

4. Q&A;

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 27 October 2018

Preacher: Rohintan Mody

[0 : 00] I think I basically agree with him, not on every detail, because of course on every book we need to test everything about the Word of God, but I think he has some very good and interesting things to explain why this Genesis 6 passage is so important in the Bible. So I'd recommend that.

Michael Heiser, *The Unseen World*. He goes into all the passages in complex detail. He also does consider the whole Joshua thing as well. So I hope that might be of help if you're interested in this topic.

Ephesians 6 verse 18 talks about the saints. Who do the saints actually refer to? Are they Christians or those who were martyred? So Ephesians chapter 6 verse 18.

Yes, they're Christians. Yeah, that's right. Yes, the saints are the Lord's people. Saints is just a word that Paul generally uses, which means holy ones, which is basically a reference not to specially holy people, but all God's people, all Christians are holy. So all Christians are saints.

That is, the word holy basically means separated from the world and separate for the purposes of God, and can also have the sense of whole in the sense of W-H-O-L-E. So basically all Christians are saints.

[1 : 35] Yeah. Yeah, that's why the NIV 2011 says the Lord's people rather than saints. Now here's a verse that you haven't referred to, but it's a good one, I think. I've heard Christians quote the verse Matthew 18 verse 18 quite often when they do deliverance.

Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. Whatever you loose on earth shall be loose in heaven. Now is this verse correctly applied to exorcism and deliverance? Matthew chapter 18 verse 18.

If you want to turn to Matthew chapter 18, let's have a look at that together. The context of Matthew 18 you will see, and indeed the parallel passage in Matthew 16 as well, where more or less the same phrase appears, and indeed also in John 20 as well.

So we can look at all three passages together, but let me just consider Matthew 18. What's the context of Matthew 18? It is basically sin in the church.

That's basically the context, isn't it? Look at verse 15. If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault just between the two of you. They listen to you, you've won them over. So fine.

[3 : 04] But if they won't listen, take along one or two others that every matter might be established by the testimony of two or three businesses. So that's the next step. The third step is if they still refuse to listen, tell it to the whole church.

And if they refuse to listen even to the whole church, treat them as you would a pagan or tax collector, i.e. treat them as an unbeliever. Impute them as an unbeliever.

So legally speaking, they are now outside the blessings of the church. They're under church discipline, in other words. And it's in that context that Jesus tells us, truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

In the sense of church discipline. Jesus knows how difficult it is for church discipline to happen. So he's saying when the church does exercise loving, kind discipline against a brother or sister who sins, well, heaven ratifies that decision.

That's all it means. So I don't think it is correctly applied to doing exorcism or deliverance. Yep. So that verse might be taken out of context. Yeah. We've got some theological questions now.

[4 : 23] Here's one I think a couple people asked similar kind of questions. I think it's a good one. So if God saw his creation as good in the beginning, Genesis 1 and 2, how did his creation have an inclination to sin?

Did God deliberately put that desire there? Well, that's a big one. I don't know. I don't know. There are some things that have been revealed to us.

The revealed things, as Deuteronomy says, Moses says in Deuteronomy have been revealed to us, but the secret things have not been revealed to us and belong to our Lord God. And as far as I can see in the Bible, God has not revealed the reason.

Therefore, we can only very loosely and very cautiously speculate as to why. So I basically don't know.

We do know that God created both the unseen world and the seen world, perfect, holy, and righteous. So he did not create Adam and Eve or even Lucifer before his own fall with an inclination to sin.

[5 : 35] So how did it happen? I don't know. It is one of the great mysteries. I just don't know, and I would prefer not to speculate.

What we do know is God didn't put that desire there, because that would ultimately make God the author of evil, and he's not. So how it happened, I don't know.

To think more broadly of this question is, if you like, tied into the whole problem of evil, isn't it? It's a bigger question.

You know, if God is good and all-powerful, but there's evil in the world, how do we reconcile both things? Well, and I think the answer is God hasn't told us, therefore we can't ultimately know.

But I think there's a good reason why God actually hasn't told us the answer to the problem of evil. And it's this. And I think the book of Job goes this way. You will know in the book of Job, of course, that while Job 1 and 2 happen in heaven, the discussion in God's law court between God and Satan, the rest of Job, Job has no idea what's going on in heaven.

