

Ask Jeff

Acts chapter 10 – Revelation

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Tonight I want to welcome you to our Wednesday night Bible study here at First Baptist, Opelika, otherwise known as Ask Jeff. If you're a first time guest with us tonight, the reason that's the title is I'm Jeff and y'all are gonna ask some questions in just a moment, and that's kind of just how it works, and the reason that I love Wednesday night is because it's not about what I want to teach, not what I want to share, but it's what you need to know. And so the questions that we'll pull in just a moment from our database, you have submitted. Now most of them have come electronically through the website, fbcopelika.com/askjeff, some come through Facebook on my personal page, some of you who are technologically challenged, you just write it on a scrap piece of paper, drop it in a box and we make sure it gets in the database. Nonetheless, when it hits the database that I will pull up right now, there is no rhyme or reason. I'm assuming there's some type of fancy algorithm to how they come out, so a lot of times people say, "Well, there's a lot of questions in there and it will take forever until mine got pulled." We have no idea when they're submitted and when you submit them chronologically has nothing to do with the time period in which they are pulled. It could be submitted yesterday and get pulled out tonight. It could have been submitted six months ago and get pulled out six years from now. It's simply an algorithm.

So that being said, we'll go to question #1. It says Acts 10, I think we're going to Acts 10, Acts 10 says that some disciples were rebaptized. Why did they do this?

That's actually a really good question. I want you to turn to Acts 10 and when we begin Acts 10, we find ourselves dealing with an individual by the name of Cornelius. Cornelius was a centurion of the Roman band. He was a very powerful military, most likely political figure in his community. The Bible says that he gave alms and prayed regularly. He was a religious man. He was a seeker of truth but he did not know Jesus Christ and he did not know the truth of Jesus Christ, and as he is praying, there's a man whom we know as Simon Peter. Simon Peter is on the other side of town. Simon Peter's on top of a building, well, that's just what they did back then, it was kind of normal. And he, the Bible says that he has in a trance-like state, he's praying and the Lord shows him a dream. You remember the story, the sheet with the four corners lowered down with all the unclean animals. And Peter made this statement, he said, "I've never eaten anything unclean." Now do you actually believe that? I never believe anybody who says, "I've never committed a sin," but that's basically what he was doing. And the Lord showed him

that it was more than animals and Levitical laws, it was about the fact that the Gentiles that Cornelius was a part of, he had been called to preach the gospel to as well. It was not just for the Jews.

So long story short, they meet at a man's house by the name of Simon the tanner, and in Simon the tanner's house a Roman centurion and his fellows hear the gospel of Jesus Christ for the very first time. Now the question was asked, "Why was there a group of them that was 're-baptized'?" Now allow me to explore that just a moment before we read this passage of Scripture. There are two groups of people that are on the scene in Acts 10, there are the Roman Gentiles that are lost, they do not know Jesus, then there are some apostles and Jewish individuals who are already saved and already know Jesus, okay? So two groups of people. We're going to read the passage and then we're going to see who was affected by the events and then address the question in specific.

So in Acts 10 there's a sermon given by Peter that begins in verse 34. We're going to pick up the story in verse 44. It says,

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Now I respect and appreciate the question that was asked and I understand why it was asked, why were these individuals, why did they experience the Holy Ghost experience, the baptism experience, why did it, as it was worded, why were they "re-baptized"? I think the critical verse is verse 47, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost," listen, "as well as we?" In this experience in Acts 10 when the Holy Ghost descended very similar to the book of Acts 2 of which all those that it came upon were Jewish in background, here we have Gentiles in background, I do not believe according to what we just read that those Jewish already believers had a second experience because it did not say that they were going to be baptized again, in this passage, those who had never heard had an experience with the Holy Ghost and were communicated with about their need to be baptized. So I appreciate the question but I don't think there's anybody being re-baptized or re-experiencing the Holy Ghost, I think you have a unique group of people experiencing the Holy Ghost and having the need to be baptized, and those who are already saved and already followed in baptism observing the conversion that has happened before their eyes.

So I don't believe there's a re-baptism as much as it is somebody observing the need for a unique individual to have the experience that we know as baptism. Any questions, follow-up, thoughts, concerns, issues? We're good on Acts 10? Wow, that was fast. Okay. Whoa, where did I put it? I thought we'd go longer than that. Forgive me.

Alright, y'all ready? Here we go, we answered that one. Next? We've already answered, I'm serious, we've already answered that one. I apologize. I never pushed answer. Okay, this question begins with why. You do understand that oftentimes we can answer who, what, when, where, how, but sometimes why is tough because when you deal with why, you're dealing with motive and agenda and such. It's interesting how this question is worded. It says, "Why did," I'm just going to read it as written, "Why did God show Lucifer and the fallen angels how to sin?"

