

Ask Jeff

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Good evening. It's 6:30 Central Standard Time and it is my privilege to welcome you to First Baptist Church of Opelika's midweek, Wednesday night, large group, adult Bible, that's a lot of adjectives to describe what we do tonight. But if you're here with us, we want to welcome you both in person online, those are listened by way of radio a little bit delayed on Sunday morning but nonetheless anybody and everybody can be a part because this Bible study is completely driven by and originated by you. That's right. You have the opportunity and the privilege tonight to guide the entire conversation. Every question, every concept, every concern is originated by you.

Now, for those of you that may not know, we actually have a YouTube channel that actually answers a question a day, Monday through Friday. Now, the way you submit a question to our YouTube channel is by way of websites. You can go to askjeff.net or you can go to fbcopelika.com/askjeff. It is through the web portals that we populate the question bank or the queue for the YouTube channel. Now, on our YouTube channel, we typically answer a question anywhere maybe 90 seconds, sometimes up to three or four minutes, but we try to keep them brief for obvious reasons. Now, on Wednesday night, we've been known to go 10, 20, 30 minutes depending on how much follow-up you want to engage in.

On Wednesday nights, there are two ways, whether you're in person or online, that you can submit a question or participate in the dialogue. The easiest way, the most, shall we say, frequented means is what we know as text messaging. Now here's the beautiful thing about text messaging, you remain completely anonymous. I have no idea who you are. Those behind the scenes have no idea who you are. Obviously, it comes in as a random phone number. We don't post the number. We don't post your name. And when you submit a question or a concern by way of text messaging, you remain anonymous. Now, the phone number, 334-231-2313. You can text from the front row, the back row, you can be on another continent, if you're on another continent though, you have to use the 01 country code before you text in to get it to our portal. Now, that being said, you can submit a question of concern or whatever topic or passage we're dealing with, you can submit a follow-up question and remain completely anonymous. If you submit a follow-up question, it will show up on my screen in a different font, which lets me know we're kind of staying on topic.

Now, for those of you that are here in person physically, you have an opportunity to do that which those online cannot, and that is raise your hand. Now once your hand goes in the air, two things happen. Number one, you take the floor. Number two, you lose your anonymity. Okay? We know who you are because we can see who you are. However, if this is your first time with us and you want to put your hand in the air, let me warn you, or shall I say give you comfort, that your voice will not be heard, nor will your image be seen on the other side of the screen or on the radio. So you're anonymous to the world at large, but not in here, but we're all family, so it's no big deal. So you're only anonymous or non-anonymous to a couple hundred people, so it'll be okay.

So without further ado, let's do some Bible study. That sound good? We're going to study what you want to study. Here we go. Question number one. Okay. What is the strongest argument against the papacy? Well, why don't we just kick it off with some fireworks tonight, okay? So let me describe what the question is asking and then let's talk about how to address the question. The papacy is the concept or the idea that is populated within what we know as the Roman Catholic Church that there is a representative at the head of the respective church that is known as the Pope. Okay? The term papacy is the identifier of that and the Pope obviously is the individual who represents, oversees, and supersedes all activities within that body of believers. Now, the question presupposes that there's something wrong with this. Okay? And you would be correct. So when we talk about what's the strongest argument, really there's two ways of approaching this. One is the biblical argument and one is the historical argument, okay?

So let's begin biblically, all right? So let me preface it by making this statement and then we're gonna go to some respective passages. Every title, every title that whom we know as the Pope allows himself to be referred to is a title that your Bible reserves for Jesus Christ alone. Now why is that an important designation? Because one of those titles is called the Vicar of Christ, the representative of Christ, the embodiment of Christ. And so one of the biggest arguments that we have against this position that our world recognizes is that it is a position held by a human being that is reserved for God alone. Okay, now let's defend this biblically and we're gonna have some fun when it comes to history. So go to Matthew chapter 23. We'll start off in Matthew chapter 23. By the way, for those of you who do not know, Jesus reserved his harshest words for those that were of a religious background, a religious nature. Here in Matthew chapter 23, he's addressing a group of men who we know as the Pharisees, and he basically, for lack of better terms, he just unloads on them, okay? This is a passage of Scripture where he says that they are whitewashed tombs. This is a passage of Scripture where he says their converts are twice the children of hell as they are. I mean, he is pulling no punches here, right? I want you to notice in Matthew 23, I'm going to begin in verse 8, "But be not called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. Call no man your father upon the earth, for one is your Father which is in heaven." Now I'll let you guess what the name Pope means. Father. Papa. That's what it means. Jesus, I mean by the way, if you have a Bible that has red letters, this is Jesus. Jesus just said call no man on the earth father That's a pretty clear-cut case, right?

Okay gets even deeper go back to John chapter 17 or shall I say forward to John chapter 17. Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane. This is what we typically call the high priestly prayer of Jesus. If you're not familiar with this chapter, obviously Jesus has done what we call the Last Supper with the disciples, they walk to Gethsemane. Peter, James, and John go by the wayside. They sleep underneath the tree. Jesus goes, in Matthew 26, we're very familiar with the story of three times, "Not my will, but yours be done." John chapter 17, though, gives us the most in-depth, most complete prayer of Jesus offered in scripture. Within the prayer though, in verse, I believe it is 11. Yes. It says, "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world. I come to thee, Holy Father. Keep through thine own name who thou hast given me that they may be one as we are." Who is Jesus speaking to? The Heavenly Father. He calls him Holy Father. That is a title that the papacy allows themselves to be referred to as.

