



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Divine Purpose #36

“Questions and Answers”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] And already up here, for the person who sent me or gave me this cartoon with “Repent” on it, I wanted to know if that was personal? Or a personal command or maybe you could wave it around after I answer a question that’s not your answer. [Laughter] But thank you.

We have some general rules to mention to you. Number 1 is something from me and, that is, my hearing is not all that great and, particularly, for those of you in the back, if you ask a question, we’d like for you to raise your hand, of course, and I’ll try to call on you. But, if you would speak out, speak out for me and then for some of the others up here, who may not also be able to hear you as well as you would like for them to hear you. So speak up when you ask a question. We have a special dispensation from some of the elders, at least, that the ladies are perfectly welcome to ask a question and so, you feel free to ask questions as well. This is not the meeting of the church and so, consequently, we want you to feel at home and also to try to have some of the questions, at least, put that you may have wanted to put not simply to me but to others, as well.

We would like for you to realize that we will try to avoid questions that might impinge on personalities. And so, occasionally, I may say, I don’t think it would be wise

for me to answer that. I hope you will realize the reason why. And, furthermore, I can use that to cover up my ignorance [Laughter] about some things.

And then, finally, as I got in the car tonight and started towards the place where we ate before the meeting, Martha said, “Oh, we forgot the cue cards.” [More laughter] And the cue cards were, of course, she was going to hold up for me, down near the front, like “dodge that one” [more laughter] or “be slippery on that one,” and so on. So, well, let’s go ahead. We want to have a good time and you won’t get all of your questions answered, but at least you can get them asked.

Let’s open our class with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we give Thee thanks and we praise Thy Name for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for this time together. We pray that our time of discussion, of questions, may be profitable for all of us. And above all, Lord, we again ask that through the discussions, through the questions, through the answers, that we may be helped in our study of the Scriptures and, ultimately, in our knowledge of our Triune God. And so we commit the hour to Thee with anticipation and with thanksgiving. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

[Message] And I forgot one thing; and that was that afterwards there is some refreshment for you in the parlor to the back. And the elders and others who have prepared this have invited all of you to stay around for a few moments and to enjoy the refreshments and the opportunity for some Christian fellowship.

I had some questions put on the pulpit here, and they are these. They are submitted by one of the deacons.

This question has to do with the warnings given by Amos and the question, “If I had heard Amos and believed what he said and was a born-again believer in that time, what should my actions be? This question is in the following context. “I believed what

Amos said was going to happen. I wanted to protect my family. Should I leave the area and wait out the storm? Should I stay there and prepare for the worst? Even though I believed Amos?”

Well, that’s an interesting question. If you believed what Amos said was going to happen, and you wanted to protect your family, I couldn’t think of anything better than to stay and obey, with God’s help, the things that Amos said in his prophecy. And if, for example, you did that you would have the confidence that the Lord God would do everything for your family that the Scriptures gave reason to expect might happen for them. So, yes, I would stay and I would, by God’s help, seek to obey the word of God. And I would trust him to provide for the needs that I, my family, and also my fellow believers would have.

The second part of the question has to do with World Wars, and that type of event. Question, “Since God is not the author of evil and war is evil, from whence cometh great wars?” This question is asked in the following context, “Does God allow Satan to create these wars? Does God cause these wars as judgment? How do wars fit in with God’s plans?”

Well, that’s an interesting question and raises, of course, a question that we all have to think about, if we study the Bible, and think about world affairs, and think about the question of evil. No philosopher ever writes a book on philosophy, general philosophy, without a chapter on the problem of evil. That’s a problem of theology and it’s a problem of philosophy, as well. Now, God is not the author of evil, according to the revelation of God in the word of God. But, nevertheless, evil exists in the world. So if God is not the author of evil, and, incidentally, that expression should be defined as when we mean God is not the author of evil, we mean that evil does not proceed out of God’s being. He is perfectly holy, infinitely holy, and, therefore, unholiness cannot proceed out of the being of God. But, nevertheless, he is a sovereign God, who determines that certain things take place, for greater good. And that’s the question, and as far as I’m

concerned, that's the way in which one should answer this. That is, if evil had not been determined, in this universe, by God, as having an existence; that is, if he had not determined that evil exist in this universe, we would never know what we know about God, now. And, preeminently, we would never know him as a gracious God because the essence of the grace of God is the means by which he covers the sin of sinners, by virtue of his gracious provision of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, as a result of the determination that evil exists, we know God as a gracious God.

