



## Q&A 2022 – Part One

### Pastor Mike Fabarez

**Pastor Mike:** Well one weekend a year we give ourselves to taking questions from the floor about the Christian life, about the Bible, about theology, about something maybe you've read that you've struggled with. Pastor Lucas and Pastor John have microphones and you wave them down if you have a question. And what we'll do for our time, instead of preaching through a passage in Acts, we will chat with each other about questions. I just ask that they be sincere, they'd be your questions and they'd be somehow related to the Christian life, about the Bible, about theology or whatever might be on your mind. A sincere question, a question that you think would be helpful to have some answers to. And I hope I will do my best to give you some answers tonight. All right. So here we go. Ready? Front row. Love it.

**Question:** So I have a question to ask. While I was reading through my Daily Bible Reading I was really kind of asking questions to one of my colleagues that I have a relationship with, one of my friends from my life though. And I was asking about basically if Job was a like, you know, a biblical or like a Hebrew Jewish name. Apparently it's not, though. So one of the questions I want to ask you is would Job be one of the very first like non-Israelites to be Christians like Nebuchadnezzar kind of repentance or...

**Pastor Mike:** Yeah, yeah. I think that Job probably as a historical figure predates Abraham. That's odd because it comes so much later in the story. It's a poetic book and that means it's probably was at least codified and put into the canon of Scripture as, of course I believe it is fully God-breathed and inspired, but probably during the monarchy or somewhere in the 10th century, 9th century, 10th century, 11th century B.C. that is. That, though, doesn't give us any kind of correspondence to the time frame of when it took place. So it's a little bit more instead of you using Nebuchadnezzar I would use someone like Melchizedek. Someone who, you know, is contemporary, of course, of Abraham. But here's someone who is rightly relating to the God of the Bible prior to Moses, 600 years before Moses. Right? So this was, I believe, a historical story. And Job is a figure, but we can't think of him as like, here's a Jewish person because Abraham hadn't been born yet. Or if he was, maybe it was during the patriarchal period, during that period of time. So that's a great observation. And the reason I say that is because if you carefully study even the language of Job, I mean, you will find that it does fit the classical monarchy, the period of the monarchy of Hebrew language. But there are words in it that don't match that period of time. Monetary units. Think of this: even how long he lived. Right? Think about how long he lived. Right? Even at the end of the story, he's going to live 100 and whatever years, 210 years or whatever. So those time frames of longevity of age put it back, I think, before Abraham. The monetary unit that's described, it's certainly not of the time of Solomon or David. So, yeah, you make a good observation there, and that is why I think we don't have a Jewish name. Good point. And he's a priest for his family. Think about that. Right? He sacrificed. You couldn't do that. You wouldn't do that after the Levitical priesthood. In Chapter 1, he's there doing sacrifices as the family priest. It's just a different arrangement, which those are all clues, even though we have no clear date given to us for Job at the beginning of the book. Yeah. Question? Another front row question. You back row people get ready because we're coming for you next.



**Question:** So in Matthew 12, Jesus speaks of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. And I always struggled with it because he says that "Whoever speaks against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven." So, like, I don't know how to deal with that because like, I understand that like, you know, Jesus will forgive every sin. So why is there like the unforgivable sin?

**Pastor Mike:** Well, let's start first of all even with the phrase 'he is the Son of Man.' There were things that you would see Jesus teach or hear him teach. There were things you might see him do that were indicative of mankind. They would be a great example of an excellent person doing an excellent thing because he fulfilled all human righteousness. You could speak against Jesus doing something righteous and good and then say, "Oh, I was wrong because I've been convicted by what he says," and repent and great. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit in the context is that he's just done miraculous signs and people who knew the Scriptures, the Pharisees, the leaders, the scribes, they had watched what he had done. This was an evidence of the Holy Spirit's miraculous work. And they're going now, there's no other way you can prove Jesus' divinity more starkly and clearly than that. Right? He then says it's not going to be forgiven. Right? So to say that somehow I read that passage and I struggle with maybe I've committed the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit because I got mad at God one day and shook my fist at him, I just don't think this is a replicable situation. You're not living in the first century watching the miraculous works of the Messiah taking place in front of your eyes. The evidence of the Holy Spirit's work through the Son of Man, the Messiah, and say you are of the Devil, which is what they had just done. And remember this: in Scripture, every time you have more light given to people, the higher the judgment. In other words, he said, it would be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah than it will be for Korazin and Bethsaida. Bethsaida and Korazin were towns where Jesus had come through and done his ministry and done miracles, and they were like, "Um, I'm not interested." Right? He says, well, even the debauched and sexually immoral activity of Sodom and Gomorrah, God is going to go lighter on them than these cities, even though they're not as flagrantly immoral because they had so much information about Christ. But what about the people who just shrug their shoulders and say, "I'm not interested"? What about people who said, you're of the Devil. I just saw you... You know that guy who was blind now sees, that Satan. Right? Jesus said that you've crossed the line at that point. And so I know a lot of people are concerned about that passage, Matthew 12, because they think that could be true of me. And I'm thinking, I don't think that's true of you. Matter of fact, the people who are concerned that it might be true of them are showing me some good signs of spiritual interest or spiritual life. I hope that helps. Where are we at next? You got to wave me down because I can't see. Okay, good. Well, we went to the back, didn't we? All right, now, Pastor John's got a mic here, so someone flag him down next. Yes. Fire away.

**Question:** In the men's Bible study I've gone through John 14. I was wondering if you could explain the end of verse 28. The verse says, "I'm going to my Father, for the Father is greater than I."