Now, I have some biblical issues, not just with the name being used, but the position that is being held. So, biblically speaking, one of the things that we need to understand, what we know as traditional Roman Catholicism, is a sacramental faith. You say, what is a sacramental faith? A sacramental faith means that you have to either accomplish, acquire, or do something in order to receive the grace of God. For example, in a sacrificial faith, you have to be baptized. You have to take the Lord's Supper, or what they would call the Holy Eucharist. You have to do these things for the grace of God to come upon you, right? What's interesting is within what we know as the Lord's Supper, what they would call the Holy Eucharist, they pray over the elements and they believe in what they call transubstantiation. It's a big fancy word which means that those pieces of bread actually become the body of Jesus and that wine or that juice actually becomes the blood of Jesus. Okay? And understand that in a sacramental theology those individuals that are overseeing this believe that they become the representative of God in the context and whom we know as the papacy is way above them.

Every title, whether it be papacy, whether it be Holy Father, Vicar of Christ, whatever, every single one of those titles is reserved for Jesus Christ alone. The Vicar of Christ, that term means the representative of Christ on earth. I have a major biblical issue with any human being who says, "I represent Jesus on the earth," because I got news for you, you're not Jesus. And neither is that guy in Vatican City. He's not Jesus either. Okay? Which leads to a historical issue. You do know that even though the Roman Catholic Church would claim that Peter was the, quote, first pope, we never actually really had a designated person as a pope until the 5th century. In other words, for the first three hundred years of what we know as Christianity there was nobody who occupied that position there was nobody who held that position and when they finally in the fourth century, when we the church unfortunately married the culture called the Roman Empire and became the quote Holy Roman Church, we created a position overseeing the church that was both quote ecclesiastical religious and political and we called him or that position the papacy. You know what we had to do? If we're going to claim that Simon Peter is the first pope, we've got to go back in and name people pope that never even knew they were the pope. Does that make sense? You had to backfill the history.

Now if that's not good enough, by the time you get to the 11th century, what we know as the Catholic Church, there was an Eastern Church and there was a Western Church and they both had leaders that both claimed to be the Pope. So you know what they decided to do? We call it the Great Schism. They decided to excommunicate each other and they sent each other to hell. You can't make this stuff up. This is history. So, biblically speaking, Jesus himself said, do not refer to anybody on earth by the names that this person is willing to be received by. Number two, historically speaking, there is a major time gap and a whole lot of issues that have come up throughout time that even from a historical model would void it as a proper biblical designation, if that makes sense.

So, now that I've opened the theological can of worms any follow-ups, any questions, any thoughts? Everybody's good. Nobody's good. Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

I know Revelation 14:8, what about it? Revelation 14:8, isn't that the everlasting gospel? Revelation 14:8. Oh, that's something about Babylon, about Babylon being fallen. So, when you get to Revelation 17, it talks about Mystery Babylon and it describes this religious entity that eerily looks and sounds like what we're discussing. It talks about chalices made of gold, it talks about robes made of red, and it talks about hats that are miter hats. Ladies and gentlemen, if you Google an image of what we're talking about, that's exactly what it looks like. And it says that she is the woman that rides the beast that causes all the world to fall into whoredom. How's that for a designated title, right? But again, it is an earthly received system of faith that biblically speaking is heavenly rejected, if that communicates. But yes, this Babylon, in the book of Revelation specifically, when it talks about Babylon, there is a...one thing a lot of people don't realize is when you get to the book of Revelation, when you get to the end times, there is this famous character known as the Antichrist and his system of ruling, we get all that. That being said, when you do so, or when you look at it from that perspective, there's a political side and there's a religious side. Okay, so you got politics and you got religion, and they're mixed. Well, isn't that what happened in the 4th century? We mixed those.

Follow-up says, so should Jews not use the term rabbi? Great question. What did Jesus say? Call no man rabbi. Right? Again, as you're walking, and by the way, what did they call Jesus? Rabboni. Okay, which is rabbi. He received that title because he is properly by that designation. We use the term rabbi very much in a cultural sense, a designated sense, a reference sense. In the context here, understand in Matthew 23, here's what Jesus is doing, he's basically saying, "Do not allow anybody on the earth to replace and/or represent God himself." In the Jewish faith, that would be rabbi. In the Gentiles, i.e. father, okay? That being said, within the Jewish faith, if you make a rabbi more than the position of which the scripture allows him to be, and you make him an incarnation of God on earth, then you have violated what Jesus said, if that makes sense. Now, that being said, I have jokingly, when he was alive, called my dad father, okay? You do understand that's not what Jesus is talking about. In the context here, he is talking about relationship to God himself and call no man father, call no man rabbi. If we use terms casually or culturally, that's really going down a different angle, if that makes sense. But

in the Jewish tradition, obviously, they have rabbis. However, I would state that the overwhelming majority of those individuals do not claim to be a representative of God on the earth. In fact, very much the opposite. They wear the yarmulkes on their head to show that there is a God above them and they are below. Very different kind of picture, but yes, good designation there.