Let me clarify. He didn't show them how to sin for the Bible makes it very clear in 1 John 1:5 that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. But to understand what happened at that "sin experience," I want us to go back to the book of Ezekiel 28. Now those of you that were here last week, we experienced Ezekiel last week. We can't get away from this guy. Remember there are some many years ago that believed reading Ezekiel would give you mental illness. I don't know what the Lord is trying to tell us but Ezekiel 28, we're going to have a communication from the Lord through the prophet Ezekiel about a king from what we know as an area known as Tyre.

Now I'm going to share with you something very specific that the prophets do in the Bible. The prophets are known for doing two things: they foretell and they forth-tell. Foretell is to share an experience that's going to happen in the future. That's what we typically know the prophets as, they're going to share what's about to happen, captivity, exile, tribulation, whatever it may be, judgment. Forth-telling is simply telling the truth.

Now when the prophets either foretell or forth-tell, there's oftentimes such as here in Ezekiel 28, there's Jeremiah 4 and various passages throughout the prophets, that they will use events in the past to illustrate the truth God is trying to communicate in the present and even sometimes toward the future. What we have in Ezekiel 28 is we have a judgment coming on the king of Tyre for his rebellion and his sin, and what we're about to see is the Lord used the fall of Lucifer and the angels as an example of what the king of Tyre has done and is doing in his life. So the events we're about to read are about the king of Tyre but the illustration in specific is in regards to the fall of one whom we know as Lucifer that would become Satan.

Now beginning in verse 11 of Ezekiel 28 it says,

11 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. [Listen to verse 13] 13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. [Listen to verse 14] 14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up

and down in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created [listen to this phrase], till iniquity was found in thee.

This passage though written to the king of Tyre as a lamentation against, the fact that it says, "You were in the garden of Eden, you were the anointed cherub," I think it's very clear to see he's using the fall of Lucifer as an illustration to the king of Tyre's behavior. Very similarly in the book of Matthew 16, remember when Simon Peter condemns the Lord for saying, "I'm going to the cross," and he says, "Get behind me, Satan"? He's basically saying, "Your behavior now is very reminiscent of the enemy's behavior in days past." Same thing happening here. The anointed cherub over the throne of God. When you get to Ezekiel 1 and chapter 10, you have cherub around the throne of God but that's another question for another day. What's important is says "when iniquity was found in thee." Unlike the garden of Eden where the old serpent comes in and says, "Hey, has the Lord said you cannot eat of every tree of the garden?" Where the temptation was made to humanity. It's very clear that in Genesis 3, one who had already fallen into sin communicated and attempted to get somebody who had not fallen into sin to fall into sin, let me show you how this is done.

You don't see that in Ezekiel 28, nor do you see anything in God's nature that would ever, there's nothing in Scripture that says he ever desires us to sin, never wants us to sin. It's not a part of who he is. In fact, go to the book of James 1 and I'm going to make it even a little more clear and then we'll open it up to whomever and however. James 1. We're going to be in verse 13. It says,

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, [listen to verse 14] when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

So based on that passage in Ezekiel 28 where it says that iniquity was found within you, based on this passage where it says of our own lust when enticed, we go there on our own, I don't think we can say God showed them, demonstrated to them or painted the picture how to, I think you see in Lucifer, I think you see a desire as John Milton, the American writer best said, he'd rather reign in hell than serve in heaven. No longer desiring to be under the subjection of or the authority of God, he wanted to do it his way. That old crooner, Frank Sinatra, remember what he said? "I did it my way." Ironically, that statement is very eerily similar to what we just read. Lucifer said, "I'm going to do it my way." In James 1:14 it says sin creeps into our lives when we say, "I want to do it my way. I don't want to do it your way." So I don't think there's any evidence in Scripture that God shows anyone how to sin or even desires for them to sin, but it says that it's something that comes within us and creeps up from the inside.

Questions? Thoughts? Comments? Concerns? We're going to go 0-2 tonight? Yes, man'am.

[unintelligible]

Ah, the question on the floor is: so does this show that the angels, who we know fell with Lucifer, had a choice or had a decision or had a say in the matter? Go to 2 Peter 2, a few pages to the right. Again, if this is your first time with us, it doesn't really matter what I think, what does the word of God say? The question: what about the angels, does it say anything about them? 2 Peter 2:4 and then we're going to go to the book of Jude. I love going to the book of Jude. It says,

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

So it says that they did, this experience happened to them, alright? Now, go a few more pages to the right to the book of Jude. If you don't know where it is, go to Revelation, hang a hard left. The book of Jude, verse 6, and I think, I'm hoping this will answer your question in specific.

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

In the human realm, Luke 15, what we know as the prodigal son, he took the spoils and left. Same picture that we have here. I think the idea we get even of the angelic host, even of Lucifer himself is that they decided, "I don't want to be under God's reign and rule, I want to do my own thing."

When you go to Isaiah 14:12-14, another passage that a prophet is using the fall of Satan to illustrate something, in three verses five times it says, "I will. I will. I will. I will. I will." In other words, he says, "I will exalt my throne above the Lord's. I will reign supreme over him. I will do this." Never any indication of, "Well, Lord, you showed me I could do this." He said, "I want this to occur. I want this to happen." And it says they left their first estate.