**Pastor Mike:** Well, the greatness of the Trinity... Let's put it this way. To even have the titles, Father and Son shows something of a relational hierarchy. It has nothing to do with ontology. In other words who Jesus is. We would say that everything that Jesus did proved that he is worthy of human worship, for instance. They worshiped him and he accepted worship. He controlled nature. It says in John 1:1 he was the agency of creation. He spoke everything into existence that existed. Right? He's the creator of all things. So as we look at Jesus as the Son of God, we would say he's worthy of all worship of the transcendent, immortal God. But in the Godhead, there's relationship. Right? And here's what Jesus keeps saying things like, "Well, my Father is working, so I'm always working." "Whatever the Father tells me, I speak." So there's this subordination of the relationship between the Son and the Father. Even the words themselves speak to that. So "greater" cannot mean that he's greater in terms of ontology, who he actually is, divinity. But you can say the roles here that are arranged in the Godhead there definitely is a distinction. Just like you might come in... If someone comes into a business and someone is a middle manager and the person, the customer, comes in and talks to them like they're, you know, the CEO, they say, "Oh, no, that's above my pay grade." Right? Well, what does that? You don't think you're as worthy as the CEO of being respected and have all the dignity of humanity? Well I'm not saying that. I'm just saying that's not my role. I'm not the CEO here. So we say Jesus is Lord of all. But even in the subjection in First Corinthians 15, when it says "All things are subjected to the Son," it is, of course, but not the Father. Right? In other words, there's a subjection of role and position and function, but not worth and not dignity and not divinity. And that's the distinction that's made. And that's how Jesus plays out his ministry. And one of the reasons he does that, at least I can say one of the reasons it's applied to us in that way, is that Jesus, according to First John, is providing a template for the way that we should live. He's showing what it is to be subjected to the Father, and you ought to live a life that's subjected to the Father, and you should say "not my will, but yours be done." And that kind of relational subordination in role is simply describing the relationship between the Father and the Son. I hope that helps.

**Question:** I just want to know I was reading in Luke, but I know it's in Matthew also, John the Baptist is the first one who baptized in water. Is there any reference in the Old Testament that can verify any type of baptism in water besides the Red Sea, Jordan and Noah?

**Pastor Mike:** Okay. Well, those aren't bad ones, but I would say that the significance of water as a symbol in God's promise in the New Covenant was looked forward to in like Ezekiel 34, Ezekiel 36. The passages that describe the coming of the New Covenant Age that starts this new thing where no longer is the Levitical law and the Old Testament ceremonies, this kind of intermediate function of human beings going to a priest and having these symbols and pictures of how we relate to God, those are going to be set aside because Christ the Messiah has shown up and then he's going to send his Spirit not just to be an influence and a force of conviction among people, but he's going to dwell within them and change their hearts. And to quote those passages he's going to change our heart of stone to a heart of flesh. And one of the things that are describing our relationship to God at that point is we're going to be washed with water, made clean, sprinkled clean with water. Now, there were ceremonies where the hyssop branch was used as terms of cleansing people with water, sometimes with blood. It depends on the situation in the Levitical law. But when they looked forward to being born of

water, that was such an important symbol. That's why Jesus in John 3, he chides Nicodemus for being a teacher of Israel, and he doesn't know that you got to be born of water in the Spirit, because those were the two things that had to happen. You need to be cleansed of your sin in this washing of water is the picture. It's a symbol, it's a picture, and you've got to have a new heart. The Spirit has to change you. He needs to put a new spirit within you. So you have to have a new start with sins forgiven and a new interior life. The water was a symbol of that. And so it was in baptism. So we have a new thing, a new ordinance that's going to be started. Jesus is going to tell them in Matthew 28 to do baptism in the name of Christ to every disciple. That was a picture of this cleansing. Now it's all a picture, just like the Lord's Supper. The elements are pictures, they're symbols of that. And sometimes, of course, with both the Lord's Supper and baptism, those have been easy causes for false teaching throughout church history. We thought wrongly about those because they're such tangible things, right? Get baptized in literal water, eat this literal piece of bread, and drink this literal cup of juice or wine. That has caused a lot of people to build theology that they shouldn't. But both of them were pictures of something. And so it was appropriate that the New Covenant Age would be pictured symbolically by being dunked in water. That was why this was a new thing. It wasn't like a one-to-one correspondence between something they were doing in the Old Testament. Although it wasn't unique, not to throw a wrench in this at this point. There were other groups who would baptize people as an initiatory right into what they were doing. There were baptismal tanks, places they stepped down into even in the Qumran digs that we've done out there in the Judean desert. I'd say we. I didn't say that because we're interested in biblical things. I was not out there digging anything up. So they had ablutions, we would say. Look that word up. Ablutions or washings that would show, you know, some kind of initiatory right into a group or a community. But Christianity then, God in his plan, wanted to symbolize this washing of water with this baptismal rite. And just like you're not eating Christ's body because he said, "you're not going to drink this fruit of the vine again until I drink it with you anew in the kingdom." It's the same thing with the water. The water is not cleansing you of your sins, but it's a symbol of that. And that's why we have a whole new thing that we didn't have in the Old Testament. Nothing really corresponding to it cleanly, other than a prediction of a prophecy that symbolized our forgiveness. Great question.

**Question:** Hey, Pastor Mike. I had a question on Romans 1. I'm 40 years old and the level of insanity that we live in today just seems to increase at warp speed. And in the 28th verse of Romans 1, it says, "And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done." Do you see like what we're going through as a divine judgment from God? In essence, like an abandonment to the reprobate mind. That's my question.

**Pastor Mike:** Yes. I mean, there's always been segments of society being turned over to their sin to be completely debauched and debased and shamed. Right? I mean, look at the stuff that is going on in the headlines of our country, in the Biden administration, in the decrees and the statements that are made by people every day online that are applauded that you dare not disagree with. This is now characterizing our civilization. And all I'm saying is it's not that it's new, and it's not even that it's new to take over a civilization. It's just that this usually marks the end of a civilization. So, yeah, it could be judgment in the sense that, okay, at this



