

Ask Jeff 11.30.17

By Dr. Jeff Meyers

sermonaudio.com

Preached On: Wednesday, November 30, 2017

Crossroads Ministries

301 S. 8th Street

Opelika, Alabama 36801

Website: www.fbcopelika.com

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers

Alright, ladies and gentlemen. I call your attention to what is known as the Circle of Concerns. If you're a guest or visitor with us, this is our prayer sheet. This is the means by which we communicate to each other about what we need to be praying for for each other, or those who are loved ones, friends, family members that are connected to or somehow related to First Baptist. Please do us a favor. If you know of anyone or any situation that needs us to be praying for, please make us aware of it as soon as possible. I was just made aware of a situation just a little while ago and just trying to get that communication going. So please let us know, we'll get it on here. Please don't throw this away. Make it a part of your life for the week to come to continue to pray for those that are connected to the church family.

On the back side you will see a section entitled "Sympathy." This week there are two of our families who have lost loved ones. Please continue to pray particularly for those as they go through that difficult time, as well as some thank you notes on behalf of our church family. And at the bottom as always, those who are serving as missionary prayer partners and those serving in the military, continue to pray for them as oftentimes their life of selflessness has them physically distant from the body. We should be praying for them even more fervently.

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

Lord, as we gather in this place, we know that there are probably three or fourfold number of names on our hearts than are even on this list, those that are in sickness, that have received diagnoses that are, just to be honest with you, in the flesh, that have created fear and apprehension, those who this Christmas season maybe for the very first time will be walking through a time without someone who's very near and dear to them, a different season of life because of loss. And so, Lord, we're praying for healing where healing is needed, comfort where comfort is needed and, Lord, we do pray that whatever the situation may be whether we know the details or not, that you would just be in and through and above and under all of it so that it is unmistakable that you not only have been but you are moving and working in their lives. Lord, for those who are serving on our behalf on the mission field, particularly at this time, Lord, we focus on giving to missions through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Lord, thank you for their service, thank you for their willingness to live a life that according or at least in comparison to us, is usually much less comfortable and very distant from family and friends. Lord, be

with them particularly at this season as they know not only the joy of the incarnation, the joy of the Holy Spirit, but the joy of their church family back home. And for those serving in the military, Lord, oftentimes so unrecognized for their willingness to do so, Lord, may they have the peace that passes all understanding. And Lord, on this campus tonight whether it's in our AWANA ministry, college ministry, student ministry, whether it is in our music ministry, in our independent Bible studies or here in this room, Lord, we just pray that your Spirit would be so thick and in our presence that as your word is opened up and as we have the privilege to read it and to study it, that it would transform us, it would change us and it would make us see the world as you see it and not the way that we desire to see it. Lord, transform us tonight by the renewing of our mind. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

I want to welcome you to Wednesday nights here at First Baptist, Opelika. If you're a first time guest with us or maybe have not been with us in a while, allow me the privilege to share with you kind of how Wednesdays roll. Our Bible study typically has two independent or different sections. We have one that is kind of a Q&A time, and then we have kind of prescribed Bible study. That's the outline that hopefully you got on your way in. As far as the first part of the Bible study tonight, everything that's about to happen is because of you. We just want the opportunity to answer your questions about the Bible, Christianity, or even those things that may be in conflict to either one of those things. The only reason we call it Ask Jeff is because you're asking questions and my name happens to be Jeff.

The best way to submit a question is on our website fbcopelika.com/askjeff. You can submit a question. If you put your email address, you still remain anonymous. We do not know who you are. I do not know who you are. But when I submit or when we get done with a question and I push the word "Answered," it will send an email link to the video and the audio for you just in case you were not able to be here when it was answered. That being said, the best part about Wednesday night is not what you put in the database, it's when you put your hand in the air. You may lose your anonymity but you have the opportunity to take the conversation anywhere you want. Some of you, some of you like to take the conversation a little bit deeper or maybe just a little bit to the side. Some of you like to raise your hand and say, "I'm tired of talking about that. I want to talk about this." You have the right to do that here on Wednesday nights. This is all about what do you want to study and what will help you.

So that being said, the database that I am pulling up has some kind of special algorithm in it. I don't understand it. All I know is that it is not in chronological order, in other words, a question that is submitted yesterday may be the first one that's brought up, one that's submitted a year ago may not come up. I don't know what the order is, it's completely random.

The question is: can you explain the Shekinah glory of God and what would it feel like to witness this glory?

If you're not familiar with the term the Shekinah glory, that is a phrase that we often attribute to particularly in the Old Testament that when the presence of the Lord is in such a fashion that it is almost overwhelming. In fact, I want to take you to two stories in the Old Testament tonight. Go ahead and go to 1 Kings 8. That's where we're going to camp out in just a minute. But as you're turning to 1 Kings 8, do you remember the story when the ark of the covenant was removed from the Israelites' presence? Do you remember that the battle had taken place and Hophni and Phineas, they had died and their dad had fallen off and he broke his neck and his daughter-in-law gave birth to a baby? Do you remember that story and they named the child Ichabod? And the reason they named the child Ichabod because they said the glory of the Lord had departed. And when you hear that phrase "the Shekinah glory of God," that's kind of the picture I want you to think. I want you to think the overwhelming presence, unmistakable presence of God cannot be questioned as anything else. In other words, before the ark of the covenant was removed, the Israelites rarely, if ever, lost a battle, in fact, they had an incredible momentum. As soon as the ark was gone, they couldn't win anything. It was a drastically different life. The presence of the Lord was different. Now you and I today have the blessing of 1 Corinthians 6:19-21, we have the Holy Spirit within us. We don't have to worry about a box so many cubits by so many cubits coming around, being carried by staves. But in the Old Testament, the concept of the "Shekinah glory" was this unmistakable life-changing presence of the Lord.

