

Preached On: Wednesday, March 8, 2017

Crossroads Ministries
301 S. 8th Street
Opelika, Alabama 36801

Website: www.fbcopelika.com
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers

Next week, or shall I say this coming up weekend is time change and so if you regularly come to our first early service and you do not set your clocks forward, you'll come here just in time for Sunday school. If you come to Sunday school at the middle hour, you'll get here in time for the last service. So please set your clocks appropriately for this coming weekend.

That being said, circle of concerns is on the pink piece of paper that hopefully you received on your way in. A couple of reminders as always, number 1, please do not throw this away. Make it a point hopefully of your daily prayer life as you pray for those not only in but connected to First Baptist Church. You will notice at the bottom there is an announcement in regards to next week. There is no supper but there is still Bible study. So please join us next Wednesday at 6:30. Always on the back, two groups always want to call attention to, those who are serving on the mission field, and those that are serving as members of our military service. One thing I do want to call a little attention to under missionary prayer partners on the very far right, Chase and Kimmy Barbary serving in Haiti. Chase suffered a little bit of a physical accident. He fell the other day. We're thinking everything is going to be okay, it's nothing life threatening or anything, but always a fresh reminder that the mission field is a spiritually dangerous place but it sometimes can even be a physically dangerous place. So please pray for that family as they begin their journey overseas.

Let's pray.

Lord, as we gather tonight, we do want to pray for those who are both overseas and stateside that are serving in your name. Lord, many times they're a part of the armed forces that are keeping us safe and protecting our freedom to be here tonight, and many of them are in, as we jokingly say, are in your army but they're not armed with physical weaponry but with the sword of the Spirit, and oftentimes they find themselves in situations where they're discouraged, they're disheartened, they're frustrated, and they feel like sometimes they possibly even are wasting their time. God, I pray that for those who are in that position tonight, that you will empower them, emblazon them with your Spirit so that they know that they're exactly where you called them to be. And Lord, tonight we're in this place and this is where you've called us to be, and for those who are not here because of physical illness or other types of circumstances, Lord, we pray that your Spirit would be with them, but in this place, Lord, guide us, direct us, as we search

out your word as we desire to know nothing more than what you have for our lives. May at the end of the hour, Lord, may we be more fashioned after you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Alright, I do want to welcome you to Wednesday nights here at First Baptist, Opelika. We do our Bible study in two segments. The first segment is kind of a Q & A session that we call Ask Jeff where everything we deal with is because of you. You submit questions many of you online at fbcopelika.com/askjeff or through the app or through email or through texting, or even the old fashioned way where you write it down on a piece of paper and you submit it and then we enter it into a database which is completely at random. So you can submit a question yesterday and it get pulled today, you can submit a question five months ago and it not get pulled for five years. It is not our fault, it is the algorithm of the apps fault.

That being said, one thing I do want to remind us is as we continue with our weekly Bible study, there may be times where questions come out of the database or somebody may raise their hand with a question which you have the freedom to do, and it may be a question that was addressed a few weeks ago, it may be a question that was addressed a few months ago, and sometimes there's that thought in our mind, well, we've already taken care of that, we've already addressed that, why would we go over it again? We need to remember sometimes people are new to us, or maybe sometimes people have not been a part of this before, or maybe it is their first time, and here's how I see that. If somebody raises their hand and deals with a question that maybe we dealt with significantly three or four months ago, I take that as God saying, "You know what? You may have gone through it once but it wouldn't hurt you to go over it twice." And so let's remember just because we may be proficient in whatever we're addressing, there may be others who it's a completely new topic. So I don't know that that will occur but I just want to give us a fresh reminder.

To the database we go and we actually answered that last week and I didn't push the answered button. I apologize. Okay. Random question 1. Oh boy. Looking at the clock, here we go. The question is where was Jesus in the time between the crucifixion and the resurrection?

Now the easy question is he was dead. Next question. But that is not what is being asked. Now the question that is being posed is from the time in which he breathed his last breath when he said, "Father, into your hands I commend my Spirit," until the moment in which the women came right before dawn on what we know as resurrection day and the tomb was removed and the angels said, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" The question is where was Jesus? And the reason that question is asked is because there have been thoughts, there have been concerns, there are verses and, yes, even throughout time there have been statements and creeds that have posed various opinions.

Now simply put, there are three options to answering this question and I'm going to do them in descending order and I think you'll understand what I mean. Option A is that upon his physical death, now let's just be honest, we know that his physical body was in

the tomb, correct? That's not what the question is asking, right, because we know that the Bible says to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, and so if I were to pass away tonight and my body were lying in a casket, you would not say, "Well, there is Jeff." It may be Jeff's deceased body but the ultimate question is where is Jeff at that point. And so when we ask where is Jesus between his death and resurrection, we're not dealing with a physical body in the physical grave of Joseph of Arimathea, what we're dealing with is where was he at that instant after he breathed his last breath until the point in which his body physically rose and became alive again by the power of God in the empty tomb.