[6 : 51] He suffers. And then, of course, Job gets upset, hurt, and angry with God, and says, why, God, have you done this to me? And then, at the end, of course, God appears to Job, and, well, what does he do?

He shows him the universe. He says, you know, look at the donkey, look at the birds, look at the mountains. I.e., he doesn't give Job an answer to his question. But Job says, it's enough.

I've seen you. Isn't it? I think what God is saying in Job is something like this. Look, Job, you need to trust me. I am sovereign, and if you don't even know the secrets of how the wind or the waves or the snow happens, how are you ever going to understand my reasons for allowing evil in the world?

I have good reasons, but even if I told you those good reasons, you wouldn't be able to understand them. And I think that is the ultimate point. God has good reasons, but he hasn't told us, and even if he told us, we would not be able to understand.

And we have to leave it at that, I think. This is a similar question. I don't know if you have a similar answer, which is basically the same thing, but why did he allow Satan to exist?

[8 : 14] Would that be a similar answer? Yes, I think it would be a similar answer to that. Again, we're not told in any sort of detail in Scripture as to why Satan fell.

The only hints of an answer, and I do want to emphasize it, very caution, the only hints of an answer is Isaiah 13, I think, and Ezekiel 28, which is all about the fall of the king of Babylon and the king of Tyre.

But basically the language is so vast and amazing that it seems to reflect the fall of a spiritual being.

So while the passages themselves are not on the fall of Satan, they might, if you like, behind the text, reflect something vaguely about the fall of Satan.

And the only thing we're told in those two passages is that this extraordinary being became proud. It doesn't give us an answer, but that's all we're told.

[9 : 24] So why he became proud, I don't know. If during Noah's time, God did have the power to purge all the human beings, why didn't he wipe the whole earth after original sin was committed and start all over again?

Yes. Well, that's a very, very good question, isn't it? Why didn't he do that? Why didn't he purge the whole world? Well, actually, you know, he could have purged the whole world because one of the extraordinary verses, which we didn't touch on, but I think is probably relevant if you want to turn to Genesis 6 again, would be good.

Look at verse 5, which we didn't actually cover. That's God's verdict on the human race.

Every inclination of the human heart was evil all the time. And then it says, the Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled.

So he says, verse 7, I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I've created, and with them the animals, the birds, the creatures that move on the ground. For I regretted that I have made them.

[10 : 56] So that's it. The end of the human race. He's going to start again, yes? But then look at verse 8. But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

I.e., God had compassion and grace on Noah. Noah's no different. He's part of the human race with every inclination of his heart evil all the time.

And yet, God has mercy and grace. That's the reason why he didn't wipe out the whole human race and start again. Because he had mercy and grace.

And just, if you like, and this is very cautious, but I think there is some biblical evidence for this. Think about it this way.

Suppose if God had wiped out the whole human race, including Noah at the time, and started again, and that this time around the human race would have been perfect.

[11 : 59] What would we have missed out on? Well, actually, we'd have missed out on Jesus Christ, wouldn't we? Because if the whole human race was perfect, would Jesus have come into the world?

Maybe he would. But would Jesus Christ have died for sins? No. There would be nobody to put him to death in the first place, would there? If everybody was good, he wouldn't have died for sins because there's no death and there's no sins.

So he wouldn't have died for the sins. But if then there was going to be no cross and no death for sins, wouldn't we have missed out on the grace and the mercy and the love of God?

Where do we see God's love at its most beautiful and deepest? It's the cross of Jesus Christ. So we would have missed out on the love of God.

That's one thing I'm thinking of. We're staying in Genesis 6.

