

## Ask Jeff

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Well, good evening. It is Wednesday night, which means it is time for some Bible study. If you're with us tonight and you're here for the first time either in person or you're watching online, or maybe you're listening by way of radio, albeit a few days late on 97.7 FM, I want to welcome you to our Wednesday night midweek large group adult Bible study here at First Baptist Church of Opelika, and those of you that are gathered here that are seasoned veterans, you know, that the format of this Bible study, the means by which we study the Bible tonight is a little different than normal and so allow me for those that are new to us to kind of explain how tonight's Bible study works. Everything that we talk about, everything we study, every concept, every question, every passage has the privilege of being originated by you. That's right. Tonight it is an audience-driven participation Bible study. I do not have a scope and sequence. I do not have an agenda. I do not have an outline. I'm going to talk about what you want to talk about.

Now, the big question is this. How do I know what you want to talk about? Well, there are two ways that you can participate tonight. The first, the easiest, and the most anonymous is by way of text messaging. We have a very simple number. [dance music] And I thought that was like the dancing client's cue to dance. I mean, I don't know what's going on.

All right, so for those of you who would love to remain anonymous, we do have a text messaging by means of communication, area code 334-231-2313. You can be on the front row, the back row. You can be on the other side of the camera. You can be in another continent. It doesn't matter where you are. If you text us a question, we'll have access to put it in the portal, put it up on the screen, and you can participate in the study. Now, when you text, you're in real time with us. It's not delayed. And you do not reveal your identity. Your phone number doesn't come up. We don't have a name, obviously. You remain completely anonymous. Now, for those of you that are here in the room with us physically, You have the opportunity, I would call it a privilege, to interact by way of non-text messaging. It's called putting your hand in the air. When you put your hand in the air, you drive the question, you drive the conversation any direction you'd like it to go. However, you lose your anonymity. Now, your image nor will your voice be heard and/or seen on the other side of the screen or by way of radio. That's why I repeat your question. But you lose your anonymity within the room. But hey, big deal. We're all friends here, right? We're all family.

So, without further ado, how about some Bible study? That sound good? All right. No hands in the air, which means going to the screen. Question number one. It says Romans chapter 6 verse 23 says that quote the wages of sin is death, 1 John 5:17 says there is a sin not unto death, please help us understand. Okay, no problem. So 1 John chapter 5. For those of you that are seasoned veterans here, a question related to this passage actually came up a few weeks ago so this is really, though a submitted question, it's really more of a follow-up.

1 John chapter 5 verse 17. It talks about this quote sin unto death and then there's a sin that is quote not unto death, all right? Now, the passage that we're going to be addressing tonight really begins in verse 13, goes through verse 17, but before we read it, allow me to remind each and every one of us that the most important concept that we have in Bible study is what we call context. Now, some of you are in the real estate business and you have a word or a phrase, it's called location, location, location, right? Well, when it comes to Bible study, it is context, context, context. In other words, you understand and I understand that words have different definitions, they have different meanings based on their, quote, context. Well, in the passage tonight, Romans chapter 6, verse 23, says the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. In the context, not just of that verse, but in the entirety of the passage, Basically what that passage is saying is the wages of sin is hell. That's really what it's saying, okay? And so therefore we understand in Romans 6:23 that word death means eternity, means a location called hell. We understand that. However, the word death does not or is not limited to, even in the Bible, as, quote, hell. Okay? You can have the death of a dream, you can have the death of this and the death of that. What you're about to discover in 1 John chapter 5 is that the word death can mean something else and not necessarily an eternity in a place the Bible calls hell.

So that being said, 1 John chapter 5, actually I'm going to begin in verse 12 just because I like this verse because it's so simple with the gospel message. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." Now here is where it gets interesting, verse 16 and 17. "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death."

Now, at first glance, let's just be honest, it's a tad bit confusing, okay? So let's kind of unpack this a little bit. I think we would agree that particularly verses 12 and 13 of this passage are very clear that when we believe on Jesus Christ, we have life, right? He that hath the Son hath life, he that hath not the Son hath not life. I love that verse because it's all one syllable words, right? Then you get into verse 13. This is the great security of the believer passage. In fact, I will testify to you when I have the privilege and the

opportunity to have a one-on-one conversation with anybody who comes to know Jesus Christ right there in my presence, one of the very first things I do is take them to 1 John 5:13. Why is that? It does not say we know we're saved because we feel saved. It does not say we know we're saved because fireworks go off. How do we know that we're saved? Because he said so. Our assurance, our security is in the fact that the Bible said if we call on Jesus, he saves us. That's what it is. Then beginning in verse 14, it's talking about, okay, how do I live this out, my prayer life, my petitions, and it basically says that if somebody has sinned a sin that is unto death, don't bother praying for it. If they've sinned a sin that is not unto death, pray and it will be addressed and it will be dealt with, for lack of better terms.

Now, why is that important? There is absolutely no way in this passage that the word death in there means hell. There's no way because if you see a brother sin a sin unto death, somebody who's a brother in Christ is not going to hell so therefore it cannot be about eternity, it cannot be quote damnation. It has to mean something else, listen, in its context. Okay, so for example, and I've mentioned earlier you can have the death of a dream, you can have the death of a desire, you can have the death of a relationship, you can have the death of a career. I mean, there's a whole lot of deaths that we experience that are not permanent what we might call eternal based deaths, right? And so therefore what I believe this passage is saying is is that if there is still an opportunity for God to move and operate in a situation, pray for it. If there's not it's not gonna do any good anyway.

