

# Gospel Driven Life - 4: Question and Answers

by Michael Horton

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*Michael Horton addresses the crisis of Christianity and emphasizes the importance of preaching the gospel as a central theme while engaging with contemporary culture.*

**Duration:** 38:19

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:15, Jeremiah 31:31, Romans 1:18

**Topics:** "Gospel Driven"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the characteristics of the younger generation, specifically Generation X and Generation Y. He mentions that these young people are exposed to a large number of images daily, which their brains struggle to process. The speaker emphasizes the importance of not treating young people like children and instead engaging them in intellectual discussions, such as logical fallacies. He also recommends resources like Gene Edward Beat and Brian Godawa for evaluating movies from a worldview standpoint. The sermon concludes by highlighting the need to understand the depth of the Gospel and make relevant applications in order to prevent people from suppressing the truth and becoming senseless.

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## Transcript

Wow, a glutton for punishment. You guys are really enduring a lot here. My wife said, took a look at it, the three talks, and I thought she was going to say, boy, that you're going to really be tired.

She said, wow, you're the only one speaking? And so, I'm really grateful to you for enduring three sermons from me today. Questioner 2 I've enjoyed your writings on the crisis of Christianity, and in your current state of consciousness, you seem to argue against it. So, what do you think? In, let's say, in regards to the crisis of Christianity, what do you think is the response to that? Is it negative? Is there a negative response? Answer It's been surprisingly positive in a lot of circles.

I've heard a lot of people say that it has helped them to see where, especially pastors. I've heard pastors say, I see where I have been critical of others, and yet my own ministry is like this. I've heard that quite a bit, that this isn't just about others.

I see myself in the mirror here and look, hey, same here. This is all, I'm talking about all of us here. And that's been really encouraging, including a pastor in Australia who says, now what do I preach? And there's been a real interest among people in secular media.

The one interview, in fact, a while ago, with USA Today, the editor said that she wanted to do something on, well she did interview me for Christmas and then for Easter, and asking the same question both times. Why did Christ need to come if we're basically good people? And her editor said for that story, I'm not really sure that this is a good thing to do at Easter, to talk about why Christians are denying sin. And that was something like that.

The title when it came out was, is sin, something like, is sin being denied? It was more clever than that. The subtitle was, if Christians don't believe in sin anymore, then why does Easter matter? And she's not a church-going Christian. And so, she was, she asked some really interesting questions and then she said, just sort of off the record, that her editor said, I'm a little concerned about doing this at Easter time.

We don't want to make the Christians mad at Easter. And she said, what do you think of that? Asked me, well, what do you think of that? I said, well, it's a little bit, it's a little bit odd if we're concerned about, you're concerned about making Christians mad at Easter, encouraging them to talk more about the reason why it had to happen. And evidently it was.

So, at least that's what her editor thought. So, I bet it's been really interesting to hear the different, the different responses from different quarters and really across the board. Methodists, Baptists, Roman Catholics, Seventh-day Adventists, Reformed, Lutherans, really across the board.

It's really interesting to hear from people. And evidently they haven't thought it through this negative, which was a concern that I had. I didn't want to just rain on everything.

Yes. She asked such a great question privately. I said, you must ask this publicly so I can run on, on a point that I didn't get to do in the talk.

See, that's how you have to do it. Thank you for asking that question. Because the point I wanted to make was that.

When you say preach the gospel every week, a lot of us who are raised with having something at the end where you make an invitation to come forward and receive Christ is what we have in our heads when you say preach the gospel every week. And that's not what I mean. I think it's not a technical appendix stapled to the end of the sermon.

It's finding Christ from Genesis to Revelation as the main course. And you know, how do we do that? Well, I think it depends on different passages. You know, historical books are easier to do that with the proverbs.

But first of all, he has a great commentary on proverbs. There are others who've done a great job with proverbs that really even proverbs is Christ-centered. Jesus said, all the Scriptures talk about me and the pattern of the preaching and act was preaching Christ from all the Scriptures.

