

Ask Jeff 5.31.17

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Alright, this is your 10 second warning. 10 seconds. If you haven't gotten a prayer sheet or an outline for the Bible study, be sure and go back there.

Tonight, we're going to begin with the Bible study again and here's why: because Friday night we're going to have two hours of Q & A if you come on Friday night. If you're not able to be with us in person, it will be online. I'll share with you that in just a moment. We're going to begin with the Bible study tonight because Q & A is going to go for two hours 48 hours from now. So that's a lot of questions in three days.

So if you don't have an outline or a prayer sheet, go ahead and go get it and then we will get started. Gold sheet. This is your circle of concern otherwise known as our prayer sheet. For those of you that are guests with us or watching by way of the internet, these are those that are not only a part of our church body but are connected by way of family, friends, coworkers etc., and we want to make it a point to pray for any and all needs that you are aware of. Please let us know in the church office if we need to add somebody or in some cases we can celebrate, we need to take them off the list because our prayers have been answered. We want to make sure that that is made to everybody's availability. Also remind you, don't throw this away. Please make it a point to use the sheet to pray for these individuals on a regular basis whether at home, at your office, whatever. Always things I like to point out, at the bottom we either have a section for sympathy, those that have lost family members, or a congratulations for those that have had births in their home, in fact, in just a moment I'll share with you some of our needs with Vacation Bible School. Speaking of births in our church family, as of right now we have 686 children that are signed up for Vacation Bible School already. So there are lots of babies around here. But we want to celebrate tonight that we have had another baby born to one of our families. And on the back, there are those particularly that serve as missionaries and in the military service, and so we want to pray for them particularly with their selfless willing to give on our behalf.

All that being said, we're going to pray tonight and then we'll get started.

Lord, as we gather in this place, Lord, we know that there are a lot of folks that we love dearly. They're not with us tonight. Many are in hospitals, some are at home, others are serving overseas and, Lord, we miss them but we know that your Holy Spirit is just as real and present in their lives wherever they are right now as we are here. And so, God,

we pray that you would move in their lives, that where there is a need for healing that you would bring healing, where there is a need for comfort, you'd bring comfort. God, I pray where there is a need for restoration, that you would bring it in their lives. And God, for those who have given these names and who love these individuals, who oftentimes are the caretakers and the friends and the family, God, we pray that you would give them the words to say, the actions to do, and if necessary the means to assist. Lord, we're just thankful that no matter what our situation is, that you are beyond capable of addressing it. So tonight, we just pray if it be possible that you would be in and through everything that is on our heart, not just on this sheet but that which is on our heart. And tonight as we open your word, may you guide us to a greater understanding not so that we can be puffed up with knowledge but so that we can be effective for the gospel of Jesus Christ wherever you take us. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Alright, as we begin tonight, as I mentioned, we're going to go ahead and do tonight in reverse. We're going to begin with our Bible study so hopefully you got one of the outlines as we continue our study of the book of Revelation and then we'll do at the end tonight, we'll do the Q & A because on this Friday night, we're going to have an opportunity from 6-8 o'clock right in this very room, we're going to have a two hour marathon Ask Jeff Bible Q & A time where we have the opportunity to answer any and all questions that you have regarding God's word. I know it's a Friday evening but hopefully it will be a time you'll be able to catch us and be a part of it, if not in person, at least online.

But tonight we have now made it to chapter 4 of the book of Revelation. Now you may be wondering why is that significant. Because when we get to chapter 4 in the book of Revelation, everything changes. You remember in chapter 1, that the Apostle John was on the island of Patmos, that he was there because that he had given testimony to Jesus Christ, he had spoken of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and he had been persecuted most likely historically by a man by the name of Domitian in the late first century. He has this incredible vision of Jesus Christ with his hair of a different color and a sword coming out of his mouth, his feet as brass. Remember, the Lord put his hand on him, he said, "Fear not, I am the beginning and the end, the first, the last, the Alpha, the Omega. I have the keys to death and hell." And he commands him in chapter 1, verse 19, he says, "Write the things which have been, the things which are, and the things which are to come."

And there's great discussion on how we can divide the book of Revelation, what is the past, what is the present, what is the future, but tonight as we go into chapter 4, everything changes. In fact, we're going to go from earth to the heavens. Chapter 4 and chapter 5 of the book of Revelation take place in the heavenly realm. By the time we get back to chapter 6, we're going to be back on "planet earth" but everything's going to be different. When we get to chapter 6, we see this horrific tribulational type events taking place. In chapters 2 and 3, we saw the seven churches, chapter 1, the island of Patmos. So chapter 4 changes everything and beginning, I'm must going to read verses 1 through 3. It says,

1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. 2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. 3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

Now when we get to verse 4 beginning next week, we're going to see that there are these incredible creatures that surround the throne of God worshiping day and night. We're going to talk about the famous 24 elders. When we get to chapter 5, we're going to have this book that's sealed with seven seals and we're going to see Jesus as a lamb that was slain. But here in the first three verses of chapter 4, we see the Apostle John and we're going to see the very similarities of chapter 1, he's in the spirit, he hears a voice as a trumpet, and what we see in chapter 4 is he is caught up into the heavenlies.

