

Ask Jeff 8.30.17

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Crossroads Ministries

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Alright, ladies and gentlemen, it is time to get started. You'll notice tonight as we start, the lights seem a little bit dim. There's a reason for that, I promise they're going to be brought up in just a minute but there is a reason.

If you have your prayer sheet with you, the circle of concerns, I want to call attention to several things. The first thing is this, do not throw this away. Please utilize this throughout the week as a means and a mechanism to pray for those who are a part of our church, connected to our church, friends, family, etc. As always, you'll see a list of a variety of places and issues that we need to be praying about. At the bottom of the first page, there's a sympathy section, in particular this week for two of our families who have lost loved ones. We want to continue to pray just for their struggle through and their peace in this time of difficulty.

On the back side, two groups I like to call attention to, those serving on the mission field and those that are serving in the military. Now I did see, I don't know if they're in the room or upstairs with our AWANA, I saw Chase and Kimmy B. earlier tonight. Are they in the room or are they already gone upstairs? So as I was saying, that two of our missionaries as you'll see on there, Chase and Kimmy B., that are serving in Haiti are actually are on our campus tonight, and I believe they're sharing with our young people upstairs. But continue to pray for all of those that are serving both stateside and international as well as those that are serving in the military.

Now the reason the lights are a little bit dim is as we come to our time to pray not just for this list but for many other items, this week and this is a wonderful problem, we have been inundated with two requests. Request 1: how can we pray for the people that are suffering via Hurricane Harvey, Texas, Louisiana, probably soon to be Arkansas and other places? 2. How can we give? How can we support and know that our money is not only going to help but it's also going to propagate the gospel of Jesus Christ? Well, we've got a little video that we want to show you tonight that will not only show you some of the things that have occurred in the last week to 10 days, but also communicate to you, first, how your prayers have been effective, and number 2, how we can tangibly give. So a quick little video and then we'll be back and pray.

Video.

Alright, this information is going to be up for a while. All the images that you saw are from Rockport, TX where the actual eye of the hurricane went over. I know there has been so much flooding that has taken place not only from Corpus Christi but now all the way up into Beaumont, into Louisiana, literally millions of people have been displaced. I wanted to show you some images of where a lot of the wind damage took place as well as a quotation from an actual Rockport resident thanking you for your prayers, that the loss of life at least in their community was as limited as it was. Even though that community is about 90% destroyed and/or at loss, they're still back in there and what we wanted you to know is, number 1, your prayers were heard and they were effective. Number two, how can you be a part of the rebuilding of people's lives and such, and one of the things that we have set up is a means for you to do that. Now if you're just kind of an old fashioned person and say, "Hey, I would love to write a check to do so, or I'd like to give cash to help out." If you will make a memo either on that check or on an envelope of cash that says "Harvey," if you just write "Harvey" on it, that is going to go directly to the North American Mission Board's relief effort there in Texas and Louisiana.

You may notice tonight I'm wearing a shirt that says, "Send North America." This is a part of the North American Mission Board. As you came into the 316 Center, you saw our send relief trailer that we have as we're partnered with the North American Mission Board. As you can tell just by the title North American Mission Board, that is the branch of the Southern Baptist Convention that does ministry here in the North American continent, and here's the thing that I love to promote is they were on the ground before the eye of the hurricane even hit, and our giving in the past made their being there in the present, and what we give specifically via this "Harvey fund" goes directly to the recovery efforts from hurricane Harvey not just in Rockport but in all of those communities of which they will be serving.

Now if you're a technological person and you want to give online, when you do so, you can go to the online giving page, fbcopelika.com/give. When you do so, it's going to ask you for an amount and then it's going to ask you what fund to put it in. If you will choose the Fellowship Fund, that is our benevolence fund, and then in the memo put "Harvey" and that will be designated directly to that where all of the proceeds will go directly to the hurricane relief in Houston, in Texas, and in Louisiana directly through the North American Mission Board.

Okay, before we pray, though, one last favor I'm going to ask you, okay? I know you've all got them, right, smartphones? The First Baptist Facebook page which a lot of you watch this when you're not in person here or what you're surfing on Facebook while I'm teaching, it happens, it's okay. You know, in the old days people wrote notes to each other, nowadays we text each other but it's okay. If you will go the First Baptist, Opelika Facebook page, this video that you just saw with an embedded link on how to give through the North American Mission Board is on there. If you will take that and share that video and get it out to as many people as you know. I'm going to be very honest with you tonight, it's at times like this that a lot of organizations and a lot of groups and a lot of people take advantage of people through relief efforts. The North American Mission Board and what we know as Disaster Relief is the third largest disaster relief entity in the

nation behind Salvation Army and Red Cross. Here's what makes them different and distinct: they don't just come with food and clothes, they come with the gospel of Jesus Christ. That is their primary goal is to share the gospel when people are hurting and in times of trouble.

So many of you have asked how can we help tangibly, financially, this is the way that we're going to begin this process of doing so. So either by check or cash, designate "Harvey," or online memo "Harvey" on the Fellowship Fund and you can be a part of contributing and not just to the relief effort physically but to the evangelistic effort of the gospel of Jesus Christ there in Texas, Louisiana and as the damage spreads wherever they need to go. So I wanted to make you aware of that. Please continue to pray not only for those who need relief but for those who are providing the relief. Many of those first responders are going 30-36-40 hours without sleep and little to any food, and so they need our prayers as well. We're already hearing reports, many of you have heard there's already been the loss of life of a police officer who was assisting and others. And so, yes, there are those that are in danger and flooded, and those that are helping. It's dangerous on all accounts, so please continue to pray for all that are involved.