Now 1 Kings 8 is the dedication of the temple. This was the first building that was built to "permanently house the presence of God." So when we talk about the Shekinah glory of God, we could tell stories about when Moses came off the mountain, and remember his countenance was different and the people looked at him and said that he looked different, he appeared different. That's what we're speaking of when we use this phrase "the Shekinah glory of God." But in 1 Kings 8, though it was the dream, it was the passion of King David to build this structure, the Lord said, "You're a man with blood on your hands. Your son whom we know as Solomon will build this structure." Over the process of time, this building is built and in 1 Kings 8, the dedication service. This is the time where the place for the presence of God is going to be celebrated in the life of the Israelites. I believe this is the best passage that we have to see what does the "Shekinah glory of God" look like, how can it impact somebody, and how do we respond to it.

So in 1 Kings 8, they bring the ark of the covenant, the "Shekinah glory" that will fill the house. Now for the sake of time, I'm going to go ahead and read beginning with verse 1. It says, "Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. And they brought up the ark of the LORD, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up. And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude." I'm going to stop there for just a

moment. This is a big deal. You notice that everybody is showing up, alright? Everybody is there.

Verse 6, "And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims. For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above. And they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day. There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD." Now let me unpack that for just a moment. The priests were there, the elders were there, everybody was there. They had a job. They have a role. They have a description. I could only imagine that this had been planned for months in advance and everybody had received notice and everybody was there and everybody had a job to do, correct? So they finally get to this time where they're going to dedicate this building that they've been desiring for a long time, I mean, all the way back to the tabernacle that was somewhat mobile back in the book of Exodus, and finally they have this structure, finally they have this place for the glory of God and it says that when the glory of God came, the cloud filled the house so they were not able to minister.

Where did they go? They had to go outside, correct? Here's what I want you to hear about the Shekinah glory of God. Someone asked the question: how do you know when you're experiencing the Shekinah glory of God? When the Lord so fills in your life his presence it messes up your plans and you've got to do it different than you wanted to. That's the Shekinah glory of God. The Shekinah glory of God is not an amen to your plans that you've already erected, so to speak. Here they had come, they had shown up, and when the glory of God showed up in this Shekinah glory, they had to go out in what we would call the parking lot.

I mean, can you imagine how that would work out today? Imagine in our economy and in our culture, spending millions and millions of dollars on a new worship center, and on the day that we're going to dedicate it, there is so much "smoke" in the building we've got to go to the parking lot. How many of you would be less than thrilled? You can be honest. "We spent all that money for this?" But what we notice is this is about the glory of God, the presence of God, not the building that was built by the people of God. The temple was simply a house for the glory of God. You and I today post the resurrection of Jesus, our bodies are the temple of the presence of God.

So the question can you explain the Shekinah glory of God, it's that time in our lives both individually and corporately when the Lord shows up in such a fashion that it is unmistakable and he messes up whatever plans we had. Now fast-forward to the book of Acts 4. I want to show you a New Testament expression of this where we now have those

of us post resurrection filled with the Holy Spirit, the presence of God not in a building in Jerusalem but in our flesh and blood. The book of Acts 4. Just as far as a timeline is concerned, Pentecost has occurred, the Holy Spirit has descended, what most of us believe as the physical manifestation of the church of Jesus Christ has been initiated. Between chapter 2 and chapter 4, not only has the gospel gone forth but persecution has begun to ensue, and at the end of chapter 4, beginning in verse 23, the disciples, the apostles who had been preaching and teaching Jesus found themselves persecuted and now have been released out of persecution, they're about to go back into the streets again. Beginning in verse 23, there is an account, this is a conversation between the apostles and themselves, the disciples and themselves, believers among believers, and they are talking about the fact that even though they now believe, even though now they have the Holy Spirit, that persecution is rampant and they are having a conversation that the Lord should empower them to overcome the persecution. Now that's kind of the summary.

Now beginning in verse 29, just for the sake of time, this is the prayer that someone offers to the Lord, "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." Wow, doesn't look like a whole lot of prayer meetings I've been to. The building shook. They were filled with the Holy Ghost and they spoke the word of God with boldness. Here's what I want you to hear about Acts 4. The focus isn't about the fact the building shook, the focus is they spoke the word of God with boldness and they were empowered to live differently, they were empowered to live victoriously whereas previously there's a little bit of fear, previously there's a little bit of apprehension, now there's a boldness about them. Only the Shekinah glory presence of God can get credit for doing that in our lives.