Three basic options. Option A or option 1 is that he upon breathing his last breath was immediately in the presence of the Father in a place that we call heaven around the throne room with the glorification of the angels. Now even though that sounds great, the problem with that is when Jesus does raise from the dead, one of the persons who first sees him physically was a woman known as Mary, one of the four Mary's, which comes to him and desires to touch his feet. Y'all remember this account? It's in the gospel of Luke. Jesus makes this statement, "Do not touch me for I have," what? "Not yet ascended to the Father." So Jesus eliminates that option real quickly, okay?

Option 2 is that he was simply just in the empty tomb or he was in the tomb for three days and three nights. The problem we have with that is the book of Acts 2 and the book of 1 Peter 3. So go ahead and go to Acts 2 and 1 Peter 3 because what we've done is eliminated option A. You and I both know with common biblical sense you've got to eliminate option B.

It only leaves one other option and it makes most of us as Baptists very very uncomfortable but Acts 2, we have the sermon of Peter of what we know as Pentecost. In Acts 2, there is a sermon, for lack of better terms, there is a message in regards to and allow me to set the stage. According to verses 4 and 5 of Acts 2, Jews from all nations, all people groups have gathered around, and they are postulating of what makes the disciples or the apostles so different. We know the tongue experience takes place. The church is formally or, shall I say, visibly initiated at that point, and then Peter begins to preach a sermon that if I were to title the sermon, it would be titled "Why you killed the wrong guy," because he begins to share the story of Jesus, the prophecies of Jesus, the life of Jesus, the death of Jesus, and the resurrection of Jesus, to show that this man who was crucified some days earlier was the Messiah that was prophesied for thousands of years.

Now that being said, in verse 25, gave an account of who Jesus was in his life, death and resurrection, it says, "For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Fast forward to verse 31, "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." Now I know there are some of your Bibles that will have the word either Sheol or Hades there. Can we all just come to the agreement that whatever word is used there is a reference to an abode

or a place of those that have departed from the flesh and it's not a tomb above ground of Joseph of Arimathea? Can we all agree to that term?

So now we go to 1 Peter 3 and then we're going to have some fun commentary here. 1 Peter 3 beginning in verse 18 is one of the only passages we have in the entire Bible that describes what Jesus was "up to" during those three days. It's a great question to ask, what did Jesus do between his death and his resurrection? Beginning in verse 18 of 1 Peter 3, it says, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."

Now the Bible also says in the mouth of three witnesses there is security, so go back to the book of Ephesians 4. So you're thinking why does this feel like Bible drill? Because I don't want my opinion to be what you hear, I just want you to hear what does the Bible say about the person of Jesus in regards to the question at hand. The first passage in Acts 2 made it very clear that upon the death of Jesus, he was in a place not what we know as heaven, and not simply an empty tomb, but where he was, he did not see corruption. Some of your Bibles will say he was literally in hell, which is why what we know as the Apostles' Creed for hundreds of years said that he died, was buried, and descended into hell, and rose three days later. That's the Apostles' Creed that was in existence for probably roughly around 1,600 years until the 1960s, they took that phrase, "descended into hell," actually out of the Apostles' Creed. Acts 2 said, it says hell, some of your Bibles say Sheol or Hades which is technically a word for the abode or the place of the dead. 1 Peter 3 says that at some point he went and he preached to the spirits that were in prison that were disobedient. Can we all agree those people were not residents of heaven? Can we all agree they were not in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. It was somewhere else.

Now we get to Ephesians 4, beginning in verse 7. It says, "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)" And so even in Ephesians 4 it says this same Jesus that ascended, at some point it says he descended.

So putting all these verses together, I think that we have to come to an understanding of is that at the death of Jesus Christ and eventually three days later at the resurrection of Jesus Christ, what you and I know as the abode of the dead was a little bit different than what it is today in the 21st century. You say, "Well, how is it different?" Well, in the book of Luke 16:19-31, there is the story of the rich man and Lazarus, both of which die, and

when they die, it says that the rich man found himself in a place the Bible calls hell. Again, much like Acts 2:31, some versions use the word Sheol or Hades, meaning the place of the dead. But can we all agree based on that famous story that this man known as the rich man is not in a good place? He says that he is thirsty. He says he is in pain, he is in agony. And even if you want to use the word Sheol, this is not a good place. This is a hellish place at its best, in fact, he begs Abraham to dip his finger in water and just to place it on his tongue, he is in such misery and agony. The Bible also says that Lazarus is in a place that oftentimes we call Abraham's bosom. It is described as a place of heavenly character but we know that it is not the "heaven" that I would ascend to today upon my death because Hebrews 9:22 says without the shedding of blood there's no remission of sins. And so these, what we call, Old Testament saints or in this case Lazarus, not the same Lazarus that is raised from the dead in John 11, this is a different Lazarus, that there is no way that he is "around the throne room" with the angelic beings. However, the Bible says that this is a pretty good place.

