

Ask Jeff

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Good evening, First Baptist family, it's 6:30 Central Standard Time. It is my privilege to welcome you to our midweek, large group, adult Bible study here at First Baptist Church. Those of you that are in person, online, or by way of radio, even though radio is a few days' delayed, you are a part of our Bible study. Tonight, just let me remind you that tonight's Bible study is a very unique if you've never been a part of us. This is a Bible study, I'll talk more about this in a moment, that's completely originated and driven by you. But tonight, we're gonna do kind of a Q&A format where you have the opportunity to ask questions, concerns, raise issues about biblical topics, passages etc., but I want to differentiate tonight from our daily question and answer time. We have a YouTube channel that each and every day Monday through Friday we have a question of the day. Typically those answers are between 90 seconds, maybe 3-4 minutes, very much different than here on Wednesday nights where we can go 5-10-15-20, all the whole hour, you know, it just depends on what you bring up and what the subject matter is. If you want to be a part of our daily Q&A, the website is the way in which we originate those questions. There's two websites. You can go to fbcopelika.com/askjeff or you can go to askjeff.net. That goes into the portal for our daily questions. Tonight, everything is driven by either text messaging or raising your hand in the air.

Now one thing I want to make clear: you can originate questions in both portals. They do not cancel each other out. Oftentimes on Wednesday night, kind of the questions can get a little bit behind if we have a lot of follow-ups or maybe they get carried over to the next week, whereas on our daily channel we answer one every single day Monday through Friday. But tonight, if you want to be a part of tonight's discussion, you can remain completely anonymous. I will not know who you are, you will not know who each other are. Text messaging is the way to do it. Area code 334-231-2313. It goes into our portal for tonight. It will show up on the screen. You can originate a question, a concept, a concern, or you can do a follow-up. If we're talking about a subject matter, issue, passage, whatever it may be, you can submit a question or concern. It will show up in a different colored font and I will know that we are staying on topic. Now you can be here in the room, you can be on the other side of the camera, it doesn't matter, wherever you are right now in real time, use our text messaging system and you are a part of the conversation and the discussion.

Now for those of you that are here in person, you have an opportunity that those online do not. You can raise your hand. When you put your hand in the air, one thing happens, you lose your anonymity. We know who you are but nobody outside of this room will hear your voice or see your image. So you are anonymous to the world out there, just not in here. You have the opportunity to take the conversation any direction you would like, any concept, any concern, whatever it may be, however you lose your anonymity in the room.

So that's kind of the rules of engagement. If this is your first time here, we welcome you, we're glad you're here and you can participate as if you've been a seasoned veteran for years and years and years. So question #1 says, "In Zechariah 6," you know, you don't hear that passage much, "it talks about four horses but as they represent directions it leaves out the red horse in the east. Why?" This is a really interesting question. Now Zechariah 6 obviously we're going to the second to the last book of your Old Testament. We are in the midst of in the book of Zechariah there are 10 visions that the Lord gives Zechariah regarding whom we know as those not only of the Jewish faith, Israelite people, but more importantly what we consider Second Coming or end time events. What we know as Zechariah is a primarily prophetic book regarding what we typically refer to as "the book of Revelation, end times, etc."

Now in chapter 6 beginning in verse 1 and really it's verses 1 through about 5 or 6, but just for the sake of context, it says, "And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass. In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses. Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord? And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth. The black horses which are therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them; and the grisled go forth toward the south country. And the bay went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth. Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, these that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country."

Now again, we're dealing with a prophetic passage, we're dealing with what we call "end time events," but the question is, alright, we see all these things happening, what's really happening here and why is the red left out, why is the direction of east left out? Now the best way that we can go and interpret what we know as the book of Zechariah is to correlate it with what most Old Testament prophetic passages have is that most of them, not all of them but most of them have a corollary passage in the New Testament. Alright, here we go, it's Wednesday night. I'm gonna let you guess where most likely the corollary passage to this passage is. That's right, Revelation. Congratulations, it didn't take long tonight.

Go to chapter 9. Here we go. For those of you that are new, it took five minutes tonight. Yes. Revelation 9. I'm gonna read for you a passage and the reason I talk about correlating, understand that you have within the book of Zechariah and a host of other places in the Old Testament, you have these visions that are given to these individuals by the Lord. In the book of Revelation, we truly have, as the word says, we have a revealing of or a demonstration of the fulfillment of these prophetic passages.

Now why do we go to chapter 9? Because understand in chapter 6 of Zechariah we had these proverbial four horses of various colors but they're described as four spirits, okay? Now the reason that's important is these do not line up with the famous horsemen of Revelation 6 because in that case it's a horse of a specific color. These are different, okay? In Revelation 9, we have what we call the sixth trumpet. Remember there are seven vials, there are seven trumpets, and there are seven famous seals. In the sixth trumpet, verse 13, it says, "And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them." And it goes on to describe this famous account and event.

Now the reason I wanted to draw your attention to Revelation 9 is whoever submitted this question, you're absolutely correct, it speaks about these four horses, it talks about them being spirits, it talks about the throne of God being sent by God into the earth as the judgment of God. What we do not see, for whatever reason in the description of Zechariah, is the red horse but more importantly is one going from the east. The reason this is critical is in Revelation 9 we have the River Euphrates, it's been "dried up," and it says that these four angels are there to instrument what God is speaking of. Now the reason I speak about these angels is back in Zechariah 6, they are called the spirits of God. In Hebrews 1:14 it says his angels are his, you guessed it, ministering spirits. So in Zechariah 6, the only other place we have in the Bible that lines up similarly to this is Revelation 9.

