

Ask Jeff

Ask Jeff

By Dr. Jeff Meyers

sermonaudio.com

Preached On: Wednesday, May 17, 2023

Crossroads Ministries

301 S. 8th Street

Opelika, Alabama 36801

Website: www.fbcopelika.com

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers

Good evening, it is 6:30 Central Standard Time here in Opelika, Alabama. It is my distinct privilege to welcome you to our Wednesday night large group adult Bible study, which if you are here for the very first time, could be a little unusual at first for you, because this Bible study is completely driven by, it is guided by you, the participants. That's right, every question that we answer, every topic we discuss, every passage that we turn to, is because you have initiated the conversation.

Now, as we get started, I know there's always new people in-house, there's new people online, you may be those listening on 97.7 FM. Even though they're a little bit time-delayed on Sunday morning, they can still be a part of it, because with our text messaging system, it would just roll over onto the next Wednesday. And I know tonight, particularly, I'm gonna give a little special shout-out. We've got some of our folks down at EAMC in the hospital watching us live. So, for all of you in your rooms, hey, welcome to Wednesday night here in the 316 Center. But for the rest of us, here we go. It's time to do some Bible study.

Three ways, actually two ways, that you can be a part of tonight's Bible study. You can text message in any question, comment, or concern you want at the following number, 334-231-2313. You are completely anonymous. Your number doesn't come up, your name doesn't come up, it's just the question by way of our, "portal." So, that way you can be on the front row, you can be online, you can be in another continent. It doesn't matter, it comes to us. Those of you that are personally in-house, you have the ability to raise your hand. Now, when you raise your hand, you have the right to take the conversation any way you want to. We can stay on subject, we can change subject, we can go deeper, we can go tangent too. By the way, speaking of back to text messaging, you can actually do a follow-up question with the text messaging too. We will know it as a follow-up, it will come up on a different font. If you were here last week, it's almost everything we did last week were follow-up questions, okay?

Now, just as a public service announcement, for those of you who do or do not know, we do a daily Ask Jeff YouTube question on the YouTube channel. If you want to do that, the questions typically are answered in a two to three minute format. Obviously, there's no follow-up. Here on Wednesday night, we take the time we need to answer the question. If you desire to do that, then you can either go to askjeff.net or go to the First

Baptist website, fbcopelika.com/askjeff. Those two website portals will take you to the daily questions. So, you can submit on the daily one, you can submit Wednesday night, you can resubmit, you can do follow-up, it's all up to you. You all are in charge tonight.

So, let's see what you all want to talk about. Here we go. Question numero uno says, just you know, we have a Latino ministry now, I'm just trying to be a part of the culture. It says in John 10:16, what does Jesus mean that he has other sheep that are not of this sheep pen and that he must bring them to? Okay, John 10:16 is, you know, under normal circumstances, I might say this is one of the misunderstood or most misapplied verses in scripture. However, when I make that statement, I'm typically making that statement about a verse that well-meaning Bible-believing Christians take either out of context or apply in a completely erroneous way. In John 10:16, this is technically one of the most misunderstood, misapplied and misinterpreted verses in all of your Bible but it is done so by a group known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, otherwise known as the Mormons. This verse, forgive me for making this parallel, this is their John 3:16, and what I mean by that is this is the verse that they hang their theological hat on. This is the verse that they give for the basis of all of the backstory that they give to what you and I know as the "book of Mormon."

So in John 10:16, we're just going to read verse 16 as it stands, "other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." They take that verse to mean that after, by the way, what I'm about to share with you is not only non-scriptural, it's non-verifiable historically or archaeologically either. Okay, their claim is that after Jesus Christ rose from the grave, and he appeared unto many, and then he ascended up into heaven, that at some point later, he made his way and appeared on the North American continents to the indigenous people that resided here. A few hundred years later, guided by the language known as Reformed Egyptian, when I say known as because it's never been found to ever exist, a group of people made their way on a boat to the North American continent and discovered there were a group of people who've been visited by Jesus who eventually became those who led to what we know as the book of Mormon, "another Testament of Jesus Christ." All of that comes from this verse right here, "I have other sheep."

Now, one of the best ways that you can take a verse in the Bible and "mess it up" is read it without reading the verse before or after it, or in the context of which is written. Here's what's interesting about John 10: Jesus is speaking about being the good shepherd and that there is an idol shepherd, i-d-o-l, which by the way, is based in Zechariah 14. Here, he's called the hireling. Basically, Jesus is referring to whom we know as Satan, who rather than going through the door, he crawls over the wall and he convinces the sheep that he has their best interest and then when trouble comes, he forsakes them. Kind of smells like the enemy, does it not? And so Jesus is talking about that he is the "good shepherd."

So let's pick up the story in verse 11. Let's read it in context. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth,

because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." The next verse is critical. "There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" What's important here is verse 19, is those who despise Jesus, those who could not stand what he was propagating, he was preaching as the Bible often says his "doctrine," they could not stand what he said because what he said is based on what we know as "verse 14, "I'm the good shepherd. I know my sheep."

