

# Bible Q&A with Pastor Paul – December 2023

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**Pastor Paul:** Hi everybody, it's December, and that means it's time for our December Bible Q&A. I'm Pastor Paul, I'm here with my wife, and we are ready to tackle some of the questions that you've been sending in to us over the course of this last month or so since our last Q&A.

**Sue:** And we're ready to go. I feel like my job is so easy. I just merely read questions to you, and you do the answering.

**Pastor Paul:** But you do some great comments too.

**Sue:** Well, the first question we have is from Enala who asked, *“Is it possible for our prayers to be delayed?”*

**Pastor Paul:** That's a good question. We know from the book of Daniel, that it's possible for the answer to prayers to be delayed, although I have to say in Daniel's case that was kind of a unique situation because he was receiving a visitor and the angel of the Lord who is coming to Daniel to give him a face-to-face answer. What we do know from the Scripture is that it's possible for our prayers to be hindered. And I would assume that that means that our prayers would not receive a ready answer. Peter is the one who actually talks about this. It's in 1 Peter chapter three. And he talks specifically to husbands saying that you're to live with your wives in an understanding manner, showing honor to her and so forth. But he ends that by saying, so that your prayers may not be hindered. So that's really more of what we hear about rather than being delayed.

**Sue:** Sure. Good way to put it. AJ asked, *“I’m sure you’ve covered the topic of purgatory before, but it seems the past leaders of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic denominations have decided that there is a holding place for unsanctified souls. They cite a number of Scripture passages for this. Doesn’t such a view marginalize the sacred mission of Jesus and His Holy Blood?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Yes, it certainly does marginalize the redemptive work of Jesus. And I liked the way AJ asked this question, because he actually said, they’ve decided that there’s a holding place. And that’s the fact of the matter that *they* decided. There are no passages in the Bible that validate the doctrine of purgatory. It is an entirely unbiblical idea. But more than that, it contradicts the statement that Jesus made on the cross when He cried out in victory saying, it is finished. Purgatory teaches that it’s not finished. There’s more that needs to be done in terms of sanctification, purification, whatever you want to call it. And so this whole idea of purgatory is not only manmade, but it flies in the face of biblical revelation. And it should not be embraced in any way shape or form.

**Sue:** I like when someone asks a question, and they basically answer it and then they say, right?

**Pastor Paul:** Yeah, what do you think?

**Sue:** So you’re basically saying, yes, right?

**Pastor Paul:** That’s true. That’s right.

**Sue:** *“Would you say that female pastors who have a ministry with both males and females haven’t really been truly called to be Pastors/Teachers, or prophets and apostles?”*

**Pastor Paul:** I wouldn't say that at all. If there's a female, a woman pastor, out there who is teaching both men and women, I believe that that particular aspect of their ministry violates the Word of God in the fact that they're teaching men. However, I don't think that means they haven't been called. They could very well be called into the ministry and even into the teaching ministry. It just means they've stepped outside of who they're supposed to be teaching, because that's what Paul says, I do not allow a woman to teach, which is to take authority over a man. And so, no, I wouldn't make a judgment call about their calling at all just about the procedure or the way they have decided to walk out that calling.

**Sue:** Sure. Here's a question on Genesis. *“I need clarification, as this has been a point of confusion for me, how can there be no shrubs or plants on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of creation when in chapter one vegetation was made on day 3?”*

**Pastor Paul:** This is a very common mistake that people make when reading the book of Genesis because this person when they're referring to the sixth day of creation in chapter two, that's where it actually says, before any shrub or vegetation had appeared on the earth. And what the writer of Genesis is doing after chapter one is they're going back and they are revisiting creation to focus on the Creation of the man and then the woman, because that is the climax of God's creation. And so what they've done is they've missed this pointing backward. So the writer of Genesis is going back, citing the creation of man, as the caretaker of the earth. And so that's the part that they're missing there. So just as they said, shrubs and plants occurred on the third day of creation, but they are referenced as not having appeared yet, in chapter two, because it's all leading up to the man who is the caretaker of all the things on the earth.

**Sue:** Well, speaking of that, the next question is specifically about the man and the woman, *“God breathed life into Adam – why not into Eve?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Well, just because the text doesn't mention that God breathed life into Eve, it doesn't mean that it didn't happen. If you look through the Bible, and look up the phrase, breath of life, it occurs many, many times throughout the Scripture, and it is always used in such a way as to express that which gives life to man. And when the breath is taken away, life ceases to exist in the body. But the thing you got to understand about the man and the woman, Adam and Eve, is that the creation of those two individuals is very unique, in the sense that they weren't developed in a womb, they were created as adults. And so, God created them as living beings. And we have every reason to believe that even though the text doesn't mention it that God breathed into Eve as well, and made her a living being because it is God who breathes in all people and creates that living ability.