Now why not the direction east? Because what we know about this event in Revelation 9 is that the kings of the east have already made their way to this place and what we discover is there is no judgment going out to the east because that has already been vacated and everything is there centralized in what we would call the Middle East, the Holy Land, and such. So to whoever submitted the question, the fulfillment is in Revelation 9 to the best of our guesstimation because it lines up the most with the numbers, the colors, and etc. So that's kind of that Zechariah...Now by the way, Zechariah has 10 visions in them. They're all very specifically vague, okay? Now I mean that seriously, that you have to kind of go to other passages and look at them. They're not necessarily as clear-cut as some of the other ones but Revelation 9 is the closest corollary we have.

It says in a follow-up, it says, "In the same chapter in verse 4, he says, 'What are these, my lord,' the word lord isn't capitalized so he probably isn't talking about Jesus, so why is an angel called 'my Lord'?" That's a very good question. In your Bible, the word Lord, l-o-r-d, can be spelled three different ways and when I say spelled, I mean with capitalization. You can find it in all capitals, capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D, okay? In your Old Testament, when you see that, that is what we would use as the word for Yahweh, the name of God. I mean, that's a big deal, right? If you see Lord with a capital L, that is typically referring to one of a magisterial position or one of high authority. For example, one who reigns over a kingdom might have the Lord capitalized. Again, all capitalization is the name of God and God himself, a capital L could be a reference to God but it also could be to a magistrate or an earthly leader. Lord with a lowercase "l" just means one, the word lord in its most simplistic form just means one who guides, directs or leads, okay? And oftentimes an angelic being, if brought along such as in Zechariah or in the book of Revelation, they will reference them as a lord not as one who is God or equal to, not even one who has a position of great authority or magistrate, but as one who is leading, directing or guiding, and what we see in Zechariah 6 is these angelic beings are those who are guiding and directing the vision that God has given. Phew, Zechariah is some tough stuff, right?

Anybody want to volunteer you got Zechariah 6? Who is memorizing Zechariah 6? Nobody in this room? We can look it up and find... No, I'm kidding. Somebody's got it because I know it's been taken. Any other Zechariah? He's a lot of fun specifically vaguely speaking.

And we're going back. It says, "Follow-up from last week." So we're going back to last week. It says, "Why do modern translations of the Bible all seem to use the Alexandrian Manuscripts instead of the 'Textus Receptus Manuscripts'?" Okay, tonight let me break this down somewhat easy because we're getting into a discipline that oftentimes we call textual criticism, and I know for some of you tonight, you say, "Okay, this is like in the weeds of things." Well, it's really not in the weeds of things, it's actually in the margins or at the bottom of your Bibles. If you have any Bible that has something other than just the text of scripture, it has cross-references, it has notes, it has commentary, it has anecdotes, at some point in a variety of places in your Bible, there will be some type of references to these "manuscripts." Sometimes they'll say the oldest and the most reliable. Sometimes they'll say this, sometimes they'll say that. And so this is a pertinent conversation that relates to each and every one of us, the question on the table per last week's conversation of Mark 16 is, that there are actually what we might call two distinct groups of these manuscripts.

Now it mentioned what we call the Textus Receptus, and I'm just going for the sake of illustration call it just the TR over here because I don't want to spell Latin over there. And then we have what we call it refers to as the Alexandrian. Now the Alexandrian is a collective term for really three distinct families that are all kind of all together, if that makes sense. So within this family over here, we have what we call the Alexandrian text, we have the Sinaitic and we have what we call the Vaticanus. So those are those three. So what we have here are two "groups." Now let me just share with you what the names

mean and then we're going to unpack this. I don't want to spend the whole hour on it unless you want to do some follow-up and we can, because we can go for days and weeks, however there's a lot of other questions that are in the queue.

Now just by the name, Textus Receptus, you know what the name means? Received Text. It means that which has been received. This text originated in a little place in the Bible known as Antioch. Does anybody know why Antioch would be important? In the book of Acts 11:26, it says that you and I as believers in Jesus Christ were first called Christians in Antioch. In fact, you might be surprised that once you get past Acts 15 in your New Testament chronologically, that anytime the disciples, the apostles, wanted to get together and kind of hammer some things out or figure some things out, they didn't do it in Jerusalem, they did it in Antioch. So if we were to go back to the biblical days when Paul was giving the message to the Thessalonians and to Philippi and to Colossae, at that time what we might call the theological center of New Testament Christianity was actually in Antioch, okay? And so these "manuscripts" come from the place known as Antioch, they're called the Received Texts because they are those that throughout time had been recognized as the scriptures, okay?

Now these other ones over here, all of these have a very interesting history. Let me just talk about their names. Alexandrian, okay, Alexandria is in Egypt. When's the last time in your Bible God said something good came out of Egypt? In fact, what did God say about Egypt? "Get out," right? Nothing good happened in Egypt, okay?

Alright, now what about this Sinaiticus or Sinaticus, what we call Mount Sinai or the subscribed place of Mount Sinai, that it was found in a "monastery on an island." It wasn't even discovered until the mid 1800's by a guy named Tischendorf who basically was suspect on his own, and it was left to rot in a can and nobody cared about it, okay? And by the way, that one document itself has 23,000 corrections even within it like scratches, x out, whatever.

Then we have Vaticanus. Now that's the Vatican. This document is so important that it was discovered, put in the Vatican and nobody's allowed to see it. I'm not messing with y'all. I'm being serious, okay? You can try to get an appointment but you're probably not going to.