The question: so they had free will? I think it's hard to argue they did not have free will when it says, "I will," and "they left and iniquity was found within you." So I have a hard time, and by the way, you bring up a question here about free will and choice and decision. How quick are we to blame our sin on somebody else, "Oh, if they had not..." By the way, I'm going to share with you where this is most demonstrated. I don't like watching them, I don't purposefully do so but every now and then you're channel surfing and you come across a daytime talk show. You know what I want to see one day on a daytime talk show, just once? Now I'm sure it's happened but I've never seen it, I want somebody on a daytime talk show to look at whoever the host is and say, "You know what? It's all my fault." They never do. It's always, "Well, the way I was raised, or my ex did this, or my So-and-so, or somebody did this." Everybody's blaming everybody else,

nobody takes ownership for their own sin and I think the product of that is because we have to take ownership of our own sin.

"I will do this. They left." They made a distinct decision, "I don't want anything to do with what God's doing and I'm done." Now you go back to Genesis 3 when humanity fell into this, notice what happened in Genesis 3 where it says they saw the forbidden fruit that it was good for food, it was pleasant to the eyes, it'll make us wise like the gods. In other words, we want to do this because we think it will benefit us to do it differently than God told us that we should do it. It's the same story, second verse, and we think it's going to be better but it only gets worse every single time.

Does that help out with that one? Any other angel questions? Lucifer questions? Garden of Eden questions? Boy, y'all are quiet tonight. It scares me when y'all are quiet. Oh, I saw, oh, yes, sir. Now you know the Bible says two shall become one, so this is y'all's second question.

[unintelligible]

Absolutely. Yes.

[unintelligible]

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Oh, it's Wednesday night, we're going there. Okay. He said we may be going some theology we don't want to go. Oh, we're going there. It's we're gonna do this. That's why we get together on Wednesday night because she asked the same question you just verbalized. Alright, so the question is: do they have the opportunity to repent? There is nowhere in Scripture where the Bible says they do, and there's nowhere in Scripture where the Bible says they don't. The Lord has not given us the answer to that question but I want to answer it by going to Revelation 20.

You see, we just keep going further right in the Bible, eventually we're going to end up in the index, but Revelation 20, which in our Revelation study we'll get there in a decade or so. Revelation 20, just give you a little insight here. Verses 1 through 9 of this chapter are about a time period known as the millennium. That's what we call it. It's the thousand year reign of Christ. Seven times in these verses it says the Lord will reign. It says very clearly that Satan himself, the original one who fell, is held captive in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. He's not allowed out, his temptations cannot be felt and/or experienced. So I want you all to understand what's happening here. For one thousand years this entity who according to the book of Job goes to and fro, this entity who had the ability to deceive in the garden of Eden, this entity who according to 2 Corinthians 11 presents himself as an angel of light, this entity who is personified as the Antichrist during the tribulation and reigns over all the world is held captive for one thousand years.

Now biblically speaking, since his fall we don't have any record of his captivity since that time. He has had free reign of his terror, for lack of better terms, but for one thousand years he's locked up. Now I don't know about you and maybe I would fall into the same trap, but I think that after one thousand years of contemplating my sin, I might want to change, realizing God wasn't joking when he said this. He said he's going to put me here for a thousand years. I've been here for a thousand years. When I go against him, it's not pretty. Now I want you to notice what happens when he gets out. Beginning in verse 10, "And the devil that deceived them." Let me go back up real quick, verse 7,

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

Now stop there. Don't look at the next verse. He's let loose. The Lord has said, "Okay, I'm getting you out of captivity after one thousand years." What does he do in verse 8?

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth,

You talk about a heart problem. In fact, a couple of chapters earlier in the book of Revelation it talks about even through this time period known as the Great Tribulation, the wrath of God is being poured out, people are hiding in the caves and such, and it says they still would not repent of their sins.

So the Bible doesn't say specifically they're given an opportunity. The Bible doesn't say specifically that they're not given an opportunity but I think we can use these verses in Revelation 20 and say if there was ever a time ever where Satan could come out and say, "Okay, I need a do-over. I need a Mulligan, second try here." And what does he do? He comes out madder than when he went in. Now here's what's interesting, how does God judge him in this passage? Did he says, "Hey, we need to sit down and talk about this. I need you to come before my throne." He says fire and brimstone, we're done. End of story.

So we're not given specifics to this question but I think we can allude, I think God giving him a thousand years in the bottomless pit, I don't know what's going to happen during that time period but I know personally it would cause me to think about it. I mean, I'm a parent, I obviously grew up in a home with parents and went to school and had coaches, and how many times when I got in trouble did they say, "You go to your room. You think about this." And it caused me to think because I didn't like the consequences, I didn't like what was happening to me, and so I usually came out dragging my head and groveling saying, "Okay, I need to fix this problem." That's not what he does. He comes out madder than when he went in.

Does that help at all? Okay. Anybody else on this one? Are we going to move on? Everybody good? Yes, ma'am. Whoa, whoa, whoa, that makes number 3 for y'all if you open up.

