

Ask Jeff 10.11.17

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Alright, ladies and gentlemen, hopefully you picked up what we call the circle of concerns. For those of you that are guests or visitors with us, this is our prayer sheet. This is your opportunity to let us know what's happening in your life or those that you care about's lives that we need to be praying actively for. As always, there are those that we know that are in hospitals, assisted living facilities as well as at home, most of them with medical, some with other types of conditions or issues. At the bottom of the first page you'll see a sympathy section for those in our church family who have lost loved ones, and on the back of the sheet two areas I always like to point out, those that are serving on the mission field and those that are serving in the United States military, oftentimes serving overseas and in areas that are not necessarily one's comfort zone, and so we want to continue to pray for them. So those that are both local and those that are far away, we want to pray for them that the Lord will encourage them in all of their endeavors.

Let's pray tonight and we'll get started.

Lord, as we gather together as the body of Christ, we recognize that worldwide this is but a small piece of your family of faith, and so tonight we lift up our brothers and sisters, some of them literally here in our backyard who are hurting physically, who are waiting diagnoses, who are concerned about what they're going to hear out of doctors' and nurses' mouths. Lord, we pray, we pray for healing, we pray for restoration, Lord, we pray for peace and for comfort. Lord, I pray for those that are caretakers and those who are the family members who oftentimes are sitting there as extensions of comfort who are exhausted themselves. Lord, we pray for all those that are in those situations and scenarios. Lord, we also pray for those that are serving on the mission field in the military, oftentimes when loneliness creeps in, Lord, we pray that you would be their comfort and you would be their joy. Lord, may they see if at all possible the joy and the fruit of their labor. If it's not on this campus, whether it's the children, the students, the college students, the choir, the men's Bible studies or us in this room, God, I pray that we would be not only in your word but we would be doers of it. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

I do want to welcome those of you tonight who may be with us for the first time or a guest either here in person or on the other side of that camera back there. I want to welcome you to Wednesday nights here at First Baptist. The way that we do Bible study on Wednesday night is twofold, we do half of it as a question and answer time, we call it

Ask Jeff because you get to ask questions, my name just happens to be Jeff. The second half is we do or we're continuing in our Bible study through the book of Revelation. Hopefully you got the outline that was available when you came on our campus. We'll be walking through that a little bit later. Here's how the Q&A works if you've never been a part of this. Everything we're about to talk about, everything we're going to discuss, well, let's be honest, it's your fault. Why? Because you have the opportunity to ask what you want to ask and talk about what you want to talk about. I've shared this before, I'll be honest again, this is my favorite part of the week. I love to preach, I love to teach, but more than that I love to answer people's questions. Why? Because I know what I know and I know what I believe but I want to help you in areas of life that maybe you've got questions about or maybe you're curious about or maybe you just need some clarity on. The way that you can submit questions are twofold: you can either do it old school or new school. Here's what new school, not nude school, I didn't say that, I promise. New school. I apologize. I apologize. New. New. N-e-w. New school. Wow. Okay, old school. Write it down on a piece of paper and hand it to me. New school, go to fbcopelika.com/askjeff and you can submit your questions.

Now when you submit your questions, it's going to ask you for an email. You're thinking, "Well, I'd like to be anonymous." You are anonymous. When I pull up the database, I have no idea who you are and I don't know what your name is, I don't know where you're from, okay? But when you put your email address in just a moment when we go to the question, when I push the word "answered" it will send a link to your email address with a copy of the video of when it was answered just in case you weren't with us in person. You remain anonymous. Now I think the best part about Wednesday night isn't what comes from the database, it's when you raise your hand in just a few moments. You have the opportunity to raise your hand and say, "But what about this? Or I'm curious about that. Or can we go a little deeper here?" Or as some of you have said, "I don't care what we're talking about, I want to talk about something different." That's okay. You absolutely lose your anonymity when you raise your hand but you can take the conversation anywhere you want to go.

So without further ado, I have the database open and the question is, this is going to sound very simplistic but it is a question. It says is Jesus alive? That's a great question and let me tell you the answer: yes. Alright, next question. No, I'm kidding. The reason, though that sounds like a very simplistic question and that sounds like a question that maybe some of you are thinking, "Well, that's overly, almost elementary." No, it's not. You do realize this is the distinguishing difference between Christianity and every other religious system. This is the difference between Christianity and every other faith system because as you begin to study religions and faiths and belief systems, one of the things that you will discover is that every system of belief, every faith system has a key personality that it is centered upon. Obviously, Christianity around Jesus Christ. Islam around the prophet Mohammad, okay? Buddha, Buddhism, Buddha, etc. Alright? So you've got to a key personality. You also have what we will call key sacred scriptures or writings. Obviously Christianity has the Bible, Islam has the koran, etc. And you also have distinctive beliefs that come from those writings as an extension of that persona or personality.

Now the reason I share that with you is if you looked at every belief system in the world, they all have a personality or personalities, they all have scriptures or writings, and they all have distinctive beliefs and/or principles or systems of belief. The one distinguishing difference between Christianity and everybody else is that all of the other leaders are dead. They're dead. In fact, some of those religions actually celebrate the death of their person by venerating their bones and memorializing them. Here's the thing about Jesus: if Jesus Christ, now this is according to 1 Corinthians 15:17, if Jesus Christ is not risen from the dead, according to that verse your faith is in vain. I've said this before and I'm going to say it again: if Jesus Christ were not alive, we would not be here tonight. There would be no reason. There would be no Christianity. All throughout the gospels all Jesus said, remember he kept telling them, "Hey, there's going to be a day they're going to put me in the grave and three days later I'm going to come back." Jesus Christ hinged his entire teaching, everything he taught on the resurrection of the dead.