Now one of the things that I put as the title of your outline is I put the term "Rapture?" Now allow me to kind of peel away those onion layers for a moment. I know and you know, or at least I hope you know, that the actual term "rapture" is not in your Bible, however, that is the English word from which we get the idea of being caught up from 1 Thessalonians 4, it says "and they were caught up into the air." The term "rapture" does not necessarily mean an eschatological or end time event like we typically read about and study. It means to be taken from one place to another in a supernatural fashion.

So the reason that I allude to that is in chapter 4, this is a rapturesque event because where was John prior to? The island of Patmos. Where is he by the time you get to verse 3? He's in the heavens and that is a rapturesque type event. And so that being said, I want to begin tonight by addressing the four means of scripture, and what I mean by that is how do we look at scripture anytime we read a verse.

The first thing we need to do or look at is what we call a literal reading or interpretation, that is just the obvious what it says is what it means. When we read through the scriptures literally, we say it says he went north, he obviously went north. If it says he turned to the right, he turned to the right. We're not reading anything into it, we're just taking it for what it says. However, there are times where the Bible speaks symbolically. Now when it speaks symbolically, it means it uses language or it uses a term on behalf of something else or instead of something else.

Now I've given you two references, Revelation 1:12 and Revelation 1:20, because I believe that when the Bible speaks symbolically, anytime it uses an item or a word or a term, it also interprets itself. The Bible is its own best interpreter. Revelation 1:12, on the island of Patmos John sees the Lord in this very unique vision and it says that he is to speak to the seven golden candlesticks, and it says that Jesus walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks and he holds the seven stars in his hand. If we were to stop at verse 12, oh, what could we make those candlesticks, what could we make those stars? They could be symbols for anything but when you get to verse 20, it says that the seven

candlesticks are the seven churches, and the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.

Why is that critically important for us? It's because when we begin to look at scripture in a symbolic fashion, our first default mechanism should always be where is this used in other places in scripture, and is it defined clearly so that we don't make it something it was never meant to be, which leads to a third and sometimes an often dangerous means of scripture, it's what we call allegorical. Allegorical is when we take the scripture and we say, "Well, I know what it says and I know what those terms mean, however, I'm going to create a picture in my mind of something beyond the literal meaning of what it could mean." Now the best biblical example of that are the seven "I am" statements of the gospel of John. Remember, Jesus made this statement, "I am a door." Now was he made of wood or was he made of stone? Literally we know that's not it but allegorically we know that Jesus was saying that he is an entry point. When Jesus said, "I am the way," he wasn't saying he was asphalt or concrete, he was saying, "I am the way to the Father. I am the path."

So allegorically we see what was being said and what was being meant, and it's a stretch beyond just the literal reading of. Now the danger is when we look at scripture symbolically or we look at it allegorically and we make it mean something completely out in left field for what we would like it to say rather than allowing it to say what it says. Now the reason I walked through those steps is because the fourth one is what I want to address tonight, it's what we call a typological interpretation. It means that there are items in scripture that give us a type of something else, in other words, it's an illustration or a tool so that we can better understand what the Lord is trying to teach us. What is it not? It does not replace the literal and/or exact interpretation.

Allow me to illustrate and I put this on your outline. Biblical typologies. In Ephesians 5, it addresses the context of a husband and a wife, and I know we've heard these verses in wedding ceremonies time after time, and it talks about the role of the wife, it talks about the role of the husband, it talks about their attitudes and their actions, and at the end of that passage it says, "and I speak a mystery to you concerning the church." And what that means is that a husband and a wife and a man and woman, their relationship and their intimacy and how they work together is a type and a picture of what the church of Jesus Christ is. The important thing is don't read your marriage into the church, in other words, don't read the type into the understanding or the picture.

Second illustration I gave you is Genesis 37-50. The character known as Joseph depending on who you read and who you study, probably no less than 40 and no more than 100 comparisons of who Joseph was to who Christ was. For example, Joseph was sold by his brothers, Jesus was sold by one of his brothers. He was cast into a pit, and Jesus was cast into the pit. And all these illustrations that you have, beloved of his father, etc., what we don't want to do is make Jesus from Joseph, what we want to do is look at the life of Joseph as how it pictures who Jesus is.

1 Corinthians 15 talks about in Adam all die, that he was the first Adam and that Jesus is the second Adam. The reason that's important is we don't want to read our lives back into Adam or Adam back into ours. It is purely a typology for our understanding.

Now the reason I went to all that trouble tonight whether it is a literal, whether it is a symbolic, an allegorical or tonight a typological interpretation of scripture, is because the book of Revelation, I believe that you can see the character of John as a typology of the church. Now let me share with you what I mean by that. John is a typology of the church. In chapter 13 of the gospel of John, it says that the Apostle John is the one who leaned on Jesus' bosom. You've seen the pictures of how they would eat in the Middle East in that context. It was so much different than our world. They didn't sit in chairs and around wooden or whatever tables, they literally laid on the ground and he was the one that was next to Jesus, he was the closest one, he was upon his side. And the picture of the church, the type of the church is that we are the one closest to him, we are next to his bosom, we're next to his heart. In fact, in John 19, he was the only apostle at the cross. The church is the only entity that understands and has gone through the cross of Jesus Christ. In John 21, he's called the beloved disciple and we, the church, are the beloved of Jesus. In John 21:24, Jesus says this about John, he says and he's speaking to Peter and the guys, he says, "What is it to you guys if one of you here," he was speaking about John, "should see the kingdom with his own eyes?"

