

Ask Jeff 8.23.17
By Dr. Jeff Meyers

sermonaudio.com

Preached On: Wednesday, August 23, 2017

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

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

Alright, good to have you here tonight. Wednesday night at First Baptist, Opelika. Hopefully on your way in you grabbed both of the sheets of paper. One of them has the title "Circle of Concerns" at the top. That's code for our prayer list. Now if you know somebody or a situation that we need to be praying for or about that is not on this list, please do me a favor, contact us in the church office either by phone, by email, stop by me. Please let us know. We want to make sure that we get that concern on there as quickly as possible. Also another reminder, I say this every week, do not throw it away. Don't toss this. Hopefully you will take this home as an opportunity for you to pray through these situations on a regular basis, a daily basis. Even though we reprint it every week with updates, please make it a point to pray for these individuals on a regular basis. Always at the bottom of the first side there is an issue for sympathy, those who have lost loved ones in their family. We want to pray specifically for them during their times of grief. And on the back two sections, I always like to bring to those who are serving on the mission field, whether it's stateside or international. We want to pray for them in various capacities, and as you see, an incredible number of people who are connected to our church body who are serving in the military. So I always want to make a point to remember those people in specific for the selflessness of the life that they're living on our behalf and on behalf of the gospel. So please, just continue to let us know what we need to be praying for and we will put it on this sheet.

Let's pray and we'll get started tonight.

Heavenly Father, we come tonight, Lord, we don't come in the name of a church, we don't come in the name of a denomination, Lord, we come in the name of Jesus Christ, recognizing that because of his life, his death, his resurrection, that your word says that we can come boldly before your throne and that's what we're doing tonight, we're coming boldly on behalf of those who are hurting, Lord, many who are hurting physically, who need healing, who need a touch from you, and we boldly come asking you to be the Great Physician in their life. Lord, we come boldly on behalf of those who are struggling emotionally and relationally and with their family, their friends and such, and Lord, we come boldly tonight asking that you would be a restorer, that you would restore those areas that in their life that feel like they are torn, broken or at a distance. More importantly, Lord, we come on behalf of those, Lord, who are spiritually struggling, maybe they're mixed in a world of addiction, or maybe they're struggling with belief or doubt and, Lord, we come boldly asking you to be the answer to their question, Lord, to

be the solution to their struggle. God, tonight we come on behalf of those who are hurting with the loss of family, Lord, who are distanced from their family because they're serving on the mission field or in the military, and we pray that you would be the comfort that they need you to be, the peace they need, Lord, that you would be, your Holy Spirit would be so present in their lives, Lord, that the distance of mileage and the distance of family would be as if it's not even there. Lord, tonight as we're blessed to be in this room, as we're blessed to be among our family and our friends here at First Baptist, guide us through your word. Lord, we don't want this to be about First Baptist, we don't want this to be about a human personality, we want this to be about your word coming into our lives so that we might be conformed to and look more like the Lord Jesus Christ. It's in his name we pray. Amen.

Alright, I do want to welcome you tonight to Wednesday nights at First Baptist. If you are a first time guest or visitor with us, allow me to welcome you to what I consider one of the most unusual Bible studies you may ever be a part of. You say, "Well, why is it unusual?" Because everything that happens tonight is because of you. That's right, it is a listener guided or a full participation Bible study. Here's what that means, that in just a few moments, we're going to open up a database and there are questions in that database that you have asked. Now you have put these questions in. Now the number 1 way that people do so is they go to our website or our app, fbcopelika.com/askjeff. You can submit a question on there. If you put your email address, whenever that question is answered you will get a link to the video of which it was answered just in case you weren't here with us. Now you can remain anonymous but I want you to hear this: if you submit by way of email, I don't know who you are so you're always anonymous to me.

Now what I think is the best part about Wednesday night is not the questions from the database, it's when you raise your hand and you say, "Well, what about this, or I'm curious about this, or I'd like to chase this." Now you do lose your anonymity but you also have the ability to take it anywhere you want. We've had people in the past say, "Hey, I know what that question was but this is what I want to ask." You have the absolute freedom to do it. It is all what do you want to know, what do you want to study tonight.

We're going to do that for about half the time, then we're going to transition to the second sheet of paper that hopefully you picked up when you came in, we're going to continue our study in the book of Revelation. Now I'm going to warn you, in the next week or two it's going to get real good as we roll into chapter 6, but tonight we're going to be in chapter 5 of the book of Revelation. So we'll do Q&A for about half the time, then we'll go into the book of Revelation beginning in chapter 5 this evening.

So we will go to the database. Just as a reminder, the database has an algorithm that is smarter than I am. They do not go by chronological order. So whenever you submit a question, it gets put in some formula and they just come randomly.

So with that being said, it says, question number 1. Did y'all notice how I had to do that? Yeah, it's happening. Thank y'all. I appreciate it. I saw the glasses being offered. Thank you. So far tonight at least, my arms are long enough.

Biblically, I'm glad you asked that, is there anything wrong with someone referring to themselves as a prophet in today's society? I've heard of other denominations referring to teachers as prophets and was wondering if this is biblically sound in principle?