That being said, go to 1 Corinthians 15, the same chapter that I just alluded to. 1 Corinthians 15 oftentimes we call the great resurrection chapter. I want you to see what it said in the first few verses of 1 Corinthians 15. Later on in verse 17, it does say if Jesus is not raised from the dead our faith is in vain. It says, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel," that means the good news, "which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep," or have died. When you begin to look at those brethren, those 500, the testimonies of the early apostles, the testimonies of the early church, one of the things that is so distinguishing to me is if Jesus Christ had not risen from the dead, then how do you explain the fact that with the exception of the Apostle John on the island of Patmos that we studied in Revelation, that all of the other apostles literally gave their lives in oftentimes a violent martyrdom fashion? Would they have willingly forsaken all that just for a system of belief or just for an inclination? But they had seen him, in fact, remember Thomas, the doubting apostle? Remember on the eighth day he said, "I won't believe unless I put my hands in his wounds"? Jesus comes through the wall, remember what he does? He falls down immediately. He saw him risen. He saw him raised. In fact, Acts 1 says they were there when he ascended on high and he said, "Guess what? As he came," this is what the angel said, "he's one day going to descend."

It sounds like a very simplistic question but it is the absolute key component of Christianity. If Jesus Christ is not risen from the dead and is not alive, everything else crumbles and falls apart.

Now one of the things that I've said throughout the years and I'll say tonight is this: I never want to follow somebody who beats me dying because I'm going to end up in the same place they are, right? Here's the great news: Jesus is alive which means that my

faith and belief in him means that I can have what he promised, everlasting life without end and where he says in Revelation 21, without pain, without heartache, without remembrance of former things. What an opportunity, what an availability not because I adhere to certain scriptures but because he rose from the dead.

Any questions about the resurrection? Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Loosely. It's fine. It's Wednesday night. You can go completely different if you want to.

[unintelligible]

Yes. Okay, the question is and allow me, the question she's asking is she said I've heard some people say that Mormons are Christians, what do you say? That's exactly how you phrased it. For those of you who are not familiar with who she's speaking of, these are the guys that love to visit you on a bicycle. They usually have a placard on them, nice white shirt and a little tie, and they are the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, alright? Their position that they claim is that they have received advance revelation through the prophet Joseph Smith, the famous golden tablets, the pearl of great price, the doctrine of covenants and what we know as the book of Mormon, and that they have adopted or they have received an advanced revelation of a purification of the church that we need to adhere to. Now that's kind of a history of who they are. What's important about this system of belief and I talked a little bit about this on Sunday, is what I call line theology. Here's line theology right now. We're going to get rid of new school here because we're just going to forget I even said that earlier. And squirt, squirt there and hopefully....there we go, there it is.

Alright, so what I call line theology. Line theology is simply this: on the left side of the line, this is lostness, okay? This is someone who is lost. They are not saved. They are not forgiven. They're destined to a place the Bible calls hell. That's lostness, okay? On this side of the line is saved. This person is forgiven. This person has a relationship with the Lord. This person is destined to a place the Bible calls heaven. So we've got hell here, heaven here, lost here, saved here. The question is what does it take to get across the line, okay?

Now the Bible makes it very clear for by grace you are saved through faith and not of yourselves, it is the gift of God not of works lest any man should boast, right? So biblically speaking, the Bible says the only way to get across is Jesus alone. That's it, alright? Jesus alone. That's it. What we know as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints or the Mormons and, by the way, lest you think I'm communicating the belief system erroneously, I've had dozens of them in my home, I've talked with them personally, I have read the material they've given me, I've come back and we've had discussions. They believe that in order to cross the line, okay, their belief is that there is Jesus, that you have to believe that Jesus is the one who shed his blood, okay? They also believe that you have to be baptized by one of their elders, not just anybody, it has to be

one of theirs, and that you have to continue with good works, and that if at any point these good works do not match up to what they should be, you can be sent back across the line. Does that make sense? Now I'm answering this question in a strange way because you asked are they Christians? I don't care if you put the name Baptist on it, if that's what you believe, then you're believing you're saved by what you do, not what Jesus did, okay? So whether you're Mormon which as a whole believe this, whether you're a Baptist which typically as a whole believe this, by the way, not all Baptists believe that and not all Mormons probably believe that so we're using big terms here, what I would say is anybody who advocates a works-based salvation, that I can do it, I can earn it, I can be good enough, does not grasp biblical salvation. Does that make sense?

And so the big question is what does it take to get across the line? Now for those of you that were here Sunday morning, now I know we had a big storm and that limited some of us. We talked about this, whatever got you across the line must necessarily be able to take you back across the line. So in other words, if Jesus is the only one who can get me saved, then it's only Jesus that can send me back and he said, "I'll never leave you. I'll never forsake you. No man can pluck you out of my hand." If my salvation is based on my good works, then guess what? There might be seasons where I'm not as good as I used to be, alright? And there might be times in my life that I'm in rebellion, so to speak, or as the prophet Jeremiah says, I'm backsliding. If that's the case, then I would "slide back" over here and I'd have to "be good again." The problem is you can't be good enough and I can't be good enough. That's why we need Jesus. I mean, you think about it, all the people he preached to in the gospels, they spent their whole life being good. The Pharisees, I mean, these were the guys that were good all the time. I mean, they didn't just tithe, they tithed three times over, okay? They gave. They served. They lived and even Jesus said that their converts were twice the children of hell as them. In fact, Matthew 23 is a whole discourse on how their religion right here isn't going to do it.