What does Abraham say in Luke 16 about these two places? There is a great chasm between them. What's interesting is here in Ephesians 4, I'm going to work backward through these passages, in Ephesians 4 it says he that ascended first descended into the lower parts of the earth and he let those that were captive out of captivity. I want to take you back to the very first sermon that Jesus ever spoke. It's in Luke 4. He opens up the book of Isaiah and he says, "I have come," listen, "to set the captives free." So Ephesians 4 says when he descended, he took those that were captive and he set them free. Does it not only make biblical sense that what we know as this item is the place though heavenly in character, not physically a place known as heaven, that Jesus upon his death and eventual resurrection, it would be he and he alone who could set these captives free and as Matthew 27:51-53 says, that those many saints of old rose with him when he rose from the dead. The question is: what about these characters because according to 1 Peter 3 it says he preached to those that were in prison, particularly those that were disobedient in the days of Noah. That would encompass these folks.

Now let me give you a very clear understanding of the word "preach." It does not mean opportunity for a decision. To preach is to proclaim truth. Guys, I'm going to pick on us. How many times have you told your buddy, "Oo, last night, my wife was preaching to me"? Did she give you a chance to repent? No. She just told you you were wrong, is what she did. And so when it says that he preached unto them, don't think that an invitation was given, don't think an altar call was given. It was simply a declaration that he was who he said he was going to be and they were in rebellion and eternally going to face the consequences for their rebellion.

Now we get back to Acts 2. So Ephesians 4 addresses this side, 1 Peter 3 addresses the characters on this side, but Acts 2 says that his soul would not be left there. I think the key word to all of this and by the way, this is a Scrabble word if y'all want big points, are you ready? Here we go: the word is propitiation. This word is found in your Bible in 1 John 2 and in 1 John 4 and it says that Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins. What does that big word mean? It means one who takes the punishment of. So when it says that Jesus Christ bore our sins, when it says he was the propitiation of our sins, he had to pay

the price for our sins. Now this is where a lot of us get a little bit uncomfortable. How is being over here paying the price for your sins? Lazarus was having a field day. Lazarus was enjoying life, everything's great. However this, not so much. In Acts 2, twice it says he descended and his soul was not left there, neither did it see corruption.

Now here's where we get into quantity discussions. People says, "Well, if that's what you're going to stand on scripturally, then how long was he there?" I don't know. If he was there for a microsecond, it's still propitiation. If he were there for 72 hours, it is propitiation. That is not a question, I think, we have access to the knowledge thereof but I think we have to understand that between his death and resurrection there was movement in what Luke 16 calls the place of the dead, both the release of those that were believing in faith, both the condemnation of those who were in rebellion, but ultimately there had to be propitiation that was made on our behalf and only Jesus Christ, because the Bible says the wages of sin is death and it had to take place.

Questions? Thoughts? Concerns? There's got to be some, I know. Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Paradise. So, the thief on the cross, you remember there were two thieves, one who condemned him and one who said, you know, "Take me with you," basically. That's the New Revised Jeff Version. He said, "Today you will be with me in paradise." Alright, so let's look at this chronologically, alright? Now we don't know exactly what day that this took place, okay, as far as like the day, the calendar year, there's a lot of discussion there. So just for the sake of illustration, on the day that Jesus Christ was crucified he said, "Today you will be with me in paradise." Paradise isn't so much a place of geography as it is a description of environment but let's work with geography. Where would he have been if he was a believer the moment he died, that thief? Right here, right? Did Jesus not at some point arrive in this place? I mean, he set them free, did he not? So today you will be with me in paradise. Here's the interesting thing: where was paradise a year later? Was it here? No, because this has been set free and Paul the apostle in 2 Corinthians 12 says he was caught up into the third heaven and he called it paradise. So paradise is no longer geographically here, for our terminology it's geographically there, but the difference in its location is based on the resurrection.

Does that help at all? Not really, kinda, sorta, maybe? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Oh, in Revelation 20, the two resurrections?

[unintelligible]

Okay. Great point. Now the question he's asking if you couldn't hear was the book of Revelation talks about two resurrections, okay? Immediately before what is described there as the thousand year reign of Christ it says that at the point the first resurrection has

consummated and yet the next one will occur, and that one is after that event at the last part of chapter 20 of the book of Revelation. Now what's interesting about what he is describing, the first resurrection, is what do you do with this, right? Because as he said, there are passages in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15 that says when the Lord descends with the shout of an archangel, the dead in Christ or those who are asleep in Christ shall rise first. Now this is a really bad joke but I'm a preacher so I'm going to tell it. Why do the dead have to rise first? Because they have six feet further to go. You're absolutely right.