We also know him as a God of justice and those two things, so far as I can tell, might not be known and surely would not be known to the degree that they are known, if God had not determined that evil exist. You might say that we would have known about justice by virtue of the fact that the angels have sinned, and the angels have come under judgment, but that only puts the question back a little farther. And through their sin and through their judgment, we know about the justice of God. And, therefore, as far as I can tell, we must take the position; God is not the author of evil, in the sense that evil proceeds out of his being; but he is the ultimate determinate that evil exist in our universe.

And, incidentally, if he were not, then we would have a dualism, instead of the kind of situation that we have in Christianity. And down through the history of Christianity, Christianity has always rejected dualism. Because dualism, ultimately, leads to the position that there are two eternal principles or beings and that is incompatible with the sovereignty of the God of the Scriptures. And so, historically, Christianity has always rejected dualism. They have affirmed the sovereign monotheism of the word of God and, therefore, have traced evil, ultimately, to the determination of this sovereign God, for a greater good. So far as I know, and as far as my own personal views are concerned, that's the most satisfactory answer to the problem of evil.

Therefore, “Does God allow Satan to create these wars?” Well, some wars, actually, were wars that were determined by the Lord God apart, so far as we can tell,

from the intermediate agency of Satan. But it might be conceivable that intermediate agencies, personal or otherwise, might be used to create situations that would reveal this character of God.

Does God cause these wars as judgment? Well, when we ask about specific wars, I must plead ignorance. I don't know. Some wars were determined by God, for specific reasons. He told the children of Israel to go into the land and exterminate the Canaanites. And so, consequently, that was something that he determined. How do wars fit into God's plans? Well, so far as I know, that's the way that they do.

Perhaps you have some other questions, you are perfectly free to raise your hand, in a moment, after I finish with question number three. This question has to do with the population of heaven and hell. Now, of course, he's dealing right down my bailiwick, talking about how many people are in heaven and how many people in hell. Of course, it is common knowledge for all Bible teachers. But [Laughter] this question is asked in the following context: The huge populations of unbelievers in India, China, Indonesia, well, the question I should have read, “Which will be more populated, heaven or hell?” This question is asked in the following context, “The huge populations of unbelievers in India, China, Indonesia, assuming there will be a great turning to the Lord during the tribulation; will there be non-elect born in the millennium?” I don't know exactly how that fits into that, but that's part of the question.

No one knows, of course, the population of heaven or hell, except the Lord God. So far as Christian theology is concerned, there have been differences of opinion. But, surprisingly, Calvinists have believed that heaven will be more populace than hell.

Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield, for example, specifically states that fact; that we have false ideas concerning how many people will be in heaven and how many people will be in hell, based upon certain views concerning the doctrine of divine election.

But what we do know is that heaven will have a such a vast multitude of people, that no man can number them, as we read in the Book of Revelation chapter 7. So there

will be a great turning to the Lord then; and, furthermore, now I'm treading on thin ice here and I'm willing to be corrected, but my understanding of world population is that due to the vast growth in world population and due to the fact that there will be this tremendous turning to the Lord, during that tribulation period, set out in Revelation chapter 7, when, as I say, so many will come out that it will be impossible to number them, out of every kindred, tribe, tongue and nation on the face of the earth. That we may, therefore, assume that there is good grounds, exegetically, for believing there will be far more people in heaven than are in hell. But, as far as the precise number, I'm sorry, I don't know.

Will there be non-elect born in the millennium? So far as we know, if we are pre-millennialists, we would affirm, yes, because of the things that are stated in Revelation chapter 20, verse 7 through verse 10. And for those of you who are here tonight, and you haven't been here all along, after you repent, we remind those who have been here and say to you, that we discussed this question in our classes, that we have been having on the purpose of the ages.

Now, I have some more here, but I'd like to give you a chance to respond. So, if you feel that you would like to ask a question, please, feel free to. It would be preferable if you stand; but if you are not going to stand, at least speak out, so that I can hear and the others too. So feel free to ask your question. Yes.

“I would like to get your understanding of the nature of the kingdom of God on earth, particularly, in light of, I think it was one evening, you said that you felt the necessity that had, or one at least one of the necessities for having the kingdom of God on earth was to show the far-reaching benefits of the atonement mainly in nature in the natural world rejuvenation. And my understanding is that the dispensationalists viewpoint essentially first taking place in the millennium, but they will beget, also. And what I am having a difficult time reconciling is that in 1 Corinthians 15, it seems to me to suggest that when Christ comes again, death is going to be done away with.”