Does that make sense? Does that help answer your question? So when somebody says, you know, and they put a label on it, a denomination, whatever, I understand as a whole the overwhelming majority of what you referenced believe this, but what I like to do, I like to make it personal and what I mean by personal it says, "Well, do you believe these folks or not?" My question is what do you think it takes to get across this line? Because there's a lot of folks that have a lot of titles that believe something like this. Does that make sense? I hope that helps a little bit in that area.

Anybody else on.... Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Correct. The question he asked is that all faith systems have that key personality. Now sometimes they have multiple personalities but the key personality they look to, and he said, "Well, what about Judaism?" Judaism absolutely it's Moses. You know, Moses was the one who brought down the law. Moses was the one, the 10 Commandments, who led them out of Egypt. You know, they talk about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, when you get into Judaism, if you were to ask someone who as Orthodox Jew who are the personalities,

they're going to say Abraham, they're going to say Moses, and probably say David. Now you get into Hebrews 11, there's actually I think 32 personalities that are mentioned, kind of the Hall of Fame of Faith, and you could build a case that almost any of them were kind of the pillars of the Jewish faith. But here's the thing that Jesus even taught about in the gospel of John, he said, "Abraham dead. Isaac dead. Jacob dead. Moses dead." And he said that's what is going to distinguish me from them, he said, because I'm coming back.

So now the one thing about Judaism, I want you to hear me, that's so different than all of these other religions we could talk about is that Christianity is a natural progression out of Judaism. In other words, understand that Christianity, our Old Testament is the Jewish testament. Notice I didn't say "Old." It's the testament. That Jesus was of the tribe of Judah, Jesus was of, if you read the gospel of Matthew, it says he was the son of Abraham, he was the son of Isaac, the son of David. He was from that extension and so he was of the tribe of Judah. He was an extension of, he was the fulfillment of the prophecies of. Unfortunately, as a whole most Jewish people have rejected him as Messiah and so Christianity, I want you to hear me just let this percolate for a moment, Christianity is what Judaism should have become. Does that make sense? Judaism should have naturally migrated into this is our Messiah, this is our Redeemer, we're headed toward the New Testament. Unfortunately, they sat before Pilate and said, "Crucify him! Crucify him! Let his blood be upon our children and their children."

Does that help with that question? That help a little bit? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Moses is dead.

[unintelligible]

Yes, in Jude. Yes.

[unintelligible]

Uh-oh, I get nervous when he said, "I heard a preacher one time." It wasn't me, was it? I was just checking.

[unintelligible]

Yes. The Bible says that Jesus, this is in Revelation 1:5, he's the first begotten or the firstborn of the dead. Yes. The verse and I want to go there tonight because this is fun. Go to the book of Jude. You say, "Where's Jude?" Go to Revelation and hang a hard left. It is literally the page before the book of Revelation in your Bible. By the way, we're going to be in the Revelation 6 in just a moment so you might want to just kind of hang out there. But in the book of Jude, verse 9. Now let me give you a little context while you're looking for Jude. It's hard to find that one page in the Bible, I understand. What we

know as the book of Jude is dealing with a very important subject matter, it's those who, they have the right language, they have the right appearance, it's almost what this young lady was talking about, they have all this stuff up here but they don't have Jesus and they've infiltrated the body of Christ and they're beginning to teach people erroneously, and the book of Jude talks about that those who deny Jesus, that they will be judged for it, alright? And it gives all these examples of people who took advantage of the grace of God, took advantage of the mercy of God.

When you get to verse 8 of the book of Jude, by the way, you may have heard this before but if you want to mess with somebody's mind, just ask them to turn to Jude 2. Jude, verse 8, it says, "Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, did not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you." Now there's two levels of thought here, one is about what we know as spiritual warfare and here you've got this picture of something going on. But per your question, Moses. Moses dies in Deuteronomy 34. If you go back and study Deuteronomy 34, the Lord said that he was buried, he was literally buried by the Lord in a place that nobody knew. Nobody knew where his grave was, alright? Lots of theories about that but nobody knew. According to Jude, verse 9, Michael the archangel, one of the only three angels that's named in scripture, an archangel means head angel, the most powerful angel, he is sent on a mission by God to get the body of Moses.

Now you may be wondering to yourself, "Why would that be important? Why did he need the body of Moses?" Well, when you get to Matthew 17, Jesus is transfigured before Peter, James and John. Remember that famous story where they want to build the tabernacles on the hill? They say, "Hey, let's not go down, we've got it pretty good." There is Jesus glorified before them and there's two men standing beside him. One of them is Elijah and the other one is Moses. Now let's think about these two guys. Elijah. How did he "get up to heaven"? Don't you remember, "Swing low, sweet chariot"? I mean, come on, here we go. The Lord comes and he swoops him up, right? Moses and according to the book of Jude, verse 9, Michael the archangel comes and grabs his "body." You say, "Well, why is that important?" Well, yes, the transfiguration, that's important. When we get to Revelation 11 and, by the way, according to our Revelation study, we will be there before one of my children graduates high school. I promise you, okay? When we get to Revelation 11, we've got two witnesses that show up for 42 months, 3 ½ years on the earth and they testify to the truth of Jesus Christ. Guess who those guys are? Elijah and Moses. Guess what happens to them? They die.