- [13 : 04] Just a couple more questions on the Nephilim and so on. I think you said something like, the spirits of the Nephilim are the evil spirits in the world.
- If that's so, who are the fallen angels? Yes, thank you. That is a good question. Yeah, the spirits of the dead Nephilim are the evil spirits, I think, in the world.
- But who are the fallen angels? Well, basically, again, I would just advise you that we don't have time to cover all that. But there is a whole vast world out there.
- We touched on it a little bit, of course, in Ephesians. You remember all that language Paul has of powers and principalities of evil and rulers and every name that can be named.
- So, yes, demons and evil spirits might stem from Genesis 6. But there seems to be a whole, well, you know, a collective state out there of rulers and authorities and fallen angels under the command of the evil one, Satan himself.
- [14 : 16] So, there's more to it than just simply the evil spirits. So, yeah. Again, I think Michael Heiser's written a new book, which I haven't seen, but I believe it's good, called Angels.
- And I think he goes into that in some detail. When those angels came to marry human daughters, so he's talking about Genesis 6 to you, was it because they were already fallen or was it the act itself that caused them to become fallen?
- Yeah. I think they were fallen in the sense that Satan was already fallen because we, of course, see that in Genesis 3. Whether that reflects, you know, did the fall start with the lust of the angels before they left the heavenly places or the perfection of heaven or not, I don't know.
- It's rather like asking when did the fall of Adam and Eve take place? Did it take place when they snatched at the fruit and ate the fruit or did it take place when they wanted to, their inner inclination?
- And if it started in the inner inclination, could they have said no even at that point and said not taken the fruit? Maybe they could. I don't know. I don't know. What we do know, of course, is that sin starts with the inner inclination of the will and the heart, but it moves through into the act.
- [15 : 44] And I guess the same sort of thing happened with the fallen angels. That, you know, obviously their inclination for human women must precede what they did.
- But, you know, could they have said no even at that point? I don't know. I'm afraid. Sorry. Do angels have gender?
- And if not, how is it that they can intermarry with these human beings? Yes. Yeah. Yes, they have gender.
- They're always called in scripture the sons of God. So I think they have gender. Yeah. I think they are gendered. While our NIV translation says they marry, I think the Hebrew can be taken a slightly different way and say they had relations rather than marriage.
- So, which obviously implies some sort of gender. Now, Jesus, and indeed together with the tradition of his day, insisted that angels do not marry.
- [17 : 04] And that is right. The holy angels do not marry. But what we're talking about here is a particularly gross corruption of the entire plan of God in the universe.
- And that, by the way, is one of the reasons why sexual immorality is so frowned on and horrifying in the scriptures. Because it's not merely what happens, but actually a violation of God's creation ordinances.
- So, yeah. Yeah, there's one more question here. I'll just read it out first and then answer it. If Satan is indeed defeated at the cross, how is it that it seems he and the evil spirits remain so active in this world?

Thank you. That's because of what has traditionally been called of what happens at the cross is the three Ps. I hope you know that.

That is punishment, power, presence. So, what happens is that the punishment of sin is dealt with and taken up by Jesus on the cross.

[18 : 09] It's finished, yeah? So, our punishment which we deserve for the sins, it's punished on Jesus. So, it's done. It's gone. The second presence of sin is the second P, the power of sin.

Yeah? Now, the power of sin is again defeated because we can do good. We can obey the Lord Jesus Christ. So, it's not the power.

The sin and evil is not a power in the Christian life, something which we must obey. We're in bondage to or slavery to. So, power has been defeated.

But presence. Has the presence of sin and evil been defeated yet? No. That very definitely, we say, has not been defeated precisely because we can see that in our world today as well.

So, it's the presence of sin which we wait for the eradication of the presence when the Lord Jesus Christ. This is because, actually, what the Old Testament presents and what the New Testament presents is slightly different.

[19 : 16] The Old Testament basically presents something like this. When God and the Messiah come, everything will be fine. The kingdom of God will be here. Total victory.

But the New Testament says, actually, that total victory is now split into two stages. First of all, there's Jesus' first coming.

And secondly, there's Jesus' second coming. So, the New Testament presents, if you like, we live in something called the tension of the ages. The old age of evil in principle is over, and the new age in principle has come, but we live in the overlap of the ages.

There's a tension. That's why we feel pulled one way and the other, and we see the evil. So, we live in the overlap of the ages. Yeah, if you ever read the book, How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth, by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stewart, it has a chapter in there where it talks about the overlap of the ages, and this is essential to understanding the New Testament.

Now, we've talked a lot about Satan, devil, demons, and evil spirits. Could you just define them clearly? Are they all the same thing, or are they different? Yeah. Sorry, I should have done that.

