



Q&A 2017-Part 3

Pastor Mike Fabarez

Pastor Mike: All right. Well it is a special morning here at Compass Bible Church. It is the one weekend a year we take off from our normal practice of going verse-by-verse through the Scripture and expositing those verses and applying them to your lives. And instead, we take a break just to answer whatever questions you might have about the Bible, about the Christian life, about theology, whatever it might be. There are no scripts, there are no plants out there asking questions that were prearranged. It's all live, it's all happening in real time. And all we ask of you is to flag down someone with a microphone, we get two microphones. Pastor Pete is over here and I think Jay's running around in the corner over there. We want it to your question, we want to be a sincere question and we'd like it to be about the Bible, the Christian life, theology, doctrine or something like that. So we'll just dive right in. Are you ready? You never know what's going to happen on Q&A weekend. So while it's going on here you can flag down Pete for the next one so we'll start right here up in the front.

Question: Good morning. I have a question that may be somewhat simplistic and naive, maybe a little silly but I'll go ahead and ask it anyway. Well, you know, God in his absolute perfection and in an absolute perfect relationship with the members of the Trinity, certainly doesn't need anyone or anything to complete him. So my question is this: why then did he create us?

Pastor Mike: Great, great question and I can only theorize, as Joseph just prayed, we can ask God one day this question. I know that when he creates, he creates to bring glory to himself. So, whatever he's doing in creation, he's doing something that will in the end honor him. Glorifies is a word both in the Old and New Testament, gives us a sense of something, in the New Testament, as something beautiful, in the Old Testament, something more important, it has the concept of weight or gravitas. So God is doing something in creating, that not only is an act of love, and think of it this way, if you have the best product in the world and no one to share it with, then it would be great to have someone to share it with and to bless them with that gift. Well God is so great. He certainly, in an act of love, creates so that people can enjoy him and know him. And so that's in itself a great thing. But in the end, I guess what we're going to see is that everything is going to work out in the creation that God made, even through the terrible detour called sin, where God is going to be honored. There are things like grace and mercy and forgiveness that magnify the greatness of the character of God, that wouldn't be exercised were it not for fallen sinners like us that are plucked and redeemed. Right? He's not having to show mercy or forgiveness toward the Son or toward the Spirit. So though he's in perfect fellowship, self-contained, he needs nothing, I can only speculate that he creates, not only to share himself with others, like us, sentient beings that can understand him and experience him and will one day experience him face-to-face, but he is going to show aspects of his character that are great that wouldn't otherwise be demonstrated without the creation of people like us. That's the best I can do with that one.

Question: I want to say how glad we are to see you here today after the experience and news that you went through last week. And not only here today, I understand that you still plan on going to Revival for the full week. God bless you.

Pastor Mike: OK, well that's a mystery to a lot of people, I suppose. Some of you are clapping thinking what are we clapping for there?

Question: Were clapping that you're well and here.

Pastor Mike: That's right. I had a little detour this week if you don't know and spent a couple of days in the hospital. But I'm doing OK and I'm all right as far as I know. This could be my last hour, I'm not sure. But, so far God is sustaining me and I'm doing all right and I am looking forward to preaching all week up at Revival unless death prevents it.

Question: Yes. First the statement is: there is the common belief taught in secular schools on creation versus the biblical creation account. I was able to watch a movie this week, actually a documentary, placed by Ph.D., scientists and doctors called "Is Genesis History?" I don't know if you've had a chance to see that or not.

Pastor Mike: I have not.

Question: I was wondering your understanding and belief of how old the universe and the planet Earth is. And the second part, how long it took God for his creation to be complete.

Pastor Mike: How old it is? Is that your question?

Question: Yes, the first part is how old is our universe and world?

Pastor Mike: Well if I'm going to take God at his self-disclosure, in other words, he has revealed what he wants us to understand about creation, we understand that it can't be billions of years old according to the narrative that we have in Scripture and that it took place in six days. That's the normal reading of the text and everyone wants to talk their way around that.

Pastor Mike: Not because the text leads them to do that, but because we're told that we must do that because of the evidence that the earth is billions of years old and that it can't possibly have been done in six days. So, all I would say to that is that every time God does something, which is not very often in Scripture, where he suspends natural law or creates something out of nothing, he does so, always, with a product that has the appearance in history of age that it never actually had. Every single time it takes place, which is less than a hundred times in Scripture, every time God creates something it has an appearance of history and age that it never actually had. If you were there when God turn water into wine and you were a chemist and you were to examine what was in those stone jars, you would find the chemical compound with all the enzymes and all the proteins and all the sugars and the alcohol and everything that was there that had an appearance in history of age, that you could no way explain, other than scientifically having been there for a long time, having developed, having gone through what we know of in observable "science" where we understand how things operate within the laws of nature. But God, just before your eyes, suspended nature. That is he suspended the laws of nature to create something out of nothing with the word of his power, with the appearance of history and age that it never actually had.

Pastor Mike: So, I recognize that if we're going to get into, as a geologist, get into the rocks and we're going to look at radiometric dating and daughter isotopes and parent isotopes and decay rates and all the rest and half-lives, we're going to come to a conclusion about how old a rock is based on its compound. But when you do that, you can do the same thing with any of the rare times in Scripture when God create something out of nothing with a word of his power and they all have the appearance and history of age that they didn't have. So, I don't know how old the earth is. I don't think you can just add up all the genealogies and come to 4,004 B.C., 6,000 years old, I don't think

that's an accurate reading of the text. As we see in genealogies, there's often gaps in those and purposefully so and highlights between this person in the genealogy and in then that person and then maybe 200 years later that person or a 1,000 years later. So we don't know, we can't just add up genealogies. But I do believe that God has the ability, as it says in Second Peter Chapter 3, not only to create with the word of his power but to destroy. In other words, the world not going to burn out according to the Bible. And even a lot of people here have acquiesced to what they feel pressure from the scientific community to say about creation, they don't seem to say about the destruction of the world. You still believe, I suppose, that God is going to destroy the earth with the word of his power as Second Peter Chapter 3 says. Well, that's a miracle as well. That's a suspension of natural law.