point we're going to so eat our filth that we're going to as a civilization, as a country, collapse. Rome collapsed in part with a lot of the same symptomatic sins and immorality that are taking place in Western culture today. You know, but you can't do a lot of these things in other cultures. And I'm just saying it's like when it was Pride Month and everyone was putting up their rainbow, you know, their logos in the rainbow flag, they weren't doing that in Middle Eastern countries. Right? They weren't doing that in Islamic countries. And I'm not saying that, you know, hey, this is a righteous society because we've said their theology is all wrong. I mean, it's deadly wrong. And yet when I was in... I was teaching actually with Pastor Lucas sitting right next to you, we were out in Dubai. I was teaching in Dubai. And I don't know if you remember even in some of those conversations Pastor Lucas, but they were like feeling bad that we were from America. Right? It's like, you know, I was there teaching theology and they loved that. It was a training center, like a seminary for people. But they were like, "Ah, man, it must be a mess living there with all that immorality that you have over there. You know, just homosexuality and transgenderism. It's just that's a mess." And I'm thinking to myself it's funny because I don't think of it that way, because you're out there in a culture that's fighting just for freedom of religion, and we're trying to chase the government around in Middle Eastern countries. Right? They're all sending their people from countries around to be trained in Dubai because it was one place where we could do it, at least with some freedom. And I'm thinking to myself, you guys are the guys we think are oppressed. They're looking at us as "you're oppressed with immorality. It must be horrible." And I'm thinking to myself, you're right. Right? And so in that sense, we may see this as a portend for the end of our civilization. And I'm not sitting here as a doom and gloomer, although you may say, "well, I've listened enough to your sermons. You seem like a doom and gloomer." But I am saying we do need to wake up and smell the coffee. We're not living in 1950s America. And you just point out something I would just fully agree with. Yes, it is a judgment on any society when they're just turned over. It's like parents. If you had eight kids and they all start growing up and they just all start, you know, smoking crack and prostitutes and all the rest. I'm not talking about him, but there are people with sons who do all that. But if you think about it, at some point, if you just said, "Well, whatever. I can't stop him," you know, it would be like your family is just going to collapse. This is a sign of God. If a parent is just turning their kids over to all of that, it's like God saying, "Okay, fine." And so we've always thought we were invincible. And I think we're going to find that our sin is going to take us down because society can't function the way we're functioning. You know we cannot sit here and fight realities. I tried to talk about this last week in the sermon, we just can't do that and survive. We can't even have a conversation about biology anymore. Right? We can't ask a Supreme Court justice nominee, "What is a woman?" Right? I mean, this is insanity and it's getting worse and it's all based on sin. You're absolutely right. So, yes, it is a judgment upon our society because we thought we could play around with sin or to quote Proverbs, we thought we could scoop fire in our lap and not be burnt. And we're getting burnt. And everything we loved about our society that made it prosperous is going away, if we haven't noticed, with nine plus percent inflation at the current moment.

**Question:** I have two questions if you will entertain that. First, it's Jesus' model prayer to the Father. So do we have reason to exclusively pray to the Father? And second, are there markers in Scripture where we can determine what Scripture is literal and what is poetic?



**Pastor Mike:** Now I think the way you worded the question, I'm not sure that's what you meant. But in the first question about the Lord's Prayer, the model prayer of Christ, Matthew 6, do we have license to pray in another way? Is that what you mean by that? Yeah, yes, I think so, because even in the prayers that we do see recorded in Scripture, even Jesus' prayers, he doesn't just recite that. So I know just by example. If Jesus is saying pray like this, and then he comes over here in John 17, his longest recorded prayer and doesn't pray exactly like that, I'm going to say, okay, I get it. And then, of course, the apostle Paul praying. There are lots of ways to pray. But the elements of prayer that are given to us in the Lord's template prayer, the disciple's prayer we should call it. Yeah, those are elements we should follow. It's starting with knowing who you're talking to. Right? "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." There are elements that you better not forget. Just like when Jesus is praying in John 17 and modeling prayer for us there, he's got a high view of his Father in every other sentence of the prayer. "And give us this day our daily bread." Well, what was the need of the moment when Jesus was about to go to the cross? Well, I need my disciples to be one. I need you to sanctify them in truth. Today what they need is to be resolved to be faithful to you. I mean, those were the things basically, a Mike Fabarez paraphrase, but things that were being said in his prayer. Well, that was the daily bread that was needed. So these are prompts. These are categories. These are ways to do it. And so when you go to church, if you don't go to a church where you stand up and recite these words and you think, wow, you're not very godly because you're not saying the model prayer of Christ, I'm saying, well, because that's not how this was designed to be recited. Is there more on that?

**Question:** Sorry, I don't think I was clear in my question but I meant to whom should we address in the Trinity?

**Pastor Mike:** 99% of the time in Scripture it is to the Father in the authority or the name of Christ. And by name we mean we're coming knowing that we have no right to talk to you. We have no right to talk as sinful fallen creatures to a holy God. And yet we're coming to look at that picture in the book of Hebrews about Christ being our great high priest. Just like if I were a priest, a normal priest in Israel. Right? I can't even come to God as a priest without thinking about that day of Yom Kippur, where the high priest goes into the holy of holies and represents the whole nation and sacrifices the animals and has the goat into the wilderness in the scapegoat. I've got to think that I'm coming really on the coattails of someone else. And so we enter in boldly into the throne of grace because we have a great high priest who intercedes for us. Romans Chapter 8. I mean, just the whole center part of the book of Hebrews. So I do think that should be just like in Scripture, the predominant way that we pray. Does Stephen pray to Jesus when he's getting stoned to death? Yes. Okay. Sure. There's nothing wrong with that. I'm just thinking and there are times in my prayers where I'm going to kick into saying, Jesus, you know what it's like dealing with what I'm dealing with. You were here, you had fingernails, you had people who wore you out, you were fatigued, you were tired, you were physically hurting. You know what it was to be thirsty. So there are times I just naturally kick my prayer over to Jesus the Son. But I think predominantly the example is I'm really talking to the Father through the authority of the Son. And to the Spirit we have no examples of that. But, you know, he has, speaking of ontology and authority, he is God. Right? The third person of the Godhead. So if I were to pray to the Holy Spirit, that wouldn't

be wrong. But if that's the predominant way you're praying, I'm thinking, I just don't think that would be a healthy way to pray. We should be healthy in our praying, praying directly to the Father through the authority of the Son. And I hope the direction of the Spirit, how the Spirit would prompt us either by conviction or by encouragement. Your second question... remind me what it was.