**Sue:** Sure. Well, now we have a question about Noah. ***“Did Noah preach to the people? Many people believe that Noah preached to the people before the rain and flood? Can you give me your view on this topic?”***

**Pastor Paul:** Well, people use that because there are several Bible translations that use the word or speak of Noah as a preacher. And it's taken out of 2 Peter chapter two, you can read this in the NIV, the New American Standard Bible, the New King James, and it basically says, if the Lord did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness. Now, the ESV says, a herald of righteousness, I believe it uses the word herald. We have no record of Noah actually preaching. But it is assumed that he is referred to as a preacher of righteousness because of the fact that he was obeying God and building the ark, which could scarcely be hidden just by virtue of its sheer size. And so, it is assumed that by walking in obedience to God and preparing for what the Word of God told him was going to take place, that he was

preaching much in the same way that we preach in our daily lives without saying a word, but just by the way, we act out of obedience to God.

**Sue:** Right. That's good. Terrence says, *"Hello Pastor. I listened to your November Q&A and was wondering why we should not use the verse, "no weapon formed against me shall prevail" in every situation? Following the verse of "no weapon..." The Lord says that this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord."*

**Pastor Paul:** And what Terrence is doing as he's quoting Isaiah chapter 54, where it specifically says, no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. And then it goes on to say, this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their vindication from me declares the Lord. In fact, that's all one verse. The reason that I said you can't use it in every situation, is because sometimes God allows people to suffer, according to His will. That is a specific quote from the Bible. If you look up 1 Peter, chapter 4, verse 19, it says, therefore, let those who suffer according to God's will, entrust themselves or entrust their souls to the to a faithful Creator while doing good. And the reason I bring up that passage is because God allowed, and has allowed over the course of history, many people to suffer for their faith. The apostle Paul was, according to church history, beheaded. So was that passage true for Paul, that no weapon forged against him should prevail? Peter, we believe, according to church history, was crucified. So does that mean that the weapon of the hammer and the nails prevailed against Peter? See the point of what God was saying, and you really need to go back to Isaiah. And I would encourage everybody look at the context. Look at the context in which God spoke that to the people of Israel, and it is spoken to the people of God. And I believe with all of my heart, that as long as God wants you here, and before your time is up, no weapon forged against you will prevail, but there's going to come a day when he's gonna call you home. And it might very well

be that on that day, a weapon that is forged against you will prevail, at least from the standpoint of taking your human physical life.

**Sue:** And that's what I was thinking when I was listening to you is, it's all a matter of perspective. For example, some of our modern-day martyrs like Bonhoeffer, some of the ancient martyrs, it sure appeared as though a weapon had prevailed. And yet, especially when it comes to martyrs, we realize later on some of the very unique purposes that were going on during that time.

**Pastor Paul:** To believe that there is never any possibility that anything is ever going to prevail against me ever, is what we call triumphalism. And it's the idea that my life and the power of God in me is going to triumph over all things. Well, ultimately, it will. Because even if your life is taken from you, you go to be with the Lord. It's win-win for you. But that doesn't mean that anything that anybody ever tries to use against you isn't going to prevail. Because if it's your day to go home and be with the Lord, then that's going to be the exception. So you can't say that every time. If you do, you're going to look at people like Bonhoeffer, you're going to look at people like the Apostle Paul, and you're going to say, where was their faith, or where was God? Sure, God made a promise. He obviously didn't keep his promise with the Apostle Paul or Dietrich Bonhoeffer, or many of the other people who were martyred for their faith.

**Sue:** All right. A YouTube user asks, *“Does one become a Christian at the point of conversion (embracing) Jesus or from the point of baptism?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Well, obviously, this is an issue of contention for many in the body of Christ, because many are taught that you don't become a born again Christian until you're baptized in water. But that's not in keeping with the Bible. The Bible is, I believe, very clear that it is by grace through faith that we are saved. This not of

ourselves, it is the gift of God lest anyone should boast. Paul writes that in Ephesians 2:89. And water baptism is something we do after we're saved. So it's at the point of faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. As Paul says, that we confess with our mouth and believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead, and we will be saved.