Pastor Mike: So I don't know how old it is. It's, you know, thousands not billions. And beyond that I can't say. And how long did it take? I think a plain reading of the text leads me to say six literal days, morning and evening, and days that have numbers attached to them. That's my understanding and I think one day, maybe sooner than later, we'll find out whether that was a legitimate thing to do, to read the text and understand it just as it presents itself to us. And I know we can say a lot more about that, but we'll leave it there.

Question: Hi, Pastor Mike. A question from Acts 19. Paul had come to Ephesus and he found some disciples there and he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So my question is, this is presumably after the Day of Pentecost, was there a different dispensation of the Holy Spirit then than there is now or how does that work?

Pastor Mike: What's going on in the book of Acts is very important for us to recognize as the acts of the Apostles. It's a record of things that are taking place with the imprimatur of God, if you will, the authority of God working through, I should be more specific, the authority of Christ, because they are Apostles of Christ, being delegated to do things without a Bible, having the ability, this is one of the rare times that happens, to suspend natural law, that's their miracle authentication to be able to, with those miracles, be able to authorize themselves as spokespersons of Christ and to be able to make clear the most pressing issue in the early church. And that is, is the gift of salvation and forgiveness and incorporation into God's plan, just for Jews or is it for those in Judea, Samaria, and the Greeks, the Gentiles, all the way to the ends of the earth. That's what's playing out in the book of Acts. If you start in the book of Acts in Chapter 1 you see that outline. Every time one of those barriers is suspended, what you find is the Apostles coming, authenticating that, yes, the same gift that God gave the Jews he's now giving to these concentric circles of expanding mission field. And so when you have things like the Spirit being given, it is not normative anywhere else in the Bible. I mean it makes very clear in Romans, for instance, if you do not have the Spirit you are not a child of God. Here are people that say, we believe in Christ but they didn't have the Spirit in their lives.

Pastor Mike: Well that's the cornerstone of the promise of Jeremiah 31, that if you become a New Covenant Christian you have the Spirit indwelling you and that is how it's described. Well, here are people who didn't have that. They responded positively to Christ but they didn't have that. Well, they didn't have it because the Apostles or the representatives had not come and authenticated that. And that's exactly what's going on in Luke 19 when that situation here, it ends with the Holy Spirit coming upon them. And then the miraculous gifts being given to them, to where everyone could say, there's no doubt, what happened here in Ephesus is exactly what happened in Jerusalem. And we're way far away from Jerusalem at this point and all of that is connected to the theological

impetus, the beginning of what Christ had done. And so everyone can say, well it's true, it didn't happen on its own. In other words you couldn't have, after Christ died, let's just go to Acts 2. You couldn't have it the day of Pentecost when the Spirit was given that someone over in Italy putting their trust in Christ because they heard word that, it traveled really quickly, that Christ died and rose again and have that Spirit indwelling them and the fulfillment of the Jeremiah 31 promise of the Spirit indwelling them, the New Covenant promise, unless there's some authentication that those Italians can be saved. Well that starts in Chapter 10 with Cornelius, and Peter is the one who represents it, and now in Chapter 19, Paul is the representative and the people in Ephesus, this Roman colony, end up getting saved and all of this is an authentication for the Jews. This is really a book that allows the Jews to finally swallow the truth that the Gentiles are now heirs of the promise of Abraham. And that's why I think we have that unusual situation of faith, of belief coming without the indwelling of the Spirit at the same time.

Pastor Mike: But after that, I mean, when we see that all authenticated, the Apostles put their imprimatur on it, now, from then on, the assumption in the rest of the New Testament is, the moment you put your trust in Christ, you have the Spirit of God indwelling you.

Question: Hi, I'm Jim. First of all I think this is really awesome how, you know, you are allowing us to engage. I always thought it would be cool for us to, you know, have a Q&A and here we are.

Pastor Mike: Here we are. So cool. I am so cool.

Question: So I have a question, my wife and I, we got saved about eight years ago and we got saved late. Prior to that we, you know, were real, you know, walking in the flesh. Did a lot of alcohol and all that. But when we got saved, by God's grace, we got cleansed. All the desire of alcohol and all that went away. And for us it was a blessing because our kids are teenagers now. So I'm able to lead a life of just really by example, you know, and not by words. The question I have is, I know that as we gather for fellowship and whatnot, you know, drinking alcohol as a Christian is kind of like, you have half say yes and half say no, but for someone like myself, it's a temptation that I don't want to be tempted to fall off the wagon. But I also don't want to lose fellowship. So I know we're told to righteously judge one another. So what do you think the loving way would be, you know, to come to a brother and say, hey, you know that's really tempting. And, you know, I'm going to lose fellowship. But at the same time, one sip of wine and I'm back to the vodka, you know.

Pastor Mike: That's a great question. It's very practical question too, because there are several people, I'm sure, for various reasons, by conviction and by background or, in my case, by example, I don't want to partake in alcoholic beverages because for me it's going to be a stumbling block for people. I can't stand at the door, you know, with a cocktail in my hand or a beer in my hand and have people not raise eyebrows at that, even in this very libertine Southern California place. You're going to go, "Oh, he's drinking a Budweiser at the door. That was really weird." But if I have a bottle of water, you're not going to think twice about that. So, I understand there are people in this room for different reasons that makes perfect sense for them to say, "I'm not going to partake." Other people are going to say, "Well, I have the right to partake because the line is not drinking alcohol, it's getting drunk." And in that sense, you're technically right. You're right, you are not allowed to be inebriated. And I would recommend you go to Costco, next time you're there, and get a little breathalyzer you can carry it around to make sure you're not becoming inebriated. That might be helpful. I know no one wants to take it that literally but you should, right? If .08 is what it takes for you to be impaired so that you can't even operate a vehicle, which, by the way, is one of



the highest inebriation rates in terms of blood alcohol content in the world. Look it up on Google.