**Question:** Yeah. It was markers of literal and of...

**Pastor Mike:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. It's funny because I was just reading in the Scripture yesterday somewhere where I thought, this is a good example of that. And of course, I can't remember what it was right now. But yeah, it would be like someone handing me a book or a newspaper or whatever and saying, you know, "Here, read this, but I'm not going to give you any instructions about what is literal and what's figurative, you know, or what's allegorical." It's almost a common-sense approach, right? There is something that we do in school, right? Obviously, we study the rules of interpretation. We call it hermeneutics, which is what it means to rightly interpret something. And we should really think through especially if we're going to be teachers, kind of the logical rules that we prescribe to think that we want to rightly understand a passage of Scripture. So there are rules, but those rules are so inherent in usually how we read anything. We know if we're talking about something that is metaphorical, Like this morning, if I said, you know, "I got up early this morning and I beat the sunrise," you'd know I was talking about the fact that the earth was spinning and the sun really in relation to us we were moving and so it wasn't like the sun really rose. It was like, you know, the earth rotated enough for me to see the sun. But I didn't say that. Right? Because you know that turn of phrase. And it may have been in Job, maybe it was earlier in the week, but it was this passage where I thought... maybe it was in the Psalms. Who knows? I shouldn't even try to recall what it was yesterday, but maybe it wasn't yesterday. But it was something where I thought, here is a passage. Maybe it was in Psalms where in First Samuel there was a clear statement about it. And then in the Psalms it was said so metaphorically, said so poetically. But those things become, I think, most obvious in the ways that we would read anything. So that's not a very helpful answer for you right now. I could hand you a hermeneutics textbook or we could look at any passage of Scripture and say, you know... Here's the general rule of thumb. Just like in reading a newspaper or a book. I'm going to generally lean to always try and take this literally. Right? And that means like exactly like what the words literally say, unless there's a reason for me not to, that is given to me within the sentence itself or the context. And so even in the context of the Psalms, I immediately know, like, okay, it's a songbook and song lyrics are poetic. And so when it talks about... Did we read Psalm 19 this morning? Right? "The sun rises like a bridegroom." That's not the passage I was thinking of earlier. You're really deep in my head at this point. But the point is it's a bridegroom it's not like, oh, was the son wearing a tux, right? We just know you're being metaphorical. So take it literally whenever you can. And this gets important when you're reading what we call apocalyptic texts. Apocalyptic texts, if you're looking at... I used to teach a genres class in the New Testament, if you look at texts that are given to us as "I saw this." That's how the whole book of Revelation starts in Revelation Chapter 4, at least. John says he was taken up to heaven and "I saw this" and he starts explaining it. We have Old Testament books that are that way. Sections of books, Zachariah, parts of the Bible that are



given as a description of what someone saw. Ezekiel, the first nine chapters of Ezekiel. Those passages, if you look at them, you think, okay, those are the hardest ones for us to determine how literal do I take what you're saying? Right? And all I can tell you, just as long as I brought up Ezekiel and Revelation, if you look at Revelation Chapters 4 and 5 and you look at the beginning, the first ten chapters actually of Ezekiel, and you compare some of the things like the four living creatures, right? You see two people who are separated by 600 years giving us descriptions of heavenly beings and they look a lot alike. And yet what they're relaying is here's what I saw in this vision. Here's what God allowed me to see in this heavenly throne. Well, that's interesting. Now, I do know it's got to be some kind of like this looks like this and this looks like that. But, you know, how literally do I take it? Like I had someone ask me this week, like in the New Jerusalem, will there literally be a river running from the throne and on both sides we got trees bearing fruit? And I'm like, yeah, I think so. Right? Even though the way it's described, like a sea of crystal. Well, it was not going to be crystal. Right? But it will be like crystal. So I think, yeah, as long as I can take it as literally as I can read it and say, is there any reason I shouldn't? So I think that should be the default for all of us when we read Scripture.

**Question:** Is it okay if I ask more than one question?

**Pastor Mike:** Okay.

**Question:** In the coattails of what that gentleman just asked, is the Scripture that says the nation most blessed would be most cursed. Could that be referring to America?

**Pastor Mike:** I don't think that we are specifically intended in any scriptural passage. But I think that all of the principles of "to whom much is given, much is required," clearly applies to us. So the applicability of those texts to America, there's no doubt. But in terms of yeah, that's what the author intended and God was using that author to write about America. Right? I don't think that would be the case.

**Question:** And also in Joel 2:25 it mentions that "God will restore the years the locust have eaten." Could that apply to someone who accepts Christ and then they lived a sinful life and their life in Christ will make up for those sinful years?

**Pastor Mike:** Well, there was a literal locust plague in Joel's day, and he's speaking literally of that plague. But what's the principle there? If I said the principle is something that has to be true in every Christian's life, then I would be wrong. Like the thief on the cross. Right? How many years did he so his wild oats, just to use another analogy, and yet he dies on a cross. He's a Christian for a few hours. You think, okay, well, God didn't restore those years. And I would say, well, how many rewards will he get? Well, a few. Some, right? He stood up for Christ against the other criminal on the cross. So there's some merit there. But when we look at wood, hay and straw, quote unquote, and gold, silver and precious stones, and we think, okay, for whatever I wasted in my life, it's going to be resupplied by reward-worthy events. Well, I can't take that as a rule. But I can say the graciousness of God in treating Israel after the locust plague, that's a gracious God. But what's in between those two is repentance. And





so we're always saying, what's the point of all that? The point is for you to repent, that God may now bring times of blessing into your life, that the favor of God can be seen in your life.

**Question:** Also, I hope I can explain this right. The furnishings of the temple they appear to be situated in the way of a cross to the Holy of Holies. Is that accurate or scriptural?

**Pastor Mike:** I don't think they're in the form of a cross, but they are concentric in a sense. But the Holy of Holies is a cube and it's in the back of a rectangular holy place. So, I mean, I know that when we talk about the placements and you see some of those images of the placements of the, you know, the altar outside, the altar of incense on the inside, the candelabra, the showbread. Even those things are hard for us to place carefully. And I think some people have made too much of what they emphatically assert about things being in which places and what they represent. And that was a very popular thing to do in the early 20th century. Books written about like, here's how Christ is seen in the arrangement of the furniture in the tabernacle or the temple. And I would just be careful about extrapolating too much and reading back into those what we're trying to see. Even though I think there are a ton of precursors to looking to who Christ would be. I mean, think about the altar itself, right? Christ is seen as the one who is the "Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world," just like a lamb would be burnt on the altar. But yeah, it's more of a room at the end of a rectangular room whereas the holy place, and then you've got the Ark of the Covenant sitting in the middle of it with the pole sticking out of it. So. Yeah.

**Question:** Pastor Mike, I work for an organization that is a faith-based organization. And I've been there for 28 years. Something just happened within the last couple of weeks that God has put it upon my heart to say, I cannot be silent. And you broached a subject a few questions ago. I need to have some Scripture that I can use in my response to an organization now that now refers to "pregnant people." So please give me some Scripture that I can, because I have to, God's put it upon my heart to respond and I want to make sure that I'm fully armed.