So you say why would the Lord need his body when not only what we know as the transfiguration but Moses is coming back. Here's what I want to distinguish about Jesus and Moses and, by the way, as we study on Sunday morning, we're rolling into John 11 which is the story of Lazarus, there's a very distinct difference between being resurrected and resuscitated. Work with me. Resurrected means raised to never die again. Moses was not resurrected, he was resuscitated. He was never resurrected because he died. When he comes up in Revelation 11 and we'll study this, he "never dies again." When Jesus rose from the grave after three days, he raised to never die again. That's why, to your point,

sir, he's called the firstborn, the first one that has been raised from the dead. Here's exciting news. If he's the firstborn, last time I checked firstborn means you're going to have a second, which means he is one of many that will follow.

So you're right. Moses, he did die, his body was fought over. He shows back up again in Revelation 11 and he dies again. Poor guy dies twice and I would defend in Revelation 11 he gets his head cut off. So the first time he dies in the wilderness because he struck the rock when he should not have, and the second time he's faithful to the Lord and gets his head cut off. So the next time you say, "Man, I wish I had it like those guys in the Bible," you might not want to say that because Moses actually takes it twice, so to speak.

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Uh-oh, here we go.

[unintelligible]

Yes. Enoch. Okay, we're going to get ahead of the game. Go ahead and turn a few pages to the right to Revelation 11 because the question he's bringing up is these two witnesses, I understand Moses has died but it would only, it does make sense that the Lord would use two individuals who had never died. We know Elijah is one of them, right? The problem is and I'm going to get back to John 11, the story of Lazarus, in a moment, alright? Beginning in verse 3 of Revelation 11, "I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceeds out of their mouth, and devours their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed." I know I've said this before but I wish that was my spiritual gift. I wish my spiritual gift was if somebody said something they shouldn't have to me, I could just go, cckkk, and it's over.

Okay, next, verse 6. I know, I'm not right. It's okay. Verse 6, "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy." Who did that? Elijah did. Exactly right, Elijah did that. Next, they "have power over waters to turn them to blood." Who did that? Moses. Enoch didn't do any of this that is described. "To smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."

Now go back to John 11. John 11. Those of you who are brand new, welcome to Bible Drill on Wednesday night. John 11. Jesus is speaking with the sisters of Lazarus, alright? This is the man we know. He is dead. He's been dead for four days. Jesus is going to call him forth. By the way, he was resuscitated because he dies again, alright? In fact, when you get to chapter 12 of the gospel of John, they're seeking his death because of his testimony. Alright, here's what Jesus says, beginning in verse 23. Jesus answered them saying, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily verily I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone but if it die it

brings forth much fruit. He that loveth his life." I'm in the wrong chapter. You know, it is the words of Jesus and it's really pretty good.

How about John 11, beginning in verse 23. "Jesus saith unto her," there we go, "Your brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Listen to what Jesus says, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believe in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live," Moses, "And whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die," Elijah. "Believe you this?"

Go to 1 Corinthians 15 again. You didn't know what kind of can you were opening, did you, sir? He's like, "No, I really didn't." That's okay. 1 Corinthians 15 beginning in verse 51. I've got the right chapter this time, I promise. It says, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead," Moses, "shall be raised incorruptible, and we," Elijah, "shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." The two witnesses that we'll get to eventually, they are a living testimony of what Jesus was teaching, that there's coming a day that those who have died in faith and those who are still alive in faith shall celebrate together with the Lord.

So when you get to the two witnesses, I understand it's very natural to say, "Well, it has to be Elijah and Enoch because neither one died." And that's true, however when it says the water was turned into blood and plagues were distributed, Enoch never did that. We do know that Moses did and Jesus talked about one who has died and one who never died, and you have the same illustration of what we know in 1 Corinthians 15 at the resurrection and also in Revelation 11.

Does that help at all? Is that where you wanted to go at all? Oh, okay, good. I actually went down the right road. Phew. Anybody else on that? Are we all good? Any other follow-up questions, thoughts, remarks? We've been hanging out in the front tonight, the back, it's okay to participate, I promise. I like back row Baptists. It's okay. Anybody back there? We're all good to go? We've all got that one? Oh, I'm sorry, yes, sir. I almost went to the database. Go for it.

[unintelligible]

Point of clarification.

[unintelligible]

Yes. Great question. You're very soft-spoken so I'm going to repeat it for everybody. The question he asked is in light of what we just discussed, why is it in Matthew 25 that Jesus comes in judgment and there are a group that are known as the sheep and there's a group that's known as the goats? Why is it that to the sheep he did not say because you believed on me but because you gave me a cup of cold water in my name, and because you gave clothes in my name, and you gave food in my name? Great question.