**Sue:** Excellent. Renee asked you, *“Hoping you can give me insight about Jude 9... why would the Archangel Michael and the devil be disputing about the body of Moses?”*

**Pastor Paul:** She’s referring to a verse in the letter of Judas, verse 9. And it says, specifically, when the Archangel Michael contending with the devil was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment but said, the Lord rebuke you. Renee is asking for any insight on this. I wish I could give it but the Bible doesn't give it. The Bible doesn't reveal why they were disputing over the body of Moses. And so obviously, I cannot go where the Bible doesn't go. The point of the statement in the book of Jude is not to speak abusively against spiritual principalities and powers. That's the point of the passage, but I understand why it raises questions in people's minds, because it's just one of those things the Bible doesn't explain.

**Sue:** Well, Marilyn has two questions. I'll give you the first one. *“Do people always speak in tongues when the Holy Spirit comes upon them?”*

**Pastor Paul:** If you read the end of the chapter 12 in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he lists a series of rhetorical questions. In Chapter 12, verse 30, he says, do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? And all of those questions are rhetorical, and they are meant to be responded with a negative

response, no, not all people do that. And so the answer to the question is no, not all speak in tongues.

**Sue:** So her second question is, *“Was the Apostle Paul's gift of tongues known languages since he was a missionary and preached all over the known world where he wouldn't know their language or dialect?”*

**Pastor Paul:** This is an interesting question. But the known world at the time was conquered by Rome, and that's everywhere, pretty much Paul went, and so there would have been common languages among the people. He didn't have to rely on the gift of tongues to speak to people in a language that only they would know. But that is a misunderstanding of the gift of tongues because the gift of tongues is never used to evangelize. People think it is because they see the first instance of it in Acts chapter 2 where the assembled believers received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They spoke in tongues, and the result was 3,000 people got saved, and so they say, well look at there. But see the people weren't preaching the gospel when they spoke the gift of tongues. In the book of Acts, chapter 2, verse 11, it specifically tells us that they said, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God. In other words, they were praising God, that's what they were doing in with the gift of tongues. The people got saved because Peter preached the gospel and told them about what Jesus had done on the cross for their sins. That's why they were cut to the heart and asked, what should we do, and they got saved. So again, the gift of tongues is never used for evangelism, as Marilyn is suggesting here. The gift of tongues is used to praise, to praise and pray. It is used in our personal prayer time. Paul talks about that in 1 Corinthians 14. He also talks about singing in his prayer language. And we know that in the early church, there were times when people spoke in tongues in the services. It still goes on today in certain churches, Pentecostal, Charismatic churches. But Paul discourages the use of tongues in the church. He



says, I would much rather speak 10,000 words in a known language than one word in a tongue. And so tongues is not meant for the kinds of things that Marilyn is referencing here.

**Sue:** Sure, that makes sense. John has two questions as well. He says, *“In First Corinthians 15:29, Paul comments on resurrection of the dead by baptism on behalf of the dead. I presume the dead didn't know or believe. I didn't see any similar statements in the Bible. Is this possible to resurrect the dead in the Lord?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Well, 1 Corinthians 15, he's not really referring of as resurrection of the dead by baptism when he talks about. He's talking about a particular something. The whole point of Paul's comments in chapter 15 is about the resurrection. And he's refuting those who say there is no resurrection. And he's basically saying to the Corinthians, if that's the case, then why are some people baptized for the dead? He's not saying we should baptize people for the dead. He's just saying, he's using it as an argument. So John is confused here. There is no reference, even in 1 Corinthians 15 there's no reference, to resurrection of the dead by baptism. Paul was talking about a completely different thing, which is not part of Christianity.

**Sue:** And then he also asked, *“Why were those born in the desert in Joshua 5:5 after escaping Egypt, not circumcised, even though that was the law?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Because the people got lacks, people got complacent. People do that. They sin.