Now I can give you a real-life biblical example. Go to the book of Hebrews chapter 12, a few pages to the left. Hebrews chapter 12. I know that this is a quote unquote Old Testament story, but it proves the point that you can have the death of something that not be eternal and consequential of that nature. Chapter 12 of Hebrews, beginning in verse 16, is alluding back to the story of Esau. Remember Esau and Jacob, his twin brother, there was this little birthright issue that took place, and Jacob, you know, he manipulated the situation, he tricked his dad, he got the birthright, we could get into all that. But Esau, remember he sold his birthright for a bowl of soup. Now, I know it had some meat in it. You might want to call it chili, but it's not worth the birthright, right? So, he basically sells his birthright. Once his belly gets full, he begins to have regrets and he begins to go, "Okay, this is not good." So, he goes back to his dad. I want you to hear what verse 16 and 17 says about Esau. It says, and by the way, it's warning us about disobedience. It says, "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." So guess what Esau experienced? The death of his birthright. And guess what the Bible's saying? Once it was done, it's over, there's no reason, and there's no good in even praying for it, right? But here's the beautiful thing. If we do sin a sin, which we should not, but we do, that is not unto death, pray for it and the Lord addresses it. And so basically, what I believe 1 John 5:16, and 17 is saying is this, there comes a time in our lives as a believer where God is working with us, in us, and through us, and he gives us second chances. Some of you might testify you've had a third chance, a fourth chance. Some of you lost count of how many chances you've had. But guess what? There

comes a time, and we all understand this, where in whatever situation or scenario we're dealing with, God washes his hands and says, I'm done. There's no more opportunities.

Now, let me give you a very practical illustration. My chance to be an NBA basketball player has passed. What would you say if I said, "Oh, we need a prayer meeting. I need to get as many people as we can, and I need the anointing oil. We are going for it." You know what you'd say? "Jeff, that dream is dead. That dream never existed." I just want you all to know. But I wanted to give you a good visual example to see that you know, based on my age and my height, there is no way that's ever going to happen right? There's no reason to pray for. it No reason. Oh, you're adjusting your glasses. I thought you had a little private question that you're asking with your finger. Okay, I apologize for that.

So hopefully that gives some clarity. The word death can mean eternal or it can mean within this life and the way we translate it has to be by way of context. 1 John is definitively talking to believers who according to verse 13 are secure in their faith, however, we do fall into sin. We pray that we will repent of and get on the right track if God so allows, but if not, unfortunately, whatever it is is dead, just like Esau's birthright. Any questions, concerns, thoughts, secret questions? Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

God's done. Is there a way to know? Yeah, when you don't get what you praying for. That's it. So the question on the table is, how do you know God is done? I knew God was done with my NBA career by about eighth grade. I'm just going to be honest with you. Maybe seventh grade. But it is a valid question and the way that I would address that, and this isn't, it's going to be my illustration, alright? Here is my illustration of praying through things with God, that if God opens a door, walk through it until he slams it shut. Guess what? Sometimes he slams it shut. What happened with Esau? Slammed shut. Look about Pharaoh in the Exodus. Slammed shut. I mean there's lots of times where it's just, it's over. It's done. Does that make sense?

[unintelligible]

Yes. Correct. Okay, time out though, we've got to distinguish. She says, okay, there's been times in my life where I've prayed for something for years and years and years. This isn't dealing with an unanswered prayer. This is dealing with sin. You have gone against God's word. You have sinned against him. It says if you've sinned a sin, not if you're still praying for whatever it may be. So this isn't about fervency in prayer as much as it is the weight, the gravity, and the consequences of sin. Now sometimes, whatever it may be, God gives us one chance. Sometimes he gives us 15. It just depends. I like to call them exit ramps. You know, and here's the problem and by the way, I'm going to use this illustration just because I think it'll resonate. You know, typically at the end of a worship service, particularly on Sunday, we have a response time. Okay? And I know that there's a time, you know, for people to be saved. By the way, statistically speaking, according to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, only 3% of people get saved in a worship

service. Most of us got saved somewhere else. We may demonstrate it there, but we get saved somewhere else. But all of us have a decision to make at the end of any service. Do we respond appropriately to what God revealed to us in his word, or do we reject it? How many times, and I'll testify, it's happened in my life, you've been in some type of Bible study, worship service, and God showed you something that needs to be righted, fixed, altered, or repented of, and you say, "Meh, I'll take care of that next week. Or, meh, what about when this takes place?" And what happens? There's been times where you say, "OK, I'm ready, God." And God's like, "That door is shut." Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Quenching the Holy Spirit. Yes, however understand I want to distinguish, quenching the Holy Spirit is God is moving and operating on you and you say no or you reject so much that it's almost as if you do not hear or respond to the Holy Spirit anymore because you get so accustomed to it that you ignore it. This specifically says you sin a sin which is unto death. What did Esau do? Esau went completely against what God told him to do. It was his birthright and he didn't do it. Obviously we know he sold it, correct? So again, fervency in prayer, you can quench the Holy Spirit, but this is about sin. And what I would even get more specific on is sin has consequences, right? I'm not just talking about eternity in hell. I'm talking about like right now. I'm not asking for a show of hands and I don't want a verbal amen. Any of you, and I know you have, any of you ever sinned against God and gotten away with it? And what I mean by is on earth you didn't face the consequences? When it comes to something that you are, whew, wow. Some of y'all are nodding because some of y'all are honest. The rest of y'all are Baptist. All right, now that being said, I'm just messing with you. But here's the deal. How many times, and I'm being honest, you quote, go against God you sin in what you appear to be this life, temporarily you get away with it and go, "Boy, I got away with that. I don't need to get right. I got away with that one." And then you do it again. And finally, it catches up with you. "OK, God help!" And God's like, "Man, road's closed." There you go.