Anybody else on the papacy? We're good? Good, because I'm sweating now. Here we go. Question number two. Is there such thing as a hardened heart? Absolutely there is. Is that a Bible concept or a human construct? How does God help with a hard heart? Okay, as usual on Wednesday night, we got three questions wrapped up into one. Go back to the book of Exodus, and we're gonna meet an individual known as Pharaoh. Exodus beginning in chapter, I think we're gonna begin in 8, is when we get the plagues. Yeah, chapter 8 is when all the plagues begin. Chapter 7, really. Yeah, it's chapter 7, I apologize. In chapter 7 beginning, then chapter 8, 9, 10 subsequently, you have the famous 10 plagues. Within these plagues, the term hardening of heart is utilized on a somewhat regular basis in reference to a man by the name of Pharaoh.

Now let's back up the story before we read it. Now I want you to understand that when Moses came and said, "Let my people go," does anybody remember the original request that was made? Three days to go and worship. That was it. Understand when he said, "Let my people go," he actually was not demanding that they be removed from their indentured servitude, he said, "Can we go for three days and worship? That's all we're asking for." Pharaoh would not even allow them to accomplish that and so we have this famous battle between the one true God through Moses and Aaron and whom we know as Pharaoh, and you've got all these plagues water, you know, blood, all these things, lice and nasty stuff going on. All right. Here's what you discover is all throughout the first five to six plagues a statement is made. If you'll notice in chapter 8 verse 15, this is one that picks out, by the way, there's a host of them in here. It says, "But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart. He hearkened not unto them as the Lord had said." In fact, you'll discover, I believe it's the first six plagues, it says that Pharaoh hardened his heart. When you get to the seventh plague, it says God hardened his heart.

So the question is can a person harden their heart? Absolutely they can. They can be so defiant to the things in the word of God for such a period of time that they become resistant to, or we might say, repellent to the desire and the will of God in their life. Now for those of you, particularly in this part of the world, that have somewhat of a Native American background, there's a very well-known Native American illustration that goes alongside this, what they call the sin wheel. When those early Native Americans were coming to know Christ as Lord and Savior, and they were beginning to be introduced to Christianity, one of the illustrations that they gave was that within the heart, hence being hardened, that within the heart, this was a Native American illustration, that there was a blade inside of it, and that every time you sinned against God, it moved and then it sprung back. And the next time you sinned against God, it moved a little bit further. And it kept going. And it kept going. And eventually, you sinned so much against God that it would move and you never felt it and it was just hardened. In other words, you became almost immune to the reality, the consequence or the gravity of your sin. Is that not what

Pharaoh did? over and over and over again, Pharaoh said, "You know what God? I tell you what, if you'll just fix the water, I'll do what you ask. If you'll just get rid of the lice, I'll do what you ask. If you just get rid of the frogs, I'll do what you ask." Did he ever do what he asked? No. He hardened his heart to the point where eventually God says, "I am done with this. We are moving on."

So now the question is, is it a biblical concept or human? It's obviously biblical. How does God help with a hardened heart? The beautiful thing is that aren't you grateful that we serve a God of grace? And here's what I mean by grace: a God that gives us a second chance, a third chance, a fourth chance, a fifth chance. Sometimes you've lost count of how many chances, right? Now, I've heard people say, "Well, I don't understand. He only gave Pharaoh six chances." He didn't even have to give him one. But he did. And he gave him a second one.

And so, how does God help with a hard heart? I know you expect this from me, and I apologize for being overly simplistic, but you know the best cure to a hard heart is this book right here because the more you read, the more you study, the more you realize what God desires, the more it supernaturally shows you how you have hardened your heart and not submitted your life and the things of your life to the things in the word of God. And you know what the Lord can do? He can repair, and he can return, and he can restore your heart to being sensitive to his word and his will. You know what we used to call that? Revival. You know what the term revival means? To renew life again. In other words, a believer who's gone a little wayward, a believer who, as Jeremiah said over and over, was backslidden, that when they realized their condition and cried out to God and got serious about the things of God, guess what? The Lord began to renew, he began to rebuild, and he began to restore one's heart so they are sensitive to the things in the word of God again. You don't see any evidence at all of Pharaoh ever repenting of his condition. I mean, he's out there, and he's against things of God.

So yes, a hardened heart is a biblical concept, lest any of us fall into the trap. It can happen. But here's the great news. God can reverse it. He can. And he does it many, many times. Don't believe me? Ask King David. You realize that King David entered into a relationship with a woman he had no business being in, justified and rationalized it by killing her husband and lying to everybody. Can we agree he was in a bad place? And you know what God used? God used a man by the name of Nathan to come to him, give him a little story, and say, "Thou art the man." Do you remember what happened in David's life? He got on his face, he got before God, he confessed his sin and what did God begin? God began to move and work in his life again. And so again, you have this pictured of a hardened heart that God can actually soften through his word and his will. It's a really insightful question, good question, not a human concept. It's actually a, you know what the world says? The world uses this phrase, they have no conscience. The Bible says they have a hardened heart. That's the biblical phrase for that concept. Yes, sir?