**Pastor Mike:** Absolutely. I would never capitulate to that language. And that's, you know, like Hans Christian Andersen, "the emperor has no clothes." You're asking us to play along with the folly that men can get pregnant because people want to assert their own identity as whatever they want it to be. It's absurd. I would start with Carl Trueman's book. What's the shorter one Pastor John? "Strange New World" is the short version of that book. He wrote two books, but the shorter version, a "Strange New World." That is filled not only with Scripture, but the logic of how we have moved as a civilization to where we're at, to where now they're trying to force Christians in a faith-based organization to say, you know, you can't say pregnant women anymore, you have to say pregnant people. That's insanity. And at some point we have to stop. It's one thing when we, as a, you know, at least historically pluralistic society, want to say, well, the Church is going to sit there and we're not going to militantly go out there and force people to do what the Bible says. Right? We're evangelistic. I get that. But to then say no, now they're telling us as Christians or faith-based organization employees, that now we have to play along with their game. We're not going to do that. You can't do that. We shouldn't do that. And you're going to lose your jobs over it. I might lose my job over it.

But we have to say this is absurd. It's insanity. So I would recommend you look at Carl Trueman's book. Or I'd look at Matthew 19. Jesus talks about, you know, he created them male and female. End of discussion. I mean, "have you not read," you know. What are you guys dumb? That's what he's saying to the Pharisees of his day. They were talking about divorce, but he starts with quoting Genesis Chapter 2. And I'm saying, of course, he creates male and female. You got two choices and only one of them has ovaries and can have a baby. So I'm sorry. If you want me to play your game, I'm not going to play. And I think if enough of us say we're not going to play, I guess either we'll be a tight, persecuted subculture or, you know, at some point someone's going to go okay, or the society is going to collapse and only the sane people are going to have any reason to keep functioning as a civilization. I don't know. That's I know, over-the-top talk, but... Yeah. You got to read Carl Trueman's the summary of his bigger book, which now escapes me too Pastor John. Do you remember the bigger book? "The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self." Great book. But it's pretty dense and there's a lot of philosophy in it. So his little book, "Strange New World," which is a take obviously on Brave New World, which if you haven't read that lately, you probably should. But read that one first, "Strange New World."

**Question:** So in the Bible Christ says every tree that does not bear fruit in me will be cut off. And so my question is how can we know the difference between a dry season and not being in Christ?

**Pastor Mike:** Yeah, well, if a dry season becomes that someone could look at you and say you're not following Christ, then I would say It's hard for you to justify saying I'm a follower of Christ, but I don't follow Christ. In other words, there are people who say, "Well, this has been a hard season of my Christian life. I've struggled to do a lot of things that I know I should do." That's different than someone who says, "I'm just not bearing fruit. I'm not interested in bearing fruit." You've got to say at some point, anyone should be able to step into your life and say, "Hey, you're a Christian, you should do this," and you should be able to say, "You're right. The core desire of my heart is to do that. And you're right. Would you help me, keep me accountable? Let's work together to see me get back to my first love," to quote Revelation Chapter 2. So what I don't want is to give anyone false hope that they can embrace Christianity, to use Jesus' words, to embrace the word with joy. Right? And then when the troubles or trials of life come along, they're just not interested in bearing fruit. There's only one soil in the four soils that bears fruit. Now there's a distinction between those fruits. You might say, "Well I'm not super Christian like that gal. Right? Well, there's 30, 60, 100-fold. There's a lot of variety in the good soil. And you may say, "Well, I'm just trucking away at, you know, 20-fold and here's my best friend and she's so godly, I can't be like her. To her I look like I'm in a dry season, but I'm doing the best I can." And so the distinctions between Christians in terms of their fruitfulness, I understand are varied. But you cannot say that just because someone embraced Christianity, they say they embrace Christianity with genuine faith, but they don't produce fruit, that somehow they can keep saying, well, I'm a Christian. And I'm not saying you were and you lost it. I'm saying there's only one way for me to view that based on Hebrews Chapter 2 and Hebrews Chapter 3. But Hebrews Chapter 2 in particular that, or Romans 8, there are plenty of passages, if you become a real Christian you are going to persevere to the end. You will bear fruit. Will there be ups and downs? Yes, we all have ups



and downs. But if I say a dry season is a willful dry season... It's even like we read, this one I know we read in today's Daily Bible Reading, "Keep me from presumptuous sins," right? In other words, a presumptuous sin is I'm not interested in bearing fruit in this season of my life. And I hope no Christian would ever be able to say that. You may look back at the last few months ago and say, "I wasn't very good. My time on the word was weak, my prayer life was weak." Okay, great. But right now, if I preach a sermon on your prayer life and your prayer life is weak, you'd feel conviction. You'd say, "You're right, preacher, that's what I need to do." And you would pray and you would say I need to work on that, and you would start working on it. That's different than someone saying, "Don't mess with me. I'm a Christian because, you know, six years ago I was really on fire for God but I'm not interested now." And here's the thing about the Bible. It's not trying to give anyone confidence or assurance if they're not bearing fruit because Jesus said, "You'll know them by their fruits." And so that's the whole point. The assurance grows that I know that I'm connected with Christ if I'm bearing fruit. And my point is every time you come into church, I hope you're being encouraged and pushed and prompted and convicted to bear more fruit. So, yeah, if you say I've just come through a barren season in my Christian life, I hope it's the kind of barren season and you look back and you say, "I am regretful of it. I feel bad about it, I'm convicted about it. And you know what? I'm stepping up to walk in step with the Spirit, and I'm going to double down on that." And that's why we should gather together all the time and all the more as we see the day approaching and our civilization tanking, because we need to stir one another up to love and good deeds. So yeah, and for me to say, well, let me just give you some comfort if you're in a dry season, if a dry season is defined, I know that's just a poetic way to put it, as like I'm not interested and I'm not going to do the right thing. I'm not going to go to church. I not going to read my Bible. I'm not going to pray then I'm going to say, how in the world can you say you're a follower of Christ if you're willfully, presumptuously saying, I'm not interested in following Christ? We have no freeze time to do that, right? We have no spot where you get at least 13 free months in the Christian life to not be a Christian, right? No, you're supposed to be a Christian every day. You're supposed to be prompted and spurred on every day. Does that... Maybe there's more to that. Did that help or is there more to that? Okay. Okay, good. Thank you.