So again, we're dealing with sin, not just fervency in prayer, and not just the quenching of the Holy Spirit. This is you have sinned, you have rebelled, and guess what? Sometimes those consequences have permanent results on earth that do not impact your eternity, that God says you can pray all night long, it is not changing. You are going to prison, or whatever it may be. I'm being serious, okay? Any other concerns, questions, thoughts? Yes, ma'am?

[unintelligible]

You're confused, okay. Okay, okay. Okay, so she's asking a clarification. When God says that's it, does that mean that God will quote unquote not forgive you? We need to draw a big line between forgiveness and restoration. Forgiveness, God forgives you, but that doesn't mean he restores you, makes as if it never happened. That's why I brought Esau into the picture. Esau sought repentance. Esau sought forgiveness. And God said, "Brother, I hear you, and I'm sorry. It's good between you and I, but you're not getting your birthright back." In other words, forgiveness does not mean restoration. And I think

we all need, particularly in our culture today, we need to hear this because we think that if I ask forgiveness, God makes it as if it never happened, and the reality is there are consequences to our sins. You know, and so drawing that line, forgiveness, you can get forgiveness from anything you do, anytime you do it, because in 1 John chapter 1, few pages to the left, says that when we sin, if we ask forgiveness, that he gives it to us. That's not the, we're talking about restoration here because unto death means there's a consequence there that we can't get reversed. Does that help out a little bit?

Now, I'll just use a situation that might occasionally happen in my life. Some of you on my Tuesday morning men's Bible study, you know where I'm headed. I like to drive, and I like to drive fast. I've had law enforcement officers tell me, I'll say, "I'm sorry officer, I'm sorry." I've heard them say, "I forgive you brother, but pay the ticket." I didn't get out of the consequences, but I got forgiveness. And by the way, I've never done what I'm about to tell you. What would you think if I actually went to court, went to the judge and said, "But the officer forgave me"? He's going to say, "Congratulations, I forgive you. Pay the fine." Does that help out a little bit, the difference between forgiveness and restoration?

So let's talk about practicality here. As a child or raising children, occasionally kids mess up. They do. I did as a child. OK? And you, "Oh mommy, mommy, forgive me, forgive me, forgive me." I forgive you. "Can I go out and play?" Nope. Go to your room. Do you see the difference? Forgiveness and restoration. I saw a hand, I thought. Yes, sir?

[unintelligible]

Yes. Right, you got it. You're good. I saw another one. I thought, yes sir?

[unintelligible]

We're going back to Psalm 78. Here we go. Psalm 78 verse 62. When I hear verse 62, all I can think is, oh the poor soul who has this chapter. I actually know who it is. It's that guy right over there. There we go. Alright, here we go. Psalms chapter 78 verse 62. It says, "He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance." So Psalm 78 is talking about the fact that our faith, particularly the Israelites in context, needs to be passed from generation to generation to generation, however, as we see often in the Old Testament, that doesn't transpire. It doesn't take place and it says that God gave them over to the sword. I'll give you a great example. It appears as well as what you brought up, sir. How about the prophets of the Old Testament? How many times did the prophets say, "Hey, you better get this right with God, or you're going into captivity"? I promise you, when they were going from Jerusalem to Babylon, every single Israelite cried out to God, "O God, I'm sorry, please, please!" God's like, "I'm sorry, you're going to captivity, 70 years." You know, for 200 plus years, God had pleaded with them and said, if you do not, I'll put it in context of the question basically, what Psalm 78:62 is saying is this, that there comes a point in your rebellion against God where he turns you over to the sword and you face your consequences. Forgiveness will be granted but restoration it may take 70 years quote in Israel's case. But I'm glad you brought that up

and we'll quiz him later on if he's got that verse memorized. You got that one? You know, I'm putting you on the spot brother. Hey, one of the beautiful things is y'all come up to me and tell me what your chapter is so I know what chapter you're memorizing. A

Anybody else on a sin unto death. We're good. We're good We're good. Okay, moving on moving on it says, does the Bible say whether God punished the angelic beings who had children with the daughters of men? Okay, we've opened up a can here. This is actually kind of a layover follow-up from last week. This subject matter comes up a whole lot on Wednesday night and for rightful reasons. Those of you that are new to us, let me go ahead and share with you that on our Wednesday night Bible study, we spend an unbelievable amount of time in two books of the Bible, the book of Genesis and the book of Revelation, okay? And the reason for doing so is Genesis tells us how it all went sideways and Revelation tells us how it all gets fixed and we're all curious about that because we're in the middle, so to speak. But back in Genesis chapter 6 it is the story of what we know as the Noadic flood or the flood of Noah. In chapter 6 verses 1 and 2 of the book of Genesis it says there that to, I guess the prelude for lack of better terms of the flood, it says that the sons of God entered unto the daughters of men and it says that they bore children and that these children were giants, that's what verse 4 says, and they were renown. Basically what the Bible is saying is that whatever was taking place here is you had people living a life span longer than they should and being larger than is natural, okay?