The reason I bring up their names is this one comes from the center of biblical Christianity and was received through the years, all of these were found at a latter date from places that were never the centerpiece or even a place of early New Testament Christianity. In fact, Alexandria is where every single heresy of early Christianity originated. Every single one of them.

Now what the question on the table is, these "what we might call a newer translation," that's absolutely correct, most of them originate from this over here because – listen to this – scholarship and academia has said that they are older, they are better, and they are more accurate. Now the reason that I somewhat do that sarcastically and I do have an academic background that I'm not ashamed to be a part of, however how many, rhetorical

question, how many professors, no offense, professors, I'm a professor so I can say this, how many professors did Jesus call as an apostle? Zero. How many academicians? Zero. How many professors and academicians criticized Jesus during his ministry? A whole bunch. Now do y'all see where I'm headed with this? What you essentially see on one side of this equation is the received, everyday, grassroots faith, and on the other side you see what we might call this textual academia approach. And so therefore we have somewhat of this tension that reveals itself in places such as we studied last week with Mark 16 and a host of others. But I wanted to somewhat, per the question, kind of explain where they originate from, where they're from, and why they would be utilized, and the purpose of which they would be utilized.

So without further ado, follow-ups, concerns, thoughts, questions, clarifications? Looks like the meatloaf has sat heavy. Yes, sir?

[unintelligible]

You know what, when you raise your hand on Wednesday night, it doesn't have to be related to anything. Go for it.

[unintelligible]

Was Paul an academician? Yes. He was as a Jew. Prior to meeting Jesus. Now again, I'm not anti-academia. No, we have a seminary that actually is based here in our church so, I mean, I'm not against it, I'm just saying the academic community in Jesus' day and in the early church was contrary to what we might call biblical grassroots Christianity. So, you're right, he was an academic in Jewish days. He still utilized his background. Think Acts 17, I mean, he basically quotes the philosophers, the Stoics. He used that background for the purpose of the gospel, not contrary to. In fact, there was a book written years ago kind of defending the purpose of apologetics called "Don't check your brains out at the door," and the whole point was just because you're a Christian doesn't mean you can't think, don't utilize, but I guess what I'm getting at is when we start looking at this, there's something to be said for tried and true, received, used, and Johnny-come-lately from suspect places, if that makes sense. There we go, we got it.

Yes, ma'am?

[unintelligible]

I don't know if you can make sense either but give it a shot. Christian literature. Yes, ma'am. Okay, the question that's on the table is this: how do we navigate, there's Christian literature out there and you quoted one of my favorites, C. S. Lewis, versus just the simple text of scripture itself, okay? I've got an answer for you. Are you ready? Go to 2 Timothy 4. Now again, this is not a Jeff study, this isn't a Baptist study, this isn't a local church study, this is a Bible study. So that being said, I want you to hear what the Apostle Paul says in 2 Timothy 4. Now just a little reminder for all of us, 2 Timothy 4 is essentially his last will and testament. This is it. Chronologically speaking, 2 Timothy is

the last piece of scripture that the Lord inspired whom we know as the Apostle Paul to give us, the church. Chapter 4, it's the last chapter, verse 13. Alright, I mean, we are at the bitter end of his life. He is in prison. He will go from prison to his death. He will never breathe freedom again, okay? I want you to hear what he says in verse 13, "The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments." Now the parchments would have been what you and I know as scripture, okay? The reason I want to bring that up is though not a pure "Christian academician," he said bring the books and bring the parchments. They're not the same. They're not equal. But they can both be beneficial in my life, and kind of the metric I would give you as we read "Christian literature," always read it through the lens of scripture because just because somebody is a believer and just because somebody writes a book doesn't mean everything they write lines up with scripture. But a lot of times it does.

Now I'm gonna say something personally here. I've had the privilege of writing some books and that's great, but one of the things I tell people is when it comes to an author that is not God-inspired biblical literature, which would include me, okay, never believe more than 85% of what they give you. I just included myself in that equation. You know, 85 in school, that's a good solid B, right? Nobody's perfect. Nobody gets everything right. The reason I use that analogy is as you read a classic like "Mere Christianity," as you read some of these devotional books out there, understand that they're not God-inspired, not every statement is directly from heaven above. They should complement the scripture, they should enhance the scripture, but we need to be discerning to make sure that scripture supersedes anything that is written, even if it's meant to complement. Does that help a little bit?

[unintelligible]

Yes, ma'am, like C. S.

[unintelligible]

Oh absolutely. Okay, so the question is as you're reading Christian literature, should you back up, should you look at what supports in the Bible? Now again, I'm just speaking for myself, the way that I read any literature is through the lens of scripture and I'm always marking how it is complementary to. So kind of the way, let's say I'm reading a C. S. Lewis book, okay? And by the way, C. S. Lewis was one of the great thinkers. I'm still going to give him a good solid 85, alright, because nobody's perfect. There are times where I'll give a little check mark by something, there's sometimes I may put an X by something meaning, "Nah, that doesn't line up with scripture." There may be times I put a question mark. I'm always reading it through the lens of scripture and here's the beautiful thing, those check marks, the 85, sometimes somebody like him will give an illustration that turns the light bulb on of what the Bible has said all along, but now I see it differently and I see it, but I'm like, "Ah, that makes it clearer to me." So it has enhanced the Bible. It has not replaced the Bible.