Pastor Mike: We have a very high tolerance in our country for how much alcohol you're can have in your bloodstream. All I'm saying is you need to be careful that you're not getting drunk. If you go start talking about Jesus, well Jesus drank. You're right. He did. But you can look this up not only by the history that surrounds the Bible but clearly in the statement about how wine was made in the time of Christ in the classical Greek Period, it certainly had a much, much, much lower alcoholic content than anything on the shelf at BevMo, I can guarantee you that. OK? You've got modern wines being probably three times the alcoholic content as the wine of the New Testament. And I know there were strong drinks in the New Testament and I understand that, but we've got to be careful. Right now we're carrying around something that's much, much more potent in terms of being accelerated in getting you drunk. You drink, you know, a few beers and be inebriated. And so you need to be careful. If you're going to exercise your liberty that way, be careful. Then I would say, if you're going to have a bunch people over from the church and Jim and I are going to come over and have a little fellowship with you, I'd recommend you put the alcohol away. Even if you have the liberty to drink it, because we're coming over, and for me, right, it's my testimony. And for him, it's his background and it may be for another person that hasn't even shared with you why. Just put your alcohol away.

Pastor Mike: OK? You've got your breathalyzer, you and your wife can drink, do your thing, make sure you don't get drunk, you'll be right with God. No problem. But I think when we get together as God's people, let's put the alcohol away. That would be a very wise thing for you to do. It's a very loving thing to do and if you study Romans Chapter 14 you'll find that's the greatest expression of love is for me to restrict my rights and my liberties for serving you and out of conscientiousness and courtesy for you and how it might affect you. And alcohol is still one of those things. Back in a certain time it may not have been. Like smoking back in the day. Right? There were times when I remember coming out of my grandpa's church in the south. Right? He was a deacon in the church. They'd come out and after the service they're all lighting up on the patio. Now, I grew up in Southern California, I visit this church in Alabama and I thought that they had all lost their minds. I'd never seen that before. Right? But in that day, no one cared. But then, of course, the culture changed even in the south and now, at that same church, you're not gonna find anyone smoking there on the patio, you know. They didn't have lighters next to the donuts or whatever anymore. So, that has changed. When cultures change, I understand some of these things have a different level of sensitivity to them.

Pastor Mike: But even in a libertine Southern California, there's still a sensitivity about pastors and others. I know I'd be a really cool pastor, literally, if I were a big drinker. But I think for all the things I do, in terms of seeing the front lines of how alcohol has very little redeeming value in people's lives, it may help you unwind but it's also the grease for people committing adultery, for battering their family members, for doing all kinds of stuff that we have to get called in on. I just don't see a lot of redeeming value. You're free to drink, don't get drunk, buy your breathalyzer and stay out of trouble with God. But I would be very careful, for the very sake that you're saying, and we'd be wise, if you're having fellowship, put the alcohol away. That would be a very loving thing for you to do.

Question: Hi, Pastor Mike. My question concerns a lot of churches out there that hold to the oneness of God theology, modalism, that is that Jesus Christ is the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. My question is, is that a damnable heresy or that the people who believe that, are they saved or not saved. If so, then why, if not, why not?

Pastor Mike: I do think that there are people who have very poor theology that have never been challenged with good theology and because of that I'm going to, and again I'm not God and I'm not going to sit there on judgment day and make these decisions, but I'm going to say, I do think there are plenty of people with a modalistic view of God, who don't know any better. Because to them that's a simple way for them to think through three in one. It's one person putting on three hats. Right? That's what Modalism is by the way. Modalistic Monarchianism is the full title of this heresy and that is that there's one God, sometimes he wears the Father hat, sometimes he puts on the Son hat, sometimes he puts on the Holy Spirit hat and that's easy for us to understand. That's not what the Bible teaches. So that heresy the church has condemned in a very astute way in a council where we all figured out, "Hey, taking all the biblical data, this doesn't work." Now I'd say, if you've been exposed to biblical doctrine and you've been challenged on the way, that's an elementary and an inferior way to understand the Trinity, I do think at some point your rebellion against the biblical doctrine, could become a damnable heresy in your life. Right? And I've argued with Oneness Pentecostals, for instance, and I do think they know enough in what I'm telling them, that really what you're doing is you're misunderstanding and perversely destroying the centrality of the ontological nature of God and who he is. So I think it's going to depend. That's my opinion. I think it's going to depend on the knowledge, the exposure. The Trinity clearly is a hard doctrine, it's not the lead doctrine that we see in terms of evangelism in the Bible. Clearly the deity of Christ is and I can say and you deny the deity of Christ I don't care what you know. Right? That's a damnable heresy. But how do you explain the three in one? That's, I think, I'm going to say, how much exposure have you had to the truth, how well has it been explained to you, what kind of teachers have you had that have helped you to understand the Trinity? That's my take. And again, God is going to have to make that decision. But that's the best I can do with that. Great question.

Question: Actually it kind of goes along with what we just heard but more from a cultural perspective. So we all know that, especially in PC USA, there's a big cultural shift towards the view on homosexuality and whatnot. And I personally work with a lot of... well, some people are openly gay, you know, gay marriage, so on. I'm just trying to think, you know, what line can we draw in terms of theological or Scriptural, different interpretations of Scripture, right, to where we can say that somebody is fully excluded from salvation. That's a difficult thing because some people I've met, who seem very earnest in their Christian faith, but truly believe that, you know, it's OK, you know, to be in a loving homosexual relationship etc.