Now, I'm gonna make this as quick as I can, because some of you here for the first time are going, I have no idea what's going on here, okay? There are two options when it comes to Genesis chapter 6, okay? Option number A is that the sons of God, which would appear to be the good guys, were the descendants of Seth and that the daughters of men, which in comparison would be the bad guys, are the descendants of Cain. Now, just take it at a very face-level value. Even if you've got godly people having relations in children with ungodly people, where do you find anywhere else in the Bible that produces people who live a long life and are huge in size? Nowhere. What we see happening in Genesis chapter 6 is very unusual compared to even when people who are of God are with people who are not of God. The quote-unquote supernatural option is the fact that the term sons of God is only used four times in your Old Testament. The other three times are found in the book of Job chapter 1, 2, and 38 and in every single one of those instances the phrase sons of God is referring to an angelic being. And so the supernatural option is the fact that there were angelic beings who were finding themselves in relationship to humanity and creating what we through kind of a mythological lens might call a demigod.

Now, I said this last week, so forgive me, I'm going to say it again. Lest you think this is crazy, this is the theme and the plot of every Avengers movie that's ever been made. Okay? Some of the best-selling movies that we have in our culture are about the gods and man creating some type of intermixing demigod status. It is the theme of every story in Greek and Roman mythology. Okay? It's a part of our culture. So guess what? Somewhere we came up with this idea. Right? So the question is, presuming that the

supernatural option is correct, the question is, how did God punish the quote unquote angelic beings.

Now, what's interesting about Genesis chapter 6 is it says there that all flesh died. All flesh died. Okay? Now, let's talk about the angels for just a minute. We get that with humanity, right? But one thing you need to understand is in Hebrews chapter 1 verse 14, it says that the angels are ministering spirits, okay? But in 2 Corinthians chapter 11, it says these angelic beings can transform themselves, particularly the fallen ones, into entities that appear to be good when they're actually evil. And every single time that humanity interacts with a, quote, angelic being in the Bible, they always appear as a man. Every single time. Now by the way, ladies, I'm not trying to upset you. It's just what the Bible says. Okay, every time they're a man. When Abram meets the angels before he goes to Sodom and Gomorrah, he calls them men. Okay, the captain the Lord of hosts, man. Okay, the Bible says in Hebrews that we sometimes entertain angels unaware. Okay, which means they look just like y'all Some of you. I don't know. Maybe some of you here tonight. I don't know. All right.

That being said, if the supernatural option, which is now on the table, if that's what happened, the question is how did God punish them because we know that flesh died, right? Everybody drowned except eight folks, right? Noah, Mrs. Noah, Ham's, Shem, Japheth, and their respective wives. Here's where I find it fascinating. I know that Genesis 6 is at the very beginning of the Bible but you do realize that we've been sideways for three good chapters and it hasn't just been three good chapters, it's been some long chapters. A guy by the name of Methuselah lived over 950 years and he died the year the flood took place. So we know that there was some really wretched stuff happening for a really long time. You say, why is that important? Because it is not until after Genesis 6 that we have any mention in the Bible of anything regarding to what we might call spirits, devils, or demons. And so the question is, what happened? I would claim biblically that if that interpretation is proper, and I think there's biblical evidence for it, when we see Jesus casting out the demons, when we see Jesus casting out the unclean spirits, where do you think these folks came from? In other words, what we might call a disembodied consequence to this action that took place in Genesis 6. There's no reference anywhere prior to Genesis 6 of any type of demon possession or unclean spirits and they had plenty of opportunity and they had plenty of activity. We just don't have any reference to it until after what we know as the flood.

So I think that's a viable option when it comes to the quote-unquote punishment which is interesting because all throughout Jesus' ministry what does he do? He casts those folks out. He gets rid of them. He dismisses them. And by the way, just ironically, did you know that the very first chronological example in your Bible of Jesus casting out a demon is in church? That's right. Mark chapter 1. It says, a man possessed with an unclean spirit came into the synagogue and Jesus cast him out. Isn't that interesting? I find it interesting. Maybe you don't find it interesting. Anything else about Genesis 6 and this whole, yes, sir,

[unintelligible]



2 Peter chapter 2 verses 4 and 5. Go over to your New Testament and by the way since you brought up 2 Peter, you know we're gonna have to go to Jude too. to the right just a little bit. So 2 Peter chapter 2 speaks of what we know as the quote-unquote fallen angels. Obviously, if you go back into Genesis 6 and we take the supernatural option, my friend, we have to be dealing with this entity, correct, because we know the angels have fallen prior to Noah's flood. In 2 Peter 2, verse 4, it says, "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; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly." Fast forward a little bit to the book of Jude a few pages to the right, verse 6 it says, "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."

Now, here's where, and I don't mean to say, friend, we're splitting hairs, but here's the question, since you asked it, that we have to answer. If we presume the supernatural option of Genesis 6 is the correct interpretation, then we have fallen angelic beings who are punished by God, correct? We also have references in the scripture that there are fallen angelic beings that are reserved in darkness, what we might call hell, until the judgment, correct? And so therefore, we have to kind of discern and disseminate how all that works out because we know all throughout the New Testament, particularly the gospels, there are unclean spirits, there are the demonic, there are those entities, and we have to ask ourselves, where did those things come from because we know that God created everything, quote in the beginning, good, right? We know Lucifer was good at the beginning, correct, and then obviously there was a fall. And so the question we have to ask is an unclean spirit, a demon, a devil, what is their origin, because we know that God did not create them as they are, they became from what they used to be. And so the question becomes, and here's where I go, did every single, quote, son of God participate in Genesis 6? In other words, are those that walked alongside and participated with humanity, are those the ones that are reserved, the ones that did not participate but suffered the consequences, the unclean spirits that still roam? I don't know. But that's really one of the only options we have to have both because the Bible says there's a group of them, they're reserved, they're locked down. But it says the sons of God, the daughters of men. It does not say every single son of God without exception. And by the way, I've got a feeling, I could be wrong, I bet there were more fallen angels numerically than there were humanity in Genesis 6 and so therefore, that leaves that option on the table. Does that help a little bit there? But I'm glad you took us to 2 Peter chapter 2, because it's one of the definitive passages that we have in the New Testament regarding fallen angels and their consequences and the potential activity. Yes ma'am.