Now, if you go back to John 1, beginning in verse 11, it says that Jesus Christ came unto his own, but his own received him not. Verse 12, but unto those of us who believe on his name, we have the power to become the sons of God who believe on his name. Now, isn't that interesting? Verse 11 of John 1 says Jesus came to his own, but they rejected him. Verse 13 said, but those who believe on his name will be his sons or be the sons of God. You take that verse, you transpose it over this verse and let me tell you what Jesus is talking about. Jesus is not talking about reformed Egyptian and Mormons. He's talking about pig-eating pagan Gentiles. That's what he's talking about. He's saying that, guess what, folks, all those folks that you see that are elbow deep in barbecue sauce, those guys, if they believe on me, they can be saved just like you. And verse 19, what did the Pharisees, they couldn't handle that. The Pharisees couldn't even handle that Jewish men like Peter, James and John could be followers of Jesus, much less you and I.

So in the context of John 10, this famous verse, verse 16 has nothing to do with this abstract faith that you and I know as Mormonism. It has everything to do with Jesus Christ being the Savior for any and all, Jew and/or Gentile or Samaritan that would believe on his name. It is a controversial verse, not within biblical Christianity, but outside of the umbrella of orthodoxy imposing itself upon.

So any questions regarding those matters? Everybody good? Everybody's good. Okay.

Question 2, in the new heaven and the new earth, is there a possibility for another angel to revolt against God like Lucifer did? Ooh, that's a really good question. So let's kind of take this question and let's just infer what it's inferring here. We know that Lucifer, the lighted one according to Isaiah 14, we know that according to Ezekiel 28, iniquity was found in his heart and he "sinned against God." Now, that being said, what's important is he was an angelic being. Technically, he was a cherubim. According to Ezekiel 28, it's a special, shall we say, classification of angelic beings, particularly associated with what we know as the throne of God. In fact, Ezekiel 28 says he was over the throne of God. He rebelled against God. He fell. Now, what's interesting is there's two other passages in your Bible, 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude verse 6 that talk about angels falling. Okay. We typically take those passages and throw them all the way back to when Lucifer fell and talk about

the "great rebellion." But what's interesting is in Revelation 12, it speaks of another angelic rebellion.

Go to Revelation 12 for just a moment. There it is. I just answer the questions. I don't ask them. So in Revelation 12, beginning in verse 7, now just kind of as a precursor here, when you're studying the book of Revelation, and by the way, let me give a shameless plug, this summer, beginning on June the 4th on Sunday mornings, we're going to do a quick little skip through the book of Revelation on Sunday mornings. It's only going to last about eight or nine weeks, just kind of hitting major subjects, major concepts. Honestly, we're going to hit it at the 30,000 foot level. But that being said, you say, "Well, I want to get in the weeds." We have all the recordings from three years of Wednesday night Bible studies that we got in the weeds on. But what you'll notice in the book of Revelation is there are several chapters that we call parenthetical. What that means is they're outside the scope of time. Okay. Chapter 12 of Revelation is one of those. Now, there's been a lot of discussion about when what we're about to read takes place but what's important to note is this: what you're about to read could not have taken place at the original rebellion of Lucifer. Okay.

So that being said, beginning in verse 7, it says, "there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels." Push pause. You say, "Well, how do we know that's not the original rebellion?" Because Lucifer wasn't the dragon initially. He is referred to that in his "fallen state." Verse 8, they "prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

So again, there is some evidence here that what we know as that original angelic rebellion was not the only one. In fact, you go in the book of Hebrews, it's really fascinating. It says one of the reasons for you and I to maintain a godly, biblical, righteous testimony is for the sake of the angels. Now that sounds really odd. What would the angels care? You put all those pieces together and it is plausible to defend the position that angelic rebellion and/or falling is not a one time or even a two time event, but could have been or has been happening throughout time. Okay? Which leads to this question. Chapter 21 and 22 of the book of Revelation, new heaven, new earth, new Jerusalem. Okay, that's great on one side. Chapter 20 addresses the other side that Satan and all those that have rebelled with him, whether angelic, human, whatever it may be, they are all cast in what the Bible calls the lake of fire.

Now, one of the beautiful things about Revelation 21 and 22 is it says there is no remembrance of former things. It is literally a new creation. It is a new start. It is George Lucas somewhat, shall we say, plagiarized, it's a new hope. Okay, for those of you that are Star Wars fans, you'll catch that one. But nonetheless, the question is, could it be? Is it possible? Technically, I would have to say it's a possibility. Okay. However, there is nothing in any passage of your Bible referring to eternity that any other rebellious behavior takes place. There is no mention of it at all. There's not a mention, there's not an allusion to, there's not a reference. It's almost as if don't even waste your time thinking about it because it's not going to happen.