That is a really really good question. I want to encourage you, turn to the book of Ephesians 4, we're going to discuss the concept not of prophecy or as 1 Corinthians 12 says, the gift of prophecy, we're speaking of tonight what is called the office of a prophet and Ephesians 4 is probably the best place to begin that discloses for us biblically as the question presupposed of what we're dealing with here.

In Ephesians 4, I'm going to begin in verse 7 just for the sake of context. By the way, for about the first three or four verses it's going to be on a completely different subject matter but nonetheless it's context. It says, "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)" Listen to verse 11, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Now here is where the discussion takes place not just specifically to the office of a "prophet" but, shall we say, all of the five that are listed, and I think we can conclusively say tonight that by way of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit through whom we know the Apostle Paul, the Lord has made it very clear that there were at least five varied ways in which the Lord spoke to not only the world at large but to the church in specific, and I want to walk through these briefly and concentrate on the one that was specifically asked.

The first one is apostles. He called the first apostles. Now what's interesting is we hear this term a lot in our culture. If you watch television that has a "religious or Christian" flare to it, at times there will be people who are titled Apostle So-and-so or Prophet So-and-so. However, biblically speaking, an apostle had varied qualifications. Qualification number 1 is they had to have witnessed the ministry of Jesus Christ. Qualification number 2, they had to personally witness the resurrected Jesus Christ. And so when you deal strictly and biblically with an apostle, that is very limited in its chronological scope.

Now when we look at the apostles in scripture, we know about the famous first 12, of course. Now you have those 12 apostles, we know about Judas who betrays the Lord, he goes and he hangs himself, etc. We know that in Acts 1, he is replaced with a man by the name of Matthias. And then later, Saul who would become Paul would be called the apostle out of due time. Now there are some people who argue and say, "Well, the Apostle Paul doesn't qualify to be an apostle." Well, yes, he does because in the position that he had, he most assuredly would have had at some level a witness to or a knowledge of the ministry of Jesus Christ. I mean, he was there personally when the first martyr was

killed, Stephen, in Acts 7, but then on the road, you know about it, to Damascus in Acts 9, who did he see with his own eyes? He saw Jesus. That's why he calls himself the apostle out of due time because he didn't see him resurrected in those first few days before his ascension but actually in the flesh after the ascension. So I believe that according to Ephesians 4:11, the role or the office of an apostle was very limited in number and in scope.

Now we move on to prophets. That's where it gets interesting because the Bible does speak in 1 Corinthians 12 about the gift of prophecy, and when you begin to deal with this, prophecy isn't just foretelling, it's also forth-telling. Foretelling means I know what's coming. Forth-telling means I know what is true in the midst of what is false. And so when you go back in the Old Testament and you think of individuals like Isaiah and Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Amos, Joel, all these individuals, they had the office of a prophet. Now I want to be very specific. Some of them were life-long prophets. Isaiah spent his whole life as a prophet, okay? Amos, 20 minutes. That was it. He's the original one hit wonder, he really is. I mean, the Lord calls him up to preach a sermon, he preaches for 20 minutes and he's done. In fact, he says, "Hey, I'm just from Tekoa, man, I'm just a sheep herder." But the Lord calls him out for a brief period to be a prophet.

Now the office of a prophet, I think, is to be distinguished from the gift of prophecy of which 1 Corinthians 12 says is a living, active gift in what we know as the church of Jesus Christ. Here's where I think it gets interesting. Go to Hebrews 1 because the apostle part, you might have an interesting discussion there, but it is on this prophet one where people say, "Well, I know people with the gift of prophecy. Could they not be called a prophet?" Well, in Hebrews 1 there's a very interesting statement that is made. Hebrews 1:1 says, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." And so the idea that you get in the first two verses of Hebrews is that the role of or the office of a prophet was critical leading up to the person of Jesus Christ but according to Hebrews 1:1-2, now that Jesus Christ has lived and has died and he has raised, that the office of a prophet is no longer of necessity because he is the fulfillment of, he is the culmination of all that the prophets were speaking of.

Now what about those who claim to? Here is where at times it may sound like we're splitting hairs but I think it's important. I would absolutely concur according to 1 Corinthians 12, there are individuals who the Spirit gives what we know as the gift of prophecy. They have the ability to foretell and to forth-tell, but I struggle with the concept of the office of the prophet because of what is said in Hebrews 1, and in specific how the New Testament is laid out. The Apostle Paul never calls himself a prophet yet he speaks of the Second Coming quite a bit, and so you don't see, once you get into the letters of Paul, you don't see anybody claiming to be a prophet like Micah was, or like Nahum was, or like Ezekiel was, but you do see the apostles for a brief season.

Then that next item that's used in Ephesians 4 is that of an evangelist, one who tells the good news. A pastor is one who shepherds the flock. And teacher is one who proclaims

the word of God. I would say of those five "offices or roles," the first one most definitively biblically was limited in scope. The second one, the office of the prophet, the struggle there is because there is the gift of prophecy. I draw the line that the office of prophet is no longer of necessity but the gift of prophecy is an absolute valid way in which the Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit speaks to the church and the world at large.