[unintelligible]

Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Okay, say that one more time. Forgive me for this pause. If you were in heaven....

[unintelligible]

Oh, you're talking about the original angelic beings. I thought you were talking about me and I'm like, I'm not walking out of heaven once I get there. No! No, no, no, no, no. I know he did.

[unintelligible]

You want to go there? Okay, go to Isaiah 14. Here we go. You opened up the can. Isaiah 14. Again, another one of these passages. Now the question at hand, what she alluded to was if you "walked out of heaven" and you had seen what it was in all of its glory, why would you want to stay out? Why wouldn't you want to get back in? Well, obviously he had a heart problem. Obviously he didn't like being in charge. He didn't like for....we've always made this statement, it's pretty true biblically that he was second in command and he didn't like being number 2, he wanted to be number 1.

Well, in Isaiah 14:12, now I'm going to give us a little lesson here in Bible reading. You don't need a theological degree, you don't need to go to seminary to do what we're about to do. I want you to imagine you're in third grade tonight reading. Don't over-think it, okay? Just read it for what it says.

12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Now let me walk us back through there. Look at what it says and then notice what it doesn't say. If "I will ascend into heaven," I'm not currently in heaven, am I? Now this is recalling when he sinned, not the aftereffect once he sinned. "I will exalt myself above the stars," which means you must be below the stars. "I will exalt myself on the high," which means you must be on the low. And what I think is interesting and we cannot and do not know everything that's involved in this passage but the picture that we get is that when he makes this decision to rebel against God, he's not around the throne, he is not amidst of all the activities that we know "of heaven," and there's a lot of suspicion. Well, what was he doing and what did God have him doing, and why was he doing what he was

doing? We'll never answer those questions but what we do know is that he was outside the physical realm of what we call heaven and didn't want to go back in and be subject to the rule and authority of heaven, he would rather reign over himself and those who he had amassed versus be subject to God alone.

So to the point, I don't think you have an individual whose heart went corrupt in the throne room. Does that make sense? Hopefully I helped there just a little bit.

[unintelligible]

Excuse me.

[unintelligible]

Correct. Um, well, it doesn't say he fell. In this passage it doesn't say he fell, does it? It says, "You are fallen from heaven," correct, okay? "For you said I will exalt myself above." In Luke 9, Jesus makes the statement he saw him fall as the stars in the night, in other words, shhh. Fallen, don't necessarily think geography as condition. In other words, when I fell or when we fall in sin, we don't necessarily change locations but we have fallen in our standing, our status. He no longer without God's permission had free access to, because when you get to Job 1 and 2, I know that's a quick right turn, it says he came to present himself on a specific day. The book of Job makes us think that there's actually a time period where the Lord says, "Okay, you can enter now and we can have a conversation but other than this, it's not allowed." So that fallen state, don't think from a high place to a low place as much as a condition of sinlessness to a condition of depravity.

Does that help? Does that help? Anybody else? Moving on? I've got one more minute before we start Revelation. Come on, somebody. Are we just going to move on?

Let's go to Revelation tonight. Here we go. We're already there anyway. The other day we didn't get all there so we'll do it today. Hopefully you got the outline as you came in. Revelation 1:9-18. We're going to the island of Patmos tonight. We're going to see the vision that the Lord gives John. We're going to have the opportunity to see Jesus at least through the eyes of John as he's never been seen before.

I want you to think about this before we read this passage. This Jesus who walked on the water, who multiplied the bread, who sat down with his disciples day after day and night after night, all of a sudden he's going to have the countenance of a Son, he's going to have a sword coming out of his mouth. His eyes are going to be red. It's a whole different picture of Jesus maybe why in just a moment we're going to see the Apostle John falls at his feet as if dead.

Revelation 1, beginning in verse 9. It says,

9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. 12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps [or the chest] with a golden girdle. 14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. 17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: 18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Now I want you to imagine before we go to our outline tonight, I want you to imagine being John the last time he saw Jesus. The last time he saw Jesus physically was on the mount of ascension, Acts 1. Here he was surrounded with some angelic beings and he ascends up into the clouds. It was a glorious moment. It was a wonderful experience and yet this time very different. His appearance was radically different and we get the idea that just the tone, the aura of the place was completely different.

So what's happening here that we need to learn tonight? The first thing we need to deal with, though, is John on the island, his position. Physically speaking he's on the island of Patmos. We addressed this a couple of weeks ago but I think it's very important tonight. There are two streams of thought and two concepts of dating the book of Revelation, either under the reign of Nero in the 60s or Domitian in the 90s during what we know as the first century. If John is on Patmos during the reign of Nero in the 60s, then the events of the temple and the abomination of desolation can be seen as events that have already been accomplished almost 1,900 years ago. If he is on the isle of Patmos during Domitian's reign right before 100 AD, a temple that was already destroyed by the Romans, an experience that has already been demolished, then the temple of Revelation and the events of Revelation aren't descriptions of the past but prophecies of the future. The reason this is important, I shared it a couple of weeks ago, I want to share it again tonight. Nero didn't exile anybody. Nero killed everybody, a ruthless, horrible individual. Domitian was a wimp. He was scared of his shadow and it makes perfect historical sense that a man who did not like to execute but liked to exile would take one of John's classification and character and put him on the island of Patmos. This is critical because it

means the events of Revelation have not been accomplished but are yet one day to be accomplished.