So that's why they have to rise first, but that being said, the dead in Christ will rise first yet 2 Corinthians 5 says to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, so the dead there is their physical bodies because it says that we shall be transformed, we shall be changed, our corruptible will be made incorruptible, our shortness will be made tallness, our mortality will be made immortality. I'm just making sure you're awake tonight. Okay, good, good deal. That we receive a new, immortal, never to be corrupted body at that point. The interesting thing to me is that Matthew 27:51-53 talk about these folks being raised. It says that they literally come out and walk in the holy city. They are raised. Those passages you're talking about, 1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Corinthians 15, they also speak of a raising, so to speak, being caught up in the air. We get the term rapture from that which literally just means to be taken from one place to another place supernaturally and with great speed, is all it means.

We get that event, but we also see and not to delve too much time into this, that when Jesus Christ comes back in Revelation 19, it says that all the armies of heaven are with him. Well, in the book of Revelation which we will study over the course of time, in chapter 7 during that time period known as the Great Tribulation, it says that there are those from every nation and every group that are saved even during that horrible time, which would postulate the principle that at some point during that time period before his return, there is another catching up, so to speak, which matches the agricultural language in the Bible of firstfruits, harvest and gleanings, which thereafter at the beginning of chapter 20 says this is the first resurrection, that the culmination of those three is collectively the first resurrection, and then after that thousand years is the second resurrection and, by the way, you really don't want to be a part of that one because they go to judgment. First resurrection, good. Second resurrection, not so good.

Did that help at all? I'm the fastest speaking Texan you've ever met in your life. [unintelligible] somewhat of a time frame. What did I not help? Help me help you. Y'all know what I'm quoting there? Never mind.

[unintelligible]

No, no, no, we're good.

[unintelligible]

Oh, I apologize. I went fast. Anybody? Somebody? Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Oh, at what point? Okay, let's talk about this one because that affects you and me, right? Were you a part of this one? Were you a part of that one? Oh, I'm just making sure. Okay, so we're going to be a part of this one, right? You know it's not a sin to have fun, right? Y'all do understand that. So one day you and I together, right, we're going to go through this experience, right? Now we'll either be alive or dead, we don't know, okay? The question she's asking is, I'm assuming for those who are deceased, at what point does the spirit and the flesh or the new flesh come together?

Now I think the Bible's very clear in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 that you and I are composed of a spirit, a soul, and a body. Isn't that interesting that God is three in one and so are we? So when I die, I'll just use me as the example, when that occurs, my flesh, my body is in the ground, I'm six foot under. But my soul and my spirit are in the presence of the Lord. I'm in, to your point, sir, I'm in paradise at that point, alright? I mean, I'm having a good time. In fact, in Revelation 6 when it talks about the martyrs there, they're described as seeking and walking and moving and kneeling, all of the bodily movements that you and I are used to today. The picture that I get according to the passages that this man alluded to in 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians is that when it says this corruptible will be made incorruptible, mortal made immortality, it says that the bodies, the graves open and so basically the Bible says we came from dust, we'll return to dust, but that is opened and I believe it says we meet him in the air, that when my soul and my spirit descend with him and my body raises up and somehow it changes, I don't know how, what, when or where, but somewhere in the air that's going to take place and I'm going to be 6'5" so be ready. Now you know what the joke of that is, right? If I'm 6'5" that means everybody else is going to be 7'4" in heaven.

And I know I tease about that but literally height has nothing to do with it, but it is an immortal, incorruptible, new body, but my soul and my spirit at that day are not going to be any different than my soul and spirit today. My soul has been saved. The Spirit of God dwells inside of me. I'm just waiting to get rid of this carcass. I know I made this statement before and I want to say it again: you are not a soul-filled body, you are a body-covered soul. Those are two different things.

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Whoa, whoa, whoa, when you say proven scientific fact...

[unintelligible]

I'll trust you on that one. Supposedly we lose a quarter of an ounce, some of us are just trying to lose a few pounds but a quarter of an ounce, so that's supposedly the weight of the soul. I've heard that same analysis as well that there is no physical explanation for

why the moment after death the body weighs a microcosm less than prior to. Those of us that are believers, we understand. There's something that's no longer there that used to be and I think the key to what you brought up, sir, is it's tangible. It's real. It's not ethereal. It's not invisible, so to speak, because when you get to Revelation 6, which I alluded to, those martyrs, they're wearing robes. Well, you have to have some type of infrastructure no matter how light it may be to be able to have that physical description that is described of them in Revelation 6.