Now, again, anything is possible, but there is no biblical evidence in any of those passages that you or I or an angelic being would revisit what "Lucifer did," and I think the key phrase in there is there's no remembrance of former things, that it's such a new beginning that it's not like somebody goes, "Hey, you know, maybe we ought to do the same thing he did years ago." That's not even in the plausibility context. So again, don't have concrete evidence, but there is no biblical evidence of any future rebellion past Revelation 21. It's just not there.

So any follow up on that? Concerns? Thoughts? Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Excuse me. I mean, yes, ma'am. I mentioned Hebrews, but I did not go there. You're correct because I don't have every verse of the Bible memorized, but I do know it's in Hebrews. It speaks about for the sake of the angels. I think it's in the first couple of chapters. Feel free to dig in there while I answer this follow up. It says if angels can fall, why can't "Christians fall"? Ah, great question. Hebrews 1. Hebrews 1:14. Now I'll go back just for context sake and go to verse 13, "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all," this is about angelic beings, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" It's very clear there, and I know our culture confuses this: angels are not humans and humans don't become angels. Okay, they're two different entities. The angelic beings are called ministering spirits, and it says that they minister to those, what did it just say? That are heirs of salvation. Angels were never formed in the image of God. Okay, angels at no point in the Bible does it said God breathed into them and they became a living soul. Does it say the angels had a soul? It says the angels were a ministering spirit.

Okay, and so therefore being originated in the image of God, yes, we fell, but now being redeemed through Jesus Christ, we are secure. In fact, we just read John 10:16. John 10:28 says that no thing or no person can pluck us out of his hand. Okay, a lot of passages we could walk through, lots of evidence that once we are born of the Spirit of God, once we're saved, once we're a child of God, we're in the family and we're there for good. The angelic beings, on the other hand, not so much. In fact, 2 Peter 2:4 says they left their first estate and it speaks of a rebellion that is non-redeemable. Okay, if that makes sense. So again, I hate to default to that's just the way God set it up, but there is no biblical evidence at all that angels are ever redeemed or restored once they have fallen. Humanity, thanks to Jesus Christ, can be redeemed and restored from our fallen state, but they are not human and we don't become them by any stretch of the imagination.

Any other angels? Did we ever find the verse? Okay, y'all keep looking during the hour. Here we go.

In Numbers 21, oh, the book of Numbers. Yes. When the people were bit by the fiery serpents, they looked upon the bronze serpent and they lived. Is there an application of the situation with a wayward person living a lifestyle that does not glorify God? Now, for

those of you don't know the story in Numbers 21, by the way, the book of Numbers from myself included gets a really bad rap. And I'll be honest with you, I think we have labeled this book of the Bible Numbers for a reason, there's a lot of numbers in there, right? There's a lot of census and names and so and so begat so and so and live so and so years and had so and so people. However, the very first word in the book of Numbers, okay, forgive me for geeking out on y'all for a moment is demidbar in Hebrew, it means in the wilderness. The story of Numbers is the story of the wilderness and a lot of times we look and go, "Oh, that's got to be boring." This is one of the most exciting books in all the Bible. Okay. The book of Numbers is where you have a donkey that speaks. Okay. The book of Numbers is where you have Korah, a false prophet rebel against Moses and God and 14,000 people die in a sinkhole. The book of Numbers is where the people get bit and they look at a snake on a pole. Anybody in the medical field that sound familiar to you? Do y'all find that ironic that in a culture that so wants to marginalize God and so elevate rightfully so those of the medical persuasion, that the official symbol that they wear is based on the Bible. Numbers 21, the pole with the serpent wrapped around it is from Numbers 21 to where when the people looked upon the serpent, they would have life. If they didn't, they experienced death.

Go to John 3. You say why John 3 to this story? Because there's a very famous verse in the gospel of John 3 that this building historically has been named after. Verse 16, and we all probably know it very well but remember that whole thing about reading the verses before and the verses after. Okay. So let's go back and read the verses before. I'm going to start with verse 9 because in verse 9, Nicodemus, who Jesus later in verse 11, we'll call a master of Israel, someone who knows more than anybody else, cannot grasp this whole concept what does it mean to be born again? Verse 9, "Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Listen to verse 14, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

Do you find it fascinating that this very famous verse that we not only quote often, but know well, the one Old Testament illustration that Jesus gives to lead up to it is this story in Numbers 21. As Moses and the serpent, so Jesus when he's lifted up. Basically, the analogy that Jesus is giving is that they had to keep looking at the serpent to "stay well." "If you look upon me and believe in me, you will always be well." Now the question presupposes, what about a wayward person? Understand Numbers 21 and John 3 are two different time periods. Numbers 21, you couldn't be born of the Spirit of God. Technically in John 3, they weren't either, but you and I today are. Okay, two words that we need to decipher or distinguish between tonight is the word sonship and fellowship. John 1:12, we've already quoted it, right? If you believe on the name of Jesus, you are a

son of God. You are his child. You're in the family. Okay, now sonship is different than fellowship. Sonship is relationship, fellowship is how it's going today. You've heard this analogy before. I don't mean to wear it out, but it's just the biblical analogy. Those of you who have children, okay, those children are your children for better or for worse. And I would guarantee, unless I'm the only parent in the room, I would guarantee that there have been times where you've been less than pleased with your children. True. In fact, there may have been times where you've used the following statement. "I brought you into this world and I will take you out." They did not cease being your child but the relationship, the fellowship was strained.