So the question about the Shekinah glory in the Old Testament, you see it more of a corporate setting, more the temple of God, in a place known as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. When you get into the New Testament, you see it more individually in the life of a believer who's experienced the resurrection power of Jesus Christ and then enjoying the Holy Spirit in their life. Kind of some key points is the Holy Spirit moving in our lives, directing us according to his plans and not ours, empowering us for boldness and power and victory, not defeat and/or fear.

Any questions about the Shekinah glory, Holy Spirit, anything of that nature? The Holy Spirit usually scares Baptists and that's okay. You Baptist are saying, "I ain't talking about the Holy Spirit. That's the Pentecostals." No Holy Spirit tonight? That's alright. A room full of Baptists and nobody wants to talk about the Holy Spirit? Alright, there we go. Hey, I've got a warning for y'all, when y'all take Master Life, there's a whole week on the Holy Spirit. You're going to learn about the Holy Spirit. That's okay. Maybe we shouldn't have fed you all so much tonight.

I can't make this stuff up. I'm not kidding. Next question said, "Hey, Brother Jeff, how about them Pentecostals?" That's what it says. Todd, you playing tricks on me? Hey, the Lord has a way of directing things. That's all I've got to say. By the way, allow me, for those of you who have a Pentecostal background and Pentecostal friends or family members, I like to tease my Pentecostal friends, that Pentecostalism is not a denomination, it's a Jewish holiday. Pentecost is a Jewish feast and celebration that took place 50 days after the Passover, so in Acts 2 when the apostles and the disciples were gathered together and it says there in verse 5 of Acts 2 that all the Jews from every nation were present there, and the Holy Spirit descended and the church as we know was initiated, that was the Pentecost celebration and feast. What we know today as Pentecostalism is a description of or an denominational title to those who more often than not attribute their expression of Christianity to A, imitate, or B, mimic what you see exactly portrayed in Acts 2. You have a rushing noise, you have cloven tongues, you have the speaking in and the hearing of tongues, and you have those outward expressions.

So therefore what we know as Pentecostalism today tends to naturally have those expressions among themselves and so the question is how about them Pentecostals? I don't know exactly what you want to know about those Pentecostals but that is where they derive from and if you want a little history lesson, today those who attribute themselves to this branch of Christian expression believe they are in what is called the third wave of Pentecostalism beginning with the Azusa Street revival in the early 1900s out in California. And so what is often known as the global revival from 1904 to 1908 that took place in Europe and came into America and manifested in Azusa Street with a lot of outward manifestations of expressions of the Spirit, so to speak, that is where it got initiated in our culture. It went through several cycles. They now claim to be in the third wave, and I will tell you under the umbrella of "Christendom or Christianity," Pentecostalism is one of the fastest growing expressions of Christianity in the world. And why is that? Because we all want to see things and we want to experience things and we want things life-altering and changing, and therefore it is very incredibly attractive to a lot of people.

One of the deficiencies of Pentecostalism is they don't go past Acts 2 much. I try to remind my friends, Acts has 28 chapters, not 2, and you've got to read chapter 3 and you've got to read chapter 4, and you've got to read chapter 5, and one of the things that you discover is a lot of the things that are happening in Acts 2 very vividly are not as clearly or as openly stated when you get to Acts 21 and 22 and 23 and years down the road.

So Pentecostal, Pentecost is a Jewish celebration or feast of which on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus, the Holy Spirit descended, the church of Jesus Christ was initiated as far as a formality is concerned. The modern-day denomination thereof is, I don't want to use the word an invention, it's a manifestation of the last about 100-110 years of history. Prior to 1904, we didn't really know or have what we would call Pentecostals in the world but typically known by outward expressions, particularly tongues, signs, wonders etc.

Surely there's got to be a question about those guys tonight? Oh, you're killing me. Oh, yes, sir, back row.

[unintelligible]

That is correct. Pentecostals have the same problem Baptists have, you get two of them, you've got three opinions. What he is asking if you couldn't hear is within the Pentecostal movement you tend to have two main divisions, those that are Trinitarian, believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and those that are what we often call modalist. If you see a sign and, by the way, understand just because there's a sign on the door doesn't mean it's necessarily what is taught and preached on the other side of the door. I understand that, but if you see a sign that says "United Pentecostal Church," typically that means a lack of belief in the Trinity and a belief in what is known as modalism, that the Lord manifests himself in one mode at a time. In the Old Testament it was the mode of the Father, and then for 30+ years it was the mode of Jesus Christ, and now it is the mode of the Holy Spirit. That's why typically in Pentecostal tradition, you hear a lot about the Holy Spirit, not so much about Jesus because their belief is that is the mode by which the Lord is expressing himself in this age and time. So typically you have a Trinitarian branch, you have a modalistic branch or United branch meaning united in the Godhead, so to speak, but even within those two there's lots of different varieties or such. But you're exactly right, there are two streams but there's multiple streams of all denominations.

Did that help with that one? Yeah, that's kind of how they tend to divide themselves. Any others? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Correct.

[unintelligible]

Correct. The observation, he's absolutely right. I'm glad you brought that up. Within the Trinitarian versus modalistic side, if you were to quantify the Pentecostal movement, the majority of them are within the Trinitarian side. You're absolutely correct there. Absolutely. So I like to say my Pentecostal brother, the Trinitarian ones, you know, they're just, you know, they're excited Baptists or Baptists with an attitude, or Baptists with some passion, you know, or something. You know, I like to tease them, you know, have some fun with them and, you know, I say the only difference between a Pentecostal and a Baptist is we don't hang from chandeliers. You know, these are my friends, you know, and I like to have a good time.