[unintelligible]

They sure did for a while. All right, the question, if you couldn't hear it, or really the statement you made, I apologize, was he was reading around the context of where we were that the plagues that the Egyptians were subjected to, the Israelites were as well. That was true for a limited time. Right before the plague of the disease of the animals, I remember exactly where it was, God told them to go to a place called Goshen. Goshen is a place, if you're looking at Egypt, it's in the northeast corner. It was an area where God said if you go there and you take your cattle there, those cattle will not be diseased. After that, remember the plague of darkness? It was dark in Egypt. It was light in Goshen. Remember the plague of death of the firstborn? In Egypt but not in Goshen. And so once you get to the part of the plagues where disease and death enters in, God protected them which is interesting because you don't see humans dying from the lice or the frogs or even the river but once the cattle got diseased, you started seeing human death and so God set them aside so that they would...and here's the other thing about Goshen. Egyptians went there too. It was open to anybody who would go. Now, to go to Goshen meant to admit Egypt was wrong. To go to Goshen meant the one true God's the real God and Pharaoh's wrong. You do realize that's a risky proposition. So Goshen was a good, that was a set-aside place, if that makes sense. Does that help out a little bit with that one? I thought I saw, yes sir?

[unintelligible]

Mark 6:11. Let's go there. Now I know in Mark chapter 6, Jesus is not welcome in his own hometown. I know that one. But in verse 11, let's go back in verse 10 It says, "He said to them in what place soever you enter into a house and thereby until you depart from that place, whosoever shall not receive you nor hear you when you depart then shake off the dust from your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in that day of judgment than for that city." Yes, sir in regards to?

[unintelligible]

Oh, are those hardened hearts? You betcha they are. So hard he said, don't take it personally, shake the dust off and go down the road. Absolutely. In fact, in the book of Titus chapter 3, it says that if somebody is a heretic, which means they believe erroneously, we usually see that word's a little stronger than the Bible. I mean, heretic just sounds bad, right? It says entertain a conversation with them once or twice, but after that treat them like a heathen. In other words, the heart is hardened, and all you're gonna do is just, you're hitting your head up against the wall, as we say, here in the South.

Follow-up says, if God hardened his heart, did Pharaoh not have free will? That also suggests that Pharaoh would have responded differently. Yes, Pharaoh had free will, because six times he said no. He said no six times. That's free will. You say, well, on the seventh time, well, yeah, eventually God says, "I'm done." He had free will to say yes or no six of those plagues. Now, here's the fascinating thing. In your Old Testament, there is a description we call the prophetic perfect. The prophetic perfect is when God speaks of the future as if it is the past. You know God can do that. We can't. Now, some of you

have heard my illustration, okay? I'm going to use it again. I apologize if you've heard it. In my home, tonight is trash night. I don't know if y'all know that. In other words, tomorrow morning at dark 30, they come by, right? So Wednesday night, put the trash out, okay? I promise you tonight, I'm gonna be asked this question. "You puttin' the trash out." You know what I'm gonna say? "Consider it done." I'm speaking of a future event as if it's already happened, correct? Here's the problem I've messed up before. I have woken on a Thursday morning to, "Hurry, they're here!" You know, please tell me you all have done that. Okay, come on. All right. It's one of the most frightening experiences in your life, right?

So, that being said, in the Old Testament, a lot of times, particularly when we get to the prophetic passages, what we call second coming passages, God speaks about events thousands of years ahead as if they've already happened. At the very beginning of the story with Moses and Pharaoh in the context in chapter 6, you know what God tells Moses? "I have hardened Pharaoh's heart." He literally says before a single plague it's hardened. Okay, but here's the issue. In the first six, it says Pharaoh hardened his heart. God was speaking of the future as if it was the past to let Moses know this is the way it's gonna go. So again, did he have free will? Absolutely he did. He had the ability to say, in fact, one of my favorite stories, back to Exodus chapter 8, Hold on, I think it's in chapter 8. It's the plague of the frogs. This one gets me every time. Ah, here we go. Verse 6 of chapter 8. It says, "And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up, and they covered the land of Egypt and the magicians did so with their enchantments, and they brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me and from my people, and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord. And Moses said unto Pharaoh, When shall I entreat for thee and for thy servants and for thy people to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses that they may remain in the river only?" Verse 10, "And he said, Tomorrow." Isn't that interesting? He was actually given a choice of when to get rid of the frogs and he said, tomorrow. One of the great statements that you'll ever find in the Bible is called One More Night with the Frogs. Pharaoh said, and by the way frogs are creepy little things. He said I want one, do it tomorrow. So not only did he have quote free will to harden his heart, he had free will to decide when to get rid of some of the plagues but it doesn't change the end of the story because God said he knew how it was going to end.

Any other Pharaoh questions we're good with Pharaoh? Does anybody want to break out in that old VBS song right now about Pharaoh, Pharaoh, let my people go? I just thought I'd ask. It says, in several of the Psalms, the word Selah appears, the chapter number, what is Selah? Are these the Psalms that are sung as you made your way up the temple steps? I love this question, and it may be for the reason that whoever gave it has no idea or clue. Alright, as you walk through the Psalms, you will notice that occasionally, and somewhat repetitively, you will see this word, Selah or Selah. S-E-L-A-H. When you see those, let me tell you, it has layers of meaning. On the surface level, that means a pause or break. For those of you that have a musical background, think of it in terms of a rest. You're playing a piece of music or you're singing music, whoever has composed the music, there are times where they put a rest in so that you can take a breath. Right? You

cannot sing all 39 verses in one breath. You have to breathe. So as you're reading through the Psalms, there's this natural musical aspect that allows a person to breathe, and it's almost as if, okay, we've sung the first verse, now we're going to sing the second verse. That's on a very, quote, surface level. Okay?