**Sue:** You could ask, do you do everything?

**Pastor Paul:** I mean, it's because they got lazy.

**Sue:** All right. Judy has a question. She said, *“Thank you for the wonderful job you're doing on the YouTube platform. I've learned a lot from both of your*

*teachings. My question is, is it appropriate to baptize a person who is living in sin? I'm asking because some think that we need to give such a person time to see if they're really changed. What is your view on this?"*

**Pastor Paul:** Yeah. This question assumes a lot of things. When somebody comes to faith in Jesus Christ, you got to know there's a lot of stuff in their life that God is going to be working on in them down the road. We don't come to Jesus and suddenly jettison every potential of sin in our lives. I don't believe that it's proper to say, well, you need to show proof of your sanctification. And when you're no longer doing this, you're no longer smoking or . . . , and we give them a list of things, and then we'll baptize you. I don't see that as biblical. In the Bible, they didn't wait for somebody to prove their sanctification. People came to faith in Jesus, they confess Christ as Lord and Savior, and they said, hey, let's dunk, let's get baptized, and they did. So I think we get really nitpicky when we start laying out demands that the Bible doesn't give us in people's lives. Calvary Chapel is based on, I say Calvary Chapel, the origins of Calvary Chapel in Southern California, were largely based on the Jesus movement where people were coming to the Lord by the 1,000s and they were baptizing them in the ocean, and they didn't sit and question them and say, so are you done with everything you've ever done that was wrong? Because if you're not, I'm not going to baptize you. The people confessed Christ, and they baptized them.

**Sue:** And some of them walked out of the water and still continued to walk in some level of their former life. But don't you think there's kind of a spectrum? You remember when I went to India about 10 years ago, and I saw something, a new understanding of something, that in some of these villages where people were accepting Christ out of paganism. And the leaders in the churches would kind of pause and wait a little bit, and it was more a kind of like, are you sure that you want

to leave what you have known, leave your other Gods? And so I don't think there's a cut and dry either.

**Pastor Paul:** No, I don't think there is either. And in those situations, you're dealing with countries where coming to Christ could literally cause you to lose your life, or your family is going to turn on you, or disown you in some way, or your business practices may be threatened your livelihood by just coming to Christ. And I think in some cases, the people, the leaders of the church, have sought to wait to see if that person is really serious about following Jesus, and that's their decision. There's nothing biblical necessarily about that, but I wouldn't fault them for it necessarily.

**Sue:** And you're somewhere in the middle where I know you have a heart to make sure that people understand what they are doing before they're baptized. You want them to understand what they're *not* doing.

**Pastor Paul:** Here at Calvary Chapel Ontario when somebody confesses Christ as their Lord and they want to be baptized, we say, great, but I make them go through a mandatory class. And that class is really a Bible study where we talk about what baptism is and what baptism isn't, so that they're going into water baptism with a full understanding of this identification process and what it means because I don't want them going into baptism thinking this is what saves me.

**Sue:** And that's because we live in a culture with so many misunderstandings.

**Pastor Paul:** There's so much confusion over water baptism, based on the number of questions we get about it. So I want to make sure we clear that confusion before somebody gets baptized. But that's different from waiting to make sure they stop sinning sufficient.

**Sue:** Correct. Travis said, *“Pastor Paul believes we are in the last days of the Last Days. Doesn't it say in the Bible that the temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem before*

*the Lord returns? If so, wouldn't that be "the sign" to look for regarding his return? In other words, Jesus won't be returning until a temple is built."*

**Pastor Paul:** Well, part of this is true. The Bible does not say that the temple will be rebuilt before the Lord returns. It simply tells us that sacrifices are going on, and that the antichrist establishes his own image in the temple. So it doesn't specifically say, we assume and we know that it's going to be rebuilt. But what Travis is doing is he's confusing the coming of the Lord for the church, and the second coming of Jesus to the earth. And this is a very common confusion. When I say that we are in the last days, and there's nothing more that needs to happen before Jesus returns, I'm talking about returns for his bride because that's called the rapture where Jesus catches the way the church. But Paul tells us very clearly, in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, that we meet the Lord in the air, we rise to meet him in the air. When Jesus returns to the earth that is called the Second Coming. And Travis is mistaking those two and, yes, the temple will be built, I believe, during the Great Tribulation. And after it is built, and those things that are prophesied to take place there do, then Jesus will return to the earth.

**Sue:** All right. Let's see where my place is. James says that, *"You spoke once regarding rewards in Heaven? Are you referring to being rewarded for achievements and our accomplishments done for the glory of God during your life on Earth? And do these rewards vary?"*

**Pastor Paul:** When we talk about rewards in heaven, we're talking about being rewarded for how we have used the resources, gifts and talents that God has given us while on the earth. And so that's what we're referring to. Is there going to be a variance of rewards? Yes, there are. Jesus makes that very clear in several parables, that some are given more rewards based on their work that they've done, and there's even a reference to a person being saved but receiving no reward.