On the other side of the equation, there's some statements that are made at times by people that the Bible cannot support, and therefore it's like, "Eh, no, no, don't go there, because the Bible says something contrary to." They may have meant well, but the only one who's perfect is God, and there's no, even C. S. Lewis as good as he is, his books were not inspired by God. He might have been inspired to write them, but God did not inspire them as Holy Scripture. even though they're really good reads.

Does that help out a little bit there? Anybody else were good? Everybody's moving? And I saw ahead. Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Why would you want to believe anything that comes out of Egypt? I wouldn't want to, personally. The question was why would you want to follow or believe anything that comes out of Egypt? When you read your Bible, now I could say beginning at the very beginning, but really it takes about midway through the book of Genesis to discover that nothing good ever comes out of Egypt and everything that goes into Egypt gets corrupted in Egypt, and you want to get out of Egypt as quickly as possible. And by the way, we read Zechariah 6. My memory could be bad, but I think in chapter 5, or maybe later in chapter 6, it says that in the last days, there is an army that comes out of Egypt and attacks Israel. Usually not a place to find good Christian devotional material. I'm just being honest. Yeah, but that's a good observation.

Everybody's good? Everybody's good? And we're following up again from last week. That's what it says. Oh, no, this is another follow-up. "What makes a text God-inspired?" In other words, what makes scripture, scripture? That's how I'm interpreting it. Okay, great. Go to 1 Thessalonians. Well, okay, you're in 2 Timothy. Back it up a few pages to 2 Timothy 3. We're going to do a little, and I'm going to give two very important words for you tonight, the words are inspiration and preservation, but we'll unpack all that in a moment. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." So what that says is it qualifies all scripture, okay? So God-inspired is scripture, that means Genesis through Revelation. By the way, it says all of it. Not some of it, most of it, the parts of it that we like, etc.

Now, back it up into chapter 2 of 2 Timothy. I promise we're not going to go back through every single chapter of the New Testament. Chapter 2 of 2 Timothy, verse 15, it says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." So all scripture is inspired by God, but as we study scripture, we need to make sure that we rightly divide it, that whom is it written to, what time is it written, and what application does it have.

Now, keep going to the left. Go back to 1 Thessalonians 5. I want to show you something that I believe could bring great clarity to this issue because when we talk about the scriptures, we talk about the text of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, at times we can

ask ourselves or we can give to questions that begin to question is what we have what we need, are there those that maybe we should add that we don't have, subtract, etc. In 1 Thessalonians, which by the way chronologically is the first letter of the Apostle Paul that the Lord inspired through his hand, I'm gonna go back to this young man's question, whom we know, Saul of Tarsus, we typically know him as the Apostle Paul, he was, as you said sir, he was a chief theologian in what we know as the Jewish faith, he was high up, he knew what he was doing, he was well versed, he was all those things, right? The reason I'm gonna bring that up is that because when, whom we know as the Apostle Paul, when he went into a city, the first thing he always did was go to the synagogue. He preached to the Jews and then he would go out and he preached to the Gentiles, okay? That being said, 1 Thessalonians 5:27. This is the very first letter that the Lord gives the Apostle Paul to give to you and I. It says, "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren." Now you may be thinking to yourself, okay, what's the big deal that it's read to all holy brethren? Because he grew up in a context and a culture that you didn't read anything in a synagogue that wasn't scripture. You didn't publicly read Christian theology. You didn't publicly read "man's writing." You only read scripture. When he says read this to all the brethren, let me tell you what I think the Bible's saying here. He knew he was called of God as an apostle. In fact, he defends his apostleship all throughout 2 Corinthians. He says, "Hey, it may not have looked like anybody else's, but I was called out of due time. I saw the Lord himself." He knew that he had a distinct role. He knew he had a distinct purpose. And when he said read this, I believe what he's telling us is, "I know what I'm doing. God is speaking inspirationally through me." This isn't going to just end with a letter in Thessalonica. This is going to last, according to Jesus, till heaven and earth pass away. So God-inspired scripture is that which these men, whether it was Moses, Paul, whomever, I believe we have biblical testimony that they "knew what they were doing," and that makes it God-inspired versus somebody like me who sits down and writes a book that may have Christian basis, may have Christian theology, but I'm not about to tell you it's on par with or equal to scripture, because it's not.

It says, "Is it fair to say every person's understanding of theology has a degree of error?" Absolutely. I got news for all of you, you ain't perfect. And by the way, one of the things, one of the ways, now this is going to sound harsh, but it's Wednesday night, we can go there, one of the things that I believe that you can utilize in your walk with the Lord is this. I'm going to call out myself. You may say, "Well, Jeff, you're unique. I've never walked through that," but here we go. I believe that you can say you are maturing, you're growing in your faith, you're truly beginning to understand the God of the Bible when you're willing to admit at some point in your life you have been a heretic. Now I know what you're saying, "What, a heretic, that sounds nasty." You know what the word heretic means? One who has false understanding. That's all it means. It means at some point, you advocated, promoted, taught, or believed something that you thought was biblical and then the more you studied, you realized, "Uh-oh, I had it wrong."