And so those are our examples. Those are our patterns. And I think finding Christ, even when he's not on stage.

You still have a central character in a plot, an unfolding plot, even when that character isn't on stage. He's still the central character. And I think that's what we have to do in our in our preaching.

Find out how this story that's coalescing around Christ is evolving at this stage in this passage that we're looking at at this point in the history. That sort of thing. I would suggest and at making applications to.

Yeah. Yeah, it's really it's really hard. I think one one thing here to bear in mind is because people are created in the in the image of God.

No matter how silly they think they are, they're really not that silly. This just shows you how far we will go to suppress the truth and unrighteousness that we will make ourselves silly. We will deny basic logic.

Basic reason we will be senseless. It's not because people think too much that they're non-Christian. It's because they are able to simultaneously suppress so much that otherwise they need to live a rational creatures in the world when it comes to religion.

I think I would ask, first of all, just tactically. Well, surely you don't believe that don't believe what that everything is relative. You heard that statement.

You're making a claim true. You don't believe that statement is relatively. If so, I can go on with my work.

I don't need to talk to you right now because you're making no sense. You're making a claim. And for us to have a conversation.

We have to have meaningful disagreement. We have to be able to to clash that the time of taking you seriously that the time of having respect for what you're saying. So if I said to you that John F. Kennedy never lived.

What would you say? Well, if that makes you feel better. Our claim is Christian. The Jesus Christ is raised on the third day in exactly the same space and time history that John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

It's exactly the same kind of claim. The public historical claim. And are you willing to hear the argument for it.

At least at that point, people are kind of thrown back to know. Frankly, I don't. I had.

He doesn't mind. We talked about the bill by the science guy. We've had we were on a panel together talking about.

He was talking about how he debunks religion and you know, you can just take religion apart because it's so susceptible to criticism. It's always people projecting their own inner feelings and long money. Yeah, I mean, it's all for a block of Freud and everything.

I agree with you, but nothing you said was interesting because it's all been said before. So can I talk about Christ and his resurrection? And so we that is religion. I mean, what you're talking about here really is spirituality religion.

All that stuff on the religion page. That's it. Yeah, it's utterly boring.

So I'm glad you're going after that. Exposing it for the sham that it is. But let me talk about Christ and resurrection.

So after that, it will in the middle of it. He says. Here's what I think happened.

Jesus was placed in the tomb. So now, oh, now we're talking about what happened. Jesus was in the tomb.

He didn't really die and his disciples came and nursed him back to health and he went on to live a full life and then died. And then it just turned into this big explosion. The further away it got from the source of what happened.

You know how people go. They grow time as time grows. Well, that's interesting because none of those factors work in this case.

It was closest to home that the rumor broke out. The Jews couldn't find the body. The Romans couldn't find the body.

They both agree that it was empty on the third day. The people of the most means motive and opportunity could come up with a body. And they had Roman seal Roman guard Jewish guard and Roman didn't like people not staying dead after their crucifixion.

They could care less about religion, but this is now a political concern. A security issue and no one could find all that it was probably those three women or or the the the self-described cowardly disciples. The men were exactly up to the job.

It doesn't look like from what how they describe themselves. Their own description. They're fleeing for their very lives.

And yet Peter is willing to be crucified upside down because he doesn't want to be crucified the way Jesus was when he's murdered. Something happened in all that you want. You don't have thousands of people growing sort of like the you know, the flu, the influenza exponential growth from the place where it happened.

You have exponential growth years later, once the myth has been able to evolve. Here you have exponential growth from Jerusalem where it happened very quickly. I think you start making those argument, but anyway, by the time it was over.

He he said that by the way, the. What you're what you're arguing for is called a hallucination or the of the. Sorry.

Resuscitation theory. Thank you. One theory.