So let's pray and we'll get started.

Lord, tonight as we gather in this place, unlike many in Texas and Louisiana, we're dry. Yeah, it's been raining, God, and we know it but our houses are dry, our church is dry, our cars are relatively dry and, Lord, we've got a lot of brothers and sisters that are struggling about a thousand miles away. And so, Lord, thank you for the opportunity not only to share finances but to share hope and the peace of Jesus Christ and, Lord, for the millions of people in these communities who are lost and without hope, without Jesus, God, we pray for those missionaries who are on the ground, those men and women who are wearing the yellow jackets and the blue hats, God, who come with plates of food and buckets of cleaning supplies, but more importantly with a copy of your word. Lord, we pray that you would strengthen those men and women, and we pray that you would give them discernment and wisdom and boldness in these days, and that the gospel of Jesus Christ would be the shining light in the midst of a very very dark time in people's lives.

Lord, a little bit closer to home, this list is filled with folks that we love, some are hurting because of the loss of life in their family, others are struggling with illness and sickness and just difficulties. God, we lift them up to you and we know that you are beyond capable of addressing every single issue. So Lord, if it be possible, would you touch their lives, would you touch their homes, and in some cases would you touch their bodies with your healing power?

Lord, for those that are serving in the mission field not just with hurricane Harvey but all over the world, particularly the Barber's who are with us tonight. Thank you for their sacrifice. Thank you for their selflessness. Lord, may you give them the fruit of their labor.

As we open your word tonight, may you direct us and take us where you want us to go. May we learn what you want us to learn. And God, we pray that at the end of the night we'll be better equipped to share you with the world. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Alright, many of you may be here tonight either in person or online for the very first time. I want to welcome you to Wednesday nights at First Baptist, Opelika. I know collectively it's known as Ask Jeff, really the reason is my name is Jeff and you get the chance to ask question. One of the things I love about Wednesday night is it's your opportunity to guide and to direct and to make this study what you want it to be.

Now if you're new to Wednesday nights, let me share with you how we get the questions. The best way or, shall I say, the most frequent way that people submit questions is by way of the website, fbcopelika.com/askjeff. You can submit your question by way of email. If you put your email address in, by the way, it's completely anonymous. I don't know who you are, none of us do, you will actually receive an email response to the video clip of your question being answered when I push the "answered" button. You still remain anonymous even if you give us your email.

Now that's fine and that's fun and that's great, but I think those of you that are seasoned veterans know that sometimes the most entertaining part of Wednesday night is not what I pull off the database, it's when y'all put your hand in the air. You see, when you put your hand in the air, you have the opportunity to take it anyway you want to, any direction you want to, however you do lose your anonymity. But that being said, that's when things get fun.

So I pull questions from the database. When I pull from the database, please know these are absolutely random. They are not in any specific order as far as the time of which they are submitted. So you can submit one two days ago, be the first one pulled, a year ago and it still hasn't been pulled yet. I don't know what the computer algorithm is, all I know is I push this little button that says "select a random question," and boom, it pops up.

So here we go, question 1. Oh, this is going to be fun. In the book of Numbers, you know it's not often you get asked a question about the book of Numbers, but in the book of Numbers, by the way, before I read the question, you know, when you hear the word "numbers" that's exactly what that book seems like, right? I mean, it's So-and-so begat So-and-so and this number of people went here and there. The book of Numbers is actually the story of the traveling of the Israelites through the wilderness. It's about that 40 year journey and if you were to take the very first word of the book, literally the first word in Hebrew is the wilderness. And so it's the story of the wilderness.

Now here's an interesting question. Numbers 5 beginning in verse 11, it says the test of a woman's unfaithfulness, did this really work? Did it blow up your stomach and waste away and how?

Alright, some of you are thinking what kind of question is that? Open up to Numbers 5, folks. This is one of those things in the Bible where you say, "Is it really in there?" Oh, it really is. Numbers 5, the Lord gives a test. When a woman has been accused of adultery, when a woman has been accused of unfaithfulness, when a woman has been accused of fornication, in chapter 5, and by the way, these are the instructions for how they're to live in the wilderness here, okay? Remember they're wandering in the desert. The only meal they have is Krispy Kreme, that's it. They've got manna from heaven which I don't know if that's the wilderness, but nonetheless that's all they have so they're very limited in supplies, they have very limited access to what you and I would call civilization and/or culture. However there is one problem that has not left them and that is the problem of man's depravity. They still struggle with some things.

So in Numbers 5, beginning in verse 11, it says,

11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him, 13 And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she be defiled, and there be no witness against her, neither she be taken with the manner; 14 And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled: 15 Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance. 16 And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD: 17 And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water: 18 And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse: 19 And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse: 20 But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee beside thine husband: 21 Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The LORD make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the LORD doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell; 22 And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot: And the woman shall say, Amen, amen.

Wow, isn't that fun? And just when you didn't think the Bible was interesting. Again, and I'm going to preface this, aren't you grateful you live in an age of grace? You see,

understand in the Old Testament when there was an individual who had a sin issue or