Pastor Mike: Well, I don't think there's any confusion at all in the Bible and I think when Paul spoke to the Corinthians he was very clear that those who practice such things won't inherit the kingdom of God. It is very clearly understood what it meant by drunkenness, what it meant by adultery, what it meant by homosexuality. It was clearly defined, even as the Old Testament doesn't just use words it used descriptions, that if a man lies with a man as he would lie with a woman, I mean, it couldn't be more clearer than that, that this is an abomination of the Lord and it's a sin and sexual sin. In the New Testament says, if you're committing that sexual sin and engaging in that, you're unrepentant in it, clearly shows you're not right with the living God. So the Bible is crystal clear on this. It's carried in conscience and "ick-factor" as I like to say, until recently in American culture when, through I think a very satanic strategy to get people now in media and in TV and in pop music and all the rest, for us to no longer have that icky, visceral reaction to that kind of sin. And now it's celebrated. And so the problem is when Christians look at the plain teaching of Scripture, you can say interpretation, there is no possible way, unless you are seeking to prove a point and you have your conclusion before you start it, that you're going to come to the conclusion that it really doesn't matter if a man lays with a man as he would with a woman, it's OK with God.

Every argument is just not going to follow. We've got some books in the bookstore that will help explain this. The author? Helped me with the author... Go in our bookstore. There's a book on the biblical view of homosexuality. Gagnon. That's his name. Thank you God, because no one said it. (Robert A. J. Gagnon).

Pastor Mike: I think he's been on the frontlines in some liberal denominations arguing, very clearly, taking every single interpretation and dealing with what, you know, why there's no possible way you can come to that conclusion. That's why the historic Christian church has always had this view. And I know people think, "Well, the Bible was back in the Stone Age when it was written and no one really knew about this in the New Testament, they were so puritanical." Do you know that homosexuality was more normative in first century Greco-Roman culture than it is in America even today. You not only had rulers who were pro-gay marriage, they were participants in gay marriage, you understand. They were marrying homosexual teenagers in the palaces. I mean this was something that was rampant and it is against that backdrop that Jesus says, you know what, from the beginning it's always been this way, he created male and female and they're joined together. I mean when Paul talks about homosexuality it's not because it's some weird, aberrant, "Ooh, I've never even thought of that. That would be weird." This was going on everywhere. So the Bible knows the context that we're living in. And it certainly, I think, isn't even as bad, although it's very publicized because we have media all around us. We need to understand there's no fudging on this line, you cannot compromise what the Bible has to say any more than if adultery became super popular and we had parades that were pro-adultery parades and everyone was saying, "Well, if you're really loving, you'll love the adulterer" and people would celebrate that. Today, if you're committing adultery, those of you committing adultery right now, you feel shame and embarrassment. And, if you go to your small group this week and say, "Yeah, I'm cheating on my wife." Ooh, that's just turn this from a very lighthearted meeting to a serious meeting and everyone now has that sense of dread about that. "Oh, you're an adulterer." No one says, "Oh, praise the Lord. Be yourself. Follow your dreams. And there's an adulterers parade going on, it Adulterers Day at Disneyland this weekend, maybe you should go celebrate." No one thinks that way about that. And we shouldn't think that way about any other sexual sin that the Bible clearly lays out for us. We should recognize that to love the homosexual community is to tell them the truth and to warn them, lovingly warning them, that what they're doing is not only against their conscience, that they have to suppress the truth in unrighteousness, but is clearly against what God said. And God is clear about the reality of sin being a barrier between us and him. And if we come to Christ, we come to Christ repentant of our sins, whether your sin is gossip, whether your sin is greed, whether your sin is adultery, whether your sin is whatever it might be. We come saying, "God, I want to change. I want you to change me, change my heart." So we have to be clear about this. We don't have to go out there and throw rocks at people. Right? But what we do have to do is be very clear in warning them of what is at stake and what's at stake is everything.

Question: Pastor Mike, I know that we don't major in minors, but I have good friends who are Pentecostal and I'm constantly invited to their meetings. And the prophet this is going to show up the apostle that's going to show up. You've got people falling out under the power, and limbs being regenerated.

Pastor Mike: Really? I want a video of that.

Question: Yeah, me too. Blind eyes that see.

Pastor Mike: I'd like to see that.



Question: Where does one draw the line between aberration and biblical Gospel and how do you respond to Pentecostal friends who are as adamant about their position as we are ours.

Pastor Mike: Well, it is different than the last conversation we just had in that I know that there are many people who are trusting Christ, who love the Lord and they are looking at the Bible and saying, "If they did it in the Bible, I want to do it now. So they're seeking so badly to see the miracles. But in terms of suspending natural law are less than 100 in the Scripture, they want to see those things normative in every generation, they want to see it now. They want their miracle and so they go seek it. And it ends up being not limbs re-growing or it would be on the front page of the Orange County Register. Right? But, headaches and things you can't see. I've been to them, I've been in the front row of them, I've told stories about being even closer than the front row at some of these situations to see, I know, don't ask me now, to see this going on. And I know there are a lot of sincere people wanting this to happen but that's not what's going on in these platforms. So, all I'm going to say is I recognize the desire but I think you need to see, just like you don't go and look for bread on your lawn in the morning, you go to the store and buy it. It doesn't deny that God delivered bread on the lawn in the Scripture in the wilderness wanderings.

Pastor Mike: It just means that I know there was a time and a place for that and God had a role for that and that's what it was used for. Now we go to the store to get our bread. We pray to God, we pray for provision, but we don't sit there and open the cupboards and think it's just going to show up automatically. We recognize that God does not suspend natural law unless there's a very important reason and the reasons we find, according to Hebrews Chapter 4 verses 1 through 4, is when he gives his revelation, and we see that in Moses' and Joshua's day, we see it in Elijah's and Elisha's day, and we see it in Christ's day and the Apostles' day. After that, even within the second century, the preachers were preaching about the day of the miracles that took place in the first century. They knew, because they weren't seeing that, because these gifts were given, as it says in Hebrews 4, according to the will of the Spirit and the will of Spirit had a purpose for what they did. So I'm very sympathetic and I understand that you're opening the Bible, simplistically saying, if they did it in the Bible, I want to do it now. But when you see them chasing these things, it becomes a very emotional experience that I think we would be wise to lovingly try and woo them to say, instead of seeking that, why don't we seek what God has to say for our lives, which is rarely proving himself over and over again or backing himself into a corner to where he has to do a miracle to get himself out. God does those miracles and did them, less than 100 times in Scripture, for the purpose of attesting to revelation. So, lovingly try and draw them out, with less urgency, though it's important, than I would say about the last conversation we had, those who twist the Scripture to say, "Hey it's ok. I'm right with God." One can certainly be a Christian and be a Pentecostal, certainly a Christian and be a charismatic, although some are in those groups because they're seeking an experience instead of seeking God. We seek God, not for the experience he gives us. We seek God, not because I can feel something. I seek God, not because I want a display of something. I seek God because I'm to seek God. He is to be glorified by my allegiance. He is God, I was made for his glory and that's what I'm supposed to do regardless of whether it feels good or I have an experience or not.