And that's been around for quite a while. And have you seen the study by the Journal of the American Medical Association in nineteen eighty or something like that. And he said, no, I don't have it handy, but I could find it for you.

And he said, no, that's just that's absurd. That I said, yeah, you know, every time I come through the Journal of the American Medical Association, I see some kind of Christian propoganda in there that is driving me crazy. And he said, I, I said, do you want do you want to really talk about this? And he said, no.

OK, so you're a scientist that shut down. See, that's that's what we do. That's what I'm talking about.

I think the best thing that we, but at least at least. He had to face the fact he had to go to bed that night. Maybe he can, but it's still a big deal that we we sort of help people go to bed with a bad conscience.

Hopefully, he went home and had trouble swallowing the fact that he had basically, as a scientist, just shut down, just closed a really interesting pattern of investigation, simply because he didn't want it to be true. Well, I could recommend Jean Edward V, for example, and Brian Goddard. They both Brian Goddard has a website where he.

He evaluates movies, not just from a sort of moralistic standpoint, but from a from a worldview standpoint, Jean V. Does that as well in World magazine. But yeah, I would. I would encourage those.

You know, you know, the real. You can tell the counterfeit Walter Martin once said that by knowing the real thing, and I think that just by here again, the fee. Once people have had the fee.

They can't go back. They can't just have the potato chips anymore, and I think we've just got to spread it. We've got to teach, teach them, catechize them, and I think that once they are so amazed with the really good stuff.

And not just the good stuff in the church, but but frankly, better culture as well. Then they're bored by constant titillation and constant entertainment. We just had in St. Louis last week.

We had a white horse in taping there and conference with a professor at the Covenant Seminary who is also a psychiatrist and you wrote a book still bored in a culture of entertainment and published by InterVarsity Press. That's a good book. You might want to want to look at.

You know, that's why again. Sorry, one more statistic. Michael Sack of Fortune 500 company marketing executive was called in by Leadership Journal, which is the evangelical pastors manual or journal to identify the coming generation, which then was generation X and a little bit of generation Y. And tell us a little bit about what we can expect from this generation.

And the one thing he came back with is surprised. Leadership Journal came back with. They're not at all like their parents.

I was saying they also said, or grandparents. They the average young person sees and it was some incredible number. I'm not going to attempt to get some incredible number.

So many images per day. And they don't know how to process it. Their brains can't possibly process older people eat visuals like a meal and younger people eat them like candy.

And so the younger you get, the less visual presentation and visual sort of entertainment is going to mean anything to them at all. That will be boring and the only thing that they will believe is something that is personally delivered. Like in a sermon.

And so he said, expect the younger generations to demand demanding sermon that make them think and are longer. But wow, that's wild. And about this time, I think leadership was saying, you're going to cash that check that we wrote to you.

We were expecting a little bit something different here. That that's really exciting. It shows the capacity of people.

We thought they're just going to get dumber and dumber, but they really are getting bored and more and more bored. Do you find that in your own ministry? More and more bored with things that older adults think will excite them. Yeah, the contrast to their contract.

Well, we've had the L. A. Times ran a story on churches, youth groups that are growing wherever they're doing in depth Bible study and even going through a catechism. And in the church, the youth group is exploding. Well, if it were.

I think first, you know, again, the last question I. I think that we are doing young people a great disservice when we treat them like children. You know, you get up there and you start talking about, for example, you talk about what a logical fallacy is used to be. That's just sort of the grammar, logic, rhetoric.

You know, you get all of this as you're as you're going through school and you show people example in TV commercials of false premises and you take a clip from one of the talking head from you know whether NBC or the whole political spectrum. Take one of their argument and take it apart in front of the kids. They will love that more than Atari.

I don't know one of those things. Yeah, we thank you more than a week. I can't even say that without laughing inside, but I think why, because they're they're taking the culture apart there.