Okay, those are very good questions and very, not easy ones. Obviously, Warren has been studying and so he's looking for answers to difficult questions. With reference to the nature of the millennium or necessity of the millennium, I think, I would, is that true, specifically, with reference to what you are saying. “Why there should be a millennium on the earth?”

I understand the promises of the rule of the Messiah in Jerusalem and the nature of things there, but the thing that concerns me, particularly, is the thing about death, versus what [Inaudible]

Well, let me answer the other first and then give you a suggestion with regard to the second. As I understand him, when he was first asking his question, what he was asking about was not so much the nature of the millennium, which if there is a millennium, is set out in the Old Testament Scriptures as well as in the New Testament, in Revelation chapter 20, verse 4 through 6 and some other places.

But when we speak about the necessity of a kingdom, we do raise a question that amillennialists, particularly, have raised. And, it's, “Why should there be a kingdom of God upon the earth? Why should we not leave our present type of existence, as believers, and enter right into the eternal state?” In other words, “Why should we have an interim kingdom of a thousand years?” And that's a very natural question. And I'd like to answer it in this way; that in the Garden of Eden, when man was placed in the Garden of Eden and was subject to his temptation in the Garden of Eden, Adam, he was, essentially, king of the earth, under God. The creation was subject to him; he was to rule over that creation. And when Adam sinned, as we all know, not only was Adam judged by God but also the creation itself because the creation stood in relationship to him. And because of Adam's fall, the creation has experienced a fall, too.

The Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 8, speaks about that when he speaks about the whole creation groaning and travailing together in pain, until now, waiting for the

adoption; that is, the redemption of the body of believers, in order that the creation may enter into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

So the physical creation is identified with man and woman; and so when man falls, the creation falls, when man enters into this redemption, the creation also is promised a redemption. In fact, that is the term that is used, for the physical creation.

One of the reasons the Christian theologians, who have been premillennialists, have insisted upon the necessity of the millennium is that since the fall occurred in history, we should expect then that redemption should occur in history as well. We already know, as far as we are concerned, that redemption for us individually has occurred in history. And so it seems perfectly reasonable to many Christian theologians for a physical millennium of the creation to occur in history because the fall occurred in history. In other words, redemption is worked out in man and then in the creation in that interim period of time. And, ultimately, finds its consummation in that which corresponds to resurrection as we pointed out in one of our last studies on the new heavens and the new earth.

Now, if reference to the question of 1 Corinthians 15, and about death; as I understand 1 Corinthians chapter 15, the death that is referred to there and the death that comes to an end is not all death but the death for believers. And, consequently, I understand 1 Corinthians 15, as setting forth this same kind of pattern that we have Christ's death, burial, and resurrection and then his coming and then the end. And while Paul doesn't specifically speak of a millennium, he does speak of his death and resurrection and then he speaks of his coming; and, as we know, that period of time has stretched out now to almost two thousand years. And then, he says, then cometh the end. I take it that so far as Paul's language is concerned his language is harmonious with an interim period.

And, particularly, when we add to that the fact that during the present time the Lord Jesus is not ruling and reigning in the sense in which the Scriptures set forth his

ruling and reigning. In other words, at the present time, he is at the right hand of the Father and the Father is bringing all things into subjection to the Son. And if you compare Ephesians chapter 1, and Hebrews, the Epistle to the Hebrews, particularly, you will find that the passages that are cited, incidentally, cited in both places; Hebrews and Ephesians are Psalm 8, verse 6 and then Psalm 110, verse 1, are referred in those contexts to the future and not to the present time. And if it were true that the coming of Christ is the end of things, then the present time would be his time of reigning. But since those texts are cited as having future consummation, it seems that there is good reason for thinking that Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 15, is compatible with the millennium.

Now, I do have some friends on both sides of this. I have friends who affirm that that’s impossible; that is, that 1 Corinthians 15 identifies the end and the Second Coming. And then, on the other hand, I have some who say that it’s plain that there is a millennium in 1 Corinthians 15. My own particular view is that while Paul’s statements in 1 Corinthians 15, 20 through 28, that’s the passage that we’re talking about and, specifically, in verse 24 through 28, that while that passage does not specifically teach a millennium, it’s compatible with the millennium.

So does that, at least, you understand how I feel about it, Warren. It’s a good question and not an easy one to answer, one over which good men have differed.

Randy is looking nervous back there, so I know he wants to ask a question. So go ahead Randy.