**Sue:** Right. From Christopher, *“Hey Pastor Paul, my wife and I’ve been listening to your teaching for a couple years now have learned so much. I have a question; is our body made of soul, body and spirit? Do we come with a spirit automatically at birth or does it come when we’re at an age to accept a spirit?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Yes, we are made up of flesh, and soul and spirit. People confuse soul and spirit many times. The Bible doesn't really define the spirit other than that life breath of God that is given to us to make us animated living beings. The soul, however, is the emotions, the will and the intellect. And of course, the flesh are these physical bodies. So, yes, we are. And the Bible assumes that when someone is born into this world, that they are flesh, soul and spirit. Now there's something about the spirit that needs to be reborn. I was actually talking to someone recently through the email, who made the reference to and asked, are our spirits dead before we come to Christ? Well, the Bible doesn't actually say that. I think where people get that is where Paul says, we are dead in our sins and trespasses. And they assume that means that the spirit is dead. Well, the Bible doesn't actually say the spirit is dead before we come to Christ. It just all we know is that it needs to be reborn. That's all we really know. And that's when Jesus breathes on us at the point of salvation, we are reborn spiritually. So I believe that we are body, soul and spirit from the point of the beginning of life, and the spirit is reborn when we come to Christ and Savior.

**Sue:** This person says, *“Regarding giving, how do you answer 1 Corinthians 16: 1-2 where Paul tells us to give according to our income?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Well, first of all, the phrase according to our income is unique to the NIV. And it can be used by some people when they read that in 1 Corinthians 16, a man has to give according to his income. That can be used by some people as a strict formula that our giving needs to be a percentage according to our income. So if your income is here, then you need to give according to that. And where you start is 10%

and then you go from there. The fact of the matter is, the Bible does not command believers in the New Testament to tithe 10%. He commands giving, but 10%, or tithe, which is what that means, is an Old Testament principle. What Paul says very clearly in 2 Corinthians, chapter 9, he says, each one must give as he has decided in his heart. Not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver. There's even a story where Jesus is sitting near this place where people drop off their offerings. And this woman comes along and gives this pittance. I mean, it's like barely nothing. And yet Jesus said she gave more than all the rest. Well, it was because she gave 10%? No, she gave everything. So you got to be careful not to become legalistic. And I really encourage people, I get a lot of notes from people who say, Pastor Paul, I attended church where the church demands, and they're constantly telling us we have to give 10% of our income or higher, but 10% is the absolute minimum. And I tell him, hey, be careful. I mean, I may not come out and say, you need to find a new church, although I've said that before to some people. But there's a danger there, and the danger is, your pastor is misquoting the Bible, misinterpreting, and passing along what is not biblical. If a pastor says from the pulpit, listen, if you're here today and you're part of the family, God bless you. If you have something to give, great. If you don't, that's fine too. You're still part of the family. You are to give according to what God has put in your heart to give. That's Biblical. This whole thing about according to your income, it has to be a particular percentage, that is not biblical. What Paul is saying in 1 Corinthians 16 is, you're not to give outside of your income, because there were people back in his day that are doing just what the faith preachers do today. They're telling people to make a pledge, and even if the money isn't there, you write out that check, or make that transfer by faith. Well, that's unbiblical. You're to give according to your income, not according to what you don't have.

**Sue:** And wouldn't you say, according to your station of life, I mean, there's a spectrum from the 10-year-old with an allowance, to the guy who runs a multimillion dollar company. So according to your station, and how the Lord has blessed you and we've got a full spectrum there. So be mindful of that.

**Pastor Paul:** And be mindful of the fact that there are people trying to take advantage of you. And so if someone asks you to give outside of your income, then that's not proper.

**Sue:** Right. Andrew says, *“Hi Pastor Paul, I listen to your teaching in 1 Timothy, Chapter 2 about a woman not teaching a man. My study Bible mentioned that there was a cult in Ephesus that was promoting the belief that women were superior to men. Also, it seems like many women in Ephesus were being swayed by this cult. Is it possible that Paul's letter to Timothy was meant for the church and Ephesus, and not necessarily for all churches?”*

**Pastor Paul:** In other words, he's asking, it's okay for women to teach men?

**Sue:** It was just a problem in that moment.

**Pastor Paul:** And that was unique just for Ephesus. The problem with that conclusion is that when you read 1 Timothy, you'll notice that Paul cites nothing about local concerns. But what he does do is he cites the creation order of man and woman as the reason, and not those local cult problems. So, no, I would disagree with that conclusion.