They're thinking there's something that God wired them to be not passive, but active, living, moving, breathing, and thinking human beings who are not part of a cold and are not being led to the gas chambers because they're refusing to ask questions and think. I'm really worried that we're getting to the place in our culture where people of great persuasive power and rhetoric are going to be able to take the stage and do all kinds of mischief with all, because we don't know what logic and reason are anymore. We don't know a bad argument when we hear it.

Yeah, absolutely. That that's the distinction is like a razor. We have to be careful.

I have to be careful not to overstate it one side or the other. It's a razor thin line between saying on one hand. The gospel is not inside of you and saying the gospel doesn't affect anything inside of you.

Those are. That's not at all what what I intend by saying the gospel is not inside you. I'm saying when the God because the gospel is outside of you.

It is an announcement about something that's already finished that doesn't need your improvement or contribution or your fingerprint on it, just because it comes to you as an external word. It has far more power than anything that happens inside of you to actually change you on the inside. That makes sense to us out from the outside and make the new from the inside out.

So even the promise. I will give you a new heart. The gospel is not that we have experienced regeneration.

The gospel is the good news. God's promise. I will give you a new heart.

I will forgive your sin. I will save you from the guilt and power of your sin. And one day from the present, I will do all of this for you.

Now, believe that that's what makes that that's what makes us new on the inside. And so it's not to deny that anything happens on the inside is to say that the gospel itself is not my conversion. The gospel convert.

But it is not itself in its content content, a message of how I got saved. It's a message about how God saved up. Let me write that down.

Yeah, I mean, that's that when you're actually in concrete terms, putting the service together there. That's where applying all of this, even if we all agreed on the theory, applying it is where often we have disagreement. I think.

I think that first of all, we have we have to use wisdom where we do have have disagreement. But in terms of big picture principle, I don't think, first of all, that we should do anything that is specific toward any gender or age group or consumer preference during the worship. I think that that one of the glory of what Christ has come to do is it.

He has come to to reconcile. Also, reconciling all things in himself. He he is the source of this reconciliation.

He is the center of the church's life, and he is. He's the one who determines who our neighbors are. Well, who are brothers and sisters are.

So I I just I have a real problem with saying, you know, for instance, we're going to have an early service for the older people and a contemporary service or or younger people and by the time it's all over. I mean, you can confirm or deny whether this is true in your circle and what you're saying, but in my experience. Well, we put it this way, according to a number of studies and you probably seen them.

Over half of the evangelicals grow who were raised in evangelical Bible believing churches. Over half of them. Never go to do you are not a church in the sophomore year of college.

Over half. They've grown up in the church. Well, that secular humanist university.

No, I don't. I think that's so small. If you think that the secular university can take them in two years, then you really haven't done your job as a parent or or as a church.

That easy. I think what has happened is we have all we have never been in church. They've been in the youth group.

They started by this one. My grandma stopped preaching and gone to Medlin. They started.

They started in the cry room, not against crying about. But I'm just saying they they went their whole life where they could be cajoled and not bother the rest of them. They never learned to become part of the confessing communion of things.

And then we sent them off to college and they go to campus crusade and intervarsity and you know their campus ministry and never go to church. Why? Well, because that's the youth group. Was always their church.

And so I think we've got it. We've got to go back and integrate young people into the life of the church and say, you know what? This does not need to be tailored to you. You need to be tailored to it.

You need to grow up. You look forward to having the wisdom that this old lady has over here. Have you? Have you heard the wisdom of her walking with Christ for these last fifty years? Do you have you heard her tell about losing her husband? I want to hear about that yet.

Well, you better hear about it yet, because your whole life is full of death and tragedy. And she's still a Christian. She's a hero.

Go talk to her. So the less I think the less we do. Demographically and the more we old people need young people.

Black need white white need black Hispanic. We all have something that the other needs. That's Paul's argument about the gift of the body.