“With regard to your own particular position, would you describe yourself as a “strict” dispensationalist? And, if not, in what ways do you differ? And then to take a different line, Scripture states this as being ransom, would you comment on to whom the ransom as paid? To sin, in general? Or to the sanctum? Or to the fathers? Or some kind of explanation?

Okay, what did I do with my, oh, here it is? Now, the first question was, concerning dispensationalism, “Would I classify myself as a strict dispensationalist, a weak dispensationalist, or non-dispensational?”

In one way, I would like to avoid that question, but I’m not going to do it, because to properly answer it, and you haven’t been here for about the past six months or so, and those are the questions that have been coming up. And I just have finished thirty-five lectures on the divine purpose of the ages in which we dealt with covenant theology, dispensational theology, and then I critiqued both of those theologies. And then we launched into a discussion of biblical covenant theology; and sought to set forth what the Bible taught concerning the divine purpose, against that background. I do not classify myself as a strict dispensationalist. There are certain things about dispensationalism with which I would agree. To give you an illustration, I agree, largely, with dispensationalism’s teaching concerning the Law of Moses; that we are not under the Law of Moses as a code. And that, as I say, would require a lot of discussion. But there are, I think, tapes on that, in which I spoke specifically to that point.

I have some other questions, concerning some other things, but the two things probably, concerning which I would most differ with dispensationalism, and you understand I’m perfectly frank to admit that I was taught by dispensationalists and taught in a dispensational school for a long time. And as far I knew at the time, I felt I was in harmony with the things that were being taught. But, like I think all of us, as the years go by, we look at truth, we think, a little more clearly.

My views on dispensationalism began to differ when I began to ponder more in detail the Epistle to the Romans and, particularly, Romans chapter 11. And I came, a long time ago to the conviction that in Romans chapter 11, Paul was essentially teaching that there is one people of God. Now, dispensationalists do not, as a rule, accept the doctrine of one people of God. I did not in any way abandon my views, as those of you who were in these classes know that the Gentiles and Israel are separate. But that there is one

people of God, and that this people of God is a people related to the Abrahamic covenant. And, that in the present day believers in Christ, Gentiles or Israel, they don't have to be grafted. But Gentiles are grafted into the olive tree; which, in that context, I think, represents the Abrahamic covenant blessings.

So I do believe in one people of God. I don't know of any dispensationalist who believe in one people of God; unless, they have some of the same questions I would have. For example, Dr. Ryrie, I use him although I am not picking him out, I think, he is following Dr. Chafer and others and the things that I was taught, that Israel and the Church are two distinct peoples, with distinct promises. And Dr. Chafer said, “With distinct destinies.” And, for many years, I think Charles Ryrie accepted that third point. I don't know what he believes now.

With reference to the Law? I would agree. With reference to the one people of God, I would disagree. There is also another point that I need to mention, although, it is not a necessary thing. And that is that ninety-five percent of dispensationalists are either Arminian in theology or as we like to say Calvinian. That is, they hold varying degrees of Calvinistic soteriological teaching. But it's very rare to find dispensationalists who are consistent Calvinists. I don't think it's impossible. I don't think there's really anything in dispensationalism itself that would prevent a man from holding to consistent Calvinism. In fact, for those of you who know me and know me well, know that I taught at Dallas for many years and that's the reason that I left Dallas over that issue.

Dr. Walvoord, himself, told me, wrote to me, I have it in writing from him that he saw no reason why Calvinism, itself, should prevent a man from teaching at Dallas Seminary. Although, later, he changed his views, at least at one particular time, he acknowledged that. And, I think, he was perfectly sincere about it. So with reference to the one people of God, I would not be a good dispensationalist. So my theology is not dispensational. It, probably, is more harmonious with historic premillennialism. But I probably have a few points there that might be different.

Yes, Randy. “Are you pretribulation with regard to. [Inaudible] I should have mentioned that, too, that pretribulationism is something that is not specifically essential to dispensationalism. But is probably the views of ninety-five percent of the dispensationalists that I know. I have serious doubts about pretribulationism. Exegetically. And so, consequently, I find that a very difficult question, exegetically, and a difficult view to support, exegetically. So I’m bearing my soul to you. That was a very good question. He undoubtedly wanted me to do that; so I have done it. [Laughter] But I am so old now, I want to be exactly with the Apostle Paul when I get to heaven he may tell me, well, you really blew it the other night, Lewis but, otherwise, fine.