It talks about the Psalms being sung up to the temple. Yes and no there. There were some that were specifically for that purpose, others not so much. Here's the thing I want to show you tonight that hopefully, or maybe, you'll find as interesting as...help, I've got no screen. I need a screen tonight. Can I have a screen tonight? Is it possible to have a screen tonight? Oh, whoa, hello. No, we don't want to Skype somebody. And I don't want to play solitaire, but that would be fun during that. We can play cards. There we go.

All right, while that's waiting, what if... what if the Selah or Selah, what if it meant something even more than a quote musical pause? I'm gonna offer you up a challenge. Read through the Psalms at your leisure, whenever you want to. I know some of you may be memorizing a specific Psalm that has this word in it periodically. Here's the thing you need to know. You'll be reading verse 4, Selah, then verse 5. I want you to go look at when those verses are used.

Why do I have a check mark? There we go, alright.

Here's the thing I want you to notice. You do realize in the Psalms, layers, again, okay? Obviously you know historically David is walking through a whole lot of stuff. We get all that, right? We know that doctrinally, that this is God interacting with his people, the Israelites, in a form of worship, recognition, the temple steps, sacrifice, feast. We get all that but did you know there's an incredible prophetic element to the Psalms? I don't mean just the first coming, I mean the second coming as well. You do realize that the one most concentrated piece of Old Testament literature regarding what we know as the cross of Jesus Christ is found in Psalm 22. There are eight very specific statements about what Jesus would undergo in the crucifixion in one single Psalm. Guess what? Psalm 23, you better hope it's prophetic. Why? That's the famous Psalm that we say and we sing at all of our funeral services to tell us there's coming a day a whole lot better than this one. Right? I mean, that's what makes Psalm 23 so great. All throughout the Psalms, you have these prophetic elements. Here's the challenge or the opportunity I want to give you. Read through the Psalms. When you see the word Selah or Selah, one of the things that you will notice is that either the verse before it or the verse behind it, more often than not, has a future prophetic element to it. What did I say that the word Selah meant? Rest. What did the Lord do on the Sabbath day in Genesis 2? He rested. What did he tell us in Exodus 31? It was a sign for the Jews. When you get to Hebrews 3 and 4, it says, enter into the Lord's rest. Yes, it is a musical rest but would you not also agree with me that when the Lord returns and establishes his kingdom, he establishes a divine rest for his people.

Now that being said, as you read through the Psalms you'll notice a lot of these what we would call second comingish or end time prophetic statements right around where that word is used. Here's where it gets even more fascinating. Please put up with my meager

ability to draw tonight but there's what we know as the Sea of Galilee comes down to what we would call the Dead Sea down in here. This is gonna be our Dead Sea. This is the Sea of Galilee. This is what we know as the Jordan River. Okay, that's the Jordan River. This up here, this is Galilee just to give you some reference points. This over here would be Bethlehem, Jerusalem. I'm just trying to give you Mediterranean Sea. I know it's poor, but here we go. Did you know that there's actual multiple, I guess, I hate to use the word interpretations, but opinions on the physical location of a place known as Sela? S-E-L-A. Okay? Now, here's what's interesting. There are some people who believe that Sela is a place right here on the bottom of the Dead Sea. There are other people that believe it is down here at a place that you and I know as Petra. Okay? That another name for Petra is Sela or Sela. Okay? Now, here's the deal. You can go and research this and Google this and, you know, you're going to talk to three people and get four different opinions. Here's the thing that's key is that both of these are potential places of a place known as Sela, or Sela, okay?

Now, you didn't ask for it, but I'm gonna go there. Go to Revelation 12, here we go. There it is, there it is. It's my fault tonight, I take all the blame. Revelation chapter 12 beginning in verse 13. Let me give you a little backstory here. Chapter 12 of Revelation is what we call a parenthetical chapter, it means it's outside the scope of the chronology. In other words, you've got all these basically seals being opened, trumpets being sounded etc. You've got chapters like chapter 7, chapter 10, chapter 12, chapter 14 that are kind of giving us backstory commentary or whatever. Chapter 12 I believe actually gives us a multi-thousand year history of the formation of the Jewish people all the way back in Genesis till the very end of what we know as this famous event known as the Great Tribulation. The reason that is important is beginning in verse 13 we have an individual known as the dragon. We know who that is because previously in verses 7, 8, 9, and 10 it says this is Satan. We have a woman who I believe is the people or the nation of what we know as Israel. The woman is on the run from the dragon, okay? Here's how the story goes in verse 13. "And when the dragon saw that he was cast into the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child, and to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness," listen to this, "into her place where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time from the face of the serpent." Okay, now what's interesting there is it says that she will go, this is the woman, what we know as the Jewish people, will go to her place, correct? Where is it? The wilderness of her place. Now you and I both know that the Israelites in the Old Testament, particularly in the book of Exodus, but also specifically the book of Numbers, spent a long period of time in a place called the what? Wilderness. All right, now here's the problem. Do you know where you were told that wilderness was? You were told that wilderness was right over here, okay? Here's the problem, Sela is over here. Not over there. And by the way, if you're gonna cross the Red Sea you've got to do it over here not over there, but that's a whole other question nobody's asked yet. We'll go there if we have to. Here's why this is important. Did you know that historically speaking, historically speaking, there is more evidence that the wilderness experience was over here than it was over there. Alright? There's a lot of people that believe that this passage is talking about what we know as Petra today, which by the way also has the name Sela. But did you know that over here at the bottom of the Dead Sea, do you know what is here? Actually I put it, it should be over