So any other questions? Nobody? Somebody? Y'all are done with them? Oh, oh, oh.

[unintelligible]

There you go. Here we go. I knew it was coming. The statement that was made or the observation that was given is that he said in my life growing up in the Baptist tradition, I've been taught that I received the Holy Spirit upon my conversion, my salvation experience, whereas oftentimes both in the Trinitarian and in the modalistic side of Pentecostalism, they teach that the Holy Spirit is that which comes later, post conversion, a different of or filling of.

[unintelligible]

You've got it but you're not full of it. Well, alright, here we go.

[unintelligible]

Alright, here's the deal. The Holy Spirit is not an installment plan, okay? This is the Christmas season, the lay-away season, you put enough back for enough time, you get to take the gift home. The teaching he's referring to is that upon the "salvation experience." Now let me go back. A lot, not all but a good majority of those in the Pentecostal background believe that the salvation experience is only verified upon the speaking in tongues. I heard a "Yeah." You've got some of those? We've got the same friends, don't we? Absolutely. And I've told you, I know y'all have heard this before. I love to joke with my Pentecostal friends when they say, "Do you believe in speaking in tongues?" I say, "Sure, I have the gift of interpretation." It scares them to death.

Okay, alright, so in the book of Acts, I'm going to make this pretty simple here. Chapter 2, chapter 8 and chapter 10 are the significant chapters in scripture where you see the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, alright? And for the sake of time, I'm not going to go through all the details here but I think what is interesting about is how it happens, who it happens to, and who is there when it occurs. So for example, in Acts 2 and feel free to read along as I'm talking here, there is a group there that already has the Holy Spirit, the apostles, the disciples. They have the Holy Spirit. Peter whom we know as the apostle, is preaching, it says that they come and it says they are filled with the Holy Spirit, okay, and they begin to preach, and it says that there are tongues there, and here's the thing, it says, "And they heard in their own language." The miracle in Acts 2 is not the speaking of tongues, it's the hearing of the tongues, but what's important about the Holy Spirit there is those that were speaking – this is not bright enough, I apologize. Those, there we go, those that were speaking, they already had the Holy Spirit when they were speaking, correct? Alright, those that were listening, they did not, is that correct? Absolutely. Alright, so the third question I want to ask is: what is the background of those in Acts 2? According to verse 5, the background was that they were Jews from every nation. That's significant in just a moment, alright?

Fast forward to the book of Acts. In the book of Acts we have a man by the name of Philip, alright? Philip is there and there is a sorcerer by the name of Simon who is bewildering people and the gospel is preached, okay? The gospel is preached by Philip, alright? Here's the interesting thing, that the person who is speaking, does he have the Holy Spirit? Philip, does he have the Holy Spirit? Absolutely he does. That's good.

Alright, those that are listening, do they have the Holy Spirit when they're listening? No. They start believing and they still don't have the Holy Spirit. Acts 8 will mess up everybody in this room because when you read chapter 8 of the book of Acts, it says they heard the gospel, they believed on the gospel, and then the apostles showed up and they said, "Do you have the Holy Spirit?" And they said, "What are you talking about?" And it says they laid their hands on them, that's interesting. They had to have hands laid on them and when hands were laid on them, then they received the Holy Spirit. In fact, Simon the sorcerer said, "How can I have this power?" Remember, this was the same guy that was making money off his previous engagements. And they said, "Oh, you're in a world of hurt here, brother, if that's how you're going to see how God moves in your life." Here's what's interesting about Acts 8: who were these people? Samaritans. Who were those who came and laid hands on them? The same apostles that were here in Acts 2, alright?

Now you go to Acts 10. In Acts 10, you have the story of a man by the name of Cornelius. Cornelius is a Roman centurion. He has a vision that a man is going to come and speak unto him. Simon Peter is up on the top of a building, normal for his day. He sees a sheet come down with four corners. This is a hunter's paradise, guys. If you like being in a deer stand, man, you need Acts 10 because the Lord said, "Rise up and eat," alright? He says, "Lord, but I've never eaten that which is unclean." He said, "Do not call unclean what I've called clean." In other words, Cornelius who he was sent to at Simon the tanner's house, was a Gentile. So he goes and he meets Cornelius. He shares the gospel with him. Here's the thing that messes it up, are you ready? While he is speaking, by the way, we know that Peter has the Holy Spirit because obviously Acts 2 and later here in Acts 8, it says that those who were listening received the Holy Spirit. They received the Holy Spirit. Nobody put any hands on them and nobody had been baptized yet.

Here they'd already been baptized, they got hands laid on them, then they got the Holy Spirit. Here nobody puts hands on anybody, nobody baptizes anybody and they get the Holy Spirit. Do you know what I love about this? It happened three different ways. It's almost as if God said, "Aha, I'm the one in charge here. Don't mess this up." If you camp out in Acts 2, you're missing out on the other two. If you camp out in Acts 10, you're missing the other two. Here's where I want us to camp out in, are you ready? Camp out in Acts 28 when it's already occurred because guess who these people were? These were Gentiles. Hm, do you remember a verse, Acts 1:8? "When you receive the Holy Spirit, you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem," this is in Judea, "in Samaria and in the uttermost parts of the earth." Interesting that those who were apostles, those who were the Jews of the Pentecost, in all three situations they personally witnessed the Holy Spirit coming down on Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles which, according to the Lord, are the only three races we've got. That's all we've got, folks. We've got Gentiles, Jews or a combination thereof.