Any other questions? I have a question that is related to that? Go ahead, Sherbon.
[Question inaudible]

Are you asking for an explanation of that? I assume that that’s in the context of what Paul is saying beginning at verse 26 through verse 31, in which the apostle is looking back over the history of God’s dealings with the Church in Corinth.

Incidentally, for anyone who may be listening to the tape, the question is, “What is the meaning of 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 28?” The Apostle in this particular part of 1 Corinthians is looking back over what God has been doing in connection with the Church in Corinth, and he asks the Corinthians to consider their calling. That is, to look back at the way God has dealt with them. That there were not many wise, according to the flesh; not many mighty, not many noble. “But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong.” And this is the text and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen the things that are not, that he might nullify the things that are.

Now, it is my understanding of this, Sherbon, that what the apostle is doing is simply this. He’s reminding the Corinthians, who tended to admire wisdom and nobility and the kinds of things that the world admires, and he’s reminding them of the fact that God’s historical activity in saving grace is, generally, not entirely, but generally, the

possession of those who are not the influential, the wise, the noble, the mighty, the rich of this earth.

And, I think, this is, as I say, I think, I think that the reason that that is true is that the wise and the noble and the mighty and the rich, tend to not feel their need of divine salvation. And, consequently, it is more likely in the history of the preaching of the Gospel to find response among those who are just such needy people. That's the way I understand that passage. And when he says in verse 28, “The base things of the world, the despised, God has chosen. The things that are not,” he means not in the sense of the eye of the world, “they are not, that he might nullify the things that are.” So he has chosen that type of approach to things, simply because, well, if we have everything we need, we tend to not need the Lord. So that's the way I would understand that.

I have another question up here that touches some of the things you have been asking about. And it's, “Do you agree with the Reformed view of the third use of the Law?” The believers are still under the Law as a rule of life and gratitude. And he refers to Professor Louis Berkhof and his Systematic Theology.

The Reformers disagreed over the way in which the Law of Moses should be followed in the Christian Church. Both the Reformed side or the Presbyterian side or the Calvinistic side of the Reformation and the Lutheran side of the Reformation believed in the civil use of the Law. That is, that the Law was a guide for individuals in civil polity. They also both agreed that the Law was the means by which God brought men to the knowledge of their sin. The apostle writes frequently about that; Romans 3:20, he says, “By the Law is the knowledge of sin.” But the Lutherans differed with the Calvinists over whether the Law was the rule of life for a believing man. Lutherans generally speaking have not believed that the Law is a rule of life for believing men. Calvinists have.

And so in books you will find them disagreeing over the so called “third use” of the Law. For example, to give you a simple little illustration, Lutherans, many of them, such as R. C. H. Lenski, one of the leading Lutheran commentators, Lenski did not believe

that we should ask people to tithe. Now, practically everybody on the other side of the Protestant Reformation on the Presbyterian side or the Reformed side, would affirm that the tithe is proper teaching for believers today. And if you go into one of their churches, you'll find that they will constantly be talking about tithes and offerings. Sometimes just tithes and sometimes preaching on the tithe. That's very common. That's because of that tradition. But Lutherans otherwise. Lenski lays great deal of stress upon the fact that the tithe was a legal thing and not a Christian thing. And, consequently, we are not under the tithe. We are to give as God has prospered us and so on.

So are believers still under the Law as a rule of life and gratitude? In my opinion, believers are not under the Law as a rule of life in the sense that they are under the Law as a code. I'm using that term because I understand what I mean. Maybe no one else understands what I mean. But I understand what I mean by that. I do not mean, however, these things: I do not mean that that means a believer can live in any other way than is in harmony with the righteousness expressed by the Law of Moses. As a matter of fact, Paul makes that so plain, it's hard that anyone, studying the Scriptures, could think anything otherwise. When he talks about the guidance of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life, he says this, “For what the Law could not do, weak as it was, through the flesh, God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an offering for sin; He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the Law,” that could be rendered, the righteous requirement of the Law, “might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

It is a valid thing for individuals to say, if we are Christians then the Law of Moses should be able to find no flaw in our moral life. The one exception, over which evangelical Christians differ, is the question of Sabbath Law. And we have a strong division among people who would otherwise agree on almost everything, over whether we should observe the Sabbath Law today. In the light of Colossians 2:16, and some

other passages, I would affirm, no, we do not. But, then, there are good friends of mine who hold otherwise.

Does that answer your question, Rich? [Yes] This is from a theologian sitting up on the second row here.