So I don't get all hung up when people say, "Well, my name is Prophet So-and-so," but here's what I do, I go to the book of Deuteronomy 18 which says that if a prophet speaks one false prophecy, they're to be stoned to death. Now some years ago, I was watching television late at night that a "Christian flare" to it, and someone was on there and they allowed themselves to be called Prophet So-and-so, and on the screen it had the audacity to say, "Over 75% accurate." That may sound good to our flesh but it doesn't coincide with Deuteronomy 18. So if you know of someone or know of someone who knows someone who says, "Well, they're a prophet," gift of prophecy absolutely, office of prophet means they're never wrong. They never miss. So just laying out the question that said biblically what is the role, and that's what the Bible says about that role and that office.

Any follow-up on prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, apostles? I heard something but I didn't see a hand. What about bishops? Ah, that's a great term. Bishops when you get over into the pastoral epistles, the pastoral epistles get even more specific within a local church congregation where it talks about what we know as deacons, it talks about what we know as elders, and it also speaks of bishops, overseers, and by strict biblical definition, you could utilize the term pastor and bishop but really a bishop is someone who oversaw multiple groups and multiple congregations.

So we see that name quite a bit in our culture today, Bishop So-and-so. By strict biblical definition, that is an individual who spiritually overseas more than one congregation. So even though it's a title that many of you may not be necessarily familiar with with your upbringing, it is a biblical title. Then you've got the term elders, deacons and such. But that title is one of those strange ones that we kind of see sometimes and think, "Well, what is that?" By strict biblical definition, over more than one congregation. So thanks for bringing that up.

Anybody else on those? We're good? Boy, y'all ate way too much and it sat heavy tonight but that's okay. We're good. Moving forward. Oh, I apologize, please forgive me.

[unintelligible]

Ah, yes. The question was or the statement was, "I've heard recently that modern-day prophecy is encouragement." All right, let's go to 1 Corinthians 12 because I think that's what I was trying to communicate that I did not communicate well so please forgive me. 1 Corinthians 12 is the list of the spiritual gifts. Now let me talk about spiritual gifts while y'all are finding this passage. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you have been born again, you are saved, you have at least one of these but you do not have all of these,

okay? But you have at least one, and what the Bible says, it communicates it very clearly beginning in verse 4 that "here are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

Now there's a list of those gifts. When you go into the book of Romans 12, we also see another list of gifts and this is where it gets real fun at times where people try to overlay and compare and contrast. In the book of Romans 12, you also see the gift of exhortation or encouragement, and so some people have said, "Well, the gift of prophecy is similar to the gift of exhortation. I'm encouraging you. I'm being prophetic in that way." I don't get too caught up with someone who says one is one versus the other because in the gift of prophecy by strict definition, you are sharing what is truth, okay? Well, if you're sharing what is true or what should be true in somebody's life, that is a form of encouragement to them, that this is what is true versus what you're being led astray with.

So by strict definition, there is a passage that deals with prophecy, there's a passage that deals with exhortation. Some people would claim it's the same thing using two different words, some people say completely different, exhortation being encouraging, speaking words of encouragement, some would say prophecy is purely just words of truth. Well, if you're being encouraging, shouldn't it be based on truth? And if you're being true, it should be encouraging, I would think. But also is that gift of prophecy of foretelling, which is kind of another aspect of it, that the Lord gives you the ability just to kind of know what's coming, if that makes sense, which should be based on truth, and when it happens, that we should be encouraging of this is what is coming, this is where we need to be.

Now here's what I think is important about spiritual gifts... Did that help at all? Okay, good. ...is spiritual gifts are given according to what we read by the Lord, and I think this is where some people who have been believers for a long time struggle. There may be a gift that is very much present in your life today that may be another gift present in your life five years from now, and sometimes people get upset and say, "Well, this is how the Lord was working. Now this is how the Lord is working." Hey, according to what we just read, he can do what he wants. It is his Spirit that gives. And so at times there may be, I know individuals that would say, "Hey, I have two or three of these," and that's great. You don't have them all but you have at least one, and so what I would claim, though, is every spiritual gift whether it's the gift of prophecy, miracles, whatever it is, all of them operate in conjunction with the word of God, not outside the word of God.

Case in point. Gift of prophecy. I've heard people say, "Well, I know the Bible doesn't address this but I'm going to speak this prophecy to you anyway." Okay, but is that

prophecy, can it be rooted in the word of God, verified by the word of God, and validated by the word of God? In other words, those who have the gift of prophecy can't predict college football scores. Does that communicate? Okay, that's called actually in scripture that's called divination, alright?

So anybody else on that one? I apologize that I missed you a while ago. Please forgive me there. We're good with spiritual gifts? Uh-oh, yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Well, where I find that is it says, verse 4, it says, "Now these are the diversities of gives, but the same Spirit. And these are the differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." So every man generically for human beings, believers, has one of. Does that make any sense?

[unintelligible]

Yeah, and I think if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, the Lord has or desires to work through you at some capacity through one of these gifts. Now some of you Baptists are scared of that miracle one but it's there.

Yes, sir. We're good. Alright, we're good.

Alright, back to the database unless I missed a hand that I don't know of. Going once, going twice. I did not talk anything about that tongue thing and we're on to the next question.