And the reason that I share all that information with you is that the Apostle John is a type – now listen to me clearly, don't get literal here, don't read the life of John and make that the church, okay? Don't make it something it's not supposed to be. When I say he's a type of, we look at John and say, "Ah, that kind of gives us a greater, maybe a clearer understanding." Now the reason that that is important is because in chapter 4 of the book of Revelation, when you look at the person of John from a typological perspective, he pictures the church because there's coming a day and a time where the church of Jesus Christ is caught up into the heavens. And notice what it says in verse 1, "After this I looked, I heard a voice as a trumpet that said, Come up here," and he followed. What a picture that we have of the bride of Christ, the church of Jesus Christ one day being caught up to be with Christ.

Now some of the key phrases that we find in chapter 4 is the phrase "after this." Now I don't want to make a mountain out of a molehill but what is "after this," what does that actually mean? Because I don't know if you remember but in days past we looked at the book of Revelation kind of from a structural perspective and what we see is here in chapter 4, we see an individual by the name of John, we see him being caught up into the heavens, in chapter 19, we see him actually descending. In both places there's a door that's opened up in heaven. Chapter 4, somebody goes up, and chapter 19, somebody comes down. In chapters 2 and 3, we have the famous seven churches, and then obviously in chapter 1 we have what we know as the introduction. Remember when the Bible spoke of in chapter 1, verse 19, "write the things which were, which are, or which are to come," there's varying views and I don't want to get into all that again tonight for the sake of your time. Some people believe that's the past, this is the present, and all this is the future. Some people believe that's the past, this is the present, and everything else is

the future. The reason that's important is because in verse 1 when it says "after this," is that meaning after he saw the vision of Jesus, or is it after he saw the seven churches? Because later it says that he was in the Spirit. Is it the same day as in chapter 1 where he saw the vision of Jesus? Or is this a new opportunity where he was in the Spirit and the Lord spoke unto him? I will not go through this tonight and I will not utilize your time but we could spend about three hours just studying what does "after this" mean because you have to look back and say what is he talking about, but what we can conclusively say is this, at least at no other less minimum, it means after he saw the message to the churches.

After this. Interesting, when you begin to look at the book of Revelation from 30,000 feet just looking down, there's the message to the churches and then after this John, who's a picture or a type of the church, is caught up to the heavens. Is that not a picture of the grand scope of history? The church of Jesus Christ going along through time and ages and there's coming a point eventually where we are caught up to the Lord.

The second key phrase is "a door was opened in heaven." As I mentioned and I have on the board before you, in the book of Revelation there's three divisions but there's only two doors. In chapter 4, a door is opened and John goes up, in chapter 19, a door is opened and the Lord Jesus comes down and all of his saints and his armies behind him. Now just like if you were going to make or have a pie that you wanted eight pieces, you would actually have seven divisions, so to speak, or seven lines or cuts because those seven would make eight pieces. You have two doors which created three segments to the book of Revelation.

Now the reason that this is critical and we're going to study this in the next few weeks, is because what we see happen in chapter 4 and 5 takes place in the heavens. It's almost as if completely separated from all the things that are happening on earth, and as we see what's happening on earth, what we're going to study and look at in the weeks ahead is all of this horrible wrath of God, that the picture of the church, John, is not a part of the wrath of God but he's protected from the wrath of God. Why? Because he's the beloved. He is his bride, his church.

Third is the voice, "as if a trumpet." There are two critical passages in your New Testament that I call rapturesque, what that means is there is this idea of the people of God being caught up by God to be with the Lord. One is found in 1 Corinthians 15, one is found in 1 Thessalonians 4. In both of those passages, it mentions a voice and a trumpet, and notice what John says here in chapter 4, he says, "I heard the voice as if a trumpet talking with me, saying, Come up here." And so what's interesting to me is the language that we see in these first three verses of chapter 4 of the book of Revelation are eerily similar to phrases and terms we see all throughout the New Testament that describe the church of Jesus Christ eventually one day being caught up to be with Jesus Christ. Notice it says, "I heard as the sound of a trumpet," or a trumpet, 1 Corinthians 15 talks about. "I heard, Come up here," 1 Thessalonians 4, it talks about coming up here. And so you hear this voice using the same language in Revelation 4 as you see in 1 Corinthians 15 and in 1 Thessalonians 4.

The last phrase, "Come up hither," or "Come up here." This is where I think it gets fun. This phrase, "Come up hither," or "Come up here," only happens three times in the Bible. That's it. It happens in the book of Proverbs 25, the book of Revelation 4, and the book of Revelation 11. And tonight may not be the night to go into great detail, I know I've spoken of this before, in fact, it's one of the answers to the questions in the top 10 questions of Ask Jeff, but you'll find no greater division among the saints of Jesus Christ than the "timing" of a rapturesque type event in scripture. It's amazing, we can agree on who Jesus is, we can agree on heaven, we can agree on hell, we can agree on all these other things but when it comes to when the church of Jesus Christ is going to be caught up to the Lord, boy, that's when the gloves get on and we get to fighting. And I think one of the struggles that we have is it's very possible that what we believe is an event where we're caught up to the Lord, the Bible may speak to multiple occurrences and not just one.