Go to Matthew 25 and we're going to find ourselves in verse 31. Now let me give you a little background, a little backstory here. Matthew 24 and Matthew 25 are two of the most difficult chapters in all of the New Testament, so thank you, sir, for going there tonight. I appreciate it. Jesus is on the Mount of Olives. This is what we call the Olivet Discourse. Everything in these two chapters is what we call eschatological which means end times, alright? At the very beginning of Matthew 24, Jesus is talking about the fact that the temple would be torn down in one day, alright? The disciples ask him, "When will this happen? What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the world?" When we talk about things in the book of Revelation, you've got to go back to these two chapters a lot because it's all about the end times, alright? In verse 31 of Matthew 25, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory." This is very different than what we just read in 1 Corinthians 15.

Now I know some of you may be getting tired of this statement but I'm going to keep saying it, okay? I love it. There is nothing that has to happen before Jesus comes back for us, there is a lot that has to happen before Jesus comes back with us. Some of the things that have to happen before Jesus comes back with us may happen before Jesus comes back for us. The reason I say that is Matthew 25 is when Jesus comes back with us. Does that make sense? So if you can, transport yourself over to Revelation 19 when Jesus splits the skies and the armies of heaven are behind him. When he comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. In Revelation 19, Jesus shows back up. In Revelation 20, he sits on his throne.

Verse 32, "And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink," and we know the rest of the story. Now if I can and hopefully in a short amount of time explain it. Jesus is describing his physical return second coming, right? The event that happens immediately before this is what we call Armageddon, that's that big battle where all the peoples of the earth are fighting Jesus, the blood goes to the bridle of the horse. However there are those that in the midst of that "time period" that Jesus called in chapter 24 the great tribulation, that did not receive the mark of the beast, that did not go with what we know as the antichrist, and they are, for lack of better terms, they're alive when he returns but they didn't fight against him, and he takes them and he divides them. Oftentimes we call this the judgment of the nations, okay? Those who, I hate to use simplistic terms, that were on his side, you're good.

Now he doesn't give them a glorified body. He doesn't give them a white robe to wear like we've read about in other passages he says to receive the kingdom, he just said he's sitting on his throne. In fact, I know I'm giving you a lot of water out of the fire hydrant, these are the subjects of those who reign with Jesus Christ during Revelation 20. They have gone through that great tribulational period. They have held to the things of God and the Lord descends, he shows up and says, "Okay, all of you who did as chapter 12 says,

you obeyed my commandments, you're going to be good. All those that didn't, not so much." And what we see is that these are the individuals, I know I'm doing a lot of material real quickly, these are the individuals that when at the end of the thousand years when Satan comes back to deceive, these are the ones who have to make a decision, do I go with the Lord or do I go with this guy? Does that make sense? These are not what we would call born again Christians, they have not received a new glorified body, they're not indwelt with the Holy Spirit, and so the Lord does not say to them, "You believed on me." He basically says, "Hey, you've followed the commandments. You," I know I'm going back into Matthew 24, "he who endures until the end shall be saved." That's what he's talking about to those in this horrific time period that hang in there, do what they're supposed to do, and wait for him to show up.

Does that help at all? I know it was a fire hydrant. Have I confused everybody? I apologize if I have. Have I confused you or was that the thumbs up of it wasn't confusing? I got two thumbs up from front and center and so I'm okay. Did that help your question at all? Now because and I'm going to be very nice and honest tonight, I have friends of mine that take Matthew 25, I have heard people say this out of their mouth, they have said that if you are not feeding the hungry and if you are not clothing the poor, then there's no way you can go to heaven.

[unintelligible]

That's what this is. Does that make any sense? They use, that passage says that but you're taking it completely out of context, is what you are. This is according to the words of Jesus the most horrific time period in the history of the world. The antichrist is reigning. The mark of the beast has been implemented and the wrath of God has been poured out, and what you gather is, to those, now he says to those that you gave a cup of cold water, who are those people? Don't you know about these 144,000? These from all the 12 tribes that are going out and teaching the truth? What about the two witnesses that they believed in and didn't go against? He said you gave a cup of cold water, you helped out. You do realize that for 3 ½ years during that famous tribulation, the people of God are running from the antichrist, they're running for their lives. You get the idea these are the people who help them, assisted them, did not fight against the things of God, and so therefore were not condemned and judged by God. Does that work? We're good there?

Now what we're describing, listen very clearly, Matthew 25 is about a very distinct time in history among a very distinct people, that is, not the "message" for all of eternity and everybody. Right now if you go around and give clothes to people who are naked and food to people who are hungry, that does not guarantee you can go to heaven, it just means you're a nice person. If you do it because you believe in Jesus, then you've got a different story. In other words, good works don't get us to heaven, we ought to have good works because we're going to heaven if that makes sense. Does that help out at all?

[unintelligible]

Excuse me.

[unintelligible]

What will be their reward? Well, in Matthew 25, their reward is they didn't go to the bottomless pit. That's a pretty good reward. They, okay, again, we're opening up a whole... I promise we're going to get through Revelation eventually. I promise you. What you have is you have individuals who are just, I'm going to say just like you and I, flesh and blood, carnal entities, okay? However at this time period, according to chapter 20, Satan is bound for a thousand years, the tempter is no longer "tempting," and it says that the young boy shall become the old man. In other words, a life will be prolonged and elongated. The wages of what is death? Sin. If you don't have the opportunity to be tempted, then sin is going to be much more minimized, is that correct? And so Jesus is on the throne, sin is minimized, the tempter has been....and you're going to see according to Revelation 20, Isaiah 59 and other passages, you're going to see individuals again like Genesis 4 and 5, living 500-600-700-800-900-1000 years. Satan comes up, he loosed for a little season and they've got a decision to make. "Whom do I side with?" You do realize that's a question we all have to ask or answer, who do we side with?