Question: Good morning Pastor Mike. In Romans 11:25 it talks about when the fullness of the Gentiles comes in. I have heard some teaching from Jack Hibbs and David Hocking that that means no more Gentiles will be saved after that point. And I wonder what you thought about that.

Pastor Mike: I don't believe so because in the book of Revelation it seems that those who have come out of the Tribulation are described being killed in the Tribulational Period and it speaks of



them being from every tongue, tribe and nation. In other words, there's a diversity of ethnicities being saved within the Tribulation. I do think what Hibbs and Hocking are trying to avoid is the expectation that people have reading the "Left Behind" series going, "Oh, I know that if at our church, you know, we got 75% real Christians here, the 25%, they'll all get it after that. They'll say, "Oh, the Christians are gone, I'll get saved."

Pastor Mike: That's really not what we see in Scripture. As Paul wrote to the Thessalonians he said, the people who refuse to believe the truth in this age, right? Once this revealing of the man of lawlessness comes, they will be deceived. They'll be deceived because they didn't love and believe the truth. Therefore, if people in this church right now are not truly saved, they reject the message of the Gospel because they don't like what it does to impede their sexual freedoms or they don't like what it does for whatever reason, so they refuse it. They know the truth but they refuse it. Right? If tomorrow God meets his church in the air and the man of lawlessness is revealed and the Temple is rebuilt and we see the seven years of the time of Jacob's Trouble unfold, I think it's clear that the Bible says, those folks will not be saved. But, as Jesus spoke on the Olivet Discourse, I do think what's going to take place is now an expansion of the Gospel all over the world and every people group on the planet is going to get the Gospel during that period. And I think there will be people confronted with the Gospel for the first time in the Tribulation Period who will respond positively to the Gospel, which attests to the people that are described in the book of Revelation that are from other ethnicities. Though the focus is on, and I agree with Hibbs and Hocking, the focus is on the people of Israel. The 144,000 Jews are out there saving the Jewish nation, by and large. But there are others saved as well. That's my view.

Question: How may parents biblically involve themselves in preventing their non-believing adult child's divorce. We have a marriage of six years. Both parents are vehemently opposed to God. They're both scientists. And we have an infant and two toddlers.

Pastor Mike: I would say it would be the same as trying to, if I said there's a couple over here that's a non-Christian thinking of divorce, why don't you go have lunch with them. There's not a whole lot more you can do than that. You're appealing to adults, they're out of your house, they're not dependent on you, you have no leverage other than your clout as their parent who changed their diapers and raised them. But for them, in their frustration over marriage and the breaking up of this family, they may look at your advice and there's not anything you can do, other than give them the right advice. You want to be loving, you want to be kind. You'd like to let them know, that though it feels like relief from this marriage because of irreconcilable differences and this person doesn't make me happy anymore, rarely is a good divorce, right, a good thing. In other words, a difficult struggling marriage is usually better than the fantasy of chasing the freedom in a divorce, in most situations. There are exceptions, even in Scripture, there are a couple of exceptions. But when it comes to the frustration of not being happy anymore, I think we need to make some decisions about how even non-Christians can make decisions to apply themselves to be friendly and kind and amiable in their relationships and make it work. The things that make marriages bad are generally shared on both sides, to some extent, and both parties need to come together and work on it for the sake of, nothing else, for the sake of, that should be for the covenant, but if not for the covenant, at least for the sake of our children. I mean, think of the children involved, and I can look all over this auditorium, I'm sure, and see children of divorced parents and that is a tough, tough thing.

Pastor Mike: So all you can do is get your friends in your small group to pray for you. You can meet with them. They know where you stand. I'm sure they know where you stand and they know that you would love to see them stay together. Pray for it, counsel with them, give as much input as



you can. Other than that I don't know how in the world you're going to... You can't force grown people to do what you want them to do. Right? I can't even force young people to do what I want them to do.

Question: I had some questions about the term, "The fear of the Lord." Kings 17, it says that they moved all the Jews out of Assyria. They put Assyrians in there. God brought lions in to kill some of them. So, they say, we need to learn about the rituals of the Lord. So, they brought someone in and then they knew the fear of the Lord. But, then in the end, like verse 40, however, they didn't obey God. They feared the Lord but they kept on with their rituals and things. And a lot of Scriptures say, well, if you fear the Lord, you're on the right track. You know, I fear the Lord, I'm a man of God. These people feared the Lord, yet, continued doing things and their children too.

Pastor Mike: Absolutely, yeah. And there's no doubt. My dad, as many of you know, was a police officer in Long Beach. I feared him and I feared the police and it affected my behavior. I went to school with a lot of thugs and punks that, in given situations, also feared the police. Right? They did. And it could be that there was a big crackdown at our school and all their narcotics trafficking that they had at my school, let's just say they had this big raid and a lot of people were busted. Well, the guys I knew, you know, that we're dealing weed or whatever, they're scared, they're fearful because there was a bust, the lions came in, the Assyrians and all that took place and they were afraid. But it doesn't mean they're afraid the way I'm afraid. I'm afraid enough to not do it. I'm afraid enough to not be involved in it, or even if I was, which I wasn't, but let's say I was, I would maybe be afraid enough to say, I'm not going to do it because I see what's at stake. There was a big drug bust at school and I'm done with pot now. I've never smoked pot, just so you know.