**Sue:** Sharon says, *“The Bible says that Jesus is the first born from the dead. What does that mean?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Well, it means that he's the first to rise from the dead, never to die again. Because you know that he wasn't the first person to be raised. There were

people raised in the Old Testament. So, the first born from the dead means first born never to die. And of course, it's referring to that physical human element, which God took on in the person of Jesus Christ. He was allowed to die, or he gave up his life, bearing our sin on the cross, but he rose again on the third day, never to die again. So, he is the firstborn of those who will come after him. And the word firstborn is not talking about birth order. It's talking about that he is the first to and we follow in his steps, in essence.

**Sue:** Steve says *“Pastor Paul and Sue, thank you both for your service in teaching and sharing what the Lord is open to you! I have a question about Ephesians 2:2. The Apostle Paul describes Satan as being ‘the prince of the power of the air...’ Just curious if you have insight as to what the Apostle meant.”*

**Pastor Paul:** The Greek literally means the commander of the power of the air. And it is just assumed that this is speaking of the heavenly realm, where Satan has his abode. We struggle to understand heavenly realms, but there appears to be an abode for those principalities and powers, those world rulers of darkness, that Paul talks about, and all of the spiritual forces where these wars are being waged. We referred earlier to the book of Daniel, where a battle took place in the spiritual realm to keep the answer from coming to Daniel. This is where those things would take place. So, it's just referring to a heavenly realm where Satan has his abode.

**Sue:** Don't you think that maybe that was also a way in that time of talking about the unseen, in that we don't see the air that we breathe, it's necessary for us, we don't see it. And in the same way, those spiritual powers are unseen to us. Only their actions can be maybe perceived by us, but we don't. It's just that he's over all of those unseen spiritual powers. You're looking at me like, yeah, maybe.



**Pastor Paul:** Well, I mean, the apostle Paul talks about being taken up to the third heaven. And there are many who believe that the first heaven is basically earth. And the second heaven is this spiritual place called the air, the abode of Satan. And the third heaven is the throne of God, or the realm of heaven, but a lot of it we're kind of guessing.

**Sue:** Sure. All right. Vada said, *“When Jesus was crucified and died, did he spend 3 days in hell to overpower Satan?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Nope. The Bible tells us very clearly in the book of Colossians that he trampled over the powers of the devil by His death on the cross. So, all of the warfare that Jesus accomplished as it relates to securing our salvation took place on the cross. And when Jesus was done, he said, it is finished. So, there was nothing more. There was no more battling to do. Satan didn't battle with Jesus. Jesus did not battle with Satan in those three days. No, it was all done on the cross.

**Sue:** All right. Henry wants to know, *“Where was the Holy Spirit during the Dark Ages, like from 500 A.D. to 1500 A.D. when all the bad things were happening in the church?”*

**Pastor Paul:** I appreciate this question, but you can ask the same thing in your own personal life. If something bad were to happen to you, or a member of your family, you could say, where was the Holy Spirit? Where was God? We can't look at human history, or even our own history and say, where was God? Because God has always been right where he has ever been, and that is on the throne. And somebody would probably follow that up and say, well, then why was that period of time so dark? Well, it was dark because man has a darkened heart, and God allows man to live within the darkness of his own creation from time to time. And the Dark Ages, which Henry is correct in his from right around A.D. 500 to 1500, we do refer to those

times as the Dark Ages, that those middle aged period, and it was very dark. It was extremely dark. And that's because the heart of man is dark and yet God was...here's the other thing, during the Dark Ages, there was a remnant, there's always been a remnant. God has always had a remnant. And what that means is, even during the Dark Ages there were people who loved Jesus with all their hearts, who followed the Word of God as best they knew, and walked according to the spirit during that time. So, the dark ages may have prevailed for the majority, but there has always and always will be a remnant that is faithful to God.

**Sue:** Peggy said, *“Did the 12 apostles know who Jesus was when they were first asked to follow him? How did they have so much faith and trust in Jesus to so quickly leave everything behind (their jobs, family comforts) and follow him? Did God supernaturally give them this faith?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Well, Peggy, you have to understand the context and the timeframe. People were expecting the Messiah. There was an expectation among the people of Israel that the Messiah would come soon. There was a buzz. There was an excitement. And when Jesus came on the scene, you got to know, I mean, right before Jesus appeared on the scene, we have John the Baptist who stirred up the entire nation of Israel with his preaching saying, get ready, he's coming, and I'm not even worthy to stoop down and untie his sandals. And the people were just a buzz with excitement. And so, Jesus came on the scene, he started performing miracles, everybody's talking about this carpenter son from Nazareth, there were huge expectations at that time. And so, when Jesus came along and started saying to people follow me, they were primed and cocked to just go with it. And so that's what we're missing sometimes when we read the Gospel accounts. It sounds like there's no expectation. We're just cruising along in life, fishing out here with dad, and all sudden, this preacher comes along and says, hey, drop everything and follow me.