[20 : 33] Yeah. They are different. Satan is, if you like, the ultimate prince of the world of evil. The devil is the same. The devil is simply another name for Satan.

Satan simply means legal adversary. Devil means cunning one or trickster or deceiver. And demon and evil spirits is what I've explained. They are not Satan or the devil, but the forces under him, and particularly the whole Genesis 6 thing.

Great. Do you want me to do the Lord's Prayer? Yep, yep. I'll just read out the question again. Now, in the Lord's Prayer, it has this line, lead me not into temptation. However, isn't God the source of good only?

How can we ask him not to lead us into temptation? Yes, thank you. Thank you. You're quite right. God does not lead us into temptation in that sense, because James says, you know, God tempts no one and cannot be tempted by anybody.

So what does it mean, lead me not into temptation? Well, the word in Greek for temptation is also the same word for testing. And I think what basically the Lord Jesus means by this petition in the Lord's Prayer is something like this.

[21 : 48] Please do not lead me into a time of testing so that I fall away. I.e., please do not put me in such a terrible place that actually I give in to sin and thereby fall away and indeed ultimately apostatize.

And so I think it's a very good line for us to remember and pray. Yeah. So James 1 would be the counterpoint to that, is it, when you're asking for wisdom? Quite so. Yeah. Yeah. Exactly.

Quite so. Okay. We now move into questions which are more to do with, if you like, ministry practice, things that actually happen in our world. How do they apply?

So here's a good one to start with. Now, when a person sees and speaks to a dead person who they can see, like a ghost, right? Is it actually a ghost?

Is it a real person coming back? Or is it something else? Wow. Yeah. When a person sees something and they think it's somebody who's died.

[22 : 52] Yeah, that's a difficult one, isn't it? I see no evidence in scripture for personal ghosts in the sense of a dead person coming back.

So I would say that it's something of the world of evil trying to trick you into thinking the ghost or the spirit of that dead person is coming back.

So I would be very cautious of saying that this was the real spirit of the ghost of the real dead person. I'd be cautious. So if I can just follow up myself on that question.

Is it the witch of Endor? Yes, yes, yes. So that might be something from the evil. Absolutely. Well, it's possible. That's a very difficult. I was just having a conversation with that with my boss, Andrew Reid, whom I think has been here.

And he is writing a commentary on Samuel. So there's an article on different interpretations of the witch of Endor, which I've sent him. But there are many different interpretations of the witch of Endor.

[23 : 57] So I think we'd, you know, Andrew Reid is probably the best. When you get Andrew Reid here and ask him that question, I think. Okay, we can. Maybe I'll shoot him an email. Now, there are a couple of questions similar to this, which is, what is our role in driving out evil spirits?

You know, do we exorcise demons? That kind of question. I suppose my own question to add to that is, you know, we see Jesus casting out demons.

You've taken us through that. I think the apostles do that too. Are they a paradigm for us? Or are they not? Okay, thank you. That's a very big question. Yes, there are three questions. There's also a question. Can an evil spirit be appeased?

Well, let me answer that one first. Can an evil spirit be appeased? No. They can only be crushed and defeated, which they have been by Jesus Christ. So there's no need to appease evil spirits.

You just need Jesus, who's done it for you, who's driven them out and destroyed them. What is our role in driving out evil spirits? Well, I hope the passage from Ephesians 6 is helpful that way.

[25 : 07] Stand firm. Stand. Stand. Stand. Stand. Put on the whole armors of God and pray. Stand and pray. That's it. That is our role.

That's it. I can't see anything else. That's the amazing nature of Ephesians 6. So that's what I would say about that one. How do I exercise a demon?

Well, you don't. Jesus Christ has done it. So you don't need to exercise any demon. Demon. It's the gospel by the Holy Spirit who exercises demons.

Not we. We're just told to stand there. So, yeah. To come back to Brian's question of, you know, is, are the exorcisms, especially in the gospels, a paradigm for us?

No, I don't think they are, because we're not Jesus. It's very simple. We're not Jesus. So it's not a paradigm for us. So you would say that Mark 5, verse 19, the man who went back to tell of the mercies of God.

[26 : 13] That's right. That would be our job. That's right. Of course, there are some things which we can take from today. We can certainly say that Jesus is our paradigm for defeating evil, and he has done it.