Isn't it interesting that the phrase "Come up here" takes place three times. If you look scripturally at harvest from an agricultural perspective, there's three phases of a harvest. There is what we call the firstfruits, there's what we call the harvest, and there's what we call the gleanings. And I put this on your outline, I didn't give these other verses and forgive me for saying that, but the firstfruits would be the calling out of the Old Testament saints. Remember, there's a verse back in Matthew 27:52 that says at the resurrection of Jesus, many bodies of the saints rose from their graves and they walked around in the holy city. That's an event that has taken place at some point in the past, it has occurred, and there was a rapturesque type event. They were in the graves and they have been brought up.

Well, we read the passages in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15, and so we know there's coming a time where there's incredible harvest, where it says all those that are in the graves will hear his voice at the last trump and they will be called up. Later when we get to Revelation 11, and by the way, hopefully I'll whet your appetite, I think Revelation 11 is the most important chapter in all the book of Revelation. Now I know what some of you are thinking, "Well, why didn't we start with chapter 11?" Well, if we started with chapter 11, then we'd have to rehash all this other stuff. But in chapter 11, there are two witnesses. We're going to discuss who their identity is when we get to Revelation 11. There is a situation where they become headless at the hands of the Antichrist. Their bodies lay in the street for 3 ½ days. It says the people who are against God rejoice and send each other presents, they're so excited. And then it says, this is in the Bible, folks, this isn't animated GCI kind of Hollywood stuff, it says their heads roll back onto their bodies and it says they hear a voice saying, "Come up here." And they go from planet earth into the heavenlies.

The reason I allude to that tonight is there's three times in scripture the words "Come up here," or "Come up hither," is used. There are three main places in scripture where we see the people of God being caught up to the Lord: back in Matthew 27 with the Old Testament saints, this 1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Corinthians 15 passage where there's this huge harvest, and then later there are these two witnesses that are caught up. Now the reason I

went to all of that trouble tonight is that when you get to Revelation 4, the word "church" is not going to be used again until chapter 19 of the book of Revelation. There's been seven churches, they've been talked about and spoken of in great detail, and as soon as we're done talking about the churches or to the churches, immediately something happens to John that looks eerily rapturesque, so to speak. He's caught up in the heavens. He sees the throne of God. He sees the person of the Lord. He sees, as we're going to see, the angelic beings rejoicing and celebrating. And the next event that's going to take place on earth in the book of Revelation is in chapter 6, and when it takes place, John is not on earth watching it laterally, he's actually been given a seat in the heavens to watch, I guess for lack of better terms, he's got a bird's eye view and he's seeing what's happening below him. He is not being directly affected by it, he is given an opportunity to witness it so as to write so that we can read and be warned of it.

So when you read the first verses of chapter 4 of Revelation, typologically I think there is a great case that can be made that we see a picture of the church of Jesus Christ being called out before we see the wrath of God being poured out on earth, which we'll get to when we get to chapter 6. But chapters 4 and 5 take place in the heavens, we see whom we know as John experiencing all the things that we long for as believers on earth. He's around the throne. He sees the crystal sea, the cherubim, the angels singing, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, worthy is he." He sees and experiences all that and then when we get to the end of chapter 5, he's going to see Jesus Christ take a book that's sealed with seven seals and he's going to begin to open those and that is the wrath of God on the rebellion of humanity on earth. So chapter 4 of the book of Revelation is critical because we've now entered a new phase of the book of Revelation that I believe typologically it gives us a great picture of how the Lord's going to work in the life of the church which as a believer in Jesus Christ is you and myself.

Alright, any Revelation questions on chapter 4 or anything else before we move on? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Okay, that's a great point. He's talking about having the Holy Spirit to be able to see what he was seeing. I agree completely which, by the way, you may not have meant this but it brings up a great secondary question. Are those in heaven watching what's happening on earth? There's no biblical evidence for that because John personally individually was given a very specific vision of. That's why I said it was typological and not literal because I'm telling you and this is an illustration I like to use and I don't mean this ugly or bad, but there are some individuals who speak of their parents who are in heaven, which I don't doubt that, but if their parents are in heaven watching what their children are doing on earth, it would not be heaven for their parents. I'm not trying to be ugly, I'm trying to be honest, you know?

So what we see in Revelation 4 and 5 is that the Apostle John who's around the throne, there's no evidence that he's seeing anything happening on the earth. When you get to chapter 6, there is an angel who is allowed to, for lack of better terms, escort John and

show him a specific vision to fulfill the commandment of Jesus to write it down, and so he's a type of but it goes back to Joseph and Jesus and marriage and the church. Don't read our experience into what John experienced. Just use it as illustrative material.

Did that help out a little bit? Any other Revelation stuff? Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Oh, that's a great question. Go to 2 Thessalonians 2. The question that this young lady brought up, I got a wink on that one, the question is when the church, when the bride of Christ is caught up, is the Holy Spirit caught up as well? Now 2 Thessalonians 2 is kind of the key chapter to discuss this because this is the chapter about the Antichrist and the falling away before his rise. When you get to verse 3 of 2 Thessalonians 2 it says, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first." Remember last week we studied that's that word apostasy. That's the only time it's used in scripture. "Except there come a falling away first and that man of sin," that's the Antichrist, "be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed."