So again, back to this point, yes, at some point, everybody at all times has some type of "theological error." Now, I'm going to share a story tonight about an individual friend of mine. He's recently passed and been with the Lord. This friend of mine, had a unique gift

by God. Some of you may have heard this analogy or this story, so I apologize for repeating it. He had what you and I would call photographic memory. I mean, he was amazing with what he could recall, and he was an avid reader, devourer, and studier of the Bible. So much so that he counted, he did little tick marks of how many times he had read through the Bible. After reading through the Bible 100 times, Now, I don't know about you, but I haven't pulled that one off, okay? After reading through the Bible 100 times, he went through it on his 101st time, he took a red pen, and he circled everything that he saw that he had never seen before, or something he saw that cleared up something he had wrong previously. When he got done, there were 200 marks in his Bible. In other words, what I'm saying is, we are always growing. We are always maturing. And at some point, all of us have some level of theological error, no matter how small or how grave. And back to 2 Timothy 2:15, we study scripture. to hopefully lessen and squeeze some of that out so that we can, as it says in 2 Timothy 3:16, go on toward all these other aspects of the faith.

But that's a really good follow-up question. Nobody's perfect. That's why I said when you read somebody who's not God himself, give them a good 85. Now, there may be some folks out there you're willing to give a 94 to. I don't know. There are some guys out there, you gotta give them about a 42. There's some bad ones out there, but I'll leave that one.

Another one says, "How can we say all scripture's inspired when some have verses omitted or books added, etc. etc.?" All right, so back to 2 Timothy 3:16. All scripture is inspired by God. Yes, if tonight we want to dig down a little bit deeper, we do have to ask ourselves a question, there are some "Bibles" that add what we call the Apocrypha in it. Okay, the Apocrypha is a series of 13 books that are called intertestamental between the Old Testament and the New Testament that may have some historical veracity to them, but they were not God-inspired, they are not God-preserved, obviously we would discount those and claim that is not scripture. Now like we discussed last week with Mark 16, okay, in Mark 16 There are the last 12 verses that many of your Bibles at the bottom will say, "Some of the oldest most ancient manuscripts do not include these verses, etc, etc, etc." So the question becomes when you have all this mess that's going on, okay, all this stuff that's out there, I don't mean to be by default but can I just give you kind of a Myers perspective? I kind of default to that Received Text. I kind of like the one that everybody's been using all this time. I kind of like the one that was at the heart of all the great awakenings. I kind of like the one that was a part of the missionary movements. I kind of like the one that Spurgeon preached from. I kind of like the one that the Reformers... I kind of like the one that when you go back and you find guys like Tyndale and the Waldensians and the Lollards and all these people who stayed faithful, the Received Text is the one that brought Christianity through all of the Dark Ages and all those difficulties. All of these "newer ones" that are out there, all of these texts, okay, never got into the public's hands until about 150 to 60 years ago.

Now I want you to think about the last 150, 60 years of Christianity versus the previous 1900. Has it been getting better? No. Have we had great revivals? No. Have we had another Great Awakening? No. And so, again, it's a great question, how do we say all scripture is inspired, well, we know that God inspired Genesis 1:1 all the way through

Revelation 22. We know that, okay? Getting into all this textual stuff, I don't want to get all in the weeds tonight, but again, I just kind of default, you know what, I think I'm going to use what these guys have been using for all these years. God's been moving. I'm just going to go on down the road, all right? That's me. I know I've got all the other stuff, but that is what it is.

Any other questions, concerns, thoughts, follow-ups? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Ah, great question, sir. Question was, let me repeat, because many of you could not hear him in the room, much less online or the radio, what was the distinction, to use generic terms, that the Protestants used to reject the Apocrypha, whereas the Catholic tradition would hold to them? The reason is because in your Old Testament, God told the prophets that he was going silent. Remember? He said, "I'm going silent for 430 years." We'll pick this up again with John the Baptist. Well, we know that in hindsight, right? Basically, he told through the Old Testament prophets, it was spoken, "I'm done. See you in 430 years." Okay? Well, if you take that time period, you go 430 years, we get what we know as the life and ministry of Jesus, the Gospels, etc. All those apocryphal writings were written between that. Basically, the rejection is the testimony of God saying, "I'm not speaking, therefore that's not me." Now, historically speaking, you can glean some things from them, but I would not claim them as scripture.

[unintelligible]

Why the Catholic tradition? Again, by the way, before I answer this question, he said, why the Catholic tradition? Catholic, Protestant, Baptist, Presbyterian, whatever you want to call, understand, I'm not necessarily talking about your neighbor. You know my joke, two Baptists, three opinions, right? Just because the Catholics subscribe, just because the Baptists subscribe, just because the Presbyterians, these are received dogmas and doctrines, not an individual per se. In other words, once I say what I'm about to say, I don't want somebody to raise their hand and say, "Well, that's not what my neighbor believes." I agree, I understand, okay? So why the "Catholic tradition"? Because in the Catholic Church, they subscribe to what is called apostolic succession. What that means is they believe, based on Matthew 16 and their interpretation of it, that whom we know as Simon Peter was, in their words today, the Pope, the first representative, Vicar of Christ, and that from then to today, there is an individual that is selected to represent and to speak on behalf of God himself to his "church." By the way, church catholic with a little C means universal. That being said, when these individuals have spoken, they speak what we use the phrase *ex cathedra*, which means from the chair. Maybe you've heard the term a papal bull. You say, why is that important? Because when they speak, it is considered to be the voice, the opinion of God himself, and so when these individuals claim those as scripture, who are you to argue in their tradition? Now what's really fun is when you have somebody speak *ex cathedra* and then a hundred years speak *ex cathedra* canceling out what the first guy said, but yet they're both supposed to be true. That's where it gets a whole lot of fun. But basically you have the opinion or the voice of these representative

individuals with the tradition of their voice being on par or level or equal to, and therefore because they said it is, it is.

Does that help a little bit there? So, fun times. Yes sir?