So he's on the island of Patmos, spiritually speaking a time of tribulation and perseverance. I want you to notice why would a political authoritative figure exile him from the masses? Because he preached the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. And we studied it last week in Revelation 19:10, it says the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. He spoke, "Thus saith the Lord. This is what the Bible says." And he said, "Jesus is coming back." I've got news for us in the 21st century, it's not much different today. When we stand on the word of God, the secular establishment is not very fond of us. In fact, I had a friend of mine years ago made a great statement, he made this statement, he said, "The more accolades that a preacher receives from the secular media, the more compromised he's going to be asked to give down the road." John didn't give in at all. He did not waver from the word of God.

It reminds me of John the Baptist. Remember Herod? Herod liked John the Baptist, liked to hear him preach, liked to hear him teach, kept him in the dungeon just for that purpose, but eventually compromise settled in in Herod's life, his head was put on the charger, we know the rest of the story. But the Apostle John, the two things that caused him to be exiled was the word of God and saying Jesus is coming back. What do men not learn from history? To learn from it.

And so we see him in this condition. Now here's where it gets interesting, the prophetic. It says that he was on the island of Patmos and he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. Now let me share with you the two opposing constructs that people created about this verse and then I'm going to give you, for lack of better terms, a different alternative. I've got my Pentecostal brethren who said that he was having an existential Pentecostal moment. He was in the Spirit on the Lord's day when this happened. I've got my Baptist brothers who said it was just Sunday morning, the Lord's day. Here's the thing I want you to notice: nowhere in the Scripture do you have in the New Testament what we know as Sunday called the Lord's day. It's called the first day of the week because in the Jewish culture and particularly in those days, that was the first day of the week.

Now several years ago, I had the experience, I ordered some, I guess some audio-video equipment from a company in New York City that was Jewish in ownership, and I'll never forget that Sunday morning I'm on my way to church when they called me about my order. Now what's my first thought? "What are you doing working on Sunday?" Their first thought was, "Why are you going to church on Sunday?" They had gone on Saturday, I was going on Sunday. They were Jewish, I was Christian. The reason that's important is what we know as Sunday in the observation of the resurrection of Jesus, a collective worship day for the Christian community, the New Testament does not call it the Lord's day, it calls it the first day of the week and I put various verses on there where they gathered on the first day of the week and they celebrated, they worshiped, etc.

Now on the other side of the equation, for those who believe that this is an existential Pentecostal type experience, let us remember the Apostle Paul who came out of the third

heaven in 2 Corinthians 12, says he was around the throne room, and came back and said, "I really don't remember what I experienced. I just know it was great." The Apostle John has given us everything he experienced. He didn't come back and say, "Woo, it was great for me but too bad for y'all."

So what I want to deal with tonight is I believe it's very possible that rather than telling us he was "either A in a trance, or B it just happened to be Sunday morning," we might be having a little insight to what we're going to study in-depth next week and that's how we look and divide the book of Revelation. I want you to turn over to chapter 4 of the book of Revelation and I want you to see something. You see, in chapter 2 and 3, we have the seven churches. In chapter 4 and 5, we have a view of the heavenlies. Beginning in chapter 6, what we know as the great tribulation will begin. I'm going to read Revelation 4:1-3. I want you to notice the similarities. It says,

1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. 2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

Do you notice the parallels? Here in the passage we've read tonight in chapter 1, he hears a voice as a trumpet speak to him; he is in the Spirit. In Revelation 4, he hears a voice as a trumpet; he is in the Spirit. I want you to look at the first two words of verse 1 of chapter 4, "After this." Next week, we're going to go into great detail just on those two verses. You think, "Well, we're getting out of context." No, we're going back into chapter 1. What is after this and what is happening? We've got two things that we're not going to resolve tonight but hopefully whet your appetite for next week. Next week it says that the Lord told him, "Write the things which have been, the things which are, and the things which are to come." There's a lot of discrepancy on what that means but it is very possible that in chapter 1, verse 9, when he has this experience with the Lord, he has been transported as is described in chapter 4, and the events of chapter 2 and 3 are a reflection of the things that have occurred in the past, and chapters 4 and on are the things of the present and the future. If that is not correct, then there are actually two places in the book of Revelation where he is caught up in the Spirit. So we're going to have to decide is it one place or is it two? We'll get more into that next week, what I want you to hear specifically tonight, this isn't saying it was Sunday morning and it's not saying that it was some trance-type experience in his life. He has been caught up. He is experiencing the throne room of God. We've just got to decide next week what does that timing look like. So hopefully that will encourage you to come back next week and we'll figure all that stuff out.