[unintelligible]

If the bad angels... Well, okay, say that one more time if they didn't drown then what? The Philistines were real tall folks, yes they were. Okay, she's got a great observation here. If not all of them drowned, per this guy's question over here, then the Philistines, who by the way were the enemy of God's people all throughout the Old Testament, and

by the way still are today, but nonetheless, they were really tall folks. You're absolutely right. I don't do what I'm about to do very often, but I'm gonna do it tonight to help you with your question. When you go back to Genesis chapter 6, and it says that their children were giants, the word there in Hebrew is Nephilim. Nephilim does not just mean a really tall person. It means an unbelievably, supernaturally, oh my goodness tall person. The only other time when you find that word again is actually in the book of Numbers chapter 13. It's a group of people, the descendants of Anak. What I'm saying is that word is never used to describe the Philistines is what I'm saying. So I do think there could be a potential correlation, but not a direct descendency of because the Philistines were human beings. I mean, they attacked David every time he turned around and vice versa. But you're right, they were very tall people. You're correct. Which, by the way, is one of the reasons that Israelites celebrate when Saul was named king, because he was head and shoulders above them, and they were excited, we got somebody who can fight these guys. And then Goliath showed up. That boy was nine foot nine, and I'm being conservative. You do know that the average height of a man in King David's day, right here. This is it. Y'all want to know what David looked like? Ruddy and manly. No, I'm kidding. No, I really am. In fact, I'm going to be honest with you. Archaeologically speaking, the average height of a man in David's day was actually a little shorter than me and Goliath stood nine foot nine. That's a big old boy, is all I got to say. But again, a little different than the Philistines. Yes sir?

[unintelligible]

We don't know anything about Noah's daughters-in-law. You're right. We don't even know their names. Okay, here we go. For those of you that are seasoned veterans, here you go. Allow me to repeat the question because it was so softly spoken. The question was, now we know there were eight people that got on that boat, right? The question is, is it possible that because we don't know anything about the daughter-in-laws of Noah, is it possible that the DNA somehow transferred to them? Well, number one, the daughter-in-laws were purely human, so they were not a part of what was going on. I think what you're asking is, is it possible that they had had some pre-flood activity that they carried onto the boat? Is that what you're asking? See, I said that so social media doesn't kick us off the air. Okay, so, that's a great question and the reason I would biblically say no, how many people got off the boat? Eight. How long were they in the boat? 15 months. Whoo, that'd be a long gestation period. But yeah, seriously, so they were on the boat longer than the birthing process would have been, and there was eight that got off, there was eight that got on, which opens up a whole other slew of questions, the fact that eight got on, eight got off 15 months later. So, I mean, just in the fact that the humanity did not increase on the boat. Let me put it that way. Does that help a little bit?

[unintelligible]

That a possibility those three daughters, if they were a descendant of the Nephilim but didn't show the characteristics of, it would have shown up eventually with one group of people known as the Anakanites, that's it, and it says they were, but the word Nephilim says the Nephilim, the descendants of Anak. In Genesis 6, it just says Nephilim in

general. And don't get me wrong, Goliath, big old tall dude, right, and his brother's just as ugly as he was. The Bible says he had six fingers and six toes. If I do math right, that's 24 digits. I mean, that's a lot of stuff there.

[unintelligible]

Whoa, whoa, whoa, we're going to talk about families now. What are we talking about here? Well, I've seen people here that have six fingers and six toes. It's a part of life. But I think the difference is, Nephilim, as a proper word in Genesis 6, is described not just as tall and ugly. I'm referring to multiple digits as ugly, okay? Forgive me if you have six fingers and six toes. It's not personal, I promise, okay? But it also says men of renown, which means literally they were not dying. Does that make sense? The life expectancy, all these other guys like the descendants of Anak and Goliath, I know David took care of Goliath, but that being said, they had a lifespan that was normal. It wasn't supernatural, if that helps out a little bit. Amazing how much time we can spend in Genesis, is it not? Are we good with Genesis? Oh, we're not good with, yes, how can I help you?

[unintelligible]

Oh boy. If they were human beings just like, you talking about Noah and his kids? Or these other people? The other people, okay? Yeah. Yes? Oh, that's a wonderful question. If the Philistines were human beings just like us, right, why would God basically command Joshua, the Israelites, and everybody else to exterminate them, right? Alright, great, great, great question. So, allow me to give you an overarching picture of what we know as the Bible between Genesis 3:15 and what we know as the Christmas story. Okay, that's a big picture. I'm gonna do it real quick. In Genesis chapter 3 verse 15, you remember, the serpent is being, I guess, dealt his consequences from the Garden of Eden and God makes the statement in Genesis 3:15 that the seed of the woman will crush his head. Push pause. It goes back to all these questions. You've got to have the seed of a woman, not the seed of a demigod. Okay? The seed of a woman crushes his heads. So in other words, from that point, all the way to what we know as the Christmas story, what we're doing is we're seeing a path for the Messiah, Jesus Christ, correct? Now let me ask you, if you were cutting a path in the woods, jungle, wherever you are, what do you do to cut the path? You get rid of everything that's in the way of the path, correct? If you look at the Philistines, you look at the Jebusites, the Hittites, and all the ites, not only did they worship false gods on a regular basis, they consistently tried to exterminate the means by which the Messiah was going to come. And by the way, if you look in your Old Testament, God always gave them a provision to get on board. If you don't believe me, look at Rahab. You know, Rahab was a Gentile woman of questionable occupation. I did it again. Did y'all see that? All right. Of questionable occupation, the spies come in and say, "Hey, we're about to wipe you all out." What does she say? "I'm not like them. I'm not worshiping false gods. I think you are of the true God. How do I get on board?" Remember what they said? "When we come in, put the red scarf out and we'll protect you, we'll take care of you." You know Rahab doesn't just get protected, she makes it into Jesus' genealogy. Okay? There are cases all throughout your Old Testament of

individuals of those backgrounds that like, "Okay, I'm done messing with God, I'm going to be on God's side."