there. You know what it's called? Masada. Anybody seen the movie Masada? Oh yeah, about the Roman invasion in the first century that basically eliminated all the Jewish people at the bottom of the Dead Sea when all that took place. Now, if you've ever had the privilege of going to Masada, I've had the privilege of going to Masada. When you go up top and you take a tour, you know what you discover? That you discover that right now those in the Israeli Defense Department, those that are in the military, that have what we might call a special forces commission, did you know that they are taken on the top of Masada when they're commissioned, they're given a copy of a Torah, they're given their weapon, and they are told that this is the last place we give up. This is it.

Now I don't know about you, but that sounds like her place. Does it not? You do realize the Bible says there's coming a day where the Jewish people are going to run from the Antichrist and they're going to run to a place that they know that's theirs for their safety. What's interesting is this whole area is known as Sela, a place of rest. And when you go in the book of Psalms and you see the word Selah, you'll discover that in the immediate vicinity are second coming, end time prophetic statements. So per the question, what does the word mean? It means rest. Musically as you were singing them it meant take a breath, continue. Prophetically it meant in the midst of tragedy, heartache, distress, that is the theme of the Psalms by the way, God will ultimately deliver and give them rest. So next time you're reading through the Psalms and you see that word, it's more than take a breath, there's a prophetic element to it that goes all the way to the book of Revelation.

Now I don't know who submitted the question. I don't know if that's the direction you wanted to go, but I took it that way, so oops, I'm sorry if I messed up. Any questions, thoughts, follow-ups, concerns, issues? Forgive my bad, poorly done map. Everybody's good? Okay, let me erase my map because I didn't do very good on there. Here we go. Boop, it's gone.

Okay, here we go. It says, it has been my understanding that one receives the Holy Spirit immediately after believing in Jesus Christ and accepting him as Savior. In Acts 8:15, Scripture says those in Samaria that had believed had not received the Spirit yet. Can you clarify why these people had not received the Spirit if they had believed? Woo, whoever you are, I love you for it. Here we go. Alright, so within the book of Acts, I'm actually going to answer this question that actually references chapter 8, which we'll get there in a moment. I want to begin or actually start back in Acts chapter 1. In Acts chapter 1, Jesus gives what we might call a commission. He gives an instruction to them. Acts chapter 1, verse 8. Jesus is about to ascend up on high. The disciples are with him. They've asked him about the kingdom being restored to Israel. He says, not for you to know the time or the place. Verse 8, "But you shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you. You shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Now, most of us, nothing wrong with this, when we read that verse we say that's exactly how it took place. There in Jerusalem is when what we know as Pentecost happened, word began to get out and Samaria is on the outer skirts, maybe the suburbs of, and then it went to the uttermost parts. Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the uttermost parts of the earth. That's absolutely a correct understanding. However, what if it means a little bit more? And what I mean by that is within Jerusalem and Judea, you

have Jewish people, within Samaria, you have Samaritans, and in the uttermost part, you have Gentiles. Now here's what's fascinating. You do realize from an anthropological perspective, that's the races that God recognizes. There's Jews, there's Gentiles, and there's Samaritans. Those are the races of the Bible, by the way. That's a whole other issue. But my point is, is it more than geography? Could it be, quote, people groups? Okay?

Go to Acts chapter 2, the famous Pentecost event. It says, on the day Pentecost was fully come, by the way, Pentecost means 50 days after. It says, "On the day Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind. It filled all the house where they were sitting, there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as a fire and it sat upon each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost. They began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance," listen to verse 5, "and there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven." Now we know, and I'm not going to repeat all of Acts chapter 2, that every single person that responded to the message that day was of what background? Jewish. Isn't that what it said? They were Jews, correct? Now we know very clearly from scripture, Jesus, tribe of Judah, you go through Isaac, Abraham, we get all that, right? So it goes unto the Jews.

Now go to Acts chapter 10. Go to Acts chapter 10. By the way, when you speak of the quote unquote Jewish people, they were in the Old Testament, even in somewhat respect today, they were resistant to the idea of anybody who was not Jewish being what we would call saved, to use our terminology. They struggled with it. Acts chapter 10, remember Cornelius. He's a Roman centurion, he gave alms, he prayed, he cries out to God. We have Simon Peter. Remember he's up on the house one day, he has a vision about the famous sheet tied at four corners. He ends up going to Simon the Tanner's house in Joppa, which by the way is the same location where Jonah got spit out by the whale. Nonetheless, he's there and he preaches to him the gospel. Now, here's what I want you to see. Beginning in verse 42, this is the end of Simon Peter's sermon to Cornelius and his Roman band. Are Romans Jews? No. Are Romans Samaritans? No. What are they? They're a bunch of pig-eating Gentiles, right? They just like you. This is your story, right here. All right, verse 42. "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Verse 44, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."