So I think that bring it all bring it all together and not let the world define what community is all of the last will and testament. Yeah. OK, well, you know, I mean.

Yeah, no, thank you. I think part of the problem is that God is using analogies drawn from the secular arrangement and molding them to his own purposes and. It's not like God is bound and obligated to the category of classical.

Ancient Near Eastern anymore than Roman law, but it is the in both. This is John Levinson Moshe Weinfeld a host of Jewish scholars make this point, not even Christians are Jewish scholars. They say very definitely there is a difference between a royal grant that you find, for instance, in the promise to Abraham and David and the new covenant and the same Jewish scholars will point all the way to the new covenant and say we could see where Christians got this reading the Christ of the fulfillment.

But at the end of the day, John Levinson at Harvard for the end of the day, there are two mountain. But at the end of the day, Mount Sinai speaks to us more loudly than Mount Zion. The law speaks to us more than the everlasting covenant and the voice of the law that must have been heard over all of the.

So it's really interesting how they're pointing out the differences between these two types of covenant. And then if you're going into more depth on this and hopefully more coherently than I'm saying it right now, look at covenant and salvation. I have three chapters on this right.

I'm drawing on Jewish scholarship and Roman Catholic scholarship, including the current pope. Obviously, there are two different types of treaties in the Scriptures. There is the suzerainty treaty and the royal grant and scholarship is now granting that I can see with all the scholarship.

How a lot of people would have probably arrived at where Luther and Calvin at the time of the Reformation on the pope. And so it's really. I think there's a lot there, just exegetically that we're not imposing on the text.

And I think Obama Palmer Robertson thinks that reform theology, the reform tradition has just found stuff there that isn't there. But when Roman Catholic and Jews find it there, they're not. I'm not because they're reformed theologians looking for it.

I think it counts for something doesn't mean it's right, but it just means it should be. Maybe we should give it another look. Yes, sir.

Yeah, absolutely. I agree with that. I think the big difference here is that God is borrowing the secular political analogy to speak, transferring it to the religious domain, whereas what the what the pagan do is is.

All they have to work with in the religious domain is natural revelation. What they were given in creation, and so they turned that into a distorted version of that original revelation. So I would agree with you that.

That the pagan religions sort of reflect. In different ways are sort of parasitical on biblical revelation. But what's really kind of, I think, interesting here is that God does draw on political analogies that people

weren't using for religion to for the first time in in history, adapt them to the relationship between himself and his people.

That's what's so new in the covenantal relationship is that it really. All of it is politics that God brings into the realm of his relationship with people. God doesn't take anything that's already there in the religion of the nation and adapt them to his relationship with people.

But I agree with the religion of the nation and reflect that primordial, even the Gilgamesh at the epic of Babylonian epic of creation and the flood. Echoes are saying radically different things about the nature of reality, but the primordial event sounds really similar. Great, a very non-controversial question to end things with the view of the sacraments.

No, I would argue, and I'm sure we have different traditions represented here. I would argue coming from the reformed family of faith that we. The sacraments do not automatically effect salvation.

Rather, the sacraments are means of grace. Well, now, what's the difference between those two ideas? The difference is that what you want of the sacraments do. I would say the sacraments don't do anything.

God does things through them. God is the one acting through the sacraments. And it's a pledge.

It's a it's a sign and feel of God of God's promise. And so, as surely as I see the water and and baptized surely as I hold the bread and the wine. So surely am I absolutely convinced that my sins have been washed away that I've been.

And so, whenever I question my salvation, I I say, I'm baptized and I receive the Lord's supper. Why you're trusting in that? No, I'm trusting in the promise. How else is God going to get the promise to me unless he can get it to me? And the way he gets it to me is by, you know, somebody up there.

You know, we're not all that great, but somebody's got to talk gospel to the people. And he uses bread, wine and water. The most common element and the most common people in order to serve up his promise.

So that's how I would define and feel of his. Well, that's how how Paul and Romans four described

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