Now the description of Jesus that we read. It's either got to be an allegory or an interpretation. Now I've given you exact definitions of what I mean. An allegory is simply an expression by means of a symbolic fictional figure and actions of truths or generalizations about human existence. It's a symbolic representation. This method of biblical understanding became very popular in the 5th century AD where we would read a

passage of Scripture and we just said, "Well, it doesn't really mean what it says but I can interpret it a certain way. It pictures this. It's an allegory. It's symbolic of something else." That's what an allegory is. An interpretation isn't, well, it's symbolic of something else, an interpretation is it may be a two-edged sword but this is what a two-edged sword means. So rather than just saying, well, it could mean this and it could mean that, and what about this and what about that, an interpretation means let's look at what it's saying and then look back at what the Bible says about it. That is why you have the chart on the bottom of your sheet tonight because every single description of Jesus in this passage can be referenced to a passage of Scripture in the Bible.

One of the struggles that we have with the book of Revelation is not reading what it says but believing it as it is written because we don't want to believe that fire and brimstone came down. We don't want to believe that a third of the waters turned to blood. We don't want to believe that a quarter of the population died. What we want to say is, "Well, what that really means, it just got really bad." So we've got to make a decision from the very beginning are we just going to make it what we want it to say, or are we going to allow it to say what it does say in light of what the Bible says about these subject matters all throughout the text.

Now his response to seeing the Lord. Some of you may be thinking, "Well, you're going the cart before the horse." I am on purpose, and the reason is I want us to look at how John responded to Jesus, then we're going to look at the Jesus that he responded to. Notice it says that he fell as if dead. Psalm 111:10 says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom."

He fell as if dead, and notice what the Lord says to him, "Fear not." Some of you may be aware of this but the phrase "fear not" or "do not fear" takes place 366 times in your Bible. That's one for every day plus leap year. You're good to go. 366 times the Lord says fear not or do not be fearful.

Notice he puts his right hand, the hand of authority on him. What's important for us to understand is he saw the Lord. He has seen Jesus Christ as we're going to see in just a moment, not just resurrected but in his glory, and as we're going to see in a moment, his soon second coming appearance. Now if this does not cause you to fear the Lord, I don't think anything will.

When he sees him he falls as if dead. Now here's what's important for us to understand: John is a believer, John is an apostle, John is a pastor, John has been put into exile because he would not shut up about Jesus. If there was anybody who could give Jesus a high-five and say, "Man, I've doing it," it was him. What did he do? He fell down dead.

I've had a lot of people tell me, say, "You know what, preacher? One day when I see God face-to-face I'm gonna tell him what I think about him." No, you're not. You're not. You know, when we get to Revelation 20 and what we call the final great judgment, you know there's no record of anybody having a conversation with God on that day? We talk big, don't we? I mean, we talk like, "Oh, boy, I cannot wait to give God a piece of my mind."

What does John do? He falls at his feet as if dead. One day all that you think you will say or do in the presence of God, you're going to end up just like John, you're going to fall at his feet. What did Colossians 1 say? At the name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that he is Lord. Nobody, I don't care how big or bad you think you are, nobody is going to stand up to God one day. We fall at his feet as if dead.

He saw him for his glorified state. Now one of the most famous passages in the Bible is Isaiah 6. You know the story well. Isaiah sees the Lord high and lifted up. What's interesting about that passage in Isaiah 6 is how it begins, "In the year that King Uzziah died." Now you can go and do the research on, you know, Google and Bing and such and find out, well, what was the relationship between Isaiah and King Uzziah? There's pretty good historical evidence that Isaiah the prophet was a relative of King Uzziah, some even believe he may have been his nephew. You say, "Well, why is that important?" What happens when one king is dismissed or dies and another king comes into prominence? What do they do to the possible successor of the other king? They kill them. They get rid of them. They eliminate them. I'm going to tell you what, if it was time to get serious about God, this was time for him.

What did Isaiah, what did he have now or what did he have absent from his life that he had when Uzziah was king? He had personal security. He had food. He had finances. He could say what he wanted to say without retribution. He had a very long leash of liberty. But when Uzziah died, all of a sudden his earthly security was gone. You want to see the Lord? Have everything in your life fall away and you'll see him pretty clearly. When he's all you've got, you find out he's all you need and Uzziah saw him differently, he saw him as he had never seen him before.

The only way I can parallel this, the only way I can demonstrate this took place several years ago. I'm going to tell you a story about the Meyers family BC. Y'all know what BC is? Before children. Several years ago, now you know both of our families live in the state of Texas. My wife's family at the time, no longer, but they lived in central Texas, the Waco, Texas area. And it was one Saturday and Tracy and I were there visiting and Tracy's sister and her husband and their three children were all in town, I mean, we had all of us in one house and so we did what the only intelligent smart thing to do on a Saturday morning when you've got that many people and three little kids, none of ours, all her sister's, we went out to breakfast, right? And there's a little town there known as McGregor, Texas. It had a cute little coffee shop and my father-in-law knew the owner and Tracy and I used to work for the owner and we thought it would be a great thing to do.