A second question, “Do you hold a distinction by definition between “covenant of redemption” and a “covenant of grace”? Some theologians combine the two into one covenant of grace.” That, of course, is true. But I do hold a distinction; although, when we do talk about things like this, we are talking about two terms that are not specifically found in the Bible. I understand the term “covenant of redemption” as a reference to the arrangements that existed between the persons of the Trinity before time. Incidentally, Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer of Dallas Seminary, you might not have expected this, did hold to a covenant of redemption, in that sense.

The “covenant of grace” is a covenant made between, some theologians say, between the divine Trinity, others, the Lord Jesus Christ and his elect, down through the years.

And so, consequently, the “covenant of redemption” is a relationship that existed between the persons of the Trinity; the “covenant of grace” between the Lord Jesus Christ or the Godhead and the elect people of God. So I do hold to that difference. There are covenant theologians who do not make that distinction. But that is the historical, and I think the most common, distinction made between those two terms in covenant theology.

Now, this is one I don't know how to answer to satisfy everyone, “Were the Old Testament saints in Christ as is the New Testament believer?” In my opinion, this is a question that touches the progress of divine salvation or the progress of revelation. And I would affirm, no, not in the same sense until Calvary, and the blood was shed. And so, consequently, there is that aspect of things that one must bear in mind, as he thinks about that question.

To support the idea, the expression “In Christ,” so far as I can tell, is never used of Old Testament believers during the time of the Old Testament age. There are one or two little passages that may be debatable. But, generally speaking, the expression “In Christ” is the result of the coming of the Holy Spirit and work of the Holy Spirit in uniting believers with the risen Christ. And, historically, that was consummated on the Day of Pentecost.

So, now, some of you ask another question? Robert Ryan? “Can you comment on the chapter 11, verse 40, of Hebrews? Chapter 11, verse 40. It is connected with what you were just saying.” The question is, “Comment on Hebrews chapter 11 in verse 4? Verse 40.” See, my hearing is not that good.

This text is, of course, a continuation of verse 39.

“And all these, having obtained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.”

Well, I won't pose as saying the final word upon that, but, I think, that does substantiate just what I mentioned; that there is a sense in which in the progress of divine revelation, it is necessary for all the people of God to be united in the possession of the Abrahamic promises, in all that they involved, and that until the Lord Jesus Christ has finished his work; that is not yet possible. So that's the way I would understand that particular passage.

Wilford? “Are we then to take that you are saying that the Old Testament cites a “non-regenerate” man?” No, I didn't say that. “He is regenerate, he's just not “In Christ”?” The question is, “Is the Old Testament saint regenerate? And, if so, is it that he's not “In Christ”?” He isn't regenerated, so far as we can tell. He is justified by the word of the

redeemer to come, but it was necessary for the redeemer to come and to do his work of shedding the blood before the fullness of divine redemption could be experienced.

Otherwise, what you would be saying was it was not necessary, really, for the Lord to do what he was going to do for them to have the fullness of divine redemption. But they looked forward to the completion of his work and the Lord Jesus, when he came said, “It is finished.” And by that he referred to all of the prophets’ work of divine redemption.

The saints in the Old Testament, it has often been said, and, I think, I wouldn’t want to lay my total existence on this, but the saints of the Old Testament were individuals who were saved, to some extent on credit; that is in faith in what our Lord Jesus Christ would do. But the saints of the New Testament, can look back and see the finished work, and that’s they stand in the products of divine revelation as a different place in the unfolding of God’s particular program.

“Could this have any connection to the [Speak louder, Jimmy.] Could this have any connection to the raising of the saints in Jerusalem at the time that the Lord died, many of the graves were opened and some of the saints were raised, after his crucifixion? After the work was done? After He said, “It is finished.” And graves were opened and many of the saints rose and appeared to many. That’s the only record we have for that.”

That’s right. Is that a question or? “Yes. I just wondered, does that make it have any connection?” I think that the reason that that took place is what I would call evidential. It was a sign of what was transpiring. And that when those individuals went back into the city, it was simply God’s way of saying something significant has happened in the ministry of our Lord, and what happened in their lives is that they lived out their lives, just like Lazarus did, and died physically again and await the resurrection.

We have a thesis at Dallas Seminary, written on that point, by an individual who studied under me for a while and many years ago. It probably needs revision now. But that’s essentially the way I would understand it.

“One question on the second point.” Okay, go ahead. “Going back regeneration, regenerate man, we are to take it into our presence of the Holy Spirit is separate from the regeneration of man’s life? They are two different events, under the scheme?” They are two different things. “Two different things.” The question is, “Is regeneration and the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit, are these different things?” Yes. They are different things. It’s very plain, I think, that they are different things. Listen to what John the Apostle says in John chapter 7 in verse 37 through verse 39, for example. He says, “Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out saying, “If any man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture said, from his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.””