So, I want you to...yes, they were human but the only reason for the quote, I hate to use the term, but it's an accurate one, the extermination, is an unrepentance of false worship and a desire to exterminate the path of the Messiah. And God never did it without warning. If you don't believe me, ask Pharaoh. He gave him plenty of warning, plenty of warning. He gave him...oh, can I go back to the first question? He gave him exit ramps. He said, "Hey, you got the chance to get on board here. Come on." But there came a time where, "All right, it is what it is. Joshua, we got to do it." And by the way, this is also, if you want to make it not as violent and gruesome, look at Solomon. Why did Solomon go completely sideways? Because these wives and concubines brought the false worship in, the false gods in, and messed everything up. And by the way, read Malachi chapter 3, the first part, not the part about giving. You know what the first part talks about? Basically, God says, "You can have nobody but me. You can't have two of me." Church of Laodicea in the book of Revelation, foot in the world, foot in the word, right? God does not, and I'm gonna use an old Texas phrase, God rides side saddle to nobody. Does that make sense? He gets the primary seat, and if they're not in the primary seat, then things happen. But that's a great observation. Again, had the opportunity to repent, didn't repent, were in the way. That's your Old Testament, right there.

Here we go, it says, who are the watchers of Daniel chapter...? Some of y'all been watching late night cable TV. Here we go. Daniel chapter 4. For those of you that are not familiar with the book of Daniel, let me give you kind of a little, I don't know if I want to say kind of a heads up or a little more of a background, what we know as Daniel is one of very few texts in your Old Testament that the Lord gave his people during the captivity. Now remember all the prophets in the Old Testament? "Oh, it's coming, it's coming, it's coming, it's coming, it's coming." Then you had prophets that said, "It came, don't let it happen again." But what we know is Jeremiah, Jeremiah spent the first two-thirds of his life in, I guess, freedom, for lack of better terms, leading up to the captivity, but the latter part of Jeremiah was given to him while in captivity. Ezekiel, our good friend Ezekiel, Ezekiel was given to him during the captivity, and obviously so was Daniel. Okay? So the book of Daniel is there during the captivity of the 70 years. Remember, Daniel was one of those few men that was very intellectual, very athletic, very much what the Babylonians respected. His life was preserved. He was educated by the king. He was taught by the king. Remember in chapter 1, the famous thing where he says, "Hey, instead of the king's meat that's been offered to false idols, let me eat pulse, or basically what we might call strained vegetable soup?" And he was found better off than all the other guys, so he stayed with it. He rises to great prominence all throughout what we know as the text of Daniel.

Okay, now that's a little background. By the time you get to chapter 4, Nebuchadnezzar, okay, by the way, proof, Nebuchadnezzar's proof that God can hit a straight lick with a crooked stick, okay, because Nebuchadnezzar is messed up. I'm gonna act like I'm a younger kid, he jacked up. I'm telling you, that boy's jacked up. Back in chapter 2 he's had this big dream of the gold statue with the arms and such. In chapter 4 he has a dream

of a tree and in this tree there's all kinds of birds and such that happen and it's hewn down. Basically at the end of chapter 4 Nebuchadnezzar goes absolutely nuts for seven years. Okay? It says he acts like a wild animal, never cut his fingernails, never cut his hair. He lived in the woods for seven years. Okay?

Now, that's what chapter 4 is about. You say, okay, great. What are these watchers? Okay, you will notice in verse 17 of Daniel chapter 4, and I believe it's in verse 13 and maybe 23, it talks about a group of people known as the watchers. Okay? This is the absolute only time in your Bible, did I get the verses right? It's the only time in your Bible that term or that word is used. Okay? Now, the reason that is important is this, Daniel chapter 4 is an anomaly in your Bible. You say, what do you mean, anomaly? Little quiz here. It's an easy test. What is the language or what was the language that God utilized to give us the Old Testament? Hebrew. Did you know that there's a section in Daniel that's actually in Aramaic and this is one of them. Say, why is that important? Who's talking? Nebuchadnezzar. What language? Aramaic. And so what we're seeing here is the testimony of a lost ruler in his native tongue telling us the dream that God gave him. And what does he refer to these entities as? Watchers.

Now I'm going to go to verse 17. It says, "This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." Basically what God has told Nebuchadnezzar is, "I make you king, I take you out of being king. I make you sane, I make you crazy. I'm the guy in charge." But it says he has set up watchers, these holy ones. Now, here's where it gets interesting. It is within the captivity. It is from the mouth of Nebuchadnezzar, and it is in the language of what we know as Aramaic, and it's from his personal perspective. However, what's being described here is that there's some type of spiritual entity that is observing, watching, and maybe at some level, administrating some things, okay? It's the only place in your Bible this word is used.