Now these individuals, you and I reign with Christ, we're going to have a glorified body, we're going to be wearing white robes of righteousness. We are the ones, that's why you have the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds where he says, "Good unto you, you faithful servant, you shall be over 10 cities." That's the words of Jesus, you'll be over 10 cities. Revelation 1:10 and 5:10 says that we shall reign with him, we will be kings, we will be priests. However one day, you go all the way in the book of Revelation and you get to Revelation 21, even those who were in Matthew 25, okay, when he says there's a new heaven, a new earth, and a new Jerusalem, all former things are passed away. It does not state clearly they received that glorified body, it doesn't say clearly they get that white robe of righteousness but you get the idea that much like 1 Corinthians 15 says, we're transformed, they will be transformed at one point but not in Matthew 25.

Did that help at all? Okay, yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Okay, she just said y'all always preaching to us out of Matthew 25.

"Y'all."

Y'all. Now we in the South say y'all fixin' to, is that what it is? This y'all hasn't preached out of Matthew 25. I try to stay away from Matthew 25 because it's been so misconstrued by so many people. There are passages and I know, forgive me if I'm repeating what I've already said, every passage in the Bible, every passage has three applications: historical, doctrinal, spiritual. Historical means in Matthew 25, Jesus was on the Mount of Olives, he was there a very short time period before the crucifixion, and he was teaching the apostles. That's what it was. Doctrinal, specific people, specific time, specific purpose. Who was he speaking to? Why was he telling them this? And why was it important?

They asked him, "What's the sign of your coming and what's the end of the world?" He is telling them what's going to happen in the future and what it's going to look like when he returns to judge, okay? Spiritually. Even though you and I as born again believers don't "go to heaven" by giving cold water to people that are thirsty, we can glean spiritual knowledge and say as a believer, as a follower of Jesus, we ought to help those that are helpless, we ought to give to those who don't, we ought to be charitable. And so we do because we're saved, not to be saved. The biggest problem that we have is when we take the doctrinal and the spiritual and we mesh them together. 2 Timothy 2:15 says rightly divide the word of God. So I should be generous, I should be charitable, I should be giving not in order to receive righteousness but because I've already received righteousness. There's coming a day in the future where Matthew 25 will be doctrinal but today as a born again believer, it's just spiritual.

Did that help answer that question? Did y'all answer it okay?

[unintelligible]

She said I need to tell some of the rest of y'all. You know what I've said, that if we would get rid of all the y'all, we'd have a lot of freed up tv time to broadcast because there's a lot of y'all out there that you're absolutely right. I've not even gonna go there tonight. Anybody else? Are we good?

Let's go to Revelation 6. Come on, here we go. Phew, we're in Revelation and we might as well stay there. Woo, y'all are getting nervous.

Alright, Revelation 6, beginning in verse 12. Let' y'all go ahead and confess that tonight I'm just gonna use that word tonight. Is that alright? Revelation 6. We have the opening of the famous seven seals, that judgment that we see poured out by God on rebellion, on sin. When we get to verse 12, I'm going to be very honest with you, verse 12 through 17 are some of the hardest verses in the book of Revelation and allow me to share with you why before we begin.

The Bible speaks of three series of judgments in Revelation 6 through 19. You have what we call the famous seven seals. Then you have the famous seven trumpets. Then you have the seven bowls or vials. As I've shared with you, there are two streams of thought. One thought says that there's seven judgments of God that are explained three different ways or basically there's seven outpourings just told three different ways. The other belief system, which I subscribe to, is that the seventh seal actually opens up the trumpets, which open up the vials, that rather than being linear or repetitive, they're actually exponential, okay? The reason that Revelation 6:12-17 is so difficult is because it doesn't matter which one of those that you subscribe to, it makes it hard and here's why. Allow me to go with just my position and this is the first thing I wrote on your outline. A necessary observation. This begins a transition from the permissive to the proactive judgment of God.

Let's think about the first four seals or the first four horsemen of the apocalypse. We have this rider who shows up. He takes peace from the earth. You have a rider that brings famine. You have a rider that brings economic destruction. You have a rider that brings death. All four of the first four seals, the Lord allows another entity to be the vehicle of his judgment. When the fifth seal is opened up, we see the residual or the result of the believers who have been subject to this, who have stayed faithful to the gospel message. They're under the altar. They've been killed for their faith and they're crying out for their blood to be avenged. When you get to the sixth seal, there isn't a fifth rider. The Lord at this point has gone from allowing some other entity to do his judgment to he is personally bringing forth his wrath on what we know as the earth and those who rebel against him.

Now the reason this is difficult, if you subscribe to the linear fashion that you've just got seven judgments that are repeated three times over, that would take you into the very last part of this period known as the great tribulation. The problem is when you get to the trumpets and to the vials, they are proactive judgments, not permissive, and if the first four seals are permissive, then it would only make sense that the first four trumpets and first four vials would be permissive as well but they're proactive. From this point forward whether it's a trumpet, a vial, or this seal, it's to the proactive judgment of God which means that you are at the very end of what we know as the tribulational period and you're only in chapter 6.