So by the time you get past Acts 10, no longer do you have this corporate falling down of the Holy Spirit changing, you know, in other words like, what are you talking about kind of stuff. Now that's corporate. On the individual level, do you notice what we read in Acts 4? It says that the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit. Now let me define filled

with the Holy Spirit according to Acts 4. Some of, not all, of my Pentecostal brothers will say that you get filled with the Holy Spirit because you lost the Holy Spirit. I'm not about to say that the Apostle Peter who got put in jail for preaching the gospel lost the Holy Spirit just because he was persecuted. Here's what the Holy Spirit is, are you ready? When you get filled with the Holy Spirit, you don't get more of the Holy Spirit, he gets more of you. Now that'll preach, folks. In other words, when you get saved, you get all the Holy Spirit you're ever going to get, the question is how much of you does the Holy Spirit have. And when we talk about being filled with the Holy Spirit, it's about yielding ourselves to his ways in our life. It's not about somehow getting more of him, he is getting more of us. That's being personally filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now on a corporate level, I've got friends that love to hang out in Acts 2, the problem is that in Acts 8 and Acts 10 the Holy Spirit descends differently than in Acts 2 but there is a different audience, and what the Lord promised in Acts 1:8 is coming to fruition. What you see in Acts 2, 8 and 10 does not happen in that fashion anywhere else in the New Testament. Is that drinking water out of a fire hydrant? I apologize.

Did that help? Did that hurt? What did that do, at all, anything, sir? Did it make it more confusing? Did it help? Help me out here.

[unintelligible]

No, no, because... Okay, what he is saying is and I'm going to go ahead and repeat the question as said, that being in a Pentecostal church, now again, I don't know which one it was, Assembly of God which, by the way, all Assembly of God are a spinoff of the Methodists, a little history there. The Keswick movement is what started the Assembly of God which derived themselves from D. L. Moody. A little history lesson there. But that being said, my Assembly of God friends, actually coming out of the revival movements of the late 1800s. But what he's saying is what is being taught in what we know that week in Master Life about the Holy Spirit, now I don't know what you learned in the "Pentecostal church," but typically, hear me out, stereotypically, typically those in a Pentecostal fashion teach that the filling of the Holy Spirit is, "I have the Holy Spirit. I lose the Holy Spirit. I get the Holy Spirit. I lose the Holy Spirit." Y'all have never heard that? Well, y'all not, we don't have the same friends because it is the fact that you have the Holy Spirit and then because of sin, because of rebellion, because of backsliding I lose the Holy Spirit so therefore then I have to be filled again with the Holy Spirit so that now I'm a believer again because it's based on losing one's salvation.

[unintelligible]

Okay. They've never taught you could lose your salvation?

[unintelligible]

Well, yeah, if you lose your salvation, you don't have the Holy Spirit.

[unintelligible]

Well, there's Baptist that will believe anything. But I want to back that up. He made this statement in all these Pentecostal traditions never heard that, but you did admit you heard that they believed you could lose your salvation. Well, if you lose your salvation, you lose the Holy Spirit.

[unintelligible]

Yes, if you don't have the Holy Spirit, you don't have salvation.

[unintelligible]

Okay. Well, you either have security or you don't. You're either saved or you're not.

[unintelligible]

I didn't hear that message. I apologize. I wasn't here for that one. So but if somebody in any tradition, forget the title you put on the door, if they subscribe that you can lose your salvation, then typically when they use expressions such as being filled with the Holy Spirit, it's you were saved, you lost it, you're now being filled back up with it. Does that make sense?

[unintelligible]

Excuse me? It doesn't make sense? Huh?

[unintelligible]

No, it's very simple. 2 Corinthians 11:3, he says, "I am upset that you have removed yourself from the simplicity that is in Christ."

[unintelligible]

No, don't be sorry about the question. Let's keep rolling here. You say it's complex, how is it complex?

[unintelligible]

When's the last time we kicked somebody out of the church, guys? I don't think you have anything to worry about. Oh, it doesn't matter what title you put on the door, a lot of folks don't believe in eternal security. But if you believe you can lose your salvation, if you believe that, then at the moment you lose it, you no longer have the Holy Spirit.

[unintelligible]

That means you don't have the Holy Spirit then.

[unintelligible]

Well, he did say that. Yes. Okay, so here's where I'm trying to make it simple.

[unintelligible]

Sure. Okay, say that again.

[unintelligible]

That have done what?

[unintelligible]

Well, sure there are people that have denied Christ.

[unintelligible]

Yes, and I would also quote 1 John 2, beginning in verse 18, those who went out from us were never a part of us. So my point on this question of the filling of the Holy Spirit and I know I kind of went corporate here, let's go individual, is if I subscribe to a theology that says I can lose my salvation, your salvation according to Ephesians 1 is because you are sealed with and in 1 Corinthians 6 you're indwelt with the Holy Spirit. Can we all agree with that? That is the seal of our salvation, correct? Can I get an amen? Thank you.