We go down there and we've got a bunch of hungry mouths, not just myself and my brother-in-law, these three little girls as well, my nieces, and I mean, we just keep waiting and we keep waiting and we keep waiting. Well, it's hard to seat a party of nine on Saturday morning in a small town when everybody's at this coffee shop. Well, finally the owner of this coffee shop comes out, he addresses my father-in-law and I'm listening to the conversation, and says, "We are so sorry for your wait. We're so sorry it's been long. You know, we have a party room in the back. I hate to put you in the party room on a

Saturday morning. There's somebody back there I don't think you'll mind. They've said they don't mind. Do you mind going back to the party room? I know it's kind of inconvenient," because the buffet was out at the front. Well, we didn't care. We were just hungry, right?

So we start making our way to the party room and everybody walking through the door is looking back going, "Sh, sh, sh." I'm thinking, "What's going on in the party room?" We get back there, George W. Bush and Laura are in the party room. The President. McGregor, Texas is right around the corner from Crawford, TX where his ranch was. We're in the party room with the soon to be President. He was in that process of becoming, and his wife and a bunch of Texas Rangers. We get to the table, my father-in-law says, "Shut up! Don't say anything!" And all of us just sat there like perfect British citizens. Not moving. Not moving. We were scared to move. We were scared to talk. We were scared and we were frightened that we had three toddlers at the table. I mean, if apple sauce starts flying, this could be bad, I mean real bad.

So we're all sitting around the table and George W. Bush, President 43, in a polo shirt, khakis and tennis shoes starts making his way to our table and he recites this statement. He says, "Well, y'all may not want to meet me but I'd like to meet y'all." Next thing I know, Laura Bush is sitting down feeding my nieces in their highchair. My sister-in-law has twin girls, she had twin girls. George Bush is sitting beside us saying, "So, what y'all do? What profession are you in?" He just starts having a conversation with us.

The reason I use that illustration is when we were 10 feet away from an individual on this earth with that much authority, did I go over and give him a fist bump? No. Those Texas Rangers are big boys. I wasn't messing with him. Did we just act like it was another day? No, no, no. Everything about us changed. When we get in the presence of God like John did, everything about your presence is going to change.

Here's where I want you to notice the parallel, though, when John was at his feet as dead, who extended, who extended the relationship? Jesus. He basically came to him and I'm going to use my human experience, and said, "You may not want to address me but I need to address you." And so the one who is in power, the one who is in authority is the one who extends because he recognized the position that the Lord had versus his.

Here's your spiritual takeaway today: if you really want to see the Lord high and lifted up, put yourself in a position where you recognize his authority and allow him to extend his hand and quit giving God fist bumps and saying, "Hey, God, we got this," right? Yes, the Bible says very clearly in John 15, "I no longer call you servants, I call you friends if you do whatsoever I command you."

Now the reason I wanted to do that before we go to the descriptions is I think it's more important today that we understand how to respond to God than getting all caught up in the details of what John actually saw because the chances of you seeing Jesus the way he did are slim to none and it's not happening, but we have the opportunity to see the Lord every day of our lives when we completely submit to his power and authority in our lives

and if you fall at his feet as if dead, he will put his hand on your life and say, "Fear not. I'm the beginning and the end, the first and the last."

Notice what he says, "I have the keys to death and hell." We're going to talk about this more when we get to the end of the book of Revelation. I get into some interesting discussions, I get into some interesting debates with individuals who question faith and despise faith, and I've had this asked to me a couple of times. I've had people say, "Well, preacher, what if you're wrong? What if you're wrong about this whole Jesus thing and you end up in hell one day?" I say, "I'm not scared." They say, "You're not scared to go to hell?" I say, "No, because Jesus has the keys, he'll come get me." He has the keys to death and hell and if he has access and controls the door of death and hell, I think he can handle whatever we're struggling with today, whatever that is.

So what did John see? Now I've given you a chart here. We're not going to go through every one of these line items in depth. What I want you to see mainly is that we don't need to see this allegorically as, well, maybe it could mean this or maybe it could mean that, we need to see this interpretatively, that what does the Bible say?

The first thing: he's one like unto the Son of man. Daniel 3, you know the famous story of the fiery furnace where Nebuchadnezzar put Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in, remember verse 25 there is a fourth individual, and notice what Nebuchadnezzar says, "He is like the Son of God," is what is utilized, the Son of man, Son of God. What we see here in an interpretation when the term "Son of God" is used in reference to Jesus, it is always in reference to God coming down to us. When "Son of man" is used, it's man going up and experiencing God. In this vision, he calls him the Son of man so what we have here, as I alluded to, is John being taken up to see Jesus, not Jesus coming down to Patmos. So John's been taken up from, Jesus hasn't come down to.