Pastor Mike: But there are people that you could see that could fear and still not respond as they ought to. Right? Picture these, I mean, this is the best scenario I can paint. And I do think that's what happened in the northern tribes of Israel and even in the South when they watched what was going on to their brothers and God kept saying to the Judeans, you need to look at Ephraim, need to look at your brothers, and look what happened. And he was trying to get them to recognize there are consequences for idolatry, and a lot of times they didn't learn that. Even if they did for a time, they feared. It was the wrong kind of fear. It wasn't a fear that led to reform.

Question: Hi, Pastor Mike. My question is how did we get that many denominations like in the churches, like Methodist and all the different denominations? How did that happen? The second question I have is about Jews and Gentiles. I get confused of who came first? Were the Jews first, then the Gentiles, and why were Gentiles always considered as some sort of bad people? So what exactly was going on?

Pastor Mike: Let's start with the denominations. Five hundred years ago when the church was, in many ways, at least institutionally, monolithic, you had such power from the top of the Roman Catholic Church that, you know, to be a Christian was to be a part of that church. Now, of course, there was always, going back, you know, to the early start of the Reformation, Hus or Wycliffe or whatever, there were always people who were questioning the perversions within the church. But once you had the break, when you had Martin Luther and you had the Reformation take root and you had the printing press and all the things that really gave them a freedom to read the Bible on their own and say, wait a minute, the church is wrong, you started a process of fragmentation. They wanted reform. That's why they're called the reformers but they didn't get reform. All they really got was a schism of sorts, not the schism of the 11th century, 10th century. We didn't have an East-West split. We had a shattering of the church because we recognized the monolith has got the

wrong gospel, it doesn't recognize the scripture alone, it's injecting its own authority into all kinds of doctrines that are wrong. So, now everyone sat around in what they didn't want to be a fragmented church, but by the product of the Reformation, became fragmentation. And then you sat around and said, okay, well, there's no institutional hierarchy, there's no state church, which there was a state church in England, but you tried to keep on seeing the purity of groups getting together saying, we want to do this biblically, we want to do this biblically. There was so much to reform at the outset, the view of communion or what they called the Eucharist, the view of baptism, which had become baptizing children, "paedo baptism." You have all these things. When people looked at the Gospel and reformed the doctrine of the Gospel, which was Christ alone, grace alone, faith alone, now all the sudden, you had, "Well, what about communion?" "Well, I think this is right." "No, I think this is right." "I think Christ's presence is with the bread." "I think it's a memorial meal." You kept having groups split until you had a lot of denominations. And people said, "Well, we don't agree on baptism, we don't agree on the nature of the Lord's Supper, or we don't agree on membership, or we don't agree on whatever." So, there was so much that was wrong, frankly, in the Catholic Church, that there was this slow fragmentation of reform and everyone began to say, well, since there is no hierarchy you ended up with all these different denominations. It's understandable and the more you... If you just study church history from the last 500 years, there's several good books in our bookstore on that, just modern church history, you can see where these splits all made sense. You know even if it was the Southern Baptists and the American Baptists, they split over slavery, you know? And I think you had strong opinions about that, so you were going to split. Then what do you have? Well, you have two denominations now. So, it's the nature of a church that is no longer a state-run monolithic organized unit. And so that's the product. Is it perfect? No, obviously, but it's better than the alternative, which we saw get us into a big mess.

Pastor Mike: Jews and Gentiles. Gentile is simply a word that means a non-Jew. When God identifies Abraham and says, you're going to be the guy who's going to create a great nation and from you, we're going to create this great nation, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Jacob, we're going to rename Israel. Israel is going to be the name of this group and so you guys are now Jews, you guys are now Israelites. Everyone from the ascendancy of Abraham becomes the Jews and everyone else is the Gentiles.

Pastor Mike: So in that sense, I guess, anyone who wasn't an Abraham, wasn't part of that, that's the nomenclature, that's the way the words were used. If you're not a Jew, you're a Gentile. Why are they bad? I was even just studying this morning, looking at how Peter speaks about Christians and then simply talks of non-Christians with the word Gentile. It is used that way. It's used as a person who's not right with God. And yet, if you read the book of Acts, Gentiles are loved as much as Jews are. Certainly they get saved. That's the whole point of the first questioner, near the first question, that the gift of Abraham has gone even to the Gentiles. So, Gentile, theologically, is not a bad word. Gentile, at least in a literary sense sometimes still in the New Testament, is shorthand and a nickname for non-Christians. But we're all Gentiles, but I'm not a Gentile. Right? I'm a Gentile in the sense that I'm a non-Jew in my DNA, but I'm not a Gentile in the sense that Peter speaks of non-Christians as the Gentiles, don't live like the Gentiles. Well, he's just borrowing that language from the Old Testament of the covenant people of God and the non-covenant people of God. Now, as a Christian, I'm a covenant person of God. But for non-Christians, sometimes and rarely, Gentiles is used as the label, the appellation, the nomenclature, the word for non-Christians. Is that good enough?

Question: Sorry, this one's kind of hard.

Pastor Mike: They've all kind of been hard, so far, for me. But anyway, go ahead.

Question: I'm new here. My name's Christy. I just was wondering if God knows what we're going to say before we say it, what we're going think before we think it, what choices we're going to make before we make them. Our whole entire lives mapped out and we don't see the bigger picture but he does. And children are innocent, right?.

Pastor Mike: No. Not correct.

Question: Not correct? Okay.

