

ANSWERS TO LIFE'S MOST  
BASIC QUESTIONS: Who Am I?  
Scripture: Psalm 8  
Message 1

INTRO: For some years now I have wanted to preach through Ephesians 2. I have covered chapter 1. I wanted to begin now, but I have decided to wait until we are in our new building. Some time ago my wife and I listened to Vodie Baucham's message, "The Supremacy of God." In that message he expressed man's most basic questions as: Who am I? Why am I here? What is wrong with the world? And, how can what is wrong be made right? In the next few messages before the end of this year, I want to seek to answer these four basic questions.

Now, before I can find an answer to these major questions I must come to another conclusion and that is how did everything come into existence. The two major positions on this, since the days of Charles Darwin are, did we evolve or were we created? Today there are many good books and organizations that specifically study this question from a biblical perspective and many of you have listened to such teaching. Any person who exercises his or her God given abilities to think rationally, and looks at the facts that exist, MUST come to the conclusion that everything came into existence by creation. It is as the Bible so accurately says, "The fool who has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'"

Furthermore, I am going to take two other matters as already established facts. First, the God of the Bible, Jehovah God, is the only true God and He brought everything into existence in six literal days, just as Genesis 1-2 states. And second, the Bible is God's inerrant, inspired Word to man. It is the truth. It contains all that pertains to life and godliness. It is the only true source of the information we need to answer the questions we have before us.

The questions before us are theological in nature. That which we refer to as 'theology', is simply doctrine, biblical doctrine. And Biblical doctrine is the systematic teaching of any biblical topic. The Scriptures contain teaching on a vast number of doctrines. In answering the questions we have set out for these messages, we will be dealing with a number of doctrines and I trust you will

find biblical doctrine is not as dry as dust. It is very relevant; very important, and vital to healthy Christianity.

North American Christianity, doctrinally speaking, in my estimation, is bankrupt. It is skinny, malnourished and bloated from lack of spiritual nurture. If Christians are not brought back on track in the days ahead by solid doctrine, the Church is doomed in North America. It does not take a prophet to see that.

So, the first question before us is:

I. WHO AM I?

A. The Person

Now the very first question we will seek to answer is this: Who am I? You may say that this question is so simple it needs no further answer. For example, for me, I am Phil Schlamp. So, look at me. Is what you see, Phil Schlamp? You say, "Yes of course. Why do you ask such elementary questions?" OK. Let me ask you another question: If I died, and you came to my funeral, would you see me in the coffin? And you say, "Yes of course. Why do you ask such elementary questions? This is embarrassing." OK. Now let me ask you, if the pastor said at my funeral, "What you see here is not Phil Schlamp. He is not in the casket before you. He has gone on to be with the Lord. What you see is only his body", would he be right?

Oh, you say, "Yes he is right." Now I ask you again to look at me. Is what you see, Phil Schlamp? In order to understand this message, you will need to think deeply or you will be lost shortly.

So, to begin, let me give you a proposal: The real 'you' is not your body. It is not your soul. It is not your spirit. It is not even your body and soul and spirit all together. The real 'you' is an entity entirely different from any one of those parts. Now let me give you another proposal, a proposal that can help us identify the real 'you'. Here it is: The real 'you' is that part of the individual that cannot be spoken of in the possessive case. For example: I can say, "My soul", therefore the soul is not the real

'me'. I can say, "My body", therefore the body is not the real me. I can say, "My spirit" therefore my spirit is not the real 'me'.

Now go with me to Matthew 22:37 (read). Jesus said, "You", there is the real 'you'. So He said, "You shall love the Lord your God..." Now you see, you are not God because God is in the possessive here. He is *your* God. So, let us go on, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart..." So, whatever it speaks of when it says 'your heart', the heart is not you. Second, "... and with all your soul..." Again, the soul is not the real 'you'. You see, anytime you can say, 'my heart, my soul, my thumb, my foot, my head' etc... that is not the real you. Those are all possessions that belong to you, all these parts are not you. The real you is instructed here to love God with all those possessions.

You see, our question is, "Who am I?" And I have said the real 'you' or 'I' is not any one of our possessions or all of our possessions put together. While we are in our physical bodies, we identify the real you by the tent, or body in which that person resides. Now I want you to see that from Scripture (read 2 Cor. 5:1-4). Here, the Bible calls our body the tent in which the real person lives. You see, at present we are in this tent. When we die, we leave this tent behind. We all know this by life's experience when we go to a funeral.

So, now, back to square one. Who am I? What is there in a human being that cannot be spoken of in the possessive case? And why can the real 'you' not be spoken of in the possessive case? Because you cannot possess yourself. You are yourself. And so, again, what is there in a human being that cannot be spoken of in the possessive case? Here is the answer: self. Self, the individual is the real you.

Now, here is a little lesson from words. In the Greek NT the pronoun 'I' is *ego*. We get our English words *ego*, *egocentric*, *egoism*, *egoist*, *egoistic*, *egomania*, *egotism*, *egotist*, and *egotistic* from this word. They all have to do with 'self'. In the proper definition of 'ego' in Funk and Wagnall's College dictionary they say of *ego*, "The thinking, feeling, and acting

self that is conscious of itself and aware of its distinction from the selves of others and from the objects of its thought and other operations."