[unintelligible]

Do you know what? I've got my happy shoes on tonight which means we'll go there. It's alright. It does speak about the gift of tongues and for a lot of Baptists that's just scary, let's be honest. Here's what I will say about that in regards to tonight. Verse 10, "To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues." I think oftentimes when we speak of the spiritual gift of tongues, there are those who, I believe, err biblically that say that everybody must have this gift. That's not what 1 Corinthians 12 says. It is a gift.

Second of all, it states that there is also the interpretation of the tongues. Notice none of the other gifts have an interpretation of. There's not interpretation of prophecy. There's not interpretation of exhortation. But there is in this one. In other words, it's the one gift that walks tandemly or side-by-side with another individual to verify or validate the proper usage of the gift so much so that you get through chapter 12, chapter 13, by the time you get to chapter 14, you have an entire chapter of scripture dedicated to the proper usage of this specific gift because obviously, kind of like our culture, it wasn't necessarily

always being used biblically. When you get to the end of 1 Corinthians 14, there is a focus, there is an emphasis on how it is to be interpreted and how it is to be utilized.

So a lot of times we spend a lot of time talking about the speaking of but not a whole lot of time on the interpretation of. I've shared this with you before so allow me just some humor again. I've had people all throughout the years who have come to me and they say, "Hey, you're a Baptist. You believe in speaking in tongues?" I say, "Well, it's in 1 Corinthians 12." And they say, "So do you speak in tongues?" I say, "No, I interpret." It scares them to death because rarely do you ever meet anybody who says, "I have the gift of interpretation." You meet a lot of people who say, "I have the gift of speaking." It's the only gift that has a qualifier with it, that to be spoken also must be interpreted. And so therein, and you could get in all the minutiae of chapter 14 but that alone is a very important biblical concept regarding that spiritual gift.

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Ah, great question. So if you're in an environment, and I've been there, where someone is "speaking in tongues" and there is not an interpreter, can that be of the Lord? According to 1 Corinthians 14, no. In fact, according to 1 Corinthians 14, it says, number one, that the one who's speaking in the tongues knows what they're speaking. In other words, they're a witness themselves. Number two, it says that in a public environment, no more than two or three. And it says that there will always be an interpreter.

I was in an environment some years ago where it was a youth camp environment, hundreds and hundreds of young people there, and you know, youth camps are loud, y'all know that, for multiple reasons but it was loud in the worship area and every time it would get real quiet, all of a sudden this young man would speak in what you and I would call tongues. Well, my ears, I mean, I'm like my Boston Terrier at home, you know, my ears get up because I'm the camp pastor and technically I'm the one that's going to have to deal with this situation whatever we've got here.

Well, I noticed that every time it got quiet, he would speak but nobody would ever interpret, and so I went up to him in the middle of the worship service, I know this isn't going to surprise y'all but I did. I just went up to him and I got his sponsor with him, I said, "Can I borrow y'all just for a brief moment?" "Sure, what's going on?" So I took them out into the little lobby area and I said, "Hey, I'm not here to pour cold water on you, I'm not here to tell you the Lord doesn't work in your life like maybe he doesn't work in mine." I said, and I opened up 1 Corinthians 14 and I said, "No one has come forward to interpret and therefore I'm going to err on the side that what you're speaking is not something we need to hear tonight because we don't have an interpretation of."

Well, the next morning we had an emergency counselor meeting. I was called a heretic and the whole church left the camp because it's what they wanted to propagate, they wanted to promote but back to what you're bringing, what does the Bible say, and the

Bible says there will be an interpreter. And so therefore, and there's the struggle with spiritual gifts in anything, is we want to be biblical, right? We don't want to be in the flesh. We don't want to be what this person wants. We want what does the Bible say? Well, the Bible says there must be an interpreter so therefore if there's not an interpreter, we've got problems.

Does that help with that one a little bit? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Can you have more than one spiritual gift? Yes, sir. I hope so.

[unintelligible]

Great question. Can the person who has the gift of tongues be the interpreter thereof? No, and here's why, here's why, because the Bible says and I love how the Lord describes this particularly back in Genesis 50, Jeremiah and such, it says in the mouth of two or three witnesses. Well, if you're both speaking and interpreting, you're only one witness, you're not two. So the picture that you get biblically is if the Lord so chooses to utilize this gift, you can imagine in a room there would be some kind of question of, "Okay, what are we dealing with here?" And then you have a second or a third coming alongside confirming what that is.

[unintelligible]

Which one?

[unintelligible]

Oh, you have to have two or three? I know Genesis 50 talks about in the mouth of two or three witnesses. I know the book of Jeremiah somewhere in his 52 chapters he talks about that. Was that narrow enough for you? No, it's in there. But all throughout scripture. That is why at the trial of Jesus, they spent hours trying to find two false witnesses that would both agree to tell the same lie because they had to have at least two. Now you get in the book of Deuteronomy 22, I believe, I think it's either Deuteronomy 20 or Deuteronomy 22, it says that a man shall not be put to death without two witnesses sharing the same story. Again, the same concept. You've got to have two. Now in 1 Corinthians 14, it says there's two or three that speak, there has to be an interpretation.