Pastor Mike: Romans 5 says that we all, unfortunately, were born on a bus that's careening in the wrong direction, therefore we are all partakers of the problem with the consequences of Adam's sin. So in that sense, judicially, they are not innocent. In terms of moral decisions, yes. I guess in the language that we would use, they're innocent children. On the news they'll talk about innocent people. I hear Christian broadcasts talking about twenty-five innocent people were killed. In that sense, they're innocent. But in a biblical, theological sense, they bear the problem that Adam had and that is they're alienated from God. So, I'm not sure what you mean by, because you were setting up a question, are children innocent. They're innocent in one sense in their moral decision so far. Not that they are making good decisions but they are not culpable yet in terms of their understanding of right and wrong, as the Bible says, they don't know right and wrong yet. But in terms of their judicial standing, their legal standing before God, they need salvation, they need grace, they're alienated from God. I don't know if that clarification is important for the rest of your question. They're morally innocent, I guess, in the sense that they do not have a culpability of making a decision, an infant is not deciding in terms of, "I know the law of God and I'm choosing to break it." And yet, they are wired, because they're fallen in Adam, to do wrong. OK, anyway. That's way too much information, probably, but I'm not sure where you were going with that.

Question: No sir. Thank you. Where I'm going with that is, if God knew that from the time I was born till present that my life... If God knows that from the age of six years old, I had to grow up. I had to take care of my parents. I had to take care of my abusive alcoholic mother. I had to take beatings for my little sister. I had to walk in several times on my mother's suicide attempt. If he knew that I was going to have to make choices and decisions at that age. That I would never even begin to comprehend six, seven years old and make the wrong decisions and raise my little sister. You strive and you want to know God and you want, you feel that... If parents don't take you to church.

Pastor Mike: But if God knew all that, you're going to say what, then what? Then why would God do that?

Question: No sir.

Pastor Mike: OK.

Question: And then on until adulthood you never had parents to teach you right from wrong, so you learned everything by trial and error. You don't have one happy childhood memory that you could... If God knew that my life was going to be hell on earth... And I'm trying so hard to be a Christian mother for my two beautiful children and I don't know all the answers. And I've made so many mistakes in my life because I never had anyone to teach me better. It's my fault. Still, he gives



us the power to make choices. And I could have made the right choice. I'm not blaming anyone but myself, I'm taking 100% accountability. Why did he create me if I'm going to be a failure?

Pastor Mike: Because you're here right now. That's why he created you, I'm quite sure, so that you can be surrounded by people who understand the truth of God's Word, who can tell you that there's grace available to fix any of the problems in your past by having you look forward with the hope of eternal life, to see your hurt in your past, as Second Corinthians Chapter 1 says, to use all of that hurt to be a ministry to other people, because I can introduce you to several people who are in the midst of the kind of pain that you look back upon. And I can tell you that God has got you on this planet and he's created you, if for nothing else, to have you right here today in this church, so that you can begin to utilize the grace that God has given you to be ministry to others.

Pastor Mike: That is assuming that you've embraced the grace of Jesus Christ and if you have, that's all that really matters in the end, because this life is a tiny little period on a super long line called eternity, and all we're living in is a tiny little dot. You and I, right now, have an opportunity to invest our lives in other people, so that we can make a difference for eternity. That's why he put you on the planet, and all that pain of the past, without minimizing it, because pain is pain and it stinks and it's awful, but God can use the pain in your past to put you as, I sometimes call it, through the seminary of pain to make you one of the most useful instruments in his hand. We've seen that all throughout church history and that's why God has you here.

Question: Good morning Pastor Mike. Thank you very much, sister, for sharing, that was very, very hard. And thank you for sharing with your church family.

Pastor Mike: And I'm sure there will be many people who want to talk to you after the service and get you in their small group.

Question: Three-part question. Can a person be baptized twice in water? Is there a limit on baptism? At what point does God block us off like he did with Pharaoh and harden our hearts.

Pastor Mike: You can get baptized a million times if you have enough time and enough water. Doesn't mean it's right. Baptism, and there's probably more to that question, but baptism is to be done post-conversion, "Go make disciples of all the nations baptizing them." So once a disciple is made, you need to get baptized. You might have been baptized as I was as, like a 6 year-old, because I walked an aisle, prayed a prayer, threw a pine-cone in the fire, or whatever I did. So I got baptized. I didn't become a Christian until I was just turning 18 years old. So then I got baptized again. If you say, "Mike, you got baptized twice." I'd say, I got baptized once the way the Bible says I ought to be. Right? So, I know there are people who go through camp experience, get baptized, go through another camp experience, get baptized. All I care about is are you sure this time that you are a genuine believer? Now, let's get baptized. You only need to get baptized once. It's like a wedding ceremony.

Pastor Mike: Someone can go through that in their bedroom and dress up in their mom's clothes and put their high heels on and pretend they're getting married. All of that's just a farce. What matters is, if you got the marriage license, if you have the clergy to solemnize the marriage, you get married one time. I know, it doesn't work in our modern day, but you get married one time. That's what you're supposed to do. All those other times, something was out of whack. OK. So one baptism.

Pastor Mike: When does God shut us down? I don't know. Every person, I think, has got their own timeline. But as Romans 1 says, the situation with Pharaoh, hardening his heart and then God hardening his heart, you see in Romans 1 played out in the modern dispensation, the modern era. And that is, that people, as they go headlong into sin, just like what we see in the culture as one of the early questions talked about, when we say, I don't care what God says, I want what I want. At some point, the Bible says, here's the repeated phrase in Romans 1, he will turn you over to your sin. That means, OK, here, have it, if that's what you want. So the hardheaded pig-headed kind of "I'm just going to do what I want," at some point they suppress the truth in their conscience, in their behavior, and so God, at some point, turns away. When does that happen? I don't know. I don't know. Each person, I suppose, is different. I suppose, it's based on the light and the knowledge they have. No one was more educated in all of Egypt than the Pharaoh. Right? No one knew more. No one knew more about comparative religions, no one knew more about everything, he had every advantage. So he starts to harden his heart against the truth of God and what he is doing, it seems relatively quickly, God hardens his heart and turns him over to his sin and encases him in that rebellion. When does that happen for the average person? I don't know. It depends. All I can say is it still happens but I don't know. Book of Hebrews is another example of these pictures of God at some point saying, "Enough! I'll turn this person over to their unbelief and their rebellion." Was there a question in between that I missed? Did I get them all? OK.

