm, and it doesn't influence them badly. It doesn't draw them away from the Lord. In fact, it might even draw them closer to their spouse. So, for that person, the influence really isn't harmful at all. But for someone else, it may be. That's not subjective truth. That is simply applying the wisdom of knowing what is harmful to me and what isn't, and realizing that what is harmful potentially to me might not be harmful to someone else.

Sue: Sure.

Pastor Paul: So we need to understand the difference. We need to be able to separate. But Christians have historically believed that if something is potentially harmful to me, it is inherently sinful for everyone.

Sue: Well, it just makes life easier when you can just...

Pastor Paul: Categorize things.

Sue: Yeah, categorize it.

Pastor Paul: Put it into a simple little circle and say, there it is, and that's a sin. That's why people have said, going to movies is a sin, listening to secular music is a sin, and on and on and on. None of those things are inherently evil, but they can be potentially harmful. It really comes down to what's the Holy Spirit saying to you. And that's what I ask people when they write to me. What about this? Pastor Paul, what do you think about a believer listening to secular music? I say, what's the Holy Spirit saying to you? The fact that you're writing me about it might mean that the Holy Spirit's speaking to you about this issue. So, what is He saying? You need to pay attention and pray about it, and then do what He tells you to do or not to do.

Sue: I think those two phrases that you just said really help a lot. Sam, again?

Pastor Paul: The difference between understanding something as being inherently sinful and potentially harmful.

Sue: I'll see if I can remember that for next time. That's it. That's our last question.

Pastor Paul: So those are our questions for this episode. I hope this has been helpful for you in some way, and we'll tackle some more of your Bible questions next time. So until then, God bless you. We'll see you. Bye-bye.