But you will say, as many students have done, "You can speak of self in the possessive case. I can say, "my self". But that is not correct. I cannot say, 'my self' as two separate words. I can say, 'myself' as one word, but not two. And you say, "What is the difference?" The difference is this: The word 'myself' is a reflexive pronoun. It simply refers back to self. Now if you cannot think through that, do not feel bad. In all of Canada and in the USA we do not learn basic grammar in school, and this is simply basic grammar.

Now let me tell you for a moment why this is important. The self, refers to the person. The pronouns, I, you, he, she, they etc... are personal pronouns. That too, is simple grammar. You, and every other 'person' are a self. You have what we call 'personhood'. You are not an impersonal animal. You are a very special being in the eyes of God. You are very important to God. It is my conviction that the age old question, "What is the image of God in man?" is answered right here. What is the image of God in man? God is a Person. Jesus is a Person. The Holy Spirit is a Person. You and I are persons. You and I are capable of something no impersonal being can do, and that is to glorify God by our own choice, rather than by instinct. You are a person with a free will. And to glorify God, you have been given many possessions with which to do that, such as a body; a soul and a spirit etc... And as a very important being to God Almighty, if in this life you fail to choose God, some day He will disown you, and say, "Depart from Me you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41).

Now when couples have a child, they give that child a name. That name identifies that newly born person in order so that that person can be identified as a distinct person from all other persons. So, let me take a moment to define what a person is. This is my definition of a person: "A person, as a human being, is distinguished from the rest of God's creatures by that which we call the 'self'. The self of each

person is that which distinguishes one person from another and makes them an individual. The self of a person cannot be spoken of in the possessive case by that individual. The self is the president and the possessor of all the various parts of the body, soul and spirit belonging to that person." Let me add to also that another distinguishing factor between persons and other animated beings is that persons have intelligence beyond instinct. That is, God created man a free moral agent. This enables persons to read and write and do math etc... It enables man to improve beyond there parents. A distinguishing factor between people and God as a Person is that God does not possess a body, and His intelligence cannot grow and is beyond man's as far as the heavens are above the earth.

Let me tell you something about the bird we know as a Robin. It will never improve beyond its parents. It will never do those things we just spoke of. That is true for horses and any other animate beings. But each person is distinguished from other persons by the name given to them. When that person is saved, that name is recorded in heaven. That is the name they will carry for all eternity.

Let me insert a point here. I believe that people become persons at conception. This is extremely important to the subject of abortion. Now let me take a few moments to prove that humans become a person at conception from the Bible. This is a very important point because if it can be shown that people become 'persons' at conception, then abortion is wrong at any point. By the way, let me just give a word to the wise, certain contraceptives are simply forms of early abortion. So, let us see if there is evidence in the Bible that people become persons at conception. Turn with me to Psalm 51:5 (read). The Psalmist said, "My mother concieved me..." Not just my body. She concieved 'me'. The pronoun 'me' is a personal pronoun and refers to the self. That means the psalmist considered himself a person at conception. You may wish to write down Song of Solomon 3:4 and Luke 2:21 for further proof. If all this is correct, and I have no doubt it is, then abortion at any stage is murder.

You see, at conception, the real 'you', you as a person came into being. This is the self. This self is the president of the whole being. It is this 'self' that is crucified with Christ. So we quote this verse in Galatians like this, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." When a person quotes that verse, 8 times he refers to him or herself. Not his or her body, or soul or spirit or any other possession but the person. And 4 times, the Person of Christ is indicated. Twice as Christ, once as the Son of God, and once by the personal reflexive pronoun.

Who is the real 'you'. It is the 'person' within your tent or body you now have. That person has your name and is an individual, that is indivisible unit that will always be 'you'. And because you are a person, you have that in common with God and thus you are made in the image of God. In that aspect you are like God, so the Bible says we are made in His 'likeness'. It is this 'self', as I see it, where the sin nature entered and corrupted the whole being. That is why this 'self' must be crucified. And when this self is crucified, and dies, the self that was under the control of the sin nature, now comes under divine control and it changes how the possessions of this individual respond to life's circumstances.

## B. The Parts

Now I want to take the rest of our time to show you the function of the major parts of a human being and we begin with the body.

### 1. The Body

Recently one of our ladies, in a sharing time, said she was going through a study of the OT tabernacle. I have concluded that one of the purposes of the tabernacle was to convey to us what man is made up of. Man is made up two basic elements; material and immaterial. The body is the material part of man. The immaterial parts have to be communicated to man through material

things because man is not capable understanding anything immaterial. One of the purposes of the tabernacle, I think, is to help us understand the immaterial parts of man.

Now, our bodies are the material part of man. Here we are in the realm of science and the physicians. We could spend several messages on this but I have determined to keep it short. Maybe I will expand this for those who will be taking pastoral training.