Did I see another one? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Yes.

[unintelligible]

To another, the interpretation of tongues.

[unintelligible]

Yeah, which answers that question. I saw one. Yes, sir. Isn't it amazing how we love to get on tongues? Yes.

[unintelligible]

Right. So the issue he's bringing up and I know he was soft spoken, was what about the issue of another language? Alright, I'm glad you brought that up. Go to Acts 2. By the way, now do you understand why the Lord gave us an entire chapter on this in 1 Corinthians 14? Acts 2, let's go to Pentecost. You know, I can't stop you, can I?

Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

There you go. You see, he works, he moves, he's good, isn't he?

[unintelligible]

That's alright. I get scared a lot when the Lord speaks. Alright, Acts 2. This is a famous Pentecost-tongue event, so to speak, alright? Beginning in verse, we'll just start with 1. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come," by the way, I love to tease my Pentecostal friends. Pentecostal is not a denomination, it's a Jewish holiday. Okay, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all..." That was bad, I'm sorry. You know the next bad preacher joke is at the end of verse 1, right? What model car did they drive? A Honda, "They were all with one accord in one place." I'm just making sure those of you who did not have coffee are awake. It's okay.

Verse 2, "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with," to your point, sir, "other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." That, by the way, nation means people group, alright? It says, "Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded," they were perplexed, "because that every man," listen, "heard them speak in his own language." So let me ask you a question about Pentecost. Was the miracle in the speaking, or was the miracle in the hearing? So again, let me go full circle with this discussion when it talks about whether it's the gift of tongues or whether the event in Pentecost, we always tend to focus on the one speaking when it is the one interpreting or hearing that holds the key to the entire event. So just something interesting there.

Anything else? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Yes. The question is, is there a distinction between the Acts 2 event and the 1 Corinthians 12 event? I would say absolutely there is a distinction and I wish I could answer this in 30 seconds or less but, friends, just put up with me. Are you ready? In Acts 1:8, alright, the Lord comes to them and says that, "You are to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth," correct? Notice what we just read in Acts 2. Who was present? Jews from every nation, okay? When they heard the gospel in their own language, you saw the truth of Jesus Christ because when you read the sermon of Peter, it's pretty clear it's Jesus, that they heard in their own language, alright? When you get to chapter 8 of the book of Acts, guess who hears the gospel? The Samaritans. When you get to chapter 10, guess who hears? The Gentiles. In every one of those situations, you have some type of involvement of the Lord supernaturally working, and so what I would say is the event in Acts 2 is distinct from 1 Corinthians 12 because in 1 Corinthians 12, it is spoken to edify the church, here it is the sharing of the gospel to the lost. So I believe you do have to distinguish between the two. One was an incredibly God-directed evangelistic outreach event of which, by the way, except for chapter 10 and a few other places, you don't see its duplication. 1 Corinthians 12 is it says that when the believers are gathered together and if this occurs, this is how it needs to be handled.

Do you see, does that help at all? Very different there. But to this man's point, there are numerous cases, if you've ever had the privilege of speaking to missionaries who've been on the field in various capacities of people who share the gospel in English, the person responds in English and then they found out a few days later that person only speaks Portuguese, and all you can do is just step back and say, "God, you are bigger than I am and I don't know how you pulled that off but that is awesome." If that makes any sense.

So I would say to my third point, there are occasions where the Lord supernaturally intervenes. He can circumvent language because he's the one who invented language, but the miracle, again, is in the hearing of it, not in the speaking. The Lord never talks about how great Peter's speech was but how supernatural their hearing was. 1 Corinthians 12, it's not so important the tongue that is spoken but the interpretation that is given.

Does that help a little bit? We're good? Thank you, sir. Anybody else. Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Ah, great question. The difference or is there a distinction between what we would call the speaking of tongues where there's interpretation and what some people talk or speak of a prayer language? You say, "A prayer language? Where did that come from?" Well, that's from 1 Corinthians 14, okay? Now can I give you all a homework assignment? Go home and read 1 Corinthians 14 because in there the Apostle Paul makes a very clear statement, he says that in public among the church, that he would rather you speak 10,000 words of prophecy or language of truth than any amount of tongues. And he says, "and

though I speak in tongues privately more than all of you." Now he doesn't use the term prayer language but what he is saying is that somehow, somehow, supernaturally he and the Lord have communication that doesn't require an interpretation because it's not a public declaration of truth, it is a private conversation between he and the Lord alone.

Does that help there?

[unintelligible]

Okay, now we're getting a little more specific. What about if you're in a public meeting and there are people that are in their own private prayer language that are doing it publicly? Yeah, well, again, that's where you kind of cross that line of if we are in a public environment according to 1 Corinthians 14 where some type of communication that is, I hate to use the word unintelligible but unknown to the public, there has to be, because it says if it's not interpreted, it will bring confusion. In 1 Corinthians 14:33 it says God is not the author of confusion. And so that's where it gets real fuzzy, so to speak.

1 Corinthians 14 is your homework assignment. Does that sound good? Alright now, I'm glad we got to talk about gifts and tongues and such but according to the clock, Revelation is calling us. So Revelation 5 where nobody speaks in tongues. I'm just being honest with you.