So to your point, ma'am, the idea that we get from 2 Thessalonians 2 is the only thing that is keeping the Antichrist from becoming what he desires to be is the Holy Spirit of God, "he who lets, he who is able to restrain, he who is able to control." And so only God himself has a leash on the Antichrist and so I agree with what you were making that statement of, that when the church of Jesus Christ, when we are taken up, it is the Holy Spirit in us, that's what takes us up, when he draws his Holy Spirit. And now the next question is, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, what about the people that are left?" Right? That's the second question. Alright, now, you know, sometimes good preaching isn't good doctrine and sometimes good doctrine doesn't make real good preaching.

Go to Revelation 12. What I meant by that is sometimes good doctrine is just not real exciting. That's what I meant but you can take it anyway you want. In Revelation 12, we have one of the parenthetical chapters of the book of Revelation. What that means is we're out of the chronology. In other words, it's almost like we've just pulled away and gotten a big picture of what's happening. Chapter 12 is parenthetical, chapter 14 is parenthetical, chapter 10 is parenthetical, but here in chapter 12 we have this picture beginning in verse 7. I'm going to go ahead and begin reading in verse 7 because it's verse 11 that's critical but we've got to get the context. It says, "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels," that's Satan, obviously. "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." Now I'm going to pause for just a moment. Great piece of

literature known as "Paradise Lost," John Milton, took this passage and described the original fall of Satan, the only problem is we have other scriptures like the book of Job that talk about Satan going to and fro and here the idea is he's no longer allowed back in. And so I would say this passage is future, not past, alright? So at some point in the future this event takes place.

Verse 10, "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." Now listen to verse 11, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." Interesting because we have a lot of songs that use that lyric, verse 11. Where is he who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved? Where is he that believes in his heart and confesses with his mouth the Lord Jesus shall be saved? What's interesting is you see when this Antichrist character is revealed, which I think we can say conclusively by the time we get to what we just read, he has been revealed and he has got a prominent position in the earth, that the Holy Spirit, I believe you see the Holy Spirit moving among people in that day very similar as we saw him move in past days. You study the Old Testament and the Holy Spirit wasn't in anybody but it was on people, and here you get the idea that the Holy Spirit is on them and they have a testimony and they love not their life, but there's no phrases such as confessing the Lord, there's no phrases such as being the temple of the Holy Ghost. And so the picture that we get is that the Holy Spirit doesn't move on individuals like it does today but like it did yesterday because the Holy Spirit when that rapturesque event takes place, it is the Holy Spirit of us being taken up. That's what takes us up there.

Does that help or did I just make it more confusing? I got a, "Hmm, okay." How about the person behind you, maybe that will help. Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

The 144,000 you said those will be the ones that stay. Here's the interesting thing about them. Go to chapter 14. By the way, if you ever get anybody who comes and knocks on your door and claims that they're a part of the 144,000, generally speaking they're not the ones on bicycles, they're the ones in cars, generally speaking they go to a hall that's called a kingdom. I'm not telling you who they are, I'm just, you know, helping you out. Sorry.

Chapter 14, verse 1, it says, and by the way, this is another parenthetical just like chapter 12, it says, "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." Now that's a different image than you and I today. The Bible says that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. It doesn't speak about the Father's name being written in our foreheads.

Verse 2, "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders:

and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand," you brought that up, sir, "which were redeemed from the earth." Now listen to verse 4, "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins," which means they have to be men and they can't be married, which disqualifies almost every person who knocks on my door and claims to be a part of them. Isn't that interesting? The 144,000 which back in chapter 7 is described as representatives of the 12 tribes, you see them being pictured. The Bible never describes you and I as the church as having the name of the Father in our foreheads, okay? It says we're sealed with the Holy Spirit. And then the Bible says in Galatians 3 that salvation, it doesn't matter one's gender, you can be male or female, you can be married or single, and here the 144,000 are all males and they're obviously all single. And it says, "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."

So a unique group of individuals who I would claim are witnesses to what God is doing, not the only ones because in chapter 7, verse 9, it speaks of the 144,000 and it says, "And I saw those from among the nations of all people groups and all tongues who stood before the Lamb."

Did that help at all? Uh, I've gotten two head nods in the last five minutes. That makes me a little nervous. Any other Revelation questions? Yes, sir, and then here. Back row and then middle row. Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Correct.

[unintelligible]

According to Matthew 27.

[unintelligible]

They have been. Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

What made an Old Testament saint? Ah.