Alright, there we go. Just making sure we're on the right path here. So I have the Holy Spirit. If I somehow, someday according to whatever belief can lose my salvation, I no longer have the Holy Spirit again, correct? I can't if I'm lost. And so therefore if I get the Holy Spirit again, I get salvation again, do you see how that goes back and forth like this? What I'm claiming according to Acts 4 and Peter being filled with the Holy Spirit, is that he was saved, he was born again, bought with a price, possessed with the Holy Spirit, but in Acts 4 you see Peter with more fervency than you even did in Acts 2. The Lord got even more ahold of Peter. It's not that somehow he got more Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit got more of him. So he didn't lose anything. For lack of better terms, he just yielded more to.

Now here's the good news. We've been arguing about this for over 100 years and we're not going to solve it tonight. The key, though, is that when you were saved, when you believe on Jesus, you do receive the Holy Spirit and thank the Lord the Holy Spirit has more of me today than it did many many many years ago. Many years ago, because if I was in the same spiritual condition today as I was then, I would still be an infant in Christ and that would not be good for anybody. So I can share with you that there have been times in my life, I guess I base this on Acts 4, where I have yielded to and I have been filled with the Holy Spirit, and I have and I hate to use this term, I have taken it up a notch. There's no more of the Holy Spirit in me, it's just there's more me yielded to him,

if that makes sense. And so the key is surrendering ourselves to him, yielding to him, allowing him to control and not us. One of the struggles that I have in this context, and I know I'm the one keeping this conversation going, is I do know people who pray to get more of the Holy Spirit. You don't need to pray to get more of the Holy Spirit, you need to pray to have less of you. If there is less of your flesh and less of your will and less of your desires, guess what? The Holy Spirit is going to have more control over your life.

Now do you see why I had this conversation? Because we're in a Baptist church and we're scared of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is no one to be scared of, it's somebody to be yielded to, submitted to, surrendered to, and if we and I'm going to pick on Baptists for a moment and I shared this story with our Master Life group, I'm gonna share it with y'all. Those of you that were in it, you've already heard it, here we go. Years ago, a friend of mine was an Assembly of God pastor, okay? We had breakfast together and here's what he said to me. He said, "Jeff, if your people and my people could combine together, we could change the world." And I said, "What do you mean by that?" He said, "My people are excited and they're passionate but they don't have a clue what they're excited about. Your folks know the Bible but they've got no passion. If your people would have the passion and my people would find out what they were passionate about, we could change the world." He said, "The problem is my people don't want to learn anything and your people don't want to experience anything." There's a lot of truth in that, is there not? That's why I joke about being a Baptocostal, the knowledge and the truth of scripture combine with a passion and a yearning for the Holy Spirit to guide and yield.

Alright, those of you that are lifelong Baptists, let me help you out here. The Holy Spirit will never ask you to do anything that is not already prescribed by the word of God. I think one of the things we get scared about and I'm picking on Baptists here, we get scared because, "Woo, what's the Lord gonna ask me to do?" Nothing he didn't ask somebody else to do. He's not going to ask you to go above what the word of God has already laid out. And so there is comfort there knowing that.

Y'all, ready... Oh, yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

You can tell me an experience. Were you caught up into the third heaven? Did you hear voices you didn't recognize?

[unintelligible]

No, that was the Apostle Paul. I just thought I'd ask.

[unintelligible]

I know who that is. I took church history. Go ahead.

[unintelligible]

You lied and went on that stage?

[unintelligible]

You're crazier than I thought. I want to take you to Christmas with my family. Let's have some fun.

[unintelligible]

That's the Lord convicting you of lying, that's what's happening.

[unintelligible]

I'm not going to deny it.

[unintelligible]

The Lord says he heals. It's in 1 Corinthians 12. I believe it and I'm not going to deny your story but I'm going to quote somebody for you, okay? Voddie Baucham, anybody heard that name? I heard somebody in the back row. Okay, Voddie Baucham, he's a guy I used to do some youth camps with years ago. He is twice the man I am. I mean, he's huge. You'll testify, he's a big man. His challenged about going into ministry was, he had been asked to come try out in the NFL to be a tight end. That's how big he was, okay? And he decided, no, the Lord had called him to ministry. So we're doing this youth camp together and what I did, I did the Ask Jeff kind of stuff in the morning, he preached at night. That's how we did our camps. That being said, this subject matter came up and he made this statement, I'll never forget it, it was probably 20 years ago. He said, "Anybody, anybody can get knocked down by the Spirit of God, but it takes a real man or woman of God to walk in the Spirit of God." And I'll never forget that. I'm not denying that experience and I'm not denying those that experienced those experiences. Yeah, I'm not saying you don't but I'm saying it is incredible to get "laid out" in the Spirit, what's hard is to walk in the Spirit. That's where it gets tough.

[unintelligible]

It's easy?

[unintelligible]

Oh, hey, you can have my microphone, man, if you say it's easy.

[unintelligible]

I'm going to suggest that's probably hard.

[unintelligible]

If walking in the Spirit is easy, why did the Apostle Paul say in Romans 7 he struggled with doing the things he didn't want to do, and couldn't do the things he did want to do? If it's easy. Huh?