So, let's talk about angels for just a moment. We've talked about them already. Let's talk about them again. The Bible talks about them all throughout, right? In fact, in Hebrews chapter 12, it says they're without number. We couldn't number them if we had to. There's that many of them, right? We know there are special classifications of angels. There are what we call seraphim. Seraphim, that's Isaiah chapter 6. Remember the holy ones took the coal off the altar of God and put on Isaiah's lips. That seraphim, it's a holiness, something going on there. Then there's cherubim. You see cherubim in Ezekiel and what we see also cherubim show up in the book of Revelation around the throne of God. Cherubim also show up in Genesis chapter 3 guarding the entrance to the guard of Eden. You have seraphim, you have cherubim, you have three angels that have names that are given to them: Michael, Gabriel, and you guessed it, Lucifer. That's it. So when it comes to the quote-unquote classification of angels, that's really what the Bible gives us. There are people that go, whoa, whoa, hold on. Is it possible that there's another classification? There's a group of angelic beings that actually have as their mission to watch, observe, report, etc.? Now, you know what my answer is going to be tonight? I don't know. All I know is they're described angelically, they're described as observing the

affairs of man, and they're described, as for lack of better terms, as reporting of what those affairs are. It's in one place, at one time, by one guy, in one very specific language, and it's the giving of his dream. I would err on the side that we're dealing with something angelic, we're dealing with something that is most obviously supernatural, and it says the holy ones who are watchers. So I think that term watcher could give us some insight into what their quote role is.

Now the reason that's important, you know in the book of Revelation it says there are four angels. Their only purpose in existing is to hold back the river Euphrates until God says so. That's their goal. That's their purpose. That's what they do. And so I think the term watcher is more of a description of mission than it is a classification or title that is brought up in this passage. But it's a fascinating text, a fascinating passage. It only happens one time in your Bible. It's during the captivity. It's at the mouth of Nebuchadnezzar. And he's observing what's happening. And what are they about to observe? They're about to observe Nebuchadnezzar going to the woods for seven years. with a very different disposition than he's had previously and/or after. So again, that's kind of what we have there. I wish I could give you a little bit more, but that's really all we got that's there in the Bible. It's one of those great, oh boy, so, but whoever submitted that, you must be watching late night cable TV, because they make a whole lot out of it.

By the way, just so you'll know, there are texts out there that talk about the watchers more than the Bible does, but they are what we would call extra-biblical or extra-canonical texts. Have you ever heard of the book of Enoch? It talks a whole lot about the watchers. Now again, the book of Enoch is not in your Bible, so don't think you missed out on that one in Sunday School. It's not there. But it is a It is a piece of literature that we don't consider scriptural that some people consider very valuable to biblical study because it is attributed to the man by the name of Enoch in Genesis 5. Remember Enoch who walked with the Lord and was not? And when you get to the book of Jude that we referenced earlier, in the book of Jude it talks about Enoch prophesying that in days there'd be 10,000 angels that would judge on the Lord's behalf. And so, again, there is a person known as Enoch, there's an allusion to some of the prophecies of Enoch. The book of Enoch is not scriptural, but the book of Enoch talks a whole lot about these watchers and that there is an angelic classification that actually watches, observes, and that's their assignment.

So, again, there it is. I wish I had more for you, but there's the watchers. Anybody else on watching? We're good? Everybody's good? Alright, moving on. Why does the Baptist church not practice in the imposition of ashes? You mean Ash Wednesday. Alright, that's a big nice fancy word there. So what we know as Ash Wednesday was a couple weeks ago. Ash Wednesday is a practice that you typically find within Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Episcopal traditions whereby which leading up to what we know as I guess the resurrection week or the passion week, they place the ashes upon their head. If they do it in truest form, they actually take palm branches. Remember, you know, what we know as Palm Sunday. They take palm branches from the year's before Palm Sunday celebration. They burn them, they grind them, they use the ashes of the previous. That doesn't always happen. The purpose of it as spoken is, remember the Bible says we came

from dust and dust we'll return, you're entering into what we know as the quote-unquote passion season, what they would practice known as Lent, where they would give up or allow things not to be a part of their life for a season of their life as they prepare their hearts for what we know as Passion Week, and therefore, they put the sign of the cross on their heads as a reminder of where they came, where they're going, and to take this thing seriously. So, the question is, why do Baptists not practice this? Because it's not in the Bible. That's why. It is a man-made tradition. There are parts of it that kind of line up with the Bible. Oh, we came from dust and dust we'll return, right? But there's no place in the Bible that is ever encouraging of, practicing of, or celebrating anything regarding what we know as Ash Wednesday, the season of Lent, or anything of that nature. It boils down to it's just not in the Bible. Does that make sense? And by the way, that should be our goal. The question asks why Baptists don't. Again, our goal should not be to be the best Baptists we can be but to be the best biblicists we can be. You know, there's traditions in the Baptist world that are not in the Bible. You don't believe me? It's called committees. Prove me wrong. You won't find one. It's not there.

But again, we laugh about it because that's who we are, right? You know how you know if you're Baptist? If you have a committee on committee subcommittee. If you've got one of those, I mean, you really... No. I say that because when we talk about what we know as Ash Wednesday, let's be honest, it's a little bit of a low-hanging fruit because there's nothing in the Bible that even supports the practice. But let's be honest, there's a lot of things that we think are biblical that are just our respective traditions, if that makes sense? And so I think we need to be careful on all sides. The best thing that we can do or the best aspiration is be as biblical as we can be. Obviously there has to be order and all that. I understand how that all developed in our quote unquote tradition. Okay, but again, I would not equate committees with Ash Wednesday. That's two completely different things, if that makes sense. Hopefully that helps a little bit on Ash Wednesday. Everybody's good with that one? Oh, that one went quick.