**Question:** Hello Pastor Mike. The question I have is that when Christ died on the cross for our sins, did he die for everyone who ever lived on this earth or he died only for the elect?

**Pastor Mike:** Well, let me ask you a question in response to that. When you say "did he die FOR them"? Okay. If you mean did he take their sins upon him and pay for them, as the Bible says, a propitiation for their sins and that their sins are forever paid for? Do you mean that by the question?

**Question:** Yeah. Just, you know, when he...

**Pastor Mike:** I know how we word the question, but I'm trying to dig down deeper and say if by that you say no, Christ died for the person who is going to hell, who never responds to Christ, that shines Christ on and yet Jesus already paid a propitiation, a satisfaction before his



Father for all the sins that they've committed. They have been blotted out by Christ's death. Is that what you mean by "died for them"?

**Question:** Yes and no. Is his death for everyone who ever lived or for the elect or predestined.

**Pastor Mike:** Well, I'm trying to answer that in a way that will help maybe you answer it for the people who are asking you the question. In other words, the little word "Huper" in Greek, which is this word "for," he died for us, right? The just for the unjust. That's a huge statement, right? That the Father sends his Son to be the payment FOR the unjust, for the unrighteous. He is the propitiation, Romans 4, for our sins. Okay. So if Christ expiates and he eliminates and if he nails sins to the cross that are forever before the Father blotted out, then I got a problem saying, yeah, Jesus died and blotted out the sins of every non-Christian who is going to stand before the Great White Throne and have the books opened and now they're going to be punished for every sin. Does he take back the payment at that point? And then I'm saying, no, no, no. The reasons Christians, at least in our kindred, our ilk, have always said no, Jesus died for those who he would save is because there's where the theological problem comes in. And how in the world did that happen? Did Jesus say, "Well, I'm not sure who's going to respond, so I'm going to die for everyone's sin and blot everyone's sin out. But once we get to the end of this thing and I see what really happens, then I'm going to take back the payment for all of these people because they didn't respond. And I'm saying that's not how we view God in his sovereign plan over salvation. That's why we've said no, God knows what he's doing, right? He's going to call dead to life. He's going to bring them to himself. And so that's why I said what I said. I'm not trying to spar with you. I'm just saying when someone says, "Did Jesus die for non-Christians." I'm going to say, what do you mean by FOR them? Do you mean did he blot out their sins and I'm going to say, I just can't go there. Because either it makes Jesus or God, the whole Triune God, unaware of what's going to happen. Right? And I'm saying, well, that's not how God works. God not only knows what's going to happen, he plans what happens. So I'm saying I think Jesus died for the people that he is going to save. And all I'm saying is... Well, I guess I'm left with this. What about those passages? He didn't just die for our sins. He died for the sins of the whole world. Well, here's a Jewish apostle, John, writing and saying, "It isn't just us." And John's the one who makes the biggest point of this. Not John here with the microphone. The John in the Bible, John the apostle. And what he's saying is, listen, hey, because here was the whole contention. We just got through it in Acts 15, the Jerusalem Council. It's not just for us. He died for the Gentiles. He died for all. And as I like to say, it's all without distinction. Scythian, slave, barbarian, free. Not all without exception. Right? He didn't die for all without exception or all their sins would be blotted out eternally. And I'm saying Jesus died for our sins, he died for the elect, he died for those who he has called to salvation. Now, again, if you're going to say, well, then, Pastor Mike, if you believe that, well, then you don't do evangelism or you don't pray for lost people or you don't... I'm saying I am not God, man. I have no clue who's elect in this town. I have no clue who God is calling that salvation. But I know that in South Orange County he's got people who are, to use the words of the book of Acts, appointed to eternal life. And he wants us to reach them with the gospel. And I don't know who that is. So I have to indiscriminately do evangelism. Because he didn't just die for the Jewish people. We don't have that problem anymore



because now we're just a bunch of Gentiles talking about more Gentiles and Jews. He died for everyone. In what sense? For every kind of person, every tongue, every tribe, every nation. All, every last individual? Well, if that were the case, what's with the payment for sin? They're going to go pay for their sin in the Lake of Fire. So it's a logical argument that I think is biblically sound, but we stumble over these words. When we look at them in context we then can understand we shouldn't stumble over those words because John's very concerned that we don't have a Jewish gospel. Right? It's a salvation that is powerful. It's mighty to say to the Jew first and also to the Greek. And that also to the Greek was a huge statement for Jewish people who thought it was all about the descendants of Abraham. So I don't think it should be a point of contention if someone says, well, I think Jesus died for everyone because I just read First John and it says he died "not just for our sins, but the sins of the whole world," First John 2. I know, I get that. But I don't think it's what John meant, right? The sins of the whole world, like every last single person on the planet. Because if that's the case, well, then he's either got to take back the payment at the Great White Throne judgment or there is double jeopardy I suppose. They get to pay it twice. Father paid for the sins on the cross for this person, and now he's going to pay for it himself. I just think it makes sense. And yet I don't think we should fight over that to me. And yet I'm sure this will get taped, it'll be streamed and someone will go, "See, I told you. That Pastor Mike, man, that's where he's at." I don't understand what the difference would be. If you think, well, then you're going to run into an evangelistic conversation, trying to look for the, you know, elect seal under his bangs or something. I'm like, no, no, no. I have no idea. I'm sharing the gospel indiscriminately to everyone. But I am stuck in my thinking at saying, "Yeah, I think God knew what he's doing, the Father knows what he's doing, the Son knows what he's doing and he died with a very specific, definite focus.

**Question:** Yeah, that's my question. I appreciate it.

**Pastor Mike:** Okay. Yeah. And I wasn't trying to spar with you, and I'm just saying I'm trying to train you when someone says that if you really, whatever... I don't even think we should be arguing about it. But if you do get drawn into that conversation, say what you mean "for them," died for them. And I just think if you dig down a little bit deeper, it certainly will help. Not that everyone's going to come to the same conclusion.