How do you fix the fellowship? 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he's faithful and he's just to forgive us of our sins." How does that happen with children and their parents? When wrong has been done until the child confesses, until the child owns up to it, until the child admits their wrongdoing, then there's still going to be some pretty serious tension within the home, right? But once that confession takes place and once the fellowship is restored, you would never say, "Woo, man, you're now again my son." Well, I have to say that because I don't have daughters. I don't understand the other side. Okay. At no point in the last 21 years have any of my children ever ceased to be my children but there's been times it wasn't good. Does that communicate? All right.

And so again, I think going back to Numbers 21, this is pre-Jesus, pre-crucifixion, this is pre-resurrection. In the case of the wilderness, they had to continuously look up in order to stay well but you and I, according to John 3, in context, when we call on his name, we became his child, we were infused with the Holy Spirit, we became a new creation. The sonship isn't going to go away, but the fellowship can. And so per the question, we can "look to him" maintaining the fellowship, but never worrying about voiding the relationship. So hopefully that helps just a little bit. But again, in the book of Numbers that we often dismiss, it's a really fascinating, fascinating story.

Any thoughts, comments? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Yes, sir. Yes, sir. Yes, sir. Yes, sir. He was. He is. Yes, sir. Yes. He did. So what he's, if you couldn't hear the commentary, it's rightfully and very fitting, in Isaiah 42 and in chapter 46, was it or 49, Jesus talked about that he would be the light even to the Gentiles, that he would be the one who would be the Savior and Redeemer for all, the mechanism of the Messianic lineage would be the Abrahamic covenant but the result of an empty tomb would be salvation to all who would call upon his name. And so even prior to these passages that even Nicodemus couldn't grasp or in John 10, the Pharisees couldn't grasp, it had been prophesied for years that redemption was available to all who would believe and it was not, as we know, redemption in Numbers 21, being born again, being saved, it wasn't a possibility because the Messiah hadn't come. They were looking to, in fact, in Hebrews 11, it said they had faith, Abraham had faith, Abel had faith, Moses had faith but they had faith in what God had shown them at that point that was all eventually leading to whom we know Jesus, the Messiah. So this isn't just a John 3 story as you're bringing out, this has been a story for a very, very, very long time.

Sir, I saw your hand as well.

[unintelligible]

Yes, sir. Is that not the method that you must do to look upon Jesus? Yes. You can't look to anybody else. You know, I heard a phrase years ago, this may sound trite, but I think it's pretty theologically sound. Okay. I don't want to follow anybody who beats me dying. Now that may sound trite to you, but think about it. Every leader of every faith other than Jesus Christ and Christianity has a burial site and bones. And when you think about that, what does that produce? It produces false hope. If I'm just going to go, if Muhammad didn't make it, how am I going to make it following Muhammad? And people say, "Well, you know, Muhammad was a great prophet. We claim he was ascended." Okay. You claim he was ascended, but you have his bones. We don't have Jesus' bones. I've been in the tomb multiple times. Ain't nothing there bone wise. I mean, there's the slabs, but I'm talking about as far as bones and remains and such. And so looking to Jesus, which is what he was going back to it, by the way, I'm going to correlate between you and the gentleman in front of you, in Isaiah, okay, it speaks about not only looking to, but it says in Isaiah 53, "by his stripes were healed." What happened in Numbers 21? They were healed when they looked upon that serpent. And so you take these concepts that are building in the old Testament, Jesus shows up to Nicodemus, by the way, Nicodemus, one of my favorite characters in the Bible. Nicodemus had grown up, I'm going to use the word church, but it would have been a synagogue, right? He grew up in church. He went to Sunday school. He never missed a service and he didn't get it because he had all the pieces in all the wrong places. He didn't have them pointing to a true Messiah. He had them pointing to a religious tradition that all these other folks had kind of painted the picture they're in. And so all these are these "building blocks."