[unintelligible]

Now and I understand here, real clear, I know what she's saying. What she is saying is there is victory in walking in the Spirit. There is an ease of life in walking in the Spirit. But it is difficult to resist the temptations of the flesh. It is difficult to resist the temptations of the world. It is difficult when everybody else is going in one direction and saying, "No, I'm supposed to go the other." That's where it's difficult. Now once you walk down that direction and see the results versus the other, that's when you can say that is easy now. Does that make any sense? So we're saying the same thing.

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

The longer you walk it, the easier it gets. Absolutely. I'll agree with that. I will agree with that.

Alright, can we go to Revelation, please? Okay, here we go. Chapter 8. There's no way we're getting through the sheet tonight. That's okay. Acts, I mean, Acts, good grief, I apologize. Revelation 8. I'm going to go ahead and confess of all the chapters of the book of Revelation, I think this one is the toughest. I really do, and the reason I think it is the most difficult, in fact, you can go and do research, there is so little that is written, there is so little that is spoken about, and I think not just because it's in the middle but I think it's kind of where it's positioned. I'll give you a little background here and, trust me, we're not going to get through all this tonight so go ahead and just push pause on that sheet and keep it until next week.

So beginning in chapter 6, the beginning of what we know as this great tribulational period that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24, you have these famous seven seals. These famous seven seals begin to unveil themselves. At the end of chapter 6, the fifth seal, you have the martyrs in heaven under the throne of God crying out, "How much longer until you avenge our blood?" In the sixth seal, you have all of this incredible, for lack of better terms, just damage being done, this cataclysmic damage to the earth, the wrath of God being poured out. Then chapter 7 as we studied, we pull out this parenthetical chapter where all of a sudden we're talking about the 144,000, we're talking about those from every tribe, tongue and nation that are saved. It's kind of a background story of what was happening in the midst of all that. By the time you open up chapter 8, we now continue with the seventh seal.

Why is this difficult? There are seven seals, there are seven trumpets, there are seven vials. This is the only one of those "21 items" that when it is opened up there is silence. I mean, it just says there was silence in heaven, in fact, it says,

1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake. 6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. 7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. 8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. 10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; 11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. 12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. 13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

So chapter 9 is going to finish these famous seven trumpet judgments. Chapter 8 has the first three.

Now before we get to the trumpets, though, we have to discern this whole issue why is there silence in heaven for about half of an hour? It's the only time that we see this expression. It's the only time that a seal is opened, a trumpet sounds, or a vial is poured, and there's not an immediate action but there is silence. Now there are three arguments here, three various arguments. I'm going to give you kind of the pro and the con of all three of those and then kind of hopefully direct you toward what I believe is more the inclination.

Argument #1 is the argument of absence, meaning the reason there was silence in heaven is because the inhabitants of heaven had vacated heaven. Now the argument for that is in chapter 19, verses 11 through 15. This is the famous passage where it says the heavens open up and Jesus Christ descends on the back of a horse with a sword out of his mouth, his feet are like brass, remember, that his clothes are up to the middle of his thigh and it says King of kings and Lord of lords. He is followed by the armies of heaven. Now immediately following that is what we know as the battle of Armageddon, the millennial reign of Christ etc., and we'll get to that eventually. The argument that this silence is that, the struggle with that or the problem with that is this comes from the belief that the seven seals are the same as the seven trumpets and they're the same as the seven vials, they're just being expressed differently.

Here are the arguments against. In chapter 11, verses 15 through 19, the seventh trumpet sounds and there is no silence in heaven. And you'll see in chapter 16, verses 7 through 21, the seventh vial is opened up and there is not silence in heaven. In other words, and we've talked about this before, are these various layers of the judgments of God or are these escalating judgments of God. If you believe that the silence in heaven is because heaven has vacated and Armageddon is about to institute, then what we know as the seventh seal, the seventh trumpet, and the seventh vial are all happening synonymously. The problem is that when the trumpet opens and the vial opens, there are sounds and there are still residents of heaven. Secondly, the issue we have there in chapter 20, verses 1 through 7, that is the "millennial reign of Christ." We'll talk about that ultimately when we get there, and you do see a vacancy of heaven in there but that is for a thousand years, not for about half an hour.

So what we see in verse 1 of chapter 8 when it says then there was silence in heaven for about half an hour, I really don't think that's heaven being vacated as much as something else taking place. One of the most commonly known interpretations is the argument of what I call the argument of awestruck, that what is about to happen is so magnificent, it's so incredible. You remember, oh, I've got to date myself here, 26 years ago, was it? I think it was when we went into the Middle East, Desert Storm for the first time, remember it was shock and awe, that the destruction that this show of power was going to be so great that we'd be awestruck? Do you know what awestruck means? It means you can't speak. And so the argument is that when the seventh seal is opened up and it pours out the trumpets and the vials, that the residents, the inhabitants, the creatures of the heavenlies are so in awe about what God's about to do that silence is the only response.

The argument for this is that, again, the judgment is so dramatic that they just take a step back and go, "I've never seen anything like this before." The judgment or the argument against it is in chapter 4, verse 8, of the book of Revelation, the beasts that are around the throne of God, it says they rest not day and night crying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty who was, who is, who is to come." According to this argument or this perspective, that they are so in awe about what God is about to do, even those four beasts pause briefly from their stating the truth or their expression toward the Lord because they see the power of the Lord being exhibited in such a fashion.