Now, why is that an important passage? Because this is the first time you have in the book of Acts of a bunch of pig-eating Gentiles believing on Jesus. Okay? Who is there to observe it? It says those of the circumcision. Those, you do realize, Christianity, okay,

and I'm grateful to be a believer, you do realize that we started with Abraham, and a Jewish lineage, right? We have a Jewish Messiah who came from the tribe of Judah and died a death and rose according to prophecies written by Jewish people. That being said, a bunch of pig-eating Gentiles get saved and what do these Jewish people say? "Oh my, the same Holy Spirit that saved the Jews is able to save the Gentiles." Great story. I know what you're thinking. Hold on, this question's about chapter 8. Now you can go to chapter 8. Go to chapter 8. Chapter 8 we have a ministry of an individual by the name of Philip who is going to meet a sorcerer by the name of Simon who is a Samaritan. Now I promise, I'm gonna read this and we're gonna put it all together, okay? All right? Begin in verse 9. It says, "But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries." Verse 12, "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John," verse 15, "Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)"

Now I know what you're thinking, that doesn't make sense and it shouldn't, and here's why. Who or what was the mechanism of the Messiah and the gospel message? Jesus Christ via the Abrahamic covenant, correct? Acts chapter 2, you've got a bunch of Jewish apostles preaching, a bunch of Jews to get saved. Acts chapter 10, you've got a bunch of Jewish men and apostles preaching, witnessing a bunch of Gentiles getting saved. Guess what? When the gospel went to the Samaritans, who's there to witness it? Who's there to verify it? And what does it say? When the apostles showed up, they prayed that they would receive the Holy Spirit. They did and they witnessed it. Now here's what I want you to see or want you to hear tonight. When you read Acts chapter 1 verse 8, it says go into Jerusalem, Judea, those are Jews, into Samaria, Samaritans, into the uttermost parts of the earth, the Gentiles, what you see in the book of Acts is you see a progression of the gospel going to the three entities that the Lord recognizes, Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles, and it goes through progressively. And here's what you see in common, every single one of those incidences you do not see the Holy Spirit either A) descend or manifest without the apostles being present to verify it. You know what happens after Acts chapter 10? You don't see it again. There's no need to because at that point they go back to Jerusalem say, "Hey guess what, boys, everybody's getting in through Jesus. It's not just us, even the Samaritans, even the, quote, Gentiles."

So, per the original question, this person, whoever submitted said they'd been taught, and rightfully so, that when you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you immediately receive the Holy Spirit. Let me ask you, which one of these chapters does your story fit in, 2, 8, or 10? Which one are you? You're 10. You're a Gentile, right? Do we need to go back to

chapter 10? And while he was preaching, the Holy Ghost came upon them. In other words, what we see from Acts chapter 10 through the rest of the New Testament is that when a person hears the gospel, believes the gospel, they are immediately indwelt with the Holy Spirit. and they're saved. That's the picture we have, okay? And it doesn't go back and it doesn't vary. What I want you to see is that chapter 2 and chapter 8 are what we might call one-off anomalies as a fulfillment of Acts chapter 1 verse 8. By the time it goes to the uttermost, you never see it change. Everybody who believes is who's hearing the gospel and they're immediately saved and indwelt with the Holy Spirit. You don't ever go back. There are people today, people today who, for lack of better terms, don't rightly divide the word and they go back and go, "Okay, you may believe in Jesus, but until I pray for you, you can't get the Holy Spirit." Number one, are you an apostle? Number two, are they a Samaritan? Does that communicate? Number three, are we in the first 60 days of the church, right? Read the letters of the Apostle Paul, all of them. The letters to Corinth, Rome, Philippi, Galatia, all of them. Did you know that every time the gospel is put forth, every time it's preached, and every time it's received, it looks just like Acts chapter 10, every single time. It never looks like the other two. Why? Because Jesus said, when the Holy Ghost comes upon you, be my witnesses in Jerusalem. By the way, you do know that in 1 Corinthians chapter 14, it calls tongues a sign, and that Jews require a sign. Guess what happens at Pentecost? A sign. The Jews believe. Then you get Samaria, then you get the uttermost, and from that point forward, every single person who believes receives the Holy Spirit immediately upon belief, just like they did in Acts chapter 10. That was a very long explanation to a somewhat very long question. Does it make sense? Any need of clarification? Hopefully I didn't confuse too much. Everybody's good? Did the food sit heavy tonight? Okay, it's okay. It's good. We can move on. I'm good. All right, here we go.

Great question. Why does Jesus pray to God if he is God? Can I answer it humorously and then get serious? Why do you talk to yourself? Some of y'all are shaking your head like, that's a really good point. I'm like, yeah. You know the old adage, it's not wrong to talk to yourself, it's only bad if you start answering yourself, right? You've heard that, okay. Now, let me answer this question by making a theological statement and then going to a specific passage of scripture. You've probably heard this before. It never hurts to be repeated. Jesus was a hundred percent God. He was a hundred percent man. Any less percentage of either, and he was neither. Okay? So we're not talking half and half here. We're talking hundred and hundred. Okay?