[unintelligible]

It is not. That is absolutely correct. Alright, so fun little thing and then we're going to go to the next question. You all ready? What you know as the Authorized version, or what some people refer to as the King James Version, does not have a copyright on it, okay? By the way, for those of you, and hopefully all of you, are participating in our Bible memorization plan, okay, that being said, the reason, and I've met with us before, all of us, when we start publishing some things, you know, one of the things we want to do is put together a devotional Bible. where your respective chapter, you write about what that chapter meant to you memorizing it, and we publish it, and it's kind of our own little devotional Bible. We have to print that in what we know as the King James Version, because there's no copyright on it, okay? We don't have to pay royalties to somebody. All the other versions, you have to pay royalties on, and whatever you print, you have to change it, I believe it's actually by 15% different than another one in order to get a copyright. And so again, at the end of the day, you spend more time in court than you do in Bible study, if that makes sense. But you're absolutely right.

So whom we know as the famous King James, when that was published originally in 1611, he, this is the quote, "he gave it to the people," and the copyright, if you'll read in an older edition of it, the copyright, it says copyrighted by the crown which means that the Crown of England copyrighted and gave it to the people for public use. So what does that mean? Right now, you can go out and you can copy the King James Bible from Genesis to Revelation and you can print it without any legal retribution. No problem at all. However, if you decide to write a book, to your question, ma'am, a Christian book, okay, and you use a different version than, and you quote the entirety of one chapter plus one more word, then you have to pay royalties to them to use it. Or if you use more than 2,000 verses collectively, like sporadically all over, then you have to pay them royalties.

That is why, y'all wanna know a little dirty secret? That is why in a lot of these "Christian books" when you open up the beginning, it says this book contains the following versions and they'll have 13 different versions in there. It's because they're avoiding copyright royalties, is what they're doing because if you do too much from one of them, you owe somebody more money than you're ever gonna make printing the book. It's just a little dirty secret. It is what it is. But y'all can go out and publish your own King James Bible if you want to. It's absolutely free of charge. Use as much as you want.

All right, moving onward. It says, another follow-up from last week. We should have gone for two hours last week, brother. I'm sorry. It says, "What does the Bible say about children who pass before they're old enough to know about Jesus? You said last week that everybody must make a choice to accept Christ or not. What if the children die before they're able to? Then what?" Okay. So if you were not here with us last week,

okay, we somewhat kind of sort of dealt with this issue, but we didn't. So we're going to unpack it tonight. The issue about children, the issue about those who are not of the ability to discern and/or decide what they believe in regards to sin, Jesus, etc. There are two what we might call salient passages in your Bible regarding the subject matter. The first one is found in Deuteronomy 1:39. Let me give you a little context here. The Jewish people, the Israelites, they're about to go into the Promised Land. Well, kind of, sort of. They've been commissioned to go into the Promised Land. It's an 11-day journey. They begin to argue. They begin to get frustrated. They begin to claim that they had it better off in Egypt and in the process, God says, "Okay, fine. All of you who've done all this, you're not going in. All right, you're going to be in the wilderness." That's how we get the 40 years in the wilderness. In Deuteronomy 1:39, it says, those who did not yet know the difference between good and evil, they would be allowed to go into the Promised Land. In other words, what we see is the grace of God over those who did not willingly, volitionally understand and/or reject what God was doing which in our case would be, per the question, children who do not understand.

Now, the difference between good and evil is different than the difference between right and wrong, okay? The difference between right and wrong, a nine-month-old can figure out, okay? In other words, if they go grab something and their parent says no, and they grab it again, they know it was wrong, but they wanted to do it anyway because that's who we are, right? That doesn't mean the difference in good and evil. The difference in good and evil is you understand not just what you're doing, why you're doing it, and the ramifications of what you're doing. Now here's where it gets interesting in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, a young man was not allowed to "fight in the military or to render an independent decision" until he was 20 years of age. Now I'm not saying that passage meant everybody under 20. What I'm saying is that passage says that anybody who did not yet understand, which would definitely include those that were under that age, possibly even those older that maybe didn't have the cognitive ability or such, we don't know, that they were not held responsible for the disobedience because they did not volitionally do so themselves.

The second passage is found in what we know as 2 Samuel 12. Whom we know as David has a child with Bathsheba. Remember that famous story? He sees her down there in the middle of the night. It goes sideways. He ends up having her husband killed. They end up having a child. That child dies on the seventh day of its earthly life. David is mourning. He's all upset. And he makes this statement. He says that, "One day I will go to where the child is but the child will never return to where I am." Those passages, I believe, give us biblical evidence for what we know as children or those who may be older than children that do not yet understand or cannot comprehend the differences between good and evil are under the grace of God and therefore upon an untimely passing or an unfortunate passing are covered by God's grace.

Now push pause. The reason this question was brought up is last week we had the conversation about paradise in the Bible and in your Bible the concept of paradise pre-crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, was what we call in Luke 16 Abraham's bosom. It was the place of the faithful. It was a heavenly place but it wasn't the throne

room of God because there had to be propitiation. There had to be a blood sacrifice. And in Matthew 27 it says, when Jesus rose from the grave, it says, many of the saints of old rose with him. We talked about paradise. So the question last week was, is paradise still open and all I did last week was open up the can, theologically speaking, and say, is it possible. Now y'all remember, y'all know what is possible means, right? Don't put it in concrete, but get out your number two pencil, okay? Is it possible that those who today have a life and an existence, they've never heard the name of Jesus, they've never seen a Bible, but yet Romans 1 says that none of us are with excuse, all of us know somehow some way that there is a God out there. Is it possible that those who have never heard the name of Jesus but believe, kind of like Cornelius did in Acts 10 where he said, "I know you're out there somewhere, please come talk to me?" Is it possible that paradise is their abode, much like the Old Testament saints, and that in Revelation 20, when the first resurrection happens, they are those who are walking in that kingdom of Christ, that millennial kingdom, that then at the end must render a decision?