**Question:** Thank you, Pastor Mike. My question and it does tag team on the other gentleman over there that was Romans 1. So in Romans 8:20 it says, "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it." Can you talk a little bit about how God is subjecting the creation to futility and maybe what we're missing in terms of why is there so much craziness in the world?

**Pastor Mike:** Well, that particular passage is trying to distinguish the sons of God being revealed. In other words, here is the promise that God is going to take his people, and the reason he calls men and women "sons" there, not because he's gender fluid or confused. It's because the son analogy was the inheritor, right? The son got the inheritance and so, the firstborn son, so the sons of God are those who are the inheritors of God's redemptive work. And when they're revealed to be who they are, not as the embattled group of persecuted





people within the Roman Empire, or, in our case, in Western civilization, we're going to be revealed as those, like these fishermen from Galilee, they're sitting on 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel. Or it says in the book of Revelation, he's got an iron scepter and we're going to have an iron scepter and we're going to be ruling the nations, it's called regions, with Christ. That picture of revealing of the sons of God, which really the first stage is the millennial kingdom, that picture of that reign, that is a picture of now saying now the earth is ultimately going to come in the freedom of the sons of God being glorified. And we will have a glorification of the world. And so this world was subjected to futility back in Genesis 3 when God said, "Cursed is the ground because of you." You are sinful, rebellious people who didn't do what I wanted you to do. Now, the ground's not going to do what you want it to do. You're going to want to plant seeds and have a beautiful garden. And now all of a sudden, you didn't want it but here come the thorns and the weeds and the thistles. So I'm going to make the world a lot like you. And you're going to be reminded every day that you are sinners. So you got a body. You should put, you know, carrots and apples and all this good stuff in your mouth every day. And you should have a healthy body, but then you get cancer and it's like, what happened? Well, your body's not doing what you want it to do. You didn't do what I wanted you to do. You now are going to live in a world, a creation that is subjected to futility. So if you see that phrase and you extrapolate, we're talking about the society and the people in it. That's not the context of Romans 8. Romans 8 is the world itself is groaning, quote unquote. It's anthropomorphized. It's personified. That's a better word. And it's like it can't wait to be done with cancer. It can't wait to be done with rotting trees. It can't wait to be done with, you know, the locust that strip the fields. It can't wait to be done with seismic activity that cause earthquakes. It can't wait to be done with volcanoes. It can't wait to be done with viruses. It can't wait to be done with thorns and thistles. Because when the children of God are revealed, ultimately, as it says in Second Peter Chapter 3, God is going to create a "new world where righteousness dwells," not just in individual hearts, but just like he had to curse the world around the sinful heart, now he's going to bring creation into freedom and redemption. And just like we get glorified bodies, that's just a depiction of a glorified planet where you plant stuff in the ground and it grows up exactly how you want it to. So yeah, but I know what you probably are looking at and that is society is bound to corruption. Right? And that's certainly true. And I think Romans Chapter 1 is speaking specifically to that. And we as a society or back to the Proverbs, "Sin is a disgrace to any people, but righteousness exalts a nation." So we are reaping what we've sown to quote Galatians 5, we are now reaping, we are reaping the whirlwind. We are getting out of our society this horrible reality that we're starting to live in. It's not as horrible as it can be. But you know, there are certainly times and periods in the past it's been worse and places around the world a lot worse. But for us, it's looking pretty bad.

**Question:** Hi Pastor Mike, a question about meeting the Lord in the air. First the dead in Christ, then the Church in Christ. We're changed in the twinkling of the eye. I've been hearing different pastors saying pre-tribulation and post-tribulation.

**Pastor Mike:** Well, I think we're going to be taken up to meet the Lord in the air because at the end of the tribulation he's not going to meet anybody in the air. He's going to come with his saints to the earth. Zachariah 14. Clearly Revelation Chapter 19. He is going to come and judge the nations as he says in Matthew 24 and 25. Olivet Discourse ending with the



judgment of the nations separating the shepherd like would separate sheep from goats. He's going to arrive on earth after the battle of Armageddon. So, if he's got this unexpected, imminent taking up of the Church and the dead in Christ rising, then when does he come and have his feet and toenails touch the Mount of Olives and it splits in half, Zachariah 14? When does that happen? That Revelation 19? Well, I think it happens after that seven-year period that's divided into three and a half years of peace. And he says, according to Daniel Chapter 9, there is a 70th week of his time, as it says in Jeremiah, at the time of Jacob's Trouble. And you should look at Romans 11 afresh, where he's going to turn his attention, when the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled, to Israel. And he's going to, as the book of Revelation says, Revelation 6, he's going to pull out right out of the gate, 144,000 Jews, each 12,000 of the 12 tribes of Israel. And he's going to work with Israel primarily as the focus of his work. And it's a time of Jacob's Trouble. As Jesus said, Matthew 24, a time of tribulation, "a time of tribulation the earth has never seen or ever will see." That's not 70 A.D., that's not any other period of time. It's a time that has yet to come. And that time that's yet to come is a period of time that's marked off, not only in Daniel, but in the book of Revelation as a seven-year period. So what divides that seven years? Christ coming to take his Church. And bringing them to what we assume at that particular time, as he described for us as the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, the Bemis Seat of Christ. And what's happening on earth? Well, Revelation Chapters 6 through 19, it's a mess. He's going to persecute the Church. He's going to press upon the Church. The world has persecuted Christians. God's going to persecute the world. And I mean that because the word flips this in Greek means the Church has pressed against this persecution. It's called tribulation. That's the word we translate it sometimes. The tribulation has come upon Christians in this life because the godless world is pressing against us. Well in the book of Revelation Chapters 6 through 19 God now presses down upon the world. It brings tribulation on people. But in that he's saving out of that time of Jacob or Israel's trouble, he's saving a remnant and bringing a whole generation to Christ. Read again Romans Chapter 11. He's now that the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled, he is now going to bring in the salvation, as he puts it, all of Israel will be saved. It's going to be like Israel's now like a messianic Christian church, because now all of a sudden we have this great conversion and adherence to Jesus of Nazareth. And that's the picture of being separated from this seven-year period. Something major happens in the middle, as it says in the book of Daniel, that there is a breaking of the covenant of this world leader. This horn, this king of the south, all of this is going to take place in the middle of the tribulation. It's broken into two halves. And yeah, read Daniel Chapters 9 through 12, Revelation Chapters 6 through 19, Romans Chapter, you can start in Chapters 9, 10 and 11. All of those will help us, I think, get this idea of God's not done with Israel. And it's going to start with a bad period of time, but the Church is going to be saved from that. The coming of Christ for the Church is unknown. The coming is like we don't know when it's going to happen, imminent and the coming of Christ at the end of the tribulation is vague. They got days spelled out and we know exactly how long it's going to be from the time that this world leader makes a covenant with Israel. So one is I can set my watch to it and one is I don't know when it's going to happen. And one is he's going to meet the people in the air. One is he's going to meet people on the earth. You know, the focus is different. One of my professors had me once take all the passages in the New Testament that talked about the return of Christ and try and see patterns and look for patterns and put them basically he was leading us to put them into two categories. And we can see two distinct