All right, here we go. It says, can somebody be considered for membership to a church if they're unable to tithe 10% of their income? I hope so. So understand, so when we, so what we know as quote-unquote tithing or ten percent, by the way the word tithe literally means ten percent. That's what the word means. Believe it or not the word tithe or ten percent actually comes up in the Bible before the law that told us to tithe. It started with Abram. Remember Abram before he became Abraham? He goes out and he wins this great battle and a guy shows up by the name of Melchizedek. Hint, hint, you might want to put in a question about that guy. He shows up to Melchizedek who is the king and he's the priest of an area known as Salem and he gives him 10% of everything. Okay, then you go into Isaiah chapter 6, I know it's after the law, but God tells Isaiah that a tenth or a tithe of the people will actually listen to you. Then you get into the last book of the Bible, the book of Malachi chapter 3, very famous verse, verse 10, bring all the tithes, quote unquote, into the storehouse, all right? So this concept of 10% is all throughout the Old Testament as an attribute, not just of generosity, but obedience and trusting God with what is often referred to in the Old Testament as the quote unquote first fruits.

Now, I'm going to go ahead and go where most Baptist preachers will not go. The concept of tithing is not found in the letters of the Apostle Paul. It's not there. You know what he says? He says give generously. He says give cheerfully. Now, if we spend our time calculating to the decimal points of percentages, we have to question if we're being generous and/or cheerful. Right? I'm being serious. I would argue that even though the New Testament does not advocate in church a 10% giving, I would argue that that is a biblical starting point for trusting the Lord with our resources. Okay?

Now, that being said, let's talk about us. And when I say us, I don't mean this local congregation. Let's talk about America at large, all right? These are actual real statistics when it comes to this concept. Did you know that 88% of evangelical Christians, now when I say evangelical, that's not just Baptist, that's a whole lot of us, right? That means those who claim that Jesus is the only way to heaven, he's the only one who can forgive our sins. That's it. Did you know that 88%, 88% of evangelical Christians, when surveyed, say that they tithe. 88%. Do you know how many actually do? Nine. Why the discrepancy? Because I think down deep we know what we're supposed to do versus what we actually do.

Now, the question is this. Does a person have to give 10% to be part of a local church? Absolutely not. Absolutely not. No, it's not there. Do you know how, I'm just going to speak to us because all I know right now is this local congregation. Do you know what it takes to be a member of this church? You have to be a believer in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord, and you have to be scripturally baptized. That's it. There's nothing about giving as membership of. Now, here's the issue about giving. It may not have a relationship between you and this local church, but it has a whole lot to do between you and God. In other words, we're not checking on you. We're not going to send you an invoice. But God sees, and God knows, and that's between you and God.

So, yes, local congregation. I don't want to get in trouble, but I'm going to get in trouble. Here we go. I know people, not here, I know people in my past who have come to churches that I've pastored and asked this question and said they used to be a part of a church that used to invoice them. I know a church, it's not in this state. I know a church that to join the church you have to turn in the last two years 1040s. Yeah, check that out. And then they invoice you. Some of y'all are just flabbergasted. When we're all fair, I'll tell you what church it is.

Alright, that being said. So, is the goal to be a biblicist? Yes. In your Bible, the only validation for being a part of a local group of Christians known as a church is faith in Christ and scriptural baptism. That's it. That's it. That is why you will hear me oftentimes say during our response time that when it comes to calling on the name of the Lord, it does not say you have to join a church to be saved. It doesn't say you have to give to be saved. It doesn't say you have to do this to be saved, right? But I would say there is a very clear line and a necessary conversation between your relationship with the Lord and your fellowship with the Lord. In other words, whether you give 80% or you give 0% does not impact your standing in heaven but it could impact your relationship with the Lord now. How's that for honesty? But I want you to know we do not require documentation and we



do not send invoices at all here. Okay? I got news for you. That's between you and God. And I can tell you, the only people I know when it comes to this church is my wife and me. That's it. That's the only people I know. I know what we're given. I don't know what any of y'all are given. Okay? Because that's between you and God.

And by the way, if you don't know, y'all are very generous people. Y'all are very trusting people. You're very giving people. And as your pastor, I want to thank you for your trusting in the Lord when it comes to your resources. But because of our faithfulness, we had the privilege of giving so much away and taking the gospel to almost every single corner of the earth. And thank you, thank you, thank you. And just so you'll know, for every dollar that is given here, almost 20% of it goes to some type of missional endeavor outside our doors. That is a wonderful, wonderful thing. And thank you, thank you, thank you for your trusting the Lord, your faithfulness to give, in spite of nobody knows it but you. Nobody knows it but you. Again, it's not a requirement for a local church, but I would say in your fellowship with the Lord, it's a pretty important thing.

So we're going to wrap up as far as time's concerned. I'm going to pray for us, but real quick, before I pray, when I say amen, that is your cue to get up and leave. Because of getting ready for Palm Sunday and all that, our college ministry, their 8th Street worship service is going to meet here in a few minutes and they need to be in here as quick as possible. So if y'all want to talk and chat and have a good time, if we can just do it outside of here, that'd be great. Does that sound good?

Let's pray.

*Lord Jesus, thank you. Thank you, thank you that we don't have to give a percentage of our income to go to heaven, thank you that we don't have to give a set amount of time of our life, that you gave and you satisfied all that was required and that was your pure perfect blood on Mount Calvary and an empty tomb three days later. God, thank you for that relationship but I pray that as we continue to study your word you would challenge us to trust you when it comes to our fellowship. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, amen.*