It says he's got a robe down to his feet. Now we alluded to this last week when it says Jesus is the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, the Prince of the kings of the earth. Kings, priests and prophets all wore robes, the difference is the length of his robe. It says it goes all the way down to his feet. When we get to chapter 19 of the book of Revelation it says that it's going to be girded up past his thighs insomuch that you can read the writing that says, "King of kings and Lord of lords." Now the difference is when that garment is pulled up we're fighting, when the garment is down we're not. So the Jesus that John sees isn't the second coming, I'm coming in the flesh Jesus, he has seen him in his majesty Jesus.

Now just, I know we don't, we're kind of short on time but I've just got to have a little fun here. I know I'm dating myself when I do what I'm about to do but I'm going to do it anyway. When I was in college, the sorority girls on my campus, it was very fashionable that they would wear wrap skirts. You know what a wrap skirt is where it's like 20 feet of material that you wrap around your body five times and it looks real pretty? Have you ever seen somebody try to run in a wrap skirt? It's hysterical because their feet can only move about 14 inches and they just go, de, de, de, de, de all the way. And when it's

raining, they're de, de, de, de, they just keep going. You cannot run, you cannot fight, you cannot engage a physical endeavor with it down to the ankles.

When Jesus comes back in chapter 19, it's all the way up. That means warfare is taking place. That's when God comes to Job in Job 38, I love this passage, he says, "Gird up thy loins like a man." In other words, get in the fight and get after it. Jesus isn't coming back in Revelation 1, he's coming back in Revelation 19 but John is seeing him in his majesty as king and priest and prophet.

There's a sash around his chest. That's the picture of not service as much as it is majesty. Remember when Jesus in John 15 washed the disciples' feet? Remember he took the towel off of him and placed it on the ground as an act of service. This isn't servant Jesus, this isn't second coming Jesus, this is magisterial Jesus.

It says his head and his hair are white. Some of y'all are just like Jesus tonight. Thank you. Yes. Picture of Daniel 7, he's called the Ancient of Days. Do not read into this that Jesus has aged. He doesn't age. In fact, 1 Timothy 6 says he's the only immortal one. It is interpreted by Daniel 7, this is the Ancient of Days, it's a picture that he has always been.

His eyes are a flame of fire. You know, he judges without speaking. I had an old football coach who used to say the eyes are the window to your soul. I've had four years in my life where I have not lived with a schoolteacher. My mom was a schoolteacher. My wife is a schoolteacher. My mother-in-law is a schoolteacher. So those four years in college I didn't live with a schoolteacher. You say, "Why is that significant?" Schoolteachers don't have to talk, they just give you a look and I know exactly what it means.

Here it says his eyes were as a flame of fire, that there's judgment without the necessity of words. But it says his feet are as brass that are burning, treading with judgment. Not only a picture of Daniel 3 but later in Revelation 19 when it says he treads the winepress with his wrath.

A voice as a sound of many waters. Power and authority. We get to chapter 5, it's going to talk about this loud strong angel that exclaims and the heavens and the earth and everybody under the earth is able to hear.

His right hand, he has seven stars. Now I want to spend just a moment as we begin to wrap up on this because this is what's very important about the book of Revelation. You don't have to wonder what this is, the whole interpretive versus allegorical thing. I want you to notice what verse 20 says in Revelation 1. It says,

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

You can't dispute it, can't debate it, you don't have to question it. Hey, that's what those seven stars are, they are the angels of the seven churches. You say, "Why is that important?" Because I believe the book of Revelation is not near as difficult as people think it is because you don't need to over-think it. You don't need to go, "Well, what does that mean?" Somewhere in the Bible there is a verse that will tell you what this means. 285 prophecies from the Old Testament and 500 allusions to other passages in the Bible in 400 verses in the book of Revelation. It will lay it out for us if we allow it to, we don't have to force it to say something that we would like it to.

His mouth has a two-edged sword. Well, that's very easy to understand. Not only does the Bible say that the word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword but we've been given the sword of the Spirit in Ephesians 6. In Revelation 19 when Jesus comes back, it says the sword is coming out of his mouth. This judgment, his judgment is in word that then is followed by action.

And finally, last but not least, I love this part. This is how we're going to wrap up. His countenance is as the sun. Malachi 4, the last chapter of your Old Testament calls him the sun, s-u-n, of righteousness. Matthew 17 when he's transfigured before Peter, James and John, he is as bright as the sun. And now his countenance is as the sun. We have a picture of a magisterial glorified Jesus that he falls at his feet and worships.

Next week, we're going to get into verse 19. Verse 19 is critical to understand how are we going to divide Revelation, what are events that are past, what are events that are present, what are events that are future.

Let's pray and we'll be dismissed.

Lord, as we depart from this place, Lord, I pray that it wouldn't be about cerebral information and knowledge in our head but, Lord, we would be men and women and boys and girls who would see you high and lifted up and want to fall at your feet as if dead. Lord, may your hand be upon us and may you make it very clear we don't have to fear because you are the first and the last, you have the keys to death and hell. Lord, we acknowledge it. Help us to live it. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.