So chronologically speaking, the reason this passage is so difficult is that you find yourself at the very end of the end and you're getting a lot of stuff in a very short amount of time. Now don't panic. The gospel of Luke is the longest gospel that we've got, 24 chapters. The last 12 chapters are about the last week of Jesus' life. So half of that gospel is about seven days, so why would we panic if half the book of Revelation is about a couple of months, alright? And so the question we necessarily then have to ask is what is the event or what is it or where are we in this timeline? If you'll remember that as you look at this period known as the great tribulation, the book of Daniel and Jeremiah and others describe it as a seven year period, there is an event that Daniel 9 talks about that's called the abomination of desolation, Jesus even talked about it, and in 2 Thessalonians 2 it says the antichrist one day goes into the temple of God, he declares he is God. At that point, forgive me for saying it this way but it's the best way I can describe it, all hell breaks loose. That's what happens. The picture you get is that the first half of this tribulational period is bad but not that bad, and the last half is unbelievably bad.

Now can we be honest? Economic despair, death and destruction of a fourth of the planet, that's pretty bad, but nothing compared to what we're about to read. You do not have stars falling from the sky. You do not have the sun going black and the moon going red. You don't have any of that stuff, okay? And so what I would claim tonight is that the abomination of desolation, that event where the antichrist goes in, he breaks that covenant with the people of Israel that's mentioned in Daniel 9, he goes in and declares he is God, what we see in the fifth seal where you have the people of God being martyred for their faith, I believe that what we know as the fifth seal takes place after the abomination of desolation and here's why. Jesus said when you see the abomination of desolation, run for the hills. He said it's about to get worse than it's ever been since the

creation of the earth. This is when it gets as bad as its ever been and so I would put on that time frame, I would put the sixth seal after the midway point. I don't know exactly where. You could have as much as a couple of years or as little as a few months that are left but it's about to get real bad. Now let's remember back to Exodus when the Lord brought the plagues on the people of Egypt, he didn't wait a year in between every plague, did he? I mean, he just started bringing it on. He was piling it on them.

So what we're about to start reading in Revelation, it could have happened in consecutive days. There could have been something happening in the morning and another trumpet that sounded that night. The Bible doesn't say, "And it was two weeks before the next trumpet sounded." You get the idea that it's compound interest at the judgment of God here. It's just about to get piled on, alright?

Now that being said, beginning in verse 12, it says,

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Now in this passage, the sixth seal is open and for the first time we have the proactive judgment of God during this tribulational time period. There are five areas or five aspects that are affected or altered in this sixth seal: the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars and the heavens. Alright, those five things.

Now let's begin with the earth. It says that there was an earthquake that occurred. There are actually five earthquakes during what we know as this tribulational time period in the book of Revelation 6 through 19. What's interesting is all five of them are all different, alright? So real quickly, here we have an earthquake. This earthquake is a part of all types of stuff that's happening, right? The second one takes place in chapter 8, verse 5. When this earthquake happens, it's after the seventh seal is opened and it is before the first trumpet sounds. Now that's interesting chronologically speaking because the seventh seal is opened, it says there was silence in heaven for about the span of 30 minutes. Then the trumpet sounds. So is the earthquake a part of the judgment of the seventh seal or is it just happening between the seventh seal and the first trumpet? It's kind of inconclusive there, but what we notice is it's just like this, it's a "earthquake."

In chapter 11, verse 13, there is an earthquake that is so destructive that it takes an area and divides it into three main pieces, and 7,000 men die in one day. Now you may be thinking to yourself, "Well, that's not real significant because when the fourth seal was opened, a fourth of the earth died." However that earthquake is only in Jerusalem and you get the idea, and we'll get there in chapter 11, that it's only on the Temple Mount. If you've ever had the opportunity to be on the Temple Mount, you can put, you know, 10,000-15,000-20,000 people up there and so to have 7,000 people killed in this earthquake is incredibly significant because it is a small geographical area of which it takes place, and if you've ever been over there and seen that Temple Mount, you can kind of see the visualization here. Here's this land mass that's divided into three parts and unfortunately 7,000 people die in the process.

So the first two earthquakes are what we call generic earthquakes, if there is such. The third one is located just in Jerusalem. The fourth one, chapter 11, verse 19, this earthquake is a result of the seventh trumpet. Now do you understand why some people want to take these judgments and layer them over each other? Because there's an earthquake at the seventh seal, there's an earthquake at the seventh judgment. The only problem is we have an earthquake at the sixth seal but we don't have an earthquake at the sixth trumpet, alright?

It's the final one that I find interesting. Chapter 16, verse 18, it is called a great earthquake. It's the worst ever, in fact, if you'll go over to chapter 16, verse 18, notice what the Lord says about this earthquake. By the way, this is the seventh vial. Now remember, the seventh trumpet had an earthquake, okay, but it was just a normal earthquake. Here's this one, "And the seventh angel poured out his vial or his bowl into the air, there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven from the throne saying, It is done. There were voices and thunders and lightnings. There was a great earthquake such as has not since the men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great."