And we can certainly say that people outside of Jesus Christ are a paradigm for the man in, the legion man, possessed man in Mark 5.

Yes, we can say that, and we can certainly see that when you come to Jesus Christ, there is a paradigm of conversion, sitting at Jesus' feet, listening to Jesus, and in your right mind.

So actually, if you like, to answer that question perhaps more fully, how do I exorcise a demon? You proclaim the gospel. That's it.

I think you've mentioned this already in your talk, but we'll just do for clarity's sake. Can Christians be possessed by evil spirits? Yeah. The short answer to that is no, but it depends what you mean by possession.

[27 : 25] What I mean is, if you look in the Bible, and especially what we did in the second talk on Mark's gospel, we saw people whose personality was completely swallowed up all the time by the demon or the impure spirit.

Yeah? That's what we see. The poor man in Mark chapter 5, living in the tombs, raving, not being able to be controlled, self-harming.

But that's his entire condition his whole life until Jesus meets him. That we do not see, I think, today. Or at least we do not see of Christians at all.

Christians cannot be possessed in that sense. But can Christians be externally influenced by evil? Yes, maybe they can for a season or a time, and especially if there's sin in that Christian's life.

You know, again, I just touched on it, but basically Paul says in Ephesians that, you know, do not be angry, or if you're angry, don't let the sun go down on your anger.

[28 : 43] Let it be short-lived. And don't give a foothold for the devil. Why? Because actually anger allows the devil some influence on your life.

So certainly sin in the Christian's life will give the devil some external influence. But I do not believe a Christian can be possessed.

Because what does possession mean? It means that your entire personality is invaded by an evil spirit. But how can that be with a Christian if the Holy Spirit lives in the Christian?

How can the Holy Spirit live with an evil spirit? So, no to possession. Yes, that sin does allow evil spirits some influence for Christians.

How do we draw the line between spiritual or demonic oppression on the one hand and psychological or psychiatric problems on the other? And I'll just add to that another question that came up, which is similar, which is in Malaysia sometimes there are cases of what we call hysteria, where people just get themselves very worked up.

[29 : 55] So, yeah, what's happening there? Yes, thank you. That's a very good question. I think spiritual or demonic oppression is quite different, or rather it's a different category from psychological or psychiatric problems or mental illness.

Spiritual or demonic possession means that you are against the gospel of Jesus Christ. We see that, of course, very clearly in the gospels.

You know, the evil spirits actually shout out and are opposed to Jesus and his mission. And that, I think, is the ultimate criterion of how we differentiate between demonic possession and psychological or psychiatric problems.

If the person who has psychological or psychiatric problems shows mental illness, but shows no sign of anti-Jesus, anti-gospel, anti-God influence, then we can say this person's problems are psychological, psychiatric, and mental.

But if this person shows a strong and clear and consistent and absolute opposition to God, Jesus Christ, and the gospel continuously, you know, over a period of time, not just a one-off irritation or doubt or something like that, then I think we can say there's something more there.

[31 : 30] That's what I would want to suggest. Here's a quite specific scenario.

If a family requests church leaders to cast out evil spirits in their child, they think the child has an evil spirit in them, but I think it's saying that the family are not Christians.

They are not ready to receive Christ as their Lord. Is it advisable to cast out the evil spirit in that child? I think you've touched on this a bit, but maybe apply it to this scenario.

I don't think there's anything we can do except give them the gospel. We must explain clearly that there is no power on earth that can conquer evil spirits except Jesus Christ.

So we need to be clear and say you need to receive Jesus Christ first as Lord and Savior, and then we can help. But at the moment, we cannot help because actually you're against the only power that can help.

[32 : 48] So please, receive Jesus Christ. Let me explain the gospel to you once more. I think it is basically what I would want to say.

Let me answer this question because this one is quite interesting. Because it's sort of what I was studying for quite a long time.

Right next to us that this church is a big temple. What are they, evil spirits or unseen powers or something else? That's a very good question. I actually did my thesis on this question, the relationship between powers of evil and idols in 1 Corinthians 8 to 10, but I ranged over the whole scripture.