Revelation 5. For those of you who are new to our study, I don't know how long it's going to take us to get through Revelation but everybody loves it so it's a lot of fun. Revelation 4 and 5 are so completely distinct and different than the other chapters of the book of Revelation and here's why: they take place exclusively in what we would call the heavens or according to 2 Corinthians 12, the third heaven. We are in the throne room of God. In chapter 4, the Apostle John on the island of Patmos hears a voice as if a trumpet. He is called up. He is there among the throne. He sees the thunders and the lightnings and there's all these creatures that we've talked about with all these different faces and they're crying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty, who is, who was, and who is to come." And beginning in verse 1 of chapter 5, we have this account. It says,

1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? 3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. 4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. 5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. 6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the

earth. 7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

Now what we are dealing with here in chapter 5 and hopefully your outline will somewhat make this clear, is we're dealing with this famous book that is sealed with seven seals, as we're going to see, holds the information, it holds, allow me to go back, it holds the prophecies of what's about to come. This is the content of the future. This is the content of the judgments of God. This is the content of the days ahead.

Now this book is a very critical nature for two reasons. 1. I want you to notice its location. It is in the right hand of him who is on the throne. Why is this critical? Because back in chapter 1 of Revelation, verse 20, when it speaks about the candlesticks or the seven churches beginning with Ephesus and ending with Laodicea, do you remember their location? They were in the right hand of the Lord, the hand of authority, the hand of power, listen to this, the hand of security, okay? Now if you've ever traveled to the Eastern world, you don't want to touch somebody's left hand, okay? The left hand is used for things we don't need to talk about publicly, okay? Yes, just take your Charmin with you, that's all I've got to say. The right hand... I'm just keeping it real, folks, okay? The right hand is the hand of fellowship. Remember the book of Acts? The Apostle Paul goes back to Jerusalem and he meets with Peter, James and John and they gave him the right hand of fellowship, okay? And so very picturesque. In fact, if you've ever seen Michelangelo's famous painting regarding the judgment of God, there's this picture of Jesus Christ, his right hand is offering everlasting life, his left hand is condemning to the lake of fire.

Now that's important the location in his right hand, so it's a hand of security and power and authority, also though that it's the one who's on the throne. Now this is one of those issues that we're not going to resolve tonight and we'll probably never resolve because it says he who sits on the throne and then one comes and takes the book from him, in and from the midst of the throne. And so the question becomes how can it be one on the throne, one in the midst of the throne at the same time? We're dealing with an infinite God in a place called heaven, folks, and sometimes it's just difficult to grasp but the key part is it's in the hand of security in the midst or it's at the throne of God itself. That's the location.

Now the content. Here's where it gets a little fun. It is written both on the front side and the back side and it's sealed with seven seals. Now two other interesting passages of scripture, the book of Daniel 12 and the book of Revelation 10, there are books, for lack of better terms, that the Lord gives these prophets that are not to be opened. In the book of Daniel it says, "Seal these up until the last days." In the book of Revelation 10, we're going to read in a couple of weeks, months, years, whenever we get there, it says that he gives them to the person known as the Apostle John and it says, "Seal them up, chew them up and don't distribute them." So there are places where the Lord "writes something" and then says, "But don't distribute it." Here what's unique here about the content is it has been sealed for a time and a period.

Now a lot of people have questioned is this what Daniel 12 was talking about? I don't know. It's very possible. Or in Daniel 12 because we're not given the content, is there material there "that is revealed later in the book of Revelation"? I don't know. All I'm saying is it could be what was given in Daniel 12 but if it's not, that's okay too because whatever was sealed is about to be opened when we get to chapter 6. So it's not going to be sealed forever.

Now what is this book of what is the content thereof? There are three major theories or ideas here. I just want to share them with you. I'm going to begin with the narrowest and then go to the largest, so to speak. Some people believe that the book or this item containing the seven seals is only a book about the seven seals and that's it. It just contains the seven seals. It would be much like a leaflet in our perspective. That would fit accordingly because you have seven seals so when you do one on the back side of every page, it would be one on the front page and one on the back page. It would work perfectly. It could be. Other people have claimed that this is the book of Revelation because of the number of chapters of the book of Revelation, if you divide it by sevens, you would have material on the front and you would have material on the back. And there are others who believe that this means the entire scripture in totality.

Now here's what's interesting about this. Most people, most people believe that the famous seven sealed book is either the book of Revelation or it is the Bible in totality, alright? Now here's an interesting thing for you to go and look. Any of you have old family Bibles that maybe have been passed down through the generations? You know, the ones that sometimes you're scared to even touch because of their age? Here's an interesting thing that took place hundreds of years ago. Sometimes you still see this particularly by Oxford Press over in England, and by the way, I used to be a Bible salesman so I'm kind of a nerd about this so just put up with me for a moment, is many of these old Bibles will have, by the way, this was printed by Oxford Press which is why it has it, notice it will have five distinct marks on the spine and then the inside of each cover will be laced with stitching to indicate 5, 2, 7 seals. It's kind of interesting there that that's how they would print the Bibles so as to indicate that it is the book sealed with seven seals.