Anything else? Oh, yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Yes. In the situation with a wayward person living a lifestyle that does "not glorify God." If you could not hear what he said, what he called a works based salvation or oftentimes there's other words we use for it, but one of the things he's saying is what the Bible does not subscribe to but humanity gravitates toward is this, okay, I'm convicted of my sin, which by the way, John 16 says the Holy Spirit does. I run to the Lord, I confess it all. I believe, I believe, I believe. And then I go back, I mess up again, and I run back again and say, I repent, I believe, I believe, I believe. Never once, never once in my life has any of my children, when they've done something wrong, run back in the house and say, "Oh dad, please let me be your son again, please let me be your son again." They actually said, "Please don't me." I'll let y'all fill in the blank, whatever that may be. But again, that works-based mentality that so easily creeps up into our thought pattern, that I have to earn, rationalize, I have to accomplish something on behalf to maintain that status which is interesting because all the analogies in scripture are relationships, son and dad, not employer and employee. And so therefore, it's that role. I think, this is just me speaking, I think the problem with what you're bringing up, sir, is they can't differentiate between

relationship and fellowship. They make it the same. That if I lose my fellowship, I've lost my relationship. And that's just not the case. It doesn't work horizontally, and it doesn't work vertically. And I know I've said this before, but just hear me again: there are certain words the Bible uses to describe us entering into that relationship. We're saved. We're redeemed. We're reconciled. But at no point do you ever see anybody in your New Testament get unsaved, unredeemed, unreconciled, resaved, reredeemed, reredeemed, is that a word, re-reconciled. You just don't see it.

But you have, and I know you're in our Tuesday Morning Men's Bible Study, in Romans 7, the Apostle Paul lays out a case. He claims to be the most wretched, sinful person on the earth. Now, can we all just agree if he thinks he's the worst, then who are we, right? But then in chapter 8, verse 1, after confessing his wretched, that's the word he uses, wretchedness, in chapter 8, verse 1, he says, "Therefore now is there no condemnation to those who are in Christ." In other words, my fellowship needs to be restored, but my relationship has not been voided. And this works-based mentality that we tend to gravitate toward, because let's be honest, in the secular world, most of our friendships, relationships, professional jobs, are works based. If I don't perform, I'm no longer employed. And so our relationship to the company, the entity, the boss, whoever it is, is based on what we accomplish and what we do but that's not the way it works with the Lord. You are his in spite of. Now, the fellowship may be strained, but the relationship is good. But there's, unfortunately, a natural fleshly tendency to seep into... One of the best descriptions of it is performance-based Christianity, where I have to perform in order to somehow be received and accepted, which is actually the opposite, because he did everything on our behalf.

Anybody else on this one? We're going... Whoop! Either somebody just got filled with the Spirit, or you've got a question. How may I assist?

[unintelligible]

Yes, sir. 1 Corinthians 15 and 17. That's correct. Say that one more time? Why do we keep saying, what? Ah, great, so the question is based on 1 Corinthians 15:17, it says, if Christ be not risen from the dead, our faith is in vain, okay? The question is, then why do we go to Hebrews 9:22, which says without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins? Okay? I would claim you can't have a resurrection without a crucifixion, and a crucifixion without a resurrection can't redeem. You have to have both sides of that. So there is no remission without the shedding of blood, but there is no true redemption without a resurrection. You cannot have... Let me just use a hypothetical, and by the way, this really isn't hypothetical because people have claimed this before. Let's say you have somebody who claims that they rose from the grave. By the way, did you know there is a somewhat culturally well-known figure whose followers still believe he's going to rise from the dead? And by the way, you probably know who this individual is, and if you were alive and conscious in 1993, you watched it for 53 days. His name is David Koresh of the Branch Davidians. Waco, we ain't coming out Texas. Okay, there. Now, the reason I bring that up... Please laugh, come on. I lived there when it happened. There are people today who on a certain day of the year still go back to that site expecting him to rise from the dead. Okay? Now, I don't believe he's going to but if he did, it wouldn't matter,

because he didn't have the pure blood that could lead to the remission of sins. So even if they claimed he rose, it wouldn't matter. There's a lot of people who claimed their innocence and their redemptive qualities upon their death that then never rose from the grave. It's the both/and. You can't settle for an either/or.

It says in regards to relationship versus fellowship, does that mean that Christian parents that disown their kids for whatever sin they've committed are in the wrong? Wow, that's a loaded question. Okay. I always on this type of question, I always, always, always like to defer to Luke 15 in the famous story of the prodigal son. Why? Because the prodigal son is a pretty good picture of this question and in that story that Jesus told, the father is representative in a parable form of God himself, right, welcoming home that rebellious child, giving him the robe, the fatted calf, etc. Here's the thing I want you to notice about that story. Now, I'm not here to frustrate, I'm not here to upset, and I know anytime you're dealing with anybody, much less children, who are struggling or have struggled with whatever, there is no reference in the story that the dad in the story ever went and drug him out of the mud. Did you hear that? The Bible says he came to his senses. Only the Holy Spirit can convict us of our sin. Only the Holy Spirit can convict us of our wrongdoing. And I will dare say, and it's not just in this question, this is in life in general, I think a lot of times you and I interfere in people's lives to keep them from hitting rock bottom thinking we're helping them, but we actually keep them from hearing God get a hold of them, if that makes sense.