[unintelligible]

Correct, and that is an absolute fabulous question because what is the criteria? Because you and I know today that what makes a New Testament saint, you and I, is a person who first and foremost understands that we have sinned, we got that one, number 2, believes in the person of Jesus Christ as incarnated, perfect life, sacrificial death, resurrected, if we believe on him, we shall be saved. That couldn't happen 500 years before Christ. It just physically, I mean, it just couldn't have taken place. The best point I've got is go to Hebrews 11 and it says by faith Noah, by faith Abram, by faith Sarah, by faith David. You see that "by faith, by faith, by faith, by faith," that they believed what God told them and they acted on it. Now here's the interesting and I don't want to make a mountain out of a molehill, what the Lord communicated to Noah was incredibly different than what he communicated to Abraham. He told Noah, "Build a boat." He built a boat, then he died after he built a boat. He had no concept of going to a land he knew not of. He knew no concept of what we know as the 10 Commandments. The 10 Commandments didn't come until Moses. You know, I've heard people say, "Well, the Old Testament the way they went to heaven was by obeying the 10 Commandments." Then Abraham didn't make it because he never saw the 10 Commandments. Joseph never saw. And so what you see is the Lord communicating, "This is what I require of you, desire of you," and by faith they responded accordingly.

So the big gap there is by the time you get to really Moses giving us the law, from that point until the time of Christ, that's your biggest, I hate to use the term, gap that you've got but you see them doing the atonement, doing the sacrifices. The sacrifices didn't save them, what the sacrifices did is it pictured to God their belief in what God asked them to do would allow the Lord to reconcile their sin problem with him. The famous scapegoat I place the sin on, I'm trusting you to take my sin away. But when you break it down, whether it's Noah building a boat, whether it's Abraham going to a land he knew not of, whether it's Moses with the 10 Commandments, every one of them responded to what God revealed to them and they did so accordingly. The problem today is that God has made it very clear that Jesus Christ is his revelation and he is how we must respond.

Middle row. Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Okay, Revelation 12:8. Here we go, I'm going back.

[unintelligible]

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Ah, great question.

[unintelligible]

You gonna answer it for me? Here. Oh. I was going to take a break and let you go for it.

[unintelligible]

No, ma'am, I don't. But you come Friday night, we might tag-team. Yes, ma'am and I haven't forgotten you, sir.

[unintelligible]

Yes.

[unintelligible]

Ah, great question which is basically Part B of his question. Okay, so Revelation 12. Remember, parenthetical. It is a picture of, for lack of better terms, spiritual war through the ages, alright? So for the sake of context, go back to verse 1. It says, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." Now we just mentioned earlier that a typology of Jesus was Joseph. Remember that? And Joseph is the picture of who we know as the Israelites and the Jewish people. It is the nation of Israel, it is the Jewish people who, let's just be honest, from the tribe of Judah came Jesus. So this woman is what we would call Israel, for lack of better terms, gives birth to the Messiah.

Verse 3, "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven horns," and you see this constant battle between the Lord and the dragon or Satan. So this is kind of a long-term struggle, however, per this young man's question, verse 7, "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven." And so the question we've got to ask ourselves today is when did that take place or has it taken place? Because and this goes back to the book of Job where in the book of Job it pictures Satan going up into the heavenlies and discussing with the Lord what he's allowed to inflict upon Job and the Lord says you can only go so far.

So the question is if John Milton who wrote "Paradise Lost," famous English literature, if he was right, then Satan is no more, has access no more to heaven, this battle has already taken place, and we can move on. If John Milton and one day when I get to heaven I'll apologize for criticizing him publicly, but if John Milton is wrong like I think he is wrong, then what we see is what we just read beginning in verse 7 is an event to take place at some point in the future when we see the devil, the old red dragon literally take possession of the earth. That's what we see later in Revelation 11 earlier. Remember, chapter 12 is being pulled out. In chapter 11, we see possession of the earth, the

Antichrist going into the temple, acting as if he is God. And so I'm of the belief that if you read chapter 12 as a big picture of spiritual warfare, that this event in verse 7 and 8 haven't taken place yet, and so what the devil has access to right now is to go to and fro. And so he is called the... yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Okay, so here's the problem we've got. If verse 7 and 8 has already taken place, then the events of the book of Revelation are past not future. Does that make sense? Do you want to say the book of Revelation has already taken place? Then this hasn't taken place yet because, you see, when we get to chapter 12, he is cast out and then he begins to chase the people of God and for 3 ½ years. So when he is cast if you read all of chapter 12, he's cast out and he has 3 ½ years and that's it. And so this event if it was at any time in the past, we've already had 3 ½ years since whenever that event could have occurred, and so therefore it couldn't have already occurred. Does that make sense?

[unintelligible]

Yes, sure, a day is with 1,000 years, a 1,000 years as if a day, and I'm 6'8". But my point is and here's the struggle with the book of Revelation, the struggle is taking the events that are in the parenthetical chapters because, you see, chapter 12 is not in the chronology of Revelation, chapter 10 is not in the chronology, and so you have to take it out. We know that this woman gave birth to the child in times past because we know that's the Messiah. We know that for a fact, okay?

To his point, this war that takes place, if this war is what's pictured in the book of Daniel, remember when Daniel prayed and Michael fought the Prince of Persia and all that? The problem is that took place before the birth of the child and so if that... Does that make sense? So you're getting... And so what we've got to decide is are these future events, are these past events, and to your point, well, the blood of the Lamb has been shed, and so therefore he should not have access to. The problem is, the reason he doesn't have access, there's no mention that the blood of the Lamb prevented him, the Lord said, "Get out. Get out of my place. You no longer have access to."