Question: I have a beautiful college daughter who has just recently shown an interest in a gentleman who is a Catholic and would like to know if you have some books that you could recommend or words for Bruce and I to kind of make sure she doesn't get too influenced by him.

Pastor Mike: Second Corinthians 6 would be my book to read. Yeah, don't be unequally yoked. I think it's very important that we recognize that the epistemology, the foundational structure of what the Catholic Church and biblical Christians are saying, they come from a completely different place. For the Roman Catholic, the church is the authority. I'll quote the catechism. When it comes to Scripture, tradition, and the Magisterium. They are all equal works of God's revelation to man, I'm paraphrasing this but it says... Here, I'll quote it verbatim. You cannot have one without the other. As one of the popular Catholic priest and apologist says, to have faith in Christ is to have faith in the church, the Roman Catholic Church. So, I am saying that I cannot have the Scripture alone, which was the cry of the Reformation, without the church and its tradition, that's what they've done, and the Magisterium, that's what they've officially taught. Therefore, you're walking into a place, like you might be walking into another church down the street that says, "We believe in the Bible, but we also believe in another testament of Jesus Christ, and it was from some gold plates buried in upstate New York and, you know, you've got another authority. And when you have another authority, right, then how I read my Bible, you're going to say, "No, no, no! The book of Lehi says..." Right? And that's what the Catholic Church, unfortunately, has done. So, if I've got a daughter coming to me saying, "I'm dating a Roman Catholic and I want to marry him," I'm going to pull out Second Corinthians 6, and I'm going to say, "This is not an option for you. This is not an option for you, and you need to find someone else. Let's get you out more often somewhere else and get you dating someone else." And I know emotions are involved, I can say that, and people can laugh, and it's your life, and it's your daughter, and her love, and she's deeply in love.

Pastor Mike: All I'm telling you is that's why we have to, as the Bible says, guard our hearts. It's so important. I would say it's time for her to break up. It's time for dad to get a book from our bookstore, like maybe from the book by McCarthy on... or even my friend Philip DeCourcy's book, "Standing Room Only" on the Roman Catholic Church. We have several books in the bookstore that distinguish between biblical Christianity and Roman Catholicism. Check our bookstore. And

say, "I want to meet with you. You're going to start dating me now," and have dad start taking him out. Right? "And no more dating of my daughter." I'm just saying what I would do. Right? "I'm happy to meet with you. You're in love with my daughter? She's not going to date you anymore. You're dating me now and we're going out and we're going to talk about what the Bible has to say."

Pastor Mike: So, that's what I would advise you to do and I'd advise you to bone up on what the Bible has to say and why these are incompatible religious systems, they are incompatible religious systems. When the Reformation took place, the Roman Catholic Church got together with what was called the Council of Trent, they doubled down on everything they said and they said, you Protestants are damned to hell, you're all anathema. And then, just in 1997 they came up with a catechism of the Catholic Church that did nothing else but doubled down on all that they said at Trent in regards to the difference between Catholicism and Protestantism. Therefore, they are two incompatible systems. And you can say, "We're both wearing the Jesus jersey." Yeah, we're wearing the Jesus jersey. Right? So are the Mormons, so are the Jehovah Witnesses. This is a system that is based on a different authority, and the authority is, you're trusting in the church and its leaders. The Pope is the vicar of Christ. He is the revelation of God to men on this planet. The Magisterium has equal weight to the Scripture. The tradition of the church has equal weight to the Scripture. You cannot have one without the other. I'm going to say, all day long, I CAN have one without the other, and the other ones can go away because all that really matters is what the reformers said and what they died for, and that is "sola scriptura."

Pastor Mike: And if you want to emphasize the died for part, go get the Foxe's Book of Martyrs and reread that and see how vehement the Catholic Church was in saying, you Protestants are wrong. And if you really sit down with an educated priest, and you should, and say, "Has any of this changed?" They may be really nice and speaking to you very kindly, but when it comes down to it, nothing has changed. Nothing has changed.

Pastor Mike: The Reformation is still as pertinent today as it was before, it's just that Christians now, you know, we're too busy watching MTV or whatever, that's ancient history I guess, but we're too busy on Snapchat, how's that? That we'd have no time to understand even what doctrine or theology is all about.

Pastor Mike: We need to understand what the Gospel is and isn't. So, I'd recommend some very serious intervention at this point and do what you can to try and change this. This guy needs to come to Christ and renounce his connection there.

Question: Pastor Mike, my question arose in our home fellowship group, when we were discussing the end of Luke 17 and it concerns the Rapture and children. When believing parents are taken up, raptured, what happens to their very young and even elementary age children? Will they be left behind all alone?

Pastor Mike: No, I don't think so. I think all I can do is, you know, speculate based on passages like First Corinthians Chapter 7, when it speaks of the children of a household that has at least one believing parent. It uses a term there that they are clean or they're holy, "hagiazō" is the Greek word. And all I can say there is that I think God has a special relationship with households that have at least one believing parent in it and that's all I can say. There's no Scripture I can go to, I can only take a principle from a passage like that and say, I don't fear for households that have young children when Christ comes to gather his church.



Pastor Mike: I have no basis for it in looking up a verse. But I certainly would go to First Corinthians 7 and that one statement about the difference in how God views the children of a household with at least one believing parent. All right. That's all I have time for.

Pastor Mike: Let's pray. God, thanks for getting us together this morning, thanks for giving us a chance to talk about a wide variety of topics. I pray it would spur us on to study your Word, to be good students of your Word, to learn to just go to you in our prayer life and ask you for insight and illumination into your Word, and then to get into it and roll up our sleeves and, as the Bible says in Second Timothy, to be able to be the kinds of workmen who don't need to be ashamed, who can rightly handle the word of truth. I pray we get better and better at that as there's so much vast information there, your knowledge is so vast, you've given us so much in your Word. But I pray you continue to encourage us as we continue on in our sanctification in our knowledge of the truth. Let us know you and love you better.

Pastor Mike: In Jesus name, Amen.