Now the reason I find all of that important is that when we come to this passage in the sixth seal, there is an earthquake but this is the first of five total that are in the book of Revelation. I do not believe that the other earthquakes are just another description of this one. I think you see five distinct times, you see basically three normal earthquakes, one localized earthquake, and one that is so devastating that it affects the entire planet. Now the reason I find that interesting is this, when you get to the battle of Armageddon and we've described this a little bit in some of our conversations, the idea is when the Lord returns and humanity behind what we know as the antichrist is fighting the Lord, the picture you get particularly from the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah is that we're fighting with sticks and with rocks. I mean, that's the picture that you have. All this glamorous military stuff that's in the world today, that's not working, okay? The idea is that we've gone back to sticks and rocks. Have you ever been in an environment that was massively affected by an earthquake? You don't have the electricity that you used to have. You don't have the power you used to have. You don't have the resources you used to have. Guess what? Your vehicles can't go down the road like they used to and all of a sudden you're back to what we'd call urban warfare, sticks and rocks.

The reason that's important is because when you get to the seventh vial which is that last one, this is right before Armageddon. And so when the whole earth shakes, when everything is torn apart, the only weaponry that humanity has is sticks and rocks and here's the Lord Jesus coming back pictured on a white horse with the armies of heaven, and all we've got are a bunch of rocks. That's the only defense. That's the only thing that rebellious humanity... And here's the sad part and you see it in this passage as well, they still fought back. They still rebelled in their human nature against their God that created and formed them.

Now the next passage of Revelation 6, there is no way that we're going to cover this in the next few moments, forgive me in advance, because it opens up a theological Pandora's box. The word was used a while ago, y'all. There's a lot of y'alls out there teaching a lot of stuff about what we're fixing to read. How was that Southern for y'all, was that good enough? There are so many opinions, so many ideas, there have been so many books that have been written that nobody should have ever bought but we all did about this passage of scripture where it talks about the sun going black and the moon going red. Just a few weeks ago, we had an event where everybody was reading this passage into the eclipse. Y'all remember that? Everybody was going back and going, "Oh, this is it!" I don't know if anybody knew but the morning of the eclipse, I was on the radio. I was being interviewed on the radio and I had the privilege, I followed an individual who was an astrophysicist from Auburn University. This astrophysicist was talking about the eclipse and all the science behind it, obviously that's not why I was called, I was called to talk about other things. And so I'm there on the radio and in the midst of the radio conversation, the person interviewing asked me this question. He says, "You know, I've heard about this Wednesday night down at First Baptist where you answer people's questions." I said, "Yeah, we have a question about this and that," and I kind of talked about what we do and he said, "Can I ask you a question on the air?" I said, "Sure." He said, "What do you think about this eclipse later today?" And I said, "What do you want to know?" And he said, "Well, we had an astrophysicist on, blah, blah." I said, "I know that." He said, "Well, is there anything biblically significant about it?" I said, "Oh, terribly significant." I said, "It's an incredible biblical thing." And he said, "Really?" He goes, "Can we come back after the break and talk about it?" I said, "Sure." We take a commercial break. We come back on, he introduces me and he says, "We're going to talk about the biblical prophetic significance of the eclipse." He goes, "Dr. Meyers, go for it." I said, "Let me tell you how significant biblically this event is today." He said, "What is it?" And I said, "The eclipse is gonna come and the eclipse is gonna go and we're gonna get up Tuesday morning and do it all over again. That's it." And you should have seen his face. He goes, "That's it?" I said, "That's it." And the reason he had the look upon his face as he did is because we had heard for months and months and months that the sixth seal was about to open up because there was an eclipse over Kentucky. No offense to those of you from that great state but the world doesn't revolve around the South, alright? Please hear me: one of the biggest problems that we've got in studying the book of Revelation is when we take the headlines and we read them into the book of Revelation. Don't read the headlines into Revelation, let Revelation just speak plainly and let's see what happens, okay?

That being said, notice what it says, it says that there was a great earthquake, the sun became black as sackcloth of hair and the moon became as blood, the stars of heaven fell on the earth even as a fig tree casts her untimely figs when she's shaken of a mighty wind. I have listed for you, we cannot get into all the details here because this is going to spin off some questions. I have put on your outline today passages from Joel 2 and from Acts 2 that allude to and speak to this event. These three scriptures are often tied together. Joel 2, a prophet from what we know as the minor prophets. Acts 2 which is that famous Pentecost sermon. And here in Revelation 6 when the sixth seal is opened. And there are those who take these passages and I think unfortunately we put them all in the theological blender and we mix it all up and we don't ever "rightly divide it."

We are out of time tonight but I want to give you an assignment. Here's your assignment for next week. Read these passages. Notice what I underlined. Notice what I highlighted. And read them and I want to give you a hint in advance: what does the word "all" mean? All. Remember that when you read the passages that you're going to read this week. We'll come back next week, discuss these three passages, and then talk about the stars falling and the heaven being rolled back as a scroll.

Let me pray for us and we'll get out of here.

Lord, as we leave this place tonight, Lord, thank you that it's not about how good we aspire to be or how the badness we try to eliminate out of our lives but that it is the goodness and the grace of the blood of Jesus Christ alone. And Lord, whatever befalls us, whatever comes before us, whatever challenges, what challenge or whatever struggles lay before us not just tonight but tomorrow, Lord, may we trust you with our day as we trust you with our eternity. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Do me a favor when you leave, go get your kids. See you Sunday.

"All the saints and angels, they bow before your throne.
And all the elders cast their crowns before the Lamb of God and sing,
You're worthy of it all, you are worthy of it all,
For from you are all things and to you are all things,
You deserve the glory."