Now back to the book of Job. When it says that he presented himself before the Lord, when and how often? We don't know.

[unintelligible]

Yeah, where have you been? It says that they appeared unto the Lord and many people have said, "Well, that was a one time a year type of..." I don't know. Nobody knows, to be honest.

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Correct.

[unintelligible]

Well, in this passage to your point, you're right. In this passage it describes the third of the angels falling or the third of the stars which are symbolic of the angelic beings which, ma'am, if this is past which John Milton said, then that's already. But I believe if it's future, there's another fall coming of the angelic beings. Does that make sense? It all boils down to do we see Revelation as a future or do we see it as a past? And if we see it as a future, then it's passages like this that are hard to reconcile because we don't want that to be but it says that it is. Does that make sense?

Now this battle is going to take place at some point and when it does, the Lord said, "I've had enough. I'm done with you. You're committed to the earth." And he has 3 ½ years. That's all he gets at that point according to the rest of chapter 12. And what does he do in those 3 ½ years? Well, according to the end of chapter 12, he chases the people of God and tries to destroy them for 3 ½ years, which is where the chronology... by the way, this is where this thing is so important right here, if that makes sense. Notice that chapter 12 takes place right about here. It doesn't take place on this side and it doesn't take place on this side even though it's parenthetical. And so we've got to decide is this past or future, and if this is future, then we've somehow got to reconcile there's a battle coming one day in the future where the Lord says, "Thump, you're gone." But to now, the name Satan means accuser. He's an accuser of the brethren and is it sisthren? Is that the proper term? I don't know, but all of us. He is our accuser.

Any other Revelation questions? I'm glad you brought that up, sir. Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

So much for the database.

[unintelligible]

Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

They are.

[unintelligible]

They do.

[unintelligible]

Okay, so the question is the angelic beings that, by the way, according to scripture they are angelic beings who have fallen in the past. We know that, correct? We know that when Satan fell, he didn't fall alone, there were those that were with him, and according to this very mysterious passage in Revelation 12, there's a third of the stars or a third of the angels that if we see it as a future passage are going to fall again. Again, please forgive me for alluding to John Milton. Most of us if not all of us had to read "Paradise Lost" when we were growing up. "Paradise Lost" though a fabulous book about the fall of Satan, took chapter 12 of Revelation and put it in the past and not in the future. And so what he communicated in that book was a third of the angels fell in the past. We know that the angels fell but if this passage is future, there's a third future coming, if that makes any sense.

Now turn to the left, ah, since we're in Revelation go to the book of Jude. It's easy to find if you're in Revelation, just keep going left. In Jude, verse 6, there's two passages we're going to read about this. It says, "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." A few more pages to the left, the book of 2 Peter 2:4, it says, "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." Now the question you had was if they were exposed to all the greatness of God and the glories of God, then why on earth would they rebel? Well, you go back to Isaiah 14 which is the passage of the fall of Satan, and he said, "I will place my throne above God's. I will put myself above the throne of God. I'm number 2 but I want to be number 1."

Now John Milton, let me give him some praise here in "Paradise Lost." He made a great statement, he said, his mentality of Satan was better to reign in hell than serve in heaven. That's a great theological treatise there, that literally Satan said, "I would rather be number 1 in hell than number 2 in heaven." And the picture that we get from Isaiah 14 is that he rallied the troops. Now when you get to Revelation 20 at the end of the 1,000 year reign of Christ, guess what Satan does? He rallies a rebellion again and these people have been on planet earth with Jesus sitting on his throne for 1,000 years and they go with him. Satan is the best salesman you've ever seen and what he does is he convinces them that they ought to go with him rather than with God. And so they chose to reign in hell versus serve in heaven.

And I know you're shaking your head going, "How could that be? Why would they do it?" Ah, we are so easily deceived. So easily deceived. And you see the angels, how were they easily deceived? Because he promised them something that he couldn't deliver. I mean, you think about that for a moment. Sin, what is sin? Satan sells us a product that we think will give us ultimate satisfaction that ends up giving us ultimate failure. Every time. And we bite the hook, do we not? We would do it. It's real easy for us to pick on the angels but we do the same thing and somehow, somehow the picture you get from those verses is they bought Satan's lie and said, "You know what? You're right. We ought to be in charge, not that guy." And guess what happened? It says they were delivered into chains.

I don't know if that helps. The one question we can't answer conclusively is why did they do it. We don't know why but we know they did, you know, and there's another rebellion coming according to what we read in Revelation 12. There's another one coming. Think about that. Now according to the book of Job 38, the angels sing and rejoice when earth was created. They've seen it all and they still rebelled. That is how convincing the devil is. I mean, think about and, by the way, I like to allude to classic works of literature because I don't know if you know this and I'm not a literary professor, but the overwhelming majority if not all plots that you see in literature are all found in scripture. That's why preachers use books and movies and stuff as illustrations because it's the same story just told a different way, that's what it is.