Now, number one, I said, is it possible? Okay? That's not a guarantee. I said it's a possibility. What that has done with this question has opened up, okay, we're dealing with fully functioning adults here that died old of age that had some type of belief. Yes, I understand they must render. What do you do about a child? And here is my "default answer." Number one, per what your Bible says, if a child or somebody who does not yet understand the difference between good and evil, if they pass from this "life to the next," I believe the Bible says they are under the grace of God, the protection of God, and they are in what you and I would say at bare minimum a heavenly place. Okay? There are two options here. Either A, they go directly and do not have to pass go. They go directly. Or B, they would be a part of this other entity I spoke of that would be raised from this place, Abraham's bosom, and then live under the kingdom of Christ and then have a decision to make. The thing that I was bringing up last week is this, and I was dealing it primarily with the adults, everybody has to make a decision, okay? And I'm here to tell you, the Bible is not absolutely clear on all these things. Here's what it is absolutely clear on, it is absolutely clear that if somebody cannot volitionally make a decision regarding their sin in Christ, they are not damned because of it. Does that make sense? So either A, they're immediately there and good for eternity, or B, at bare minimum, they're still good and get the privilege of being with Christ for a thousand years and serving him and reigning in glory with him for all of eternity. You do realize neither one's bad. They're both good, okay? Again, the great news is there is no damnation just because you're young and there is no damnation just because you cannot cognitively understand the difference between good and evil, and I would advocate per Deuteronomy 1:39, all was good, if that makes sense.

But that is a good follow-up. We were talking about volitional adults last week and those dying of old age. You just brought it back to this question. Follow-ups, thoughts, concerns, issues, what abouts? Everybody's good? By the way, let me do a little PSA here, a little public service announcement. When I say what I'm about to say, please hear me out. This sounds awful, but it's true. I consider it a privilege when somebody contacts me to lead a funeral service for a child. You say, why would you consider it a privilege? Because it is an incredible opportunity not only to come alongside and love and

encourage a family that is grieving beyond grief, but to show them what the Bible actually says and not what their friends think. What does the Bible actually say about the grace of God and not what some book I read told me? I got one for you. I don't care how old you are, how young you are, when you die you do not become an angel. Y'all laugh because there's a lot of books out there that tell you they do. There is nothing about being an angel, okay? That's not in the Bible, all right? Again, hear me. The reason I consider it a privilege is because I believe the Bible speaks clearly that those who do not have the volitional ability to understand their sin and respond, that they are under the grace of God, protected by God and loved by God, and we should celebrate his goodness in that in spite of what some podcast you heard said. The Bible's pretty clear. God is better to us than we ever deserve. I'll just leave it at that.

"It says Genesis 1:26, 'Let us make man in our image.' Who is 'us' and who is 'our'?" Boy, that's a good question. All right. Genesis 1:26, we have what we know as day six of the creative order. This is the Lord declaring that humanity is going to be coming into existence. Now, the word create is found in verse 26. That's an important word because that word create means to make out of nothing. It means to originate of its own. So when it says let us make, let us create, it says and let us make and then in our image, why the plurality there? I'm going to give you the standard Jewish rabbinical answer and then I'm going to give you what I believe to be the whole context of scripture answer. If you were to go and research some commentaries and some thoughts by the Jewish rabbinical or rabbi sources, what they will tell you is in light of Job 38:7 when it says when the Lord created everything that the the sons of God, the angels, they rejoiced that when the Lord said let us make, let in our image, that he was collectively referring to the angelic beings of the process, okay? That will be a rabbinical answer. The reason I do not subscribe to the rabbinical answer is because rabbis do not believe in the Trinity, okay, Father, Son, Holy Spirit. You know that the word God in Hebrew is both plural and singular at the same time. And so, I believe the "us" and the "our" is the original Trinitarian statement of scripture, because if you begin to, and by the way, I think the best example, again, biblically speaking, is in Matthew 3, the baptism of Jesus. Remember it says, the Father spoke, "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased." Obviously Jesus is there, and it says the Holy Spirit descended as a dove. You have all three, right? Well, one of the things that you see, and when I say this, please, I mean this is an elementary description, okay? When you see the Trinitarian working within scripture, you see it Father in administration, Spirit in communication, and you see Jesus in revelation. For example, in John 1, Jesus says, "No man has seen the Father at any time except the only begotten Son." Then he said later you haven't seen the Father, "If you've seen me, you've seen the Father." What does it say in John 1 about Jesus? It says nothing was created apart from or without him. So again, when it says "us" and "our," I believe that is what we would call a Trinitarian of Father, Son, Holy Spirit creating and forming humanity. So the "us" and the "our" is the Lord, even though he is one, there are three persons within one. And by the way, when we start dealing with the Trinity as far as theology is concerned, that's tough to explain and hard to understand, but that's just how the Bible describes it. So hopefully that addresses that one somewhat a little bit. We got "us" and "our" there.

Everybody good with that one? Everybody's good with the Trinity? Good, because we need to be. Oh, yes ma'am.