Now, John adds his interpretation of this. “But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

So the Holy Spirit’s indwelling presence was not the permanent possession of believers until our Lord accomplished his work and until the fifty days elapsed when the promise of the Spirit, as set out in the Old Testament, confirmed by our Lord in Luke chapter 24, came to be.

Pentecost is a redemptive event, like Calvary is a redemptive event. The Incarnation, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, but, particularly, coming of Spirit and Second Coming, are all redemptive events.

“So our power to live a Christian life comes through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit; our eternal life, the gift of God regeneration comes to a man at the time of belief. So, therefore, we could take the comparative to say that in the Old Testament, where men were regenerate unless the Holy Spirit stayed upon them that they did not have the power to live the life [Inaudible].” It would be nice if I were able to answer your question in with a lot of Scripture, Wilford. The only thing I can say is this. In the Old Testament, the enduement with power by the Holy Spirit is very evident in the lives

of individuals. It is specifically stated in some places. And, in fact, in some places it is stated that the Spirit is in some. However, in each of those cases, in which it is stated that the Spirit was in them, it was of the nature of a temporary indwelling; which in my opinion, equals with enduement of power. And that permanent indwelling does not occur until Pentecost. But enduement with power, yes. Jacob, great sinner, great failings, but, also, some remarkable works of faith. Abraham, of course, stands out. Those men, as far as I can tell, were men who were endued with power from the Holy Spirit, many of the times in their lives. But, not always. So, yes, I would understand it as something along those lines.

Let me mention one other passage, which bears on this point, and that's John chapter 14, verse 16 and 17, where the Lord Jesus says to the apostles, “And I will ask the Father and He will give you another helper, that He may be with you forever.” That is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold him or know him, but you know him because he abides with you and will be in you.” In other words, the permanent indwelling of the Spirit still is future, from the time of the Upper Room Discourse. So that's the way I would understand that. But those questions are not altogether easy to answer; as, probably my stumbling a little bit indicates, at least for me.

Yes. Marilyn. Can you please tell me the difference when we talk about a person having a body, a soul, and a spirit? What's the difference between the soul and the spirit?

That's a question over which good theologians differ. For example, Professor Lewis Berkhof, we've already referred to him, most Reformed theologians, mind you, it's not all that important, in my opinion, but, most Reformed theologians would affirm there is no difference between soul and spirit. They are both terms that refer to the inner life of a man. It is possible to distinguish them and some have. And the difference is the difference between the viewpoints of men like Berkhof, and even men like William G. T. Shed. If there is a difference, now, I personally. It's interesting, Marilyn, that in these particular theologians who affirm there is no difference, like Professor Berkhof, at the end

of his discussion, he will say, that there is, however, that these two entities are looked at in slightly different ways.

So in other words, the terms bear, for those who think they are the same, some different emphasis. Now, if there is a difference, then we would be affirming what is called trichotomy; as over against dichotomy. Dichotomy, that we have simply the inner man, soul, spirit, without much distinction and the body. We would be dichotomous. Most Reformed theologians are dichotomous. Dallas Seminary is trichotomous. But they have members of their faculty who are dichotomous, because they've never regarded that as being serious enough doctrine to make much difference. If trichotomy is right; then we have the body, we have the soul, which probably refers to what we would call the emotional side of our being, and the spirit, that which refers more definitely to the mental side of our being. There are some indications in the word of God that this may be the distinction. And even if we all were the same, we could say these emphasis exist. For example, the apostle writing in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, states this, with reference to the Holy Spirit. He says, verse 11 of 1 Corinthians 2, “For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.”

So the apostle speaking generally about individuals says that that part of man which knows the things of the man is his spirit. We have some texts, such as Luke chapter 1, in which for many people, they affirm the identity of these expressions. Let me look at the text, if I can find it immediately. Luke chapter 1, verse 46, and this is in the Magnificat. Mary said, “My soul exalts the Lord, my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.” So spirit, according to many commentators, this is a perfect illustration of Hebrew parallelism, in which the first line is equivalent to the next line. “My soul exalts the Lord, my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.”