Now, the question says "disown." In that story, the dad figure never disowned him but he basically said, "I'm here, you know where I live, and when you come to your senses and repent, then we can go forward." When that son is coming home, did you know that in that parable, that is the only place that's ever inferred in the Bible that God runs? That dad gets up and runs to meet him because why? He sees him walking. He's no longer in the mud, and he is coming home. And I want you to think about that story. This young man has wasted his entire inheritance, and everybody knows it. His brother, if you read the rest of the story, has kind of been leaking secrets about how bad he's been, okay? His reputation is ruined, everything's bad and he, this is important, he has the humility to walk back to the house because he knows he's wrong. What did he say? "If only my dad will make me a hired servant." That's a heart change. That's an attitude change. And when that young man came walking across the grass, don't you think that dad could see it? And what did that dad do? He went and he met him.

So per this question, that dad in the story never disowned that son. Never disowned him. But the rules were very clear about the behavior that was expected, if that makes sense. Kind of the other way, oftentimes we say it somewhat colloquially, is at times in life where you have to de-fellowship from somebody because of their sin, always leave the door open for them to come back when they repent, is kind of the way that we colloquially say that. So the dad didn't lock the gate and change the code. But again, you look at the disposition of the son, it was completely different, willing to confess, willing to admit, basically absolute humility. So, but good question, hard question, but a real question.

It says, can you explain apostolic succession and why Baptists don't believe in it? All right, now, it's at this time that I probably need to make a public service announcement. It doesn't matter whether Baptists believe in it or not, the question is, what does the Bible say? Okay? Now, on this issue, the Baptists just happen to line up with the Bible, okay? But again, this isn't a Baptist issue, okay? And by the way, some of you may be thinking, oh, that's like the Popes and Catholics. This isn't a Catholic issue either, okay? There are other branches or aspects of Christianity that believe in what we know as apostolic succession.

So apostolic succession is rooted in John 21. John 21 and then we're going to go to 2 Corinthians 12 in just a moment. But John 21. I apologize, John 20. I knew it was on the left side of the page. I had the wrong page. John 20. Jesus Christ has risen from the grave. He has been teaching the disciples, the apostles, for numerous amounts of days. I'm going to begin in verse 19 but it's verse 23. Remember when we talked about John 10:16 earlier about being kind of a text verse for a certain faith? Verse 23 of John 20 is the textual verse for apostolic succession. It says, "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord." Verse 21, "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." Apostolic succession basically makes this claim that those that come in the footsteps of Jesus don't just believe in him but represent him.

So one of the titles that whom we know as the Pope allows himself to be called by is the Vicar of Christ. That means the representative of Christ meaning, because Christ is in the heavens, that he, this is their belief, that he is Jesus on earth. He's the representative. Apostolic succession basically says that there is a continuous line of the presence of the Lord through a specific people so as to be accessible on earth. Okay. That's what apostolic succession essentially teaches and/or preaches. One of the reasons people believe that is verse 23 because what did Jesus say? "Whose soever sins you remit, they'll be remitted and whose soever sins you forgive or remit, they'll be remitted."

Now, here's what's interesting. Last time I checked, please note my gift of sarcasm, the only one according to Acts 4:12 and a host of other verses that can forgive you of your sins is Jesus Christ. That's it. Okay. Did you notice when I read this verse, I used a word called "remit." Do any of your Bibles have the word "forgive" there? Some of them do. Do they not? Whose soever sins you forgive, they'll be forgiven. Some of you don't, but some of you do, right? Now, this is where we're going to have a little dialogue and fun, okay? If yours says forgive, I promise I'm not trying to be disparaging, I'm just trying to be honest with you, if you're willing to, just share with me what "version" of that Bible it is. Anybody? The New American Standard. Who else? NIV. New King James. Here's what's interesting. New American Standard and the NIV, both of the committees that put that together, half of the people that translated it were Roman Catholic. So what do you expect? Apostolic succession. Correct? Right? The New King James actually added that

in 1979. Okay? Here's what's interesting and I know I go old school on y'all, but the old King Jimmy says remit.

Now, let me tell you what remit means, to remit means to not hold accountable to or to place in the queue. So when it says there whose soever sins you remit, it will be remitted, what Jesus was telling them was you have the right to come to me and say, "Why don't we not count that one against them?" Is that forgiveness? No. You and I, nor any other person, have the ability to forgive somebody and absolve them of their sins and place them in the heavenlies. We don't have that ability. But here's the interesting thing, there are people throughout time that do believe that who were a part of these translating committees that interject that apostolic succession to make us read that and go, "Whoa, time out. If the apostles could forgive sin, well, then it makes sense that Jesus always had somebody who could. So there must be an 'apostolic succession.'"