There's a classic literary story called "Dr. Faustus." Remember the story of Dr. Faustus? Anybody remember Dr. Faustus? Only the English teachers and the nerds, which I'll claim to be one? Dr. Faustus is the story of a college professor who sold his soul to the devil, sold his soul to the devil and to his dying day believed that he could not get out of the contract. And he dies and he goes to hell and the final part of that story is he did not know that the one who he "sold his soul" to did not have the deed to his soul. He spent his whole life believing that what this individual whom we know as Satan said was true and it wasn't. And the reason that story is so impactful to me is he was so intelligent, so wise, so sophisticated, yet he believed the wrong source. So whether it be the angelic beings, whether it be the fictional character, Dr. Faustus, or whether it be your next door neighbor, we all have a tendency to believe the lies of the devil over the truth of God.

Did I ever answer your question, sir, about the war? Okay. I'm like we'll circle back there. Any other Revelation? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Okay, the question is if a third fell in the past and a third fall in the future, that troubles him. If this passage in Revelation 12 is about the future, then we don't know how many fell in the past. You see, that concept of 1/3, you know we've all heard the idea of 1/3 of the angels fell? That's only found in Revelation 12. And so we do know the angels rebelled, we don't know how many. Was it one-millionth, or was it half? Here's the interesting thing, in Hebrews 12 it says the angelic beings are innumerable, it means cannot be numbered by man. A third of innumerable is a lot. In fact, later on in the book of Revelation in chapter 5, it talks about there were 10,000 times 10,000 times 10,000 angels who their sole job was just to sit around the throne of God. And so 1/3 of however many is an awful lot, correct, but as far as the past is concerned, we do not have an exact number. We don't have an exact number but we do know in the future there is 1/3 of whatever is, I guess, left.

Any other fun Revelation questions? Phew, did we exhaust Revelation tonight? We didn't. Okay, well, if we didn't exhaust Revelation tonight, I've got good news for you, you can come back in 48 hours, 48 hours from tonight we're going to kick off what I call the Ask Jeff tour which is where I have the opportunity, I don't know if y'all have noticed this but I really like talking about the Bible, and so Friday night from 6-8, I want to make sure you have the time right, Friday night from 6-8 we're going to be right here answering your Bible questions. Some of you may say, "Well, I've got plans. I'm going to be out of town. I can't be here." We are going to be broadcasting by way of social media and the church website and so you can have access there wherever you are. I do want to request, you know, you don't text and drive, don't watch and drive, if that makes sense. But if you're a passenger, feel free to do so. I've done that before. You can watch while you're going down the road thanks to the marvels of technology.

This Friday, you can still submit questions for Friday night at askjeffal which stands for Alabama @gmail.com or you say, "You know, I'm just not technologically savvy but I've got a question." Write it down, email it to me, we'll make sure it gets in there. But Friday night, 6-8. Now let me give you kind of a ballpark how that's going to work. The game plan is that we're going to go for about 45-50 minutes or so and then we're going to take a break because the seat, your mind can only handle what the seat can endure. Does that make sense? So we're going to take a little break and then we'll come back and we'll keep going and we'll just enjoy talking about the Bible, and tonight we never even got to a question and so who knows what Friday, we may just go until 2 in the morning. I'm kidding, we're not going that long. But I do want to invite you to be here on Friday evening.

A couple of announcements before we depart. To my left and your right as you dismiss, many of you heard last week about the opportunity next March of an Ask Jeff cruise. What that means is we're going to hit the waters, we're going to do Bible study in the morning, we're going to answer questions in the afternoon. Mr. Wood, if I'm correct, we have already, do we have 20 people that have already said, Mr. Wood, 20 people already? Is that right? We have 20 people. It takes 75 to make it happen so if you're interested or you want more information, see Mr. Chris on the way out. He's got information for you. But the lovely young lady who is standing next to him is my wife, Miss Tracy. If you completed your Vacation Bible School assignments from last week, please turn them in and as you can tell, she's got more for you. 686 kids are already signed up and it doesn't start for 10 more days and we've still got some ministries in our area that are going to be bringing kids by the busload in that we don't even have their numbers yet. So we're going to have lots of kids, we've got lots of opportunities. I do want to encourage you if you're not the craft type, she's got craft type stuff. We have, let me get my sheet of paper out here. Listen to this. In the 2 year old just as of today, we have 97 2 year olds. We need help. Lots of help. You know, 97 2 year olds is like 400 teenagers. I mean, really if you think about it. As of today, we have 108 kindergartners and 107 4 year old.

So if you're willing to take a beating for Jesus during VBS. No, I'm kidding. We would love to get you taken care of. My wife has crafts or things that you can help get ready for Vacation Bible School or if you want to volunteer and say, "Hey, I'll be a helper in one of

those areas or more," if you would let her know on the way out. Can you believe we're just shy of 700 children? That doesn't include the 192 adult volunteers that are already signed up plus all the others. So we're going to have a great time and here's the fun part, we're going to put everybody right in this room and we're going to have a good time.

So let's pray and we'll dismiss.

Lord, as we go from this place, I know we may have more questions than we have answers, in fact, we may be more confused than when we got here but, God, we do know this, that when we read the last book of the Bible, we know that you know everything and you're going to wrap it all up and you're going to take care of your people. And so, God, as I pray as your people we would comfort in that, we would rest in that and, Lord, if we know those who don't know you, we would be sure to communicate and to share with them the love of Jesus Christ that will not only change their life today but give them an eternity in a place you call heaven. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Please go by and see Miss Tracy or Mr. Chris.