Now the body gives us world consciousness and provides for us what we need to live while we are physically alive. Usually when we refer to the Psalm that says we are fearfully and wonderfully made, we are referring to the body. Surely it does refer to the body and the body is incredible but it may refer to more than that. As to the body, we have about a trillion cells, each one as complicated as the city of Tokyo.

But there is one function of the body we need to discuss briefly. The body is the vehicle by which all physical data reaches the soul. There are five ways data can enter the soul via the body and only five, and these are the five senses. If you will study the tabernacle of the OT you will find the number five will be stamped all around the physical tabernacle. But most importantly, there are five pillars that make up the doorway into the tabernacle. I believe they represent the five senses, or doorways into the soul. These senses are taste, touch, sound, sight, and smell.

All we learn in life from the material world is learned through these five senses. They are the doorway into the soul, and thus we say they give us world consciousness.

## 2. The Soul

Then every 'self' possesses a soul. The soul and the spirit are immaterial. The soul, it is generally held, and I believe rightly so, gives us self consciousness. The soul, as I see it, interprets all the data that comes in through the

five senses and from that we learn all we learn from the material world.

Let me just briefly show you something from Hebrews 4:12 (read). Now the verse seems to say that the Word of God is sharp enough to divide the soul from the spirit. But a fuller translation would read that it can divide the soul into its parts and the spirit into its parts. You see, the body is extremely complex, but so are the soul and spirit. However, the body, man is able to divide into its parts, but the soul and spirit only the Word of God can divide into their parts. So, the soul, as I see it, holds within it the mind with all its parts such as the memory, the active thinking part and the data storage part and the conscience. But the most important resident in the soul is the real 'you'. The body houses the soul and the spirit while we are alive. The soul houses the real you. This is where 'you' dwell, before and after death.

Furthermore, everything you ever see, hear, taste, smell or touch is recorded in the storage part of the soul. Every thought you have thought, every sin you have ever committed, everything is recorded here. God can take one look at our mind and know absolutely everything about us.

Let me just mention one thing briefly. The storage part of the mind which is part of the soul contains every sin we have ever done. You cannot escape it. You cannot erase it. You cannot work it off. You cannot do anything about it ever! It shows up as black in your mind and you cannot access it to get rid of it. This part of the mind is called the 'nous' in Greek NT.

But there is another word, formed from that part of the mind and it is 'metanoia'. The 'meta' means change and the noia comes from 'nous', this storage part of the mind. In English we read this word as 'repentance'. And here is the good news: When we sincerely repent of any sin God takes care of it and He will never remember it again. It has been cleansed. I cannot bring you any news

better or greater than that and on judgment day we will all say 'amen' to what I just said.

And because this subject is so very important, John the Baptist came preaching, "Repent!" And Jesus came preaching, "Repent." And today, we have so decapitated the Gospel that we think people can get to heaven by bypassing repentance and simply accepting Christ. That is a horrible deception of our day and it will blind millions and send them to hell while they think they are Christians. So the Lord says, "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

[\*\*Only if time permits: For many many years, Christian theologians have debated the doctrine of the origin of the soul. Where does the soul come from? Many non-Christian views say there are many souls out there waiting to enter a body. That soul enters a body that has been conceived, but whether the soul enters at conception or at birth, or somewhere in between, they do not know.

A second view says that though the body is propagated by the parents, the soul is created by God and enters the body at conception, birth, or sometime in between. This is a highly dangerous view, because then we do not know exactly when a person becomes a person, and maybe abortion is acceptable if it is done before the soul enters the body. So all you may have at conception, is a 'fetus', and not a person. If so, abortion at that point is OK.

The last view is that the parents propagate, body soul and spirit; or the entire human being. This is called the traducian view. I hold to this view. You probably would too if you studied it. But if that is so, then at conception a 'person' comes into being. And if that is so, and I expect you all agree with that, then could it not be that a funeral for a child of any age after conception would be in order?]

So, let us take a moment to consider the spirit of man.

### 3. The Spirit

Man has a spirit. Every self possesses a spirit. The spirit, like the soul, is immaterial. The doctors cannot find these two parts but they are there as sure as can be. When you die, something leaves the body, but the doctors can find nothing missing. Absolutely everything they could find in the material realm before you died is there after you died. You see, life, is not a material thing. It is brought about and maintained as long as body soul and spirit are together. But as soon as soul and spirit leave, the body dies. So James says that the body without the spirit is dead.

Well, the body gives us world consciousness, and the soul gives us self consciousness; but what does the spirit give us? It gives us God consciousness. And though there is more I would like to tell you about the spirit part of man, because I have been so long winded, I have to leave it there.

CONCL: So, let us conclude. Our question was, "Who am I?" I am not my body, soul, or spirit. Those are my possessions. I am a 'person' created in the image of God, named by my parents which identifies me according to my parentage. They give me world consciousness; self consciousness and God consciousness. I, the real me, is the self which is the president of all the parts.

We have said at the outset that we are taking for granted that the God of the Bible is the creator of all and the Bible is His inspired, inerrant word for man. In Psalm 8 we had these words read for us earlier, "When I consider the heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have made; what is man that You are mindful of Him?"

We will answer some of that in the next message, "Why am I here?"