Now does that mean that it's the entire content of scripture? No, absolutely not. It very easily could be the book of Revelation, just the seven seals. The thing that is critical is not is it a leaflet, is it Revelation, is it the whole of the Bible, the thing that is critical is that which is sealed is about to be opened up.

Now when this book is presented, I want you to see what I call the call of desperation here. It says a strong angel comes forth. That's interesting because I don't know any other place in scripture where the description of an angel is as strong. Now that's fascinating to me because when you begin to look at angelic beings in scripture, they're not, and I joke about this all the time, they're not what we have at Hallmark stores, they're not short, little, fat guys that are somewhat, you know, with receding hairlines playing a harp on a cloud. The picture of an angel in scripture is a warrior and, in fact, in the book of Isaiah there's an angel who kills 185,000 men in one night with one sword, and then Jesus on

the night of his crucifixion says, "Can I not call upon legions of angels?" In other words, "I can wipe out this whole place with one fail swoop. I've got this." And yet those angels are not called strong angels. This one is called a strong angel.

Now there are several places in scripture where angels are given very specific descriptions. I put these on your outline. In chapter 1, verse 3, when it talks about the book of Revelation being given through the Apostle John, and it says he sent and he sealed it, this is the Lord, by his angel. Now that's interesting. There is actually a possessive pronoun attached to the angelic being that was a part of the communication of the words of what we know as the book of Revelation. When you get to chapter 9, it talks about four angels that were bound in the river Euphrates for a specific time, place, and function.

Now the reason I brought that up is angelic beings are spoken all throughout scripture but it is a rare thing for them to be given a specific descriptive title. Here is a strong angel. You say, "Well, why is that important?" Because the material in this book is of such a critical nature that it wasn't just some run-of-the-mill angel that was going to talk about it, it's a strong angel. How strong? Well, at least his vocal cords were strong because when he cries out, it says everybody in heaven, everybody on earth, and everybody under the earth heard.

Now I'm going to just have some fun for just a moment. I'm going to pull aside. You know, people have their dream jobs, y'all know about dream jobs, right? You know, the job you'll never have but, you know, if it could be offered, it would be fun. Can I share with you one of my dream jobs? I want to be the town crier at, I guess, what we would call Congress. Do you know what I'm talking about? You know, the guy who walks in and says, "Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States." He does that like twice a year and that's his whole job. What a gig, I mean, that's awesome. And all I can tell by watching is all you've got to do is be obnoxiously loud. I've got that. I can do that, alright? And so the reason I bring that up is that individual walks into that room and when his voice proclaims, the whole room focuses on that door. Look at what this angel does. All of heaven, all of earth, and all those under the earth, all those that are deceased is the picture we get, everybody hears his voice. Woo, that's a crier, so to speak.

So there's this call of desperation, "Who is worthy?" Then there's the desperation of the Apostle John. The problem, so to speak, nobody's deemed worthy. Now notice what the Apostle John does, he begins to weep. He begins to cry out because this item, this book contains the future, it contains everything that's about to happen. It's the answer to all of humanity's question of how is this thing all going to wrap up. And the angel comes out and says, "I've got the book. Who's worthy to open it?" Nobody comes forth.

Now here's another thing I find interesting about this whole scenario. Humanity, well, can I speak as a Southerner? I mean, I am wearing seersucker with happy shoes here. We have this bad tendency to say, "Hey, guys, watch this." Y'all ever heard that? Or you know it's bad when somebody goes, "Here, hold my tea." Do you know what I mean? It's going to get bad, going to get ugly, and somebody's going to the emergency room. Does

it not as a Southerner, does it not shock you that somebody didn't go, "I'll give it a try"? We've all got those friends, don't we? Some of you have got the... I don't know, does your family, does everybody have that uncle? Everybody has that uncle, right, or that cousin that will try anything. Nobody comes forward. Nobody. I want you to think about that for just a moment. The humility and the magnitude of this situation, not one single person says, "I think I can do that." Nobody, and the Apostle John begins to weep because no man, no person whether alive or dead is able and worthy to open it.

So what does he do? He weeps much. Now here's the great news. There is one person in verse 4 who is deemed worthy. They don't have a conclave, they don't have a discussion, they don't have a debate of whether he is worthy and/or not, he just comes and takes the book. It says there in verse 4, "And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne." Who is this person? Pretty simple, folks, this is Jesus. There is no debate here. There is no either... there's not even a second option of who this person is in Revelation 5. Why? He is the tribe of Judah, and he is the seed of David. There is nobody else this could be. Second, is the picture that is given. He is called the Lamb as it had been slain. Do you notice that threefold witness there? Not only do we have the tribe of Judah, not only do we have the seed of David, but the picture is as a lamb that had been slain. And then finally the process is he comes and he takes it and he opens it.