Okay, and they dropped their nets. And that sounds, and I can see, while somebody's reading it like Peggy would look at that and just go, that's weird. But if you know the background, if you know what had been going on for years in Israel and the expectation, then you would know that they were ready to go.

**Sue:** Michelle, *“Hi Pastor Paul, as Christians are we allowed to seek coaches or therapists who are also believers? I've heard in church to seek out our elders, but what is the best way to get counseling?”*

**Pastor Paul:** The Bible says that there is safety in a multitude of counselors. Now, of course, that assumes they're good counselors, and it's not talking about therapists there. It's talking about people who are going to give you wise godly biblical counsel. There's nothing wrong with getting counsel. We all need to get counsel from time to time. This person says, I've heard in church to seek out our elders, well, I don't know whether she's referring to elders in the church or just those who are older than us because the word can mean both. I think going to older, mature believers when you need counsel is a great idea. I'm talking about people who have a track record of making good decisions.

**Sue:** And a gift of being gifted at listening to people. And I think that's really critical. I think of even in our women's ministry, like we have a lot of older women with a lot to offer. Some of them are really gifted by the Holy Spirit to be really good listeners and communicators, but not all. And I think that's a key in the same way you can go to a professional counselor, they may be gifted, or they may not. I think a layperson who's gifted is way better than a professional that isn't. Same with teachers.

**Pastor Paul:** Agreed. Exactly. You know that I'm not big on professional counselors. I'm just not a big fan because I think we put too much credence to

somebody who has got a degree or something like that. I would much rather go to somebody who's going to give me wise biblical counsel, based on the Word of God, and based on their experience with walking with God.

**Sue:** Roxane says, *“Thank you for the wonderful work you do for the Lord. I've been following you for the last two years and have been blessed in a mighty way. Number one question, “Jesus has talked about us having a physical body in heaven? Why do those who die leave bodies on earth?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Because these are not the bodies that we're going to have in heaven. The Bible makes it clear that these bodies were not created for eternity. They are temporal, and Paul refers to them as corruptible. That's the word he uses. But he also says that when we are raised, when our bodies are raised, they will be raised incorruptible. So, we leave these bodies on earth because this is a seed, as Paul talks about in First Corinthians 15. This is just a seed that is later on raised up incorruptible when we receive our new bodies.

**Sue:** And then she asks from *“John 13:14-17, where Christ instructs His disciples: If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I've given you an example that you should do as I have done to you. (that's the Scripture) Why is it that this command is not followed before receiving Holy Communion?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Because Jesus wasn't trying to follow any kind of organizational order of how things were to be done. He was just communicating truths to His disciples, and that's what was going on in the Last Supper. Sometimes we get caught up in our traditions in the way our churches do things. And we think that's the proper order that those things need to be done in and Jesus wasn't teaching in order of, do it this way. The washing of the feet was all about humble yourself and be willing to serve.

Communion was all about remembering what I'm about to do for you on the cross, and the order of those things was not important.

**Sue:** Someone asked, *“How do you talk to a teen that believes they are transgender?”*

**Pastor Paul:** That is a very difficult question. First of all, there's nothing in the Bible about this sort of a thing from the standpoint that it dealing with transgenderism. There are truths in the Bible that you can convey, such as God made them male and female and we are born that way. And as Mr. Rogers says, boys are boys from the beginning and girls are girls right from the start. But it's difficult to speak to a teen who has embraced transgenderism because they're coming from a worldview that has really nothing to do with the Bible. So, my personal approach would be not to talk to them about transgenderism, but I would talk to them about Jesus. I would talk to them about what Jesus did on the cross for them. And I would encourage them to make a decision to embrace what Jesus did on the cross apart from transgenderism. Transgenderism can be a big smokescreen for I don't want to talk about anything except my personal issues, and that's not the most important issue. The most important issue is Jesus. Get the person saved and let God deal with clearing the confusion. We're all confused when we come to Christ. Kids today are tremendously confused. We're not going to be able to clear up that confusion, apart from those people getting saved, ultimately coming to Jesus Christ, opening their hearts to Him as Lord and Savior. That's where God is going to begin to push away the confusion of this world and replace it with the wisdom and the truth of His Word. We can't do that in a counseling session. We can't do that by sitting down with a kid and saying, all right, sit down, shut up and listen. I'm going to tell you what's true. Because they're coming from a completely different mindset of the world. And the world has infiltrated their thinking to the point where what you're saying about God is