What I would say about other, I actually wrote a little book as well called Empty and Evil. But what I would say is that what happens in other religions is this, that basically that there is no such thing as the God of this or that other religion, but that basically the demons accept the worship which is offered to this imaginary, fictitious, idol God.

And therefore they come under the influence and the domain of the powers of evil. So whenever the, basically what they do is co-opt. Of course the unbeliever or the people of person in the other temple might have some very good intentions.

[34 : 16] They might want to worship God, but actually what happens is that the worship that they want, they think is good is actually co-opted or taken up by the world of evil.

And what the world of evil does, let me re-emphasize this point in other religions, is to prevent these people coming to the Lord Jesus Christ. So let me, let me once more just reiterate.

The evil spirits and the demons today are basically not the angels, the sons of God angels of Genesis 6. They have basically been dealt with by God and are incarcerated in hell.

What we have today, generally speaking, is basically the spirits of the dead giants who are the children of the angels. Not the angels themselves.

The angels themselves have been taken care of by God. They, as Jude and 2 Peter says, you know, they're incarcerated and kept there in the punishment of God.

[35 : 21] But yeah, so this question of other religions is a big one. And that is why my conclusions from my research is that Paul warns us against being compromising or being involved in the worship of different religions.

Indeed, the particular issue I examined was the whole issue of 1 Corinthians 8 to 10, food offered to idols. One more scenario.

One more scenario. Is there a common practice among some churches to pray at every corner of, say, a village, or maybe sometimes it's a housewarming, to rid the evils that they believe is in the house?

Is that biblical? I don't see it in the Bible myself is what I would want to say. Basically, again, you see, let me come back to my main point.

What gets rid of evil is basically the gospel. If you have the gospel, you've got rid of evil. And therefore, basically, Jesus Christ is Lord, and if that person accepts Jesus Christ, then all is fine.

[36 : 40] And you don't need to worry. It's not as if, you know, Jesus can't work if you forget to pray in this corner or that corner. It's not that, you know, oh dear, you know, now Jesus can't work at all.

He's Lord of all. Everything belongs to him. He will do as he does. So let's concentrate on people and bringing them to Christ. Are you familiar with the writings of Neil T. Anderson, so Bondage Breaker and a few others?

If so, can you comment whether they are biblical or not? Do you know Neil T. Anderson? If you don't, it's all right. Neil Anderson. Yeah, so he's written a few books. The Bondage Breaker.

No, I don't know his writings. Okay, so Dr. Modi can't comment on that. That's all right. If we were to abuse the gift of tongues, will it invite evil spirits into our midst?

No, I don't think so. I think so. I mean, that's a different question altogether. We need to research and go into 1 Corinthians 12 to 14. But while some do think that this is of demonic origin, I just do not see it as so at all.

[38 : 03] I think that is a misunderstanding and a misapplication, basically. Yeah. Probably one final question is whether you have any...

Sometimes in some circles they talk about generational curses. Yes. And how that might affect Christians if they have some sort of generational curse in their background.

And drawing from the book of Exodus in particular, where they get their texts. The sins of the father to the third and the fourth. Yeah, in Exodus 20 and 34. Do you have any comments on the idea of generational curses?

Not so much. If you like, we know that basically the whole human race is under the curse of Adam.

The original sin, as it's called theologically speaking. So in that sense, because Adam is the head of our race and our father, we are all implicated in Adam's sin and Adam's punishment.

[39 : 04] Now that is, if you like, I think very biblically true. The doctrine of original sin and indeed inherited sin in that sense, that we're all born with a corrupted spirit, that we all have an inner desire and rebellion against God.

Now, if the question is asking, in particular, could some family from the third or fourth generation back have certain problems or issues, I'm sure that's true, if you like, in the sense of dysfunctional families.

I mean, you know, we see that, don't we? You know, if, that sometimes family issues go down the generations and you repeat your parents' mistakes and so on and so forth.

But I think that's quite different from an intergenerational curse. If you come to Jesus Christ, that curse of your family is broken. So once it's broken, it's broken, surely, isn't it?

Well, I think the Q&A; has lasted more... But I think that's an ■■■ sin for a sister's guess, but I even don't think that's what I wat'am on later on.

[40 : 27] Well, it does look like that reason. So now I'll pay you back for your boyhood to fool him each other.