Now tonight as we close, as we wrap up, there are two very important takeaways from Revelation 5, these verses. Takeaway number one: Jesus appears "as slain" even post-ascension. So let's work with me here. So you have the life and the ministry of Jesus. Here is a sinless man, alright? He goes through his life ministering, there is that point of which he is placed upon a cross. According to the prophecies of Psalm 22 and fulfilled in the gospels, when he's placed on the cross, they pierce his hands, they pierce his feet. He goes into the grave. Three days later, the stone has been rolled away, the angel declares to the ladies, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" They go back and tell everybody, "He's risen! He's risen indeed!" There was one person who really struggled with this whole resurrection thing. Do you remember his name? Thomas. Remember what Thomas said? "I won't believe unless I put my hand in the scar."

Well, eight days later according to the gospel of John, they're in the Upper Room, Thomas is up there with them and Jesus just comes right in. Thomas immediately hits the ground. What does Jesus say? "Come on, touch them. If you want to touch them, they're right here." Jesus' resurrected body possessed the marks of the cross. Eight days later, he's asking Thomas, "You can feel free to touch these. You can." Why is that important? Because this picture in Revelation 5 is the resurrected Jesus, this is the ascended Jesus. He is on the throne, in the throne room of what we call the third heaven, and when John

sees him, the picture is a lamb as it had been slain. I think there is strong biblical evidence that what we know as the marks of the cross weren't temporary, they're eternal.

Now let me tell you about the significance there. One day as a believer in Jesus Christ, I'm going to get a new body. According to the scripture, the new body is going to be immortal, it's going to be eternal, it's never going to wear out, it's never going to get sick. I want you to think about my body or yours in comparison to what he saw. My body's not going to have scars. My body is not going to have it, but his does. Do you find that interesting, that the one who came to bear our sins is the one who bears the scars of our sins for all eternity so we don't have to? Woo, folks, that's significant there, okay?

So the picture of a post- not just resurrected but a post-ascended Jesus has the picture of the marks. Secondly, Jesus is the one who opens up the judgment of God. Fast forward to chapter 6. I know you want to get there because this is when all the good stuff happens. But in chapter 6, verse 1, this is the first seal being opened. "And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals." Now that means that the wrath of God, that means the judgment of God isn't opened by the Antichrist. In fact, we're going to see when we get to chapter 6, it is the Antichrist that according to 2 Thessalonians 2, that is allowed by the opening of this first seal by Jesus Christ. Here's what I want you to take away tonight, the future is in the hands of Jesus Christ alone. Nobody else. He's the one that opens the seals. 2. The judgment of God that is described in Revelation 6 is opened by God himself. Humanity doesn't do something to "invoke it." The Antichrist doesn't have the ability to say, "Here we go." Until Jesus opens it up, it doesn't happen. And finally, this same Jesus speaking to his followers in Matthew 28 said, "I will never leave you and I will never forsake you."

So do you believe that our Savior who said, "I'll never leave you. I'll never forsake you. I'll be with you until the end of days," why would he open up the judgment and the wrath of God on his own children? What we see beginning in chapter 6 are those who have rejected, those who have renounced, those who have not received the grace of God experiencing the wrath of God opened up by the Son of God. It's a critical piece of information that we have here in Revelation 5.

So two major takeaways. 1. The picture of Jesus bearing our sins is a picture that goes way beyond even the resurrection. 2. The eventual final judgment of God is actually distributed by the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

Alright, before I pray and close us tonight, one last bit of information or piece of data that I'd like to share with you regarding our AWANA ministry, that's those in sixth grade and below. If you were here last week, we talked all about it and what that encompasses, not only scripture memorization but the learning about missions etc. I am here to share with you, we have an absolute wonderful problem, here it is: we have in excess of 320 kids who have signed up for our AWANA ministry. Yeah! That's a good problem. We are in need of men. We have an abundance of young, energetic, testosterone-filled boys who need bigger boys to help, in specific, we need 14. So if you or you know anybody else who would be willing to serve with our preschool through sixth grade young men specifically on Wednesday night, we need 14 guys who might be willing to do so.

Now let me share with you this: if you are one of those 14 guys that says, "You know what? I'd be willing to do that." Everything that we do here on Wednesday night with adults, it's all on the internet. It's all recorded. It's all archived. You can get access to that are your own time. You can get it on your phone, your iPad, your computer, you can listen to a podcast. So as far as the content is concerned, it won't be with us but you can have access to it, but we are in need of about 14 men to participate at that level. Please hear me out, this is a really good problem that we've got so many young men on our campus that we need more older men to be a part of.

So just wanted to throw that out. If you're interested in being a part of that or participating, catch one of us on staff, particularly talk to Taylor T. or Miss Sherry C. or you can email Miss Laurel M. in the office, call the office, we can go forward. But if you find one of us, I promise you we'll get you to the right person at the right time.

Let's pray and we'll be dismissed.

Lord, as we leave this place, Lord, what a picture you've given us, the lamb as if it had been slain, Lord, a picture that the offering for our salvation, the offering for our forgiveness never goes away. And Lord, I pray as we depart from these grounds, that we would never forget the impact, we would never forget what you were willing to do on our behalf. Lord, you have spoken to us, you have shown us your word, you have given us a vivid picture in your word, now may we take what you've given us and may we do what 1 Peter 3:15 says, may we always have an answer for folks for the hope that is within us. May we not just have come to church tonight, may we depart being the church. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Please go get your children.