Anybody else? Yes, sir. We're back.

[unintelligible]

Yes.

[unintelligible]

Great question. Now the new heaven and the new earth as we walk through the book of Revelation, we're going to study that in detail in about six years. No, I'm kidding. That gets you all the way to new heaven and the new earth, this is over in Revelation 21. That is after all this stuff takes place. In other words, anything in Scripture related to resurrection, already taken place. Even if we, not you and I personally, even if we disagree on the who, the what, the when, and the where, it's all happened. All judgment has taken place. Everything involving resurrection, judgment, and all those things, it's all done with. When you get to Revelation 21, the last chapters of your Bible and it says, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth and a new Jerusalem," and it goes through all of that passage, what's critical to that is that none of the new stuff takes place until all the old stuff. No matter what we agree or disagree with on, we all have to agree it's all over with before this starts. Even if we don't quite understand or maybe on the same page about who, what, when and where, you cannot disagree with the overarching chronology. It's over with. Judgment is done. Opportunity is over. Eternity begins in Revelation 21.

Here's the great thing about that. It says at that point there is no former remembrance of former things. That is going to be a beautiful beautiful experience. Somehow supernaturally, by the way, I am convinced that all that Hollywood is, is a hijacker of godly or spiritual concepts. Have any of you seen the movie "Men in Black"? You can admit you've seen it. It's okay. But there is a device that these interplanetary law enforcement officers use that when they push the button, it zaps all memory. Now all that was, was a humanistic Hollywood version of what happens in Revelation 21 where the Lord says, "Pfft," and all the pain, the hurt, the disappointment of all of this is gone. Then it says there will be no more tears. So until we get there, there will be tears. Until we get there, there will be pain. Until we get there, there will be disappointment. But once that time frame arrives, that part is gone. That's after the first, second resurrection. All that stuff no matter how we agree to order timing and place, both of those events have taken place prior to.

Anybody else? We're good? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

The question that he posed... is that the end of the question or is there....?

[unintelligible]

Do I find it perplexing about those that were raised at the resurrection? Oh, absolutely because in Matthew 27, beginning at verse 51, it says that when Jesus rose from the dead, it says many saints of old rose and walked with him in the holy city. It absolutely blows my mind to imagine what that would have looked like, what the experience was, and how it took place.

[unintelligible]

Okay, great question. What happened afterwards? Because, now there are various incidents in Scripture where people die a physical death and are resuscitated. Now resuscitation and resurrection are two different things. Resuscitation is I have flat-lined and I now have a heartbeat again. Resurrection is to raise to never die again. There's a big difference there. Lazarus was resuscitated. The widow of Nain's son was resuscitated. The widow who helped Elijah's son was resuscitated. Various people were resuscitated. Resurrection means never to die again. I would argue these folks were resurrected, not resuscitated so I don't believe that the saints of old came up in the holy city and several years later died again. What I do believe is that based on Acts 1, when Jesus ascended it said the angels say, "Why do you look toward heaven? Do you not know that in the same manner he left, he will return again?" Well, we know that he left in the clouds, Revelation 19, he comes back in the clouds. We got that. But when he comes back, does he come back alone? No. He comes back with a group. So I think there is, this is the perplexing part, I think there is a perplexing possibility that they ascended with him as well because based on this man's question, if this event is a raising and there's another raising, it would only make sense that these events would look similar to each other and the firstfruits is always a much numerically smaller number than a harvest. And so we don't know how many folks this would have been but I would somewhat confidently yet perplexingly say, to use your word, that they were raised and ascended on high with Jesus some 40 days later. That's biblically speaking that's the picture that's kind of laid out. Does that make sense to me? No, but neither does a lot of stuff in the Bible. Just because it doesn't make sense to me doesn't mean that's not how the Lord worked it out, it's just the picture that we're given.

Does that help at all? Sure, okay. Now sure is not really a good word. Anybody else on this one before we move to Revelation? Yes, sir. Quick question.

[unintelligible]

No, it is not.

[unintelligible]

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Correct.

[unintelligible]

According to, right now today, if I were to breathe my last breath tonight, notice I always use myself as an example and none of y'all, okay? If I were to breathe my last breath, I would immediately be in a place that Paul called in 2 Corinthians 12 paradise which is the third heaven, which is the presence of the Lord, the throne room, the crystal sea. What we picture as heaven heaven is the place I would be now known as paradise.