[unintelligible]

I can go back to the last question. Which part about it, ma'am? Say that again. Say that again. I can't hear you. I'm sorry. Oh, absolutely not. No, absolutely not. Say that again. I understand. Okay, so the context of the question is, again, let me kind of pull this back here. This young man over here, please, you love that fact that I called you a young man, brought up earlier about selective writings of Catholic tradition. The statement was made about your son and not being baptized. In Catholic tradition, which is sacramental theology, the reason that they practice what we call paedobaptism or child baptism is because they believe that children are born with original sin, and that if they are not baptized, even at five or six days of age, will go into hell. Okay? I got news for you. That baptism doesn't do nothing for their soul. Okay? All it is is water. And by the way, if you want to get highly entertained, watch a Greek Orthodox priest baptize a baby. I mean, they sit there and they dunk it up and down. Oh, it's hysterical to watch. No, I'm serious, because they dunk him three times upside down. That poor baby. It's just sad. But understand in sacramental theology the belief system is that certain things have to be done or the soul is damned, okay? That is why we talked about this a couple weeks ago when it comes to suicide, that tradition believes that suicide leads to hell because you could not repent of the sin prior to your death, okay? That being said, a baptism of a child has absolutely nothing to do with whether they go to heaven or hell, okay? Again, it goes back to the Bible, did they have a volitional understanding of sin and responding to it?

Now, the bigger question is, what is that age and it's different for everybody. By the way, when we talk about our local church here, it's kind of a neat little trivia question, the youngest member of our church, you know, you can't be a member of this church until you're saved and baptized, the youngest member is six. The oldest member is 98. So, you know, all those preschool kids, man, we love them, but none of them are members. They can't be. Is that really who you want voting on the budget? I mean, come on now. I'm just asking. I mean, and so back to your question, ma'am, that had nothing to do. Absolutely.

Now, did I, let me go back. Remember I talked about the privilege of doing funerals for children? The reason I consider it a privilege is to clear that stuff up because I promise you, you have somebody that unfortunately has the death of a child in their family, they'll run into somebody that says, "Was your child baptized? No, oh, that's too bad." What do you mean? "Well..." What happens, then you've got all kinds of crazy going on, right? I just like to set the record straight, if that makes sense, what the Bible says, not what tradition says.

Yes sir?

[unintelligible]

Feel free. Yeah, last rites. Yes. Yes. Purgatory. Oh, hey, let me clear that up for the radio. I'm sorry. The radio's like, what? I apologize. This, whoa. Somebody just wrecked the car, I promise you. I just went off, what? In that tradition that is sacramental based. By the way, when I use the term sacramental means you have to generate a works based system to meet God's approval. You can be baptized, you can be confirmed, you can be married, you can go through all of, there's six before the one you're talking, there's seven in total. The last one is what we call last rites. You can go through all those six but you can die out in the middle of the ranch and nobody finds you for three days, and because you didn't get last rites, then you gotta hang out in purgatory for a while until somebody prays you out and lights enough candles to get you out of there, in their tradition.

I'll give you a good historical example of this, and I guess it's pertinent to me just because of where it took place. November of 1963, anybody remember a world-changing event that took place? Yeah, JFK, shot and killed in Dallas, Texas, right? Now that's a whole other conversation, but nonetheless, some of you have done some research there. You and I both know that man was dead in the Lincoln. All right, he was dead. They took him to Parkland Hospital, and they worked on him and did all kinds of things but they would not pronounce him dead for hours. And do you know why? They're waiting on a Catholic priest to give him last rites as a practicing Catholic. Well, here's the problem. He was dead but they didn't pronounce it like the doctor decides who's dead. I mean, no offense. But in other words, they waited to pronounce him dead till he could have the last rite so he could go through that ritual. But that's just a good historical example. Everybody knew he was dead but nobody would claim he was dead until the priest came in and did his thing and went through all that.

So yeah, thanks for the can of worms. I appreciate you. We're down to a minute. It says, "Why was Moses punished and not allowed to go into the Promised Land when he essentially disobeyed once while others are given many chances?" I'm going to answer this question. I don't know. I'm serious. Have you ever met somebody who has 19 lives? You know what I'm talking about, right? And then somebody who one bad thing and there he goes. Again, when we talk about, I'm going to end on the concept of what we call the fairness of God. Alright, you realize God is God and you're not God. His ways are not your ways. His thoughts are not your thoughts. When somebody says, that's just not fair. Okay? Why did Moses disobey one time and he's out? Okay? You realize that for God to be fair to you, all he has to do is give you one shot. That's all that requires fairness. If he gives you a second one, that's called living on grace. So what happened to Moses was fair, what Moses did... by the way, real quickly, interesting and this may hang on, you realize the first time Moses struck the rock God told him to strike the rock. The second time he told him to speak to the rock but he struck the rock and that's why God... So he not only disobeyed but he did so after forty years that he should have matured and learned and he did not. But it was fair, even though at times it seems harsh. It's still fair.

We're out of time. We've got to pray. We've got to roll.

Lord Jesus, thank you that tonight, as we study your word, there are a lot of traditions out there, there are a lot of philosophies out there, God, we know there's a lot of

opinions, and we've even talked about, even the books that we read and the podcasts we listen to, and even ourselves, God, we have constructs that don't always line up with scripture. And God, I pray for all of us that pull those lenses down, pull those scales off our eyes. May every question we have, may every concern we have, Lord, may we see it through the lens of scripture and not tradition or ideology. Help us, God, not to be better Baptists or better this or that. Help us to be biblicalists and to see it through your holy word. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.