It's not so easy as that, however. The word “exalts” is in the present tense. The word “has rejoiced” is in a past tense. And so if it's true that a man's mind directs his

thinking through his emotional life, and ultimately through his bodily life, then there may be a difference even there. In other words, because her spirit has rejoiced in God her Savior, her soul exalts the Lord and prays in thanksgiving, just like this great Magnificat. And that manifests itself, ultimately, in her bodily actions. But, Marilyn, I don't know anything more about that than that. If you want to ask another question, go ahead.

Does the spirit particularly have to do with the Holy Spirit?

No, not necessarily. In other words, an unbelieving man has a spirit, too. His spirit is simply unquickened; in other words, it is not regenerated. That text in 1 Corinthians 2, it seems to me, says that plainly. What man knows the things of the man except the spirit of the man, which is in him. And that means, simply, this. You don't know how I feel about the Dallas Cowboys. You don't know, nor even does Martha know. She has a better idea than you. But you do not know that I agonize [Laughter] when the Cowboys are playing. And I don't even tell Martha some of the things that I think about the Cowboys. [More laughter] So or about a lot of other things, for that matter. But, at any rate, did that help any? Everybody has a spirit. He should have a redeemed Spirit; a quickened spirit.

How about Hebrews 4:12? “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit,” does not that apply?

Well, of course, I don't want to answer that because, obviously, I tend to trichotomy. So that's one of the texts that I use in order to show that there are texts in the Bible that support the trichotomous position. And that's one of them. And, the passage in Luke chapter 1; the passage in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, where it says, “May your whole body, soul and spirit so and so.”

In fact, I was attending a conference, and I'll have to close with this because our time is up, maybe we'll have another question time, before too long, I was attending a New Testament conference in Aarhus, Denmark. The leading New Testament scholars all

over the world, actually, were there. It's the Society of New Testament Studies. A Frenchman got up and gave a ten minute paper, and his paper was on 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5, and he delivered his paper; and he delivered it very well. And the point of his paper was, simply, that the apostle did not make any distinction, whatsoever, between soul and spirit. And he sought to answer what seemed to be, to many people, a text that seemed to clearly suggest a difference. It's the text, “Now may the God of peace Himself, sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Well, he sat down, having finished his paper. And C. F. D. Moule, one of the outstanding British New Testament scholars, when a chance was given to reply, stood on his feet. And Professor Moule was a very interesting looking man. We think of him, who are New Testament students, we think of him as a massive New Testament intellect. Well, he's a little shriveled up looking Englishman. We expect a man like this, that everybody listens to, to speak out with a nice, powerful voice. He spoke in a high, squeaky voice. And he said, “I appreciate the paper that our colleague has just delivered. I'd just like to say, however, that Paul's thinking is not always as neat as we would like for it to be.” And with that, he gave three little succinct questions that completely destroyed the fellow's paper.

And it illustrates the fact that good men do differ over interpretation of these points. But how in that text, there's another text and I wish we had time to talk about it exegetically from the Greek text, but there is good reason for thinking that that text does, also, affirm a distinction between soul and spirit. But we must admit that there are many fine men who think otherwise. And, further, I think that it's not quite as important as other doctrines.

Well, I appreciate very much; you haven't asked any really astonishingly difficult questions tonight but some very good ones. I hope that we are able to do this again, and

give you a chance to ask further questions. And, we will, I hope the elders will say, go ahead, and do it sometime. I’ve enjoyed it. And you’ve been very kind tonight.

Thank you. There will be no meeting of this class next week. However, the following week, on Wednesday night, we’re starting something entirely new. We’re going to have an old fashioned Bible reading; which, in twenty-five years of existence of Believers Chapel, we have never had. And the elders have agreed that we will try it out, and we will take a small book. We’ll give you instructions so you can know what passages we’ll be studying each week. And we’re going to study the book together, to encourage all of us to get into the Bible, together. That particular thing. And, you’ll be given opportunity to ask questions and encouraged to make comments, concerning the text of Scripture that we are talking about.

The elders have said they wanted me to lead the discussion, for a while at least, and so I will be doing that on Wednesday night. We’ll give you the information. It will be two weeks from tonight. We will start, the first time. I hope you will profit from it. I know that we will, if we really apply ourselves to it.

Now, I hope you’ll stay and have a bit of fellowship with us, in the parlor. May we close with a word of prayer?

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for this time of discussion together. We ask Thy blessing upon the things that we have discussed and enable us, Lord, to continue to give ourselves to the study of the Scriptures. And, above all, may God the Holy Spirit, who does indwell all of us, guide us in our personal life in such a way that our Savior, whose we are, whom we love and whom we desire to serve, may be glorified through us.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.