Now here's the interesting thing. You opened up the can, I'm going to drink it. Here we go. In John 14, when Jesus makes the statement, "If you believe in God believe also in me, for in my Father's house are many mansions and I will come again and prepare a place for you." The heaven that you, well, I'm not going to put you, the heaven that I would go to today is not my permanent eternal dwelling place because right before this passage it says that he was seated on the throne and everything in heaven and earth was eradicated in a flame of fire. So what we know as, I think we can defend the fact of what we know as paradise today is not the paradise of eternity. Now it's not a holding tank, it's the throne room of God, it's the presence of God. It's not a triage center for heaven, so to speak, it is the dwelling place and the place of God. But the Bible says that one day everything in the heaven and the earth will be eradicated and a new heaven and a new earth and a new Jerusalem.

Now the fun part about that study, we don't have time tonight, is when you look at the dimensions that are given in Revelation 21 compared to earthly dimensions today of similar places. It is an unbelievable place of magnitude. People always say, "Well, do you really believe the Bible says it's a mansion?" Well, according to the dimensions that are given in Revelation 21, it is incredibly huge and if that's not a mansion, I don't know what is. And by the way, I'm going to pick. Some of our newer versions of the Bible say, "I created an apartment place for you." What kind of translation is that? I don't want a two bedroom apartment. I mean, seriously, that's not appealing. But a mansion is a picture of grandeur, a picture of incredibleness, and so the size, again, that's irrelevant at that point but even the dimensions that are given in Revelation 21 are incredible.

Anybody else? Oh, yup, yup, yup. We're never going to get to Revelation but we are in Revelation. Go ahead, sir.

[unintelligible]

Oh, yes. Oh, yes, yes, yes. The question or the statement if I were to go to...why am I the one always dying here? Okay, so if I die tonight, I believe that the moment I breathe my last breath, I am instantly in a place called paradise but in the presence of Jesus. Absolutely. And I don't think, we tell a lot of jokes but I don't think I have to get to the gates of heaven and say, "Well, is he up here somewhere?" I mean, I think it's immediately because it says to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, not to be present in a mansion. I mean, just to use our language, but I think I'm immediately in his presence and since I'm not the Apostle Paul and I have not been caught up to the third heaven, I can't tell you what that's going to look like and neither can those that have written books. Did y'all catch that?

And I want to pose something. Why, I'm going to pick on me again. Let' just say I write a nationwide bestseller about visiting heaven, not that I would but other people have. Why would the Lord give me more access than he did the Apostle Paul? It's a pretty arrogant proposition if you think about it. Why would he give me more information than he gave the Apostle John? He told us everything we need to know in Scripture so why do we need more? Have you ever thought about that? So that being said, even the Apostle Paul who had been to heaven, came back and said, "It's so cool, I can't even describe it to you." But all of a sudden we've got all these books that can tell us what it looks like but Paul couldn't even describe it.

Now I'm not picking on them. It's a great way to make a living but you have to question the theological integrity. If Paul didn't know what all it was, and the Apostle John who the book of Revelation is given to, if he wasn't given that, then why would I? Does that make sense what I'm saying? And I know it sounds like I'm being ugly. I'm not being ugly. Here's what I'm calling for, people: be discerning. Believe Paul and not a five year old. Believe John. Does that make sense? Do I believe that five year olds can tell the truth? I think. I had three in my house at one point, I think it's possible, but why would I elevate anybody's personal experience over what Scripture has given us no matter how wonderful that person may be? There's my two cents.

Anybody else? Oh, boy, opened it up. Yes.

[unintelligible]

Oh, what did I mean by the 40 days? Great question. Alright, let's do a timeline. And by the way, there is an outline here for the book of Revelation. You can just file it for next week. But we are in Revelation most of this study.

Alright, she asked the question about the 40 days. The chronology here is that Jesus was crucified during Passover, one of the Jewish feasts. We know that he was ascended seven days before Pentecost. Pentecost, pente, it means 50, okay, 50 days after Passover is another Jewish feast. So if we do a chronology here, this is Pentecost, we know that that's day 50. We can't argue with that because that's just why it's called what it is, alright? We know that Passover is day 1 of this chronology. So there's day 1. We know that Jesus rose three days, correct? So we've got him raised for three days, day 3. We know that he

ascended, it says in Acts 1 that they prayed in Acts 1:14 for seven days before the Holy Spirit descended. So we have a seven day expansion here which gets us to day [unintelligible]. I'm not or wasn't a math major but I think that gives us 40 days.

Now what that means is according to Acts 1, it says that he taught the disciples during that time period. So when I speak of the 40 days, he died, rose three days later, spent 40 days teaching and preaching, ascended, seven days later the Holy Spirit descended on what we know as Pentecost. That's just a chronology between the death of Jesus and the descending of what we know as the Holy Spirit in Acts 2.

Now does that help at all with that one? Yeah, so I apologize for just assuming but that's that 40 day time period and the 40 days is between resurrection and between his ascension because he ascended a week before Pentecost.

I saw another hand, I thought. Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

I get nervous when people say, "I've always had a little problem."