Now I think what's interesting in verse 1 it says "about half an hour." The Lord is so good not to give us 30 minutes but about half an hour, and so, in other words, when you're looking at it, yes, there's a timeframe involved but don't get legalistic here, okay? Don't try to divide the time and don't try to divide and see where it happened in these seven years and it was this time and that. It's about half an hour.

The last issue that I want to deal with here is I call it the issue of "about." I want you to work with me here. I don't believe that there's absence in heaven. I do believe heaven is awestruck about what's about to happen. But this third item I find fascinating, that what we see in chapter 8, verse 1, is actually the fulfillment of or the answer to the prayers of Revelation 6. Now remember, we just read heaven is opened up, there's silence for about half an hour, and notice it says the angel has the incense, the golden censer with the prayers of the saints, correct? So in other words, everything that's about to happen is somehow correlated to or related to the prayers of those who've been offered up or petitioned to the Lord. When you go back into chapter 6, remember the fifth seal that was opened, the martyrs were under the throne of God and they asked this question, "How much longer until you avenge our death?" When you get to the seven trumpets, the first four trumpets, the judgment is on the earth, the last three are personal. They're actually against the individuals, against the persons who are rebelling against God, and could it be that the reason you have silence in heaven for about half an hour is not just because they are awestruck but it is also because the prayers of these martyrs saying, "How long until you avenge our death," it is actually coming to fruition at this moment? They were praying for God to do such, he is now answering, he is now responding.

Here is the argument for. In Matthew 17 and in Luke 9, these are the context of what we know as the transfiguration. It says in Matthew 17 after six days. In Luke 9 it says in about eight days. You say, "Well, what does that have to do with this?" Again, in that story where the Lord goes up with Peter, James and John and Moses and Elijah are there with him, the timeframe that is used is a very vague yet specific time and what do you see happen? You see the Lord very specifically speaking to and communicating with his people which is what prayer is. In Daniel 10:12-13, remember Daniel is praying and he is fasting and it says that Michael the archangel comes and he says, "I am sorry. I was detained for 21 days fighting the Prince of Persia, but now I have come to answer your prayer." And so you see these timeframes involved. 2 Peter 3:8-10, the very famous verse, "This one thing I say to you that a day with the Lord is as if a thousand years, a thousand years as if a day." Revelation 6:10-11, you have the martyrs' prayer.

Why did I give you all of those biblical references? Because in all of those contexts you have the Lord communicating with his people, responding to his people based on a timeframe that is selected or has been distributed. When you get to Revelation 8, it says this happened for about half an hour, and when you begin to read about the trumpets being opened, the judgment that is poured out is very vengeful, it is very violent, it is very dramatic. What did the martyrs ask for? "When will you avenge our death?" What's interesting is what we're going to see in just a moment is the amount of death that takes place when the trumpets are poured out.

What is the argument against? In chapter 5, verse 8, you have the prayer of the saints versus the prayer of the martyrs, and I kind of call it the square and the rectangle question. Y'all know about the square and the rectangle? A square is a rectangle but a rectangle is not always a square. In other words, a martyr is going to be a saint but a saint is not always going to be a martyr. And so even though that is an argument against that this is the prayer of the martyrs versus the prayer of the saints that is mentioned here in Revelation 8, they are a saint but a martyr for the faith is also a saint of the faith as well.

Now kind of let me recap all that. I know it's just one single verse here in Revelation 8:1 but it determines how we see Revelation play out. If you believe, and it's okay if you do, but if you believe that the silence in heaven is because heaven has been vacated, then chronologically speaking Revelation 8 fast-forwards you to Revelation 19:11 when Jesus comes back with the armies of heaven because that would mean that the seal, the trumpet, and the vial are synonymous judgments, okay? If you believe that it's simply because of the awestruck or the awesomeness of what they're about to see, then the silence is the response of the people of God, the elders of God, the cherubim of God, to the wrath of God that's about to be poured out. If you see what I call the "about" part, then you see the silence of God or the silence in heaven as those that were praying are no longer voicing their prayers because they're now being answered before them.

Now I lean against the first option and toward the second two for this very simple reason: when the seventh trumpet opens and the seventh vial pours, there is noise and there is volume in the heavens as well as in the earth, and so I do not see the silence as an end to the things of the tribulation but a continuing thereof.

Next week we're going to pick up with the four trumpets and I want to give you food for thought before we leave. These first four trumpets, it is very possible of all the judgments that they actually happen synonymously. So read through chapter 8, get a head start for next week.

Let's pray and we'll get out of here.

Lord, as we depart from this place, Lord, it is good to know the unsearchable riches of your word, Lord, the empowerment of your Holy Spirit and that is what I pray for all of us, that the Holy Spirit of which you empower us with upon the conversion of our souls, the belief unto salvation of Jesus Christ, Lord, empower us to live passionately for you in the truth of your word. No matter what life holds for us tonight, tomorrow or between the next time we see each other, God, may we live in a reckless abandonment for you and you alone. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

God bless. Please go get your kids if you have them here with you, that is.