Now, go to 2 Corinthians 12 and let me show you what the Apostle Paul said. Then we're going to go to Acts 1. This is a really good question. 2 Corinthians 12. Remember, he's caught up in the third heaven, sees things he never thought he'd see, hear things he never thought he'd hear. The famous thorn in the flesh. Verse 12, "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, signs, wonders, and mighty deeds." So can we agree that the Apostle Paul said there is a special gifting, there is a specialness to the call of an apostle? Okay, he said that, right? Signs and wonders, that's a pretty big deal. You go back to John 20 and verse 23, who was Jesus speaking to? Apostles, correct?

Now, go to Acts 1. We're going to find out if those guys on late night TV are actually lying to you or not. Here we go, Acts 1. The answer is they are in case you all were curious. Acts 1. Judas has gone his own way. He has rebelled. He has sinned. He has hung himself and his bowels have all gushed out. That's what the Bible says, okay? Well, they have to replace him and beginning in verse 20, I'm going to begin the passage describing who is qualified to be an apostle. It says, "For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take." That was a prophecy of Judas. Verse 21, "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." In other words, if you have apostolic succession, you're going to have somebody who's really old because you cannot be an apostle unless you qualify.

Now, there's a man by the name of Saul of Tarsus who became the Apostle Paul. Remember what he said in Romans 11:13? He was the apostle out of due season. By the way, he saw the resurrected Jesus in Acts 9 but he even admits that the others struggled receiving him because he didn't technically qualify according to this. However, if you'll remember in Acts 15, he goes down and he meets Peter, James, and John, who he perceived to be pillars and after three days, they grilled him for three days, they gave him the right hand of fellowship. In other words, "You are who you claim to be."

Now, the reason that's important is apostolic succession cannot be biblical because there is nobody here today who's ever been a part of the ministry of Jesus from the beginning

to the end. You don't qualify. Number 2, that which was spoken in John 20:23 wasn't about somebody forgiving sins, it was about remitting sins. And then number 3, the Bible says in Ephesians 4, it says he gave some to be apostles, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors, some to be teachers, etc. In other words, there was a calling that now is not relevant and thus no succession.

So again, when I talk about late night TV, there are people on "Christian television" that rather than saying their name is pastor so and so, they will claim to be apostle so and so. And I've looked at these guys and I've researched them and they just age really well because again, and by the way, per the question, this isn't a Baptist thing, this is a Bible thing, okay? There are people of a lot of different groups that subscribe to apostolic succession really for the reason, I'm not trying to be disparaging, I'm just trying to be honest, if you believe in apostolic succession, then you don't have to go directly to the Lord, you can go to another human being for your spiritual problems. And that is problematic in the fact that according to Hebrews chapter 10 and chapter 7, only Jesus Christ qualifies to be the intercessor on our behalf, that all those other guys, according to Hebrews 7, it says remember they gave sacrifice day after day after day, but all falling short.

So again, yes sir?

[unintelligible]

Oh, yes I would. Psalms 12:6 and 7. We about to have a dialogue again. Psalm 12:6 and 7 is speaking to the nature of the word of God and the reason this young man, do you like the fact I called you young, sir? The reason that he asked this question is based on verse 23 of John 20, the difference between remit and forgive. That's the reason he asked this question, okay?

In Psalms 12:6 and 7, I'm going to read these two verses, and I want you to pay very close attention to the words in your Bible. Ready? "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever." Now do any of you in verse 7 have the word "us" and not "them"? Come on, confess it. Tell it all, brother. You know you got it and I know who you are. It's okay. But my point is this: there are multiple versions of the Bible that use the pronoun "us" rather than "them" in verse 7 speaking that you will keep and preserve us, O God. Which by the way is not a really bad concept. The problem is it has nothing to do with the passage. The passage has everything to do with the veracity and the longevity of scripture, that scripture is inspired by God and it's preserved by God, which I'll address in just a moment.

Now here's what's interesting. If you were to go back and just let me geek out on you all for just a moment, okay? There is a discipline that we call textual criticism. Textual criticism is where you go back and you look at all these ancient documents, all the source material where we collate the scriptures together and you can really, really get in the weeds, okay? And you'll have a manuscript that says A. You'll have a manuscript that says B. And you start weighing, okay, where did this come from, where did that come

from and I won't get in all those weeds tonight. Here's the thing I need you to hear. I need you to hear that you can look up every manuscript known to man from Psalm 12:7, and not one of them has the word "us." Every single one of them has the word "them," third person plural. Okay?