[unintelligible]

Yes.

[unintelligible]

Ah, great question. He said, "I've always had a struggle with John 14:6 where Jesus says, 'No one comes to the Father but by me.'" Jesus. The question is what about the godly men and women before Jesus? A great example of that is Hebrews 11, what we know as the Hall of Fame of Faith where we have folks like, oh, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David. I mean, it's a pretty good list. So what do we do with those folks? Well, I think the criticalness of tonight's discussion is I would claim that their death in faith, because when you get to Hebrews 11, I think it's 32 times, I could be wrong, I think 32 times the phrase "by faith" is used. By faith, Abel. By faith, Abraham. By faith, David. So they had faith in whatever God told them to do, they essentially did it. I would claim that it was their faith that this would have been their residence – thank you, ma'am – after their last physical breath of which it was Jesus who led captivity captive. So essentially now in the 21st century looking back, it was Jesus alone that paid the price for their sins but it was their faith in God's plan that allowed them ultimately to be saved by Jesus though he had not come yet.

Does that help? Nobody is saved outside of Jesus, however, there are those that lived prior to, those that have lived after. Jesus is at the center of that.

I saw a hand. Yes, sir. You know this is number three.

[unintelligible]

Oh, okay.

[unintelligible]

Yes, Job.

[unintelligible]

Before the law, before all that stuff.

[unintelligible]

"And I shall see him the latter day." And that statement in Job 19 where he says, "I know my Redeemer lives and I shall see him at the last day," when Handel wrote the "Messiah," it takes eight minutes to make that statement. Those of you who have ever been to the "Messiah," you know what I mean. It says, "I know my Redeemer," it just keeps saying, "I know my Redeemer lives." It takes about eight minutes.

Anybody else on this? Oh, yes, sir. Everybody's adding to everybody. Go ahead.

[unintelligible]

Oh, he did say. Yes, "In my flesh I shall see God," which I think based on what we studied tonight ultimately he's referring to the incorruptible flesh that one day he will receive because Job will go through this experience and David will go through... I mean, I say hope, I mean, I'm going through the experience but it's possible that it happens before my physical death and it will be a translation of my flesh, not a replacement thereof. By the way, the Apostle Paul said those who have not experienced death prior to, he equates it to winning a prize that we did not have to experience. I'm going to tell y'all, I'm not worried about where I go when I die, but I'm not looking forward to the possible processes by which we get there. Now if I had my choice, either asleep or doing about 160 mph in a car and I never feel it.

Okay, moving on. Anybody else on this one? Oh, yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

That is correct.

[unintelligible]

Great. Okay, the question and I know she was soft-spoken. Wonderful question. It was in the Old Testament, you're absolutely correct, that the high priest would go in on the Day of Atonement, okay, once a year and put blood on the mercy seat. It was a blood offering

for the sins of the people. Jesus in Hebrews 7 and 10 is called our great high priest. His blood was shed. So the picture has been given that when he shed his blood, he placed it on the mercy seat. Here's where it gets fun, okay? When he told Mary, "I've yet to ascend to the Father," okay, but then if you want to do the strict chronology, about 2-3 hours later he tells them, "Handle my feet. Go for it," alright? At that point when you look at the resurrected Jesus, he's walking through doors, he's here in Emmaus, he's there in two seconds. There is no longer a limitation of time and space as you and I know it. What's interesting to me is that when you get to Revelation 19 before all this stuff, you know and I don't know if you're aware of this, but when Jesus Christ was walking the earth, when he was ministering, when the temple was there, if you would have taken the veil and looked behind it, there was no ark. It was gone. The ark of the covenant had not been there in Jerusalem since at least 586 BC when Nebuchadnezzar came and ransacked it.

Now there's all kinds of great ideas and theories and conspiracies about what happened to it and where is it, but in Revelation 19 it speaks of God's ark being in the throne room. And so the picture if not literal, the picture we're given is that upon his resurrection he did raise to the Father, he did present himself on the mercy seat in the throne room of God as the eternal propitiation and sacrifice for our sins so that when he comes back, he says, "Touch me all you want. The sacrifice has been made." If that doesn't turn you Pentecostal, nothing will.

Yes, ma'am, sir. Oh, yes, sir. I think it's a sir. I'm sorry, I couldn't see behind others. Yes.

[unintelligible]

Oo, that's a great question that Jesus answered in Matthew 22:30. The question is what happens between a man and a wife? Matthew 22:30, there's a group of people known as the Sadducees. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. They believed that you came from dust, you returned to dust, that's all there is. They give this analogy or illustration to Jesus about a woman who was married to a man and her husband died. He died, she married his brother, went for seven brothers, okay? And the question was asked to Jesus in the resurrection, whose husband will she be? That's a pretty good question, to be honest with you, from the perspective of the Sadducees. Jesus said, "You err because you know not the Scriptures." And in Matthew 22:30 he said, "For in the resurrection we will be as the angels," it does not say you become an angel, "and will not marry."