gobbledygook. It's nonsense. It's gibberish. It's through the Holy Spirit that these things begin to make sense. And that person, they need to hear about Jesus, they need to understand the cross of Christ.

**Sue:** And don't you think when someone has already been affected by and or embraced the confusion that swirls around this, really the first step is just sincere prayer, like just praying for that person. Praying for the proper opportunity to share Christ. Praying for a softening in that window in their heart that they would be able to understand.

**Pastor Paul:** Yeah. And it goes way beyond transgenderism. I mean, it deals with anything that's going on in the world today, whether someone believes I'm this or I'm that, I was born this way or that way and this is the way. You know what, having a conversation or an argument with somebody about those things is not going to change their mind. What needs to happen is they need to have their heart changed, and that's only going to happen through the Holy Spirit.

**Sue:** Yeah. And our last question is from Charles, *“If Christmas is to be celebrated as a festival by Christians, why was it never mentioned anywhere in the Bible as similar to the festivals that were to be celebrated by Israelites in the Old Testament?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Well, I understand the question. First of all, it isn't a festival celebrated by Christians. We're simply celebrating the birth of Christ, and no, there's no celebration of his birth mentioned in the Bible but that doesn't mean it's wrong to celebrate the birth of Christ. And we do it just, we don't do it as a biblical thing. We do it as a celebration out of our love for the Lord. And so, it doesn't have to be similar to the festivals that were celebrated by the Israelites. Those pointed to New Testament realities, and they serve their purpose. And they did what God intended

them to do. I don't see Christmas in the same way at all as the Old Testament festivals, not even close. There are no commands. And you know what, if somebody says to me, I'm a Christian, I love the Lord, but I choose not to be involved in any sort of a Christmas celebration, I would say, okay, whatever you want.

**Sue:** I will say this. I can't think of any Old Testament festival with choirs of angels that showed up and sang. And so, it was a big deal in the moment. We have the birth of Christ, and we have a really long text telling us about what a big deal it was, a lot of extraordinary things. Yea, there's no command to celebrate this, but it was a festival in the moment.

**Pastor Paul:** In the moment it was. And you know even today looking at that event, the birth of Christ is, without a doubt, the biggest event in human history. The most important, paramount above all others, event of human history to mark it. And people say, well, he wasn't born on December 25. I don't care if he was born June 22<sup>nd</sup> or October 3<sup>rd</sup>, that's not the point. It doesn't matter when you celebrate. In fact, that's another thing. If somebody says, well, I celebrate the birth of Christ. I think he was happened to be born in the summer months, so I celebrated in July. Great. I don't have any problem with that. I don't have any problem with somebody not celebrating Christmas, as long as they don't go around telling people you're a pagan, and you're wrong if you do. But if they simply choose to say, you know what, I don't do that. Okay, cool. How about it man? I'm not going to try to convince them otherwise. And again, if somebody wants to celebrate it some other day, I don't care. But I will say this again, it is the biggest, most monumental event in human history. And for us to ignore it as if it never happened seems wrong to me to the degree that I think we should at least say, Lord, thank you for giving the greatest gift that I will ever receive in the person of your Son, Jesus Christ.

**Sue:** Well, that is an excellent note to end on then.

**Pastor Paul:** Well, good.

**Sue:** Well, good.

**Pastor Paul:** Well, we are coming up on a brand new year. When we are recording this, we're just a few days away from the end of 2023, and we're going to say goodbye to that year and hello to the New Year. And as we get into January, we're going to do just what we did in December, and that is fielding your questions and your comments, and putting them together in a form like this where we can answer them, so be watching for that also in January. Anything else you'd like to share before we say goodbye?

**Sue:** Just thank you for answering all these questions. You do such a good job.

**Pastor Paul:** It's fun. And thank you for joining us today for this. Keep digging into the scriptures. Know what the Bible has to say, and walk in the wisdom of God. We'll hope to see you soon. God bless you. Bye-bye.

**Sue:** Bye-bye.