So a few years ago, there was an individual that just so happened to be on one of the translating committees of one of these versions of the Bible that uses the word "us." He was called on the carpet. They asked him. They said, "Sir, no manuscript in the world says that. Why did you translate the verse that way?" You know what his answer was? "I would never translate that verse that way." You know what my answer is? Who do you think you are? He said, "I would never do that." Do y'all see the danger in that? I do. Because there's no evidence that would subscribe to his position other than what he wants it to say versus what it does say. You say, "What do you mean what does it say?" "Thou shalt preserve them." That's the scriptures, right? The words of God. They've been purified. Okay? Think about preservatives for just a moment. Okay? We do that really good in the south, right? Some of you all preserve some stuff ain't no business preserving. Oh, previous church I pastored, they may be watching, if you are, God bless you and I still love you. Went to somebody's house one day, they had preserved watermelon rinds. Okay. I mean, if the zombie apocalypse is really true, then I might go there but until then, I think I'm going to stay off the watermelon rinds. I'm just going to be honest with you.

But think about preservation. We love to preserve things. We call them preserves. That's who we are. But you think about this. This is the illustration. It's just what Psalms 12:7 is saying. You take an item, it doesn't matter what it is, fresh off the tree, right? If you take that item off the tree, make it whatever you want it to be. What do you all want it to be? Peaches? Peaches good? All right, why not? We'll take a peach. Okay? Take a peach off the tree, you eat the peach. It's good, it's peach, right? Great. However, let's say that you have a tree that produces more peaches than you want to eat. What do you do? You preserve them. Correct? You take those peaches, you put them in a certain container, you add a few ingredients, seal it up, you put it on the shelf. And then typically in the South, we forget about it for about 15 years. True? We're cleaning it out and someone goes, what is this? All right? But the purpose in reality of a preserve, the purpose is so that you can have that item out of season because peaches don't, they don't come into season every aspect of the year so we want to have them out of season at another time. So what you do is you put them in a jar, pressure it up, mix it up, do some different things. When you open the peach preserves, is there anybody ever in your life who's taken a bite and go, "Ooh, that tastes like apples"? What does it taste like? Peaches. It's peaches. It's the same thing in a different form. Okay?

All right, so let's go back to Psalm 12. When the Lord inspired its original writing, it wasn't English, it was Hebrew. Correct? It was. And for years and years and years, it was in Hebrew but then years later, Hebrew kind of dropped off the map and we started writing in Greek and in Latin and in German and in English and what Psalms 12:7 is saying so clearly to us is God didn't just inspire his words through David or through Paul or through Matthew, but he also preserves them. Can you imagine, I want you to imagine this. I want you to imagine that for you to read the Bible, you had to go learn Hebrew and Greek. Oh, dear is right. You know, that's what the Muslims believe. If you don't read the

Quran in Arabic, you're not reading the words of God. So I guess Allah is not powerful enough to preserve his words. But the one true God is. It doesn't matter if it was 3,000 years ago in Hebrew or if it's the 21st century in English, God is big enough and powerful enough to make sure that what he said then is still spoken now. He has preserved his words.

Now, I'm going back. Here's the problem with making the word "us," okay? Verse 7. I'm going to read it the way some have translated it. "Thou shalt keep us, O LORD, thou shalt preserve us from this generation forever." So is King David still alive? That's problematic because he was speaking about himself. He hadn't been preserved. In fact, the last time I checked, and by the way, I was in Israel about a month ago, they have, you know, a tomb dedicated to him because he's not preserved. So again, the whole context there, and it goes back to the John 20:23 story, is when we start making the scripture be what we want it to be, in that man's case, or in what our tradition says, in some faith's case, we have issues. Okay?

Here's the thing I want you all to see and I know I tease and I tease and I tease about my old King Jimmy. I know I tease about that. But can I share with you something I think is very important for you all to hear tonight? And we're down to one minute. You ready? Did you know there wasn't a single Baptist that translated it? Not one. In fact, they were Anglican, Episcopal. They were all kinds of everything but not Baptist. You say, "Well, why is that important?" Okay? Because that's not homegrown cooking right there, guys. You all have said that at a ballgame, right? When somebody makes a bad call, that's home cooking. You all know what I mean? There wasn't a single Baptist that translated those scriptures back then. But isn't it ironic how the Baptist doctrine lines up so well with them? Because God doesn't just inspire his words, God preserves his words.

All right, we're out of time. I'm not out of town, I promise that. I'm here. Okay? So next week, same place, same time. Chris, right? All right, just double checking. We do at some point, this is just a PSA for those in the room, at some point, hopefully in the near future, right Chris? At some point, we're getting a new floor in this room. Right now that floor is on a boat coming from another continent stuck somewhere, all right? But when it gets here, we can't meet that week when it's being done. We thought it was going to be soon. It's not, but we will let you know. We're going to go across streets. But next week, the boat's not getting here in time, right? Okay, just checking. All right.

Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, how grateful we are, Lord, that you didn't just inspire but you preserve your word. Lord, that what you said then is still good now and it will always be good. And so, God, we thank you. May we continue not just to be the hearers but the doers of your word. May the reading of it challenge us, Lord, to think and to be more like you and to take ourselves, our preferences, our traditions, and our desires, God, help us to take that out of the equation and just to simply believe what you wrote is what you wrote for our lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.