Now there are some people they find this very disheartening that the concept of marriage in an earthly form is not in a heavenly form. There are some people that are incredibly comforted by this fact. Just keeping it real. Here is my best answer to that, that you and I as believers in Jesus Christ, we are called the sons of God, we're called the bride of Christ, but we're also called brothers and sisters in Christ, and the picture that I get is that no matter how good it is on earth, the worst thing in heaven is infinitely better. We've heard the old preacher joke and I hate to use it but I will and I know you've all heard it. You know the joke about the guy who has all kinds of money and he begs God, he says, "Please let me bring something to heaven with me. I've attained so much. Please let me bring it." He said, "Sure, I'll make one, you know, exception." So he gets to the Pearly

Gates, he's got a whole wheelbarrow full of gold bricks and the Lord says, "Why did you bring asphalt?" And the point is whatever appears to be of greatest value here is of little to no value there, to which I would argue that our relationship as brothers and sisters in Christ will be infinitely greater with each other there than even a physical marriage is here because the Bible says in Ephesians 5 as Christ is to the church as is a husband to a wife, I think what the Lord is saying is the most intimate, the closest, the most intimate of relationships on earth is a husband and a wife and that's the best picture I can give you for your relationship with the Lord, but even in eternity it's even greater than that.

Now I will tell you, I do not find any evidence at all that my wife and I, who I love dearly, will be residents of the same mansion. I just don't find it. However, I have put in a request to be her neighbor. She may not have asked for the same thing. But that's what I've asked for. So to your point, I have a dear friend of mine who recently passed away who gave this analogy, okay? Are you married, sir? Okay, soon to be. Okay, let's just speed forward and let's go ahead and fast forward 100 years and you're married, I'm married, life is good. Okay, in heaven, okay, your wife will not love me any less than you, and my wife will not love you any less than me. That doesn't, to you, sir, that's perplexing. But I think when Jesus made the statement as the angels, we don't become angels but there is that connection that we can't even describe here, that marriage here is the best analogy we have for there but it's even infinitely more.

So I believe that I will in heaven, my relationship with you will not be different, greater, better or worse than my relationship with your soon-to-be wife, and vice versa with us and everybody else in this room and that's what's incredible about it, that what we consider the greatest here would be considered substandard there. It's that much infinitely greater.

Does that help at all? Now you're still going to get married now, right, even after all that? I'm just making sure. When are you getting married? December 17. Congratulations in advance.

Anybody else? Oh, yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Ah, boy, here we go. The question is will we be male or female? You know, in the 21st century that's such a fun question to talk about. We can't even figure that out here, how are we going to figure it out there? Here's how I want to answer that question. In the book of 1 John 3:2, it says we do not know yet how we shall appear but that when he appears, we shall appear as he is. Now I'm going to vaguely not address your question because the Bible does not specifically speak of gender in eternity. It does speak of immortality and it does speak of a body without pain and without agony and without demise. There is no specific reference to gender in eternity, however, I can promise you there will not be confusion like there is today on planet earth. And I'm going to be honest with you, I don't think we're going to care because to this young man's point, we're as the angels. There is

not the marriage relationship as today, there is the brothers and sisters of Christ relationship. That is no longer an active factor of life in the eternal perspective.

Does that help at all? Kinda, sorta, not really? You're just curious if you're going to get the great switch one day? Is that what you're curious about?

Next. Anybody else? Boy, that's a great way to end. Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

See, we're in Revelation. Thank you.

[unintelligible]

Yes, he does.

[unintelligible]

Ah, the question is in Revelation 1, is it verse 17, did I get it right? Which one? Ah, verse 17. Jesus makes this statement to the Apostle John, "I hold the keys to death and hell." The question is when did he get those? Now I'm at times a simpleton. Does that make sense? In other words, I like to just see, let's just keep it simple, stupid. For me, not for your sake but for my sake. What we began with tonight, it makes sense that this is when at this point because of his resurrection he now is, and I'm going to use earthly terminology, Jesus is the gatekeeper to eternal destiny, whether one is an eternal resident of heaven or hell, he is the one that determines that and therefore he has the key. Here's what I'm going hinge on, he has the key to unlock the door of the righteous into heaven and to lock the door of the rebellious in hell. Now that's a sobering sobering thought but he does right now possess the keys of death and hell. He's got them.

Alright, I think we've exhausted it tonight. Next week, same outline, Revelation 3. I promise we'll get...hey, but we dealt a lot with Revelation tonight nonetheless. Thank you for your questions. It was fun. I love you but I'm going to a basketball game.