things happening when Christ comes back, one for his Church and one to deliver Israel. One he comes to meet us in the air. One he comes with us in the air to the earth. So I'm a pre-tribulational guy if you understand that. So yeah, there's a lot of talk about the end times. And one of the reasons I think that motivates it, when I have conversations, at least, with post-Tribbers, they would say, "Well, you know, you and your pre-Trib view is all just escapism. You're just trying to get off the planet. You just don't want persecution. So it's always pie in the sky. You don't want to engage culture." And I'm just like, that has nothing to do with my view. What my view has to do is bound by what I'm reading in Ezekiel, in Jeremiah, in Daniel, in the book of Revelation, in Matthew 24. I'm stuck with this because I think it's the best reading of the text. And a lot of good men disagree. A lot of good women, I don't mean to say only men are theologians, but I'm saying a lot of good Christians disagree on that. And that's fine. We can still be friends. They can still come and preach in our pulpit as has happened many times. But I believe in a pre-tribulational rapture the Church. Not as an escapist theology.

**Question:** Thank you for having this Q&A. We started up with Job. We're going to close with Job, first part of Job 1:6. It reads, "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord." My question is what does "sons of God" mean? You address a little bit ago that it could be creation. But then some commentaries talk about angels. So can you shed some light on this for us?

**Pastor Mike:** Well, let me clarify what I didn't mean to say, and that is the revealing of the sons of God in Romans 8 is our glorification. And then the statement that was made was what about the subjection to futility of creation? Well, that meant the physical creation. The sons of God, I wasn't trying to equate that with creation. I was saying creation at least as a contemporaneous freeing from the bondage of the curse, the same time that Christians are glorified. But your question, here's the Hebrew of it, the "Bene-Elohim." The phrase "sons of God" is a phrase that is in my mind clearly in that text and in others referring to angelic beings. And of course, Satan is a part of that conference and comes. And as you see throughout the book of Daniel this celestial battle and even in Ephesians we read about it, right? There are the cosmic powers and forces of darkness in the present age. All of this is going on that we don't see. But there's a lot of stuff happening in the angelic category. And by angelic, I mean both elect angels as Jesus puts it, the elect angels they call them, and the evil angels. Right? The devil and his angels. So we call them angels and demons usually. But demons are angels as well. When they come for this conference I'm thinking, well, what is that about? I don't know, other than that's what happened. And I'm thinking that probably regularly happens. Now I think probably like, I don't know, any business, and the world is a business in a sense, God's running a big kingdom here. You probably have all kinds of different staff meetings. And so I'm assuming as I look at Revelation 4 and 5 and others, I think he's probably calling his good angels, if you want to put it that way, elect angels and having conversations all the time. But the bigwigs come in and he's got one now that the bad angels come in, particularly Satan is there at that Bene-Elohim meeting, that sons of God meeting. So sons of God, I think, is a category. And if it sounds positive, it only sounds positive because we're used to saying Son of God as a positive thing. Just like we say angels as a positive thing. But it's a category of creation. In that case, it's nonphysical beings. They're



spirit beings. And that means that they have intellect, emotion and will, but no physical reality. But they're running things in many ways on this planet. And a lot of people here, leaders and kings, they rise and fall as we see in the book of Daniel. There are fights going on that we don't even see in a lot of our politics and rising of monarchs throughout history and kings. So there's a day there in Job that's described that's kind of like just peeling back the curtain. And it probably happens a lot. Who knows how often it happens? And God's saying, "Well, what's happening?" Does God know what's happening? Of course he knows what's happening. But he delegates and brokers authority and oversight on the planet. And for every positive oversight we have in the Scripture, like Michael over Israel, at least as it's described in the book of Daniel, there are demons that are assigned and dispatched to deal with that place and that region. I mean, look for instance in Isaiah Chapter 14 or Ezekiel Chapter 28, when you see these spirit beings described as being engaged in geopolitics at a Bene-Elohim level, at an angelic level. So this is a common thing in Scripture, even though it's rarely talked about, it's talked about in a way like it's normal. And that's all I can say is that the angels come together in this case, both good and bad. I don't know how many. I don't know if they're just the top, you know, four-star generals of the angelic class. But they come before God and God goes, "What's up?" And Satan goes, "I know what's up. Your dude there, you know, is all about you because you're good to him." That's the Mike Fabarez paraphrase. But then the book of Job plays itself out. Does that help? Okay, great.

**Pastor Mike:** All right, gang. Thank you. I hope and I have been praying that somehow you'll take something out of tonight, that it would least encourage you to study your Bibles or that you would be, you know, motivated by something. Or if your question was asked and answered that it might be helpful and a catalyst for you. So thanks for being a part of it tonight. Let me pray for you and I'll let you go.

**Pastor Mike:** God, thank you for our team here. And just for their love for your word, their desire to know you better, and know your word better. And even these things that seem esoteric and interesting, like the sons of God coming before God and having that conversation there in Job Chapter 1. May these things help us at least to expand our minds that life is more than Facebook and Instagram and that there's a huge world out there that is exposed to us in the Scriptures, both the spiritual realm and even historically in what went on throughout history that, God, we need to be just digging in to. Help us, even as it says in Hebrews 5, to be people that long for that need of the word, so that our senses can be trained and our discernment can be trained to do what is right. So as Psalm 119 would tell us, just let us love your word, let us thank you for it seven times a day. I just pray that we would be people who would get into it more and more, even because of tonight's time together.

**Pastor Mike:** In Jesus name. Amen.