Now, go to Philippians chapter 2. Go to Philippians chapter 2 and then if time will allow us, we're gonna go to the book of Matthew 24 and 28. But go to Philippians chapter 2, hopefully we can get this in before the buzzer goes off. Philippians chapter 2. I want you to hear what it says about Jesus. Beginning in verse 5. It's a challenge to the church of Philippi, but it speaks about Jesus. It says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of man, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." In other words, that passage basically says that Jesus, even though 100% God became 100% man, and he humbled himself to

dwell within flesh. Now listen, God is omnipresent, right? God can be everywhere. In the gospel stories, was Jesus everywhere at one time? No. He humbled himself into human flesh, right? Do you think that God gets tired or hungry? Did Jesus get tired or hungry? He sure did. There were times where he ate food and there were times where he said, "We're tired, let's pull over," right? Did that disqualify his deity? Absolutely not. The same Jesus who got tired and hungry said, "Hey, if I need to call down millions of angels, I got this." Right? So what you need to start, don't compartmentalize this as a little bit of this and a little bit of that. It's all of this and all of that. Okay?

Now, here's my, I guess not my favorite, but way to explain this. Go to Matthew chapter 24 and then we're gonna go to Matthew chapter 28. Hopefully we can grab this in time. Matthew chapter 24. Mount of Olives, second coming. We're not here to get into all that. But I want you to hear what Jesus says in Matthew 24:36. He's been talking about the second coming, the famous parable of the fig leaf, and when you begin to see it bloom, know it's the last generation. Verse 36, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Now Jesus just made a statement, those are the red letters, right? He made a statement on the Mount of Olives days before his crucifixion that he didn't even know the day the Lord's coming back. You know what he said? He said, "only my Father," correct? Fast forward to chapter 28. Verse, I believe it's gonna be 18. "And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and the earth." Now, all power, yet you don't know when you're coming back.

What's the difference between chapters 24 and 28? I know what it is, it's called an empty tomb. Jesus appeared in a resurrected body post his resurrection. He was in a fleshly body that bled and died in chapter 24. He's in a resurrected eternal immortal body in chapter 28. Guess what? Philippians chapter 2, he humbled himself, not in chapter 28. What kind of humility says "all power is given unto me"? None. In other words, the humble servant Jesus has raised from the dead. He came, he came as a lamb but he said, "I'm coming back as a lion." A lamb is slain, a lion does the slaying. Correct? A lamb is slaughtered, a lion does the slaughtering. So in other words, as a lamb, he was humble and what did he do? He prayed. He prayed to his Father. Absolutely he did. Now I can joke about you talking to yourself, because he is 100% God, 100% man, but at the same time, he's in flesh. He's humble. When you get to chapter 28, you know what's fascinating? Once Jesus raises from the dead, you never see him pray again. There's no need to. Why? Because he's not humbled in mortal flesh. He is restored unto that prominence of eternity because guess what? Flesh dies. We all know that.

Hopefully that helps a little bit. And this is a great question. Now by the way, the antidote to that question is if Jesus prayed, you ought to pray. If Jesus felt the need to pray, then you ought to pray, right? I mean, that's an obvious answer there. But I think that the clarity of it is understanding the incarnation. Jesus did not lose his deity. He did not give up his deity. However, his deity was confined within human flesh. Guess what? While in flesh on the earth for 33 and a half years, do you ever see Jesus walk through a wall? No. What happens after his resurrection? Walked through a wall. Before he goes to the cross, do you ever see Jesus just immediately vanish from one place and go to another? No.

What happens on the road to Emmaus after his resurrection? He disappears from one place to another. He's no longer in a humble state, he's no longer in a servant state, and he's no longer praying to the Father because why? All power has been given to him.

Now I've heard people say based on Matthew chapter 24, Jesus doesn't even know when he's coming back. I've got news for you, he knows when he's coming back. Why? All power has been given to him. In other words, you have to contextualize chapter 24 of when it was and what he was walking through and guess what? A body that could bleed and die on a cross is a whole lot different than the body he possessed when he came out of that grave. Whole lot different. He walked through walls. He could disappear and reappear. And here's the best news for you Baptists, he ate. Check that out. Good stuff, isn't it?

Oh, y'all realize that we're not confined to this room, right? We got one minute left. I'm going to take a little personal privilege here. There's a great number of you here in this room, and we're grateful you know that we're online. You know that we're on the radio. But I've just gotten word there are people right now that are watching this from India. So hello. I've been to India, that's how you talk. So for those of you wherever you are in India, man, thank you for being here. It's eight in the morning over there. Wow, y'all are up early, glad to see you. Isn't that amazing? So you know I joke with y'all about using the country, did they submit a question?

[unintelligible]

Was it a good comment? Oh okay, I get nervous. I've been to India. Do they know me? Well, there's only a billion plus people there. What are the odds?

[unintelligible]

Oh yeah. Those guys. Oh, hey pastors. How y'all doing? Okay. Thank y'all for being a part of that. Let me pray. We'll roll and say hi to India on your way out. Here we go.

Lord Jesus, tonight as we depart from this place, God, thank you for the truth of your word and literally as we saw tonight the unsearchable riches that are contained within. God, we confess there is no way that we can ever grasp it all and we can ever get it all but, God, tonight as we end it, we know that you knew this about us so you were willing to humble yourself, you were willing to be a servant, you were willing to bleed, you were willing to die and you were willing to raise from the grave so that we might be forgiven, might be saved and might be eternally with you forever. So thank you, O God, that while we were yet sinners you died for us, you came for us and you loved us. May we never take it for granted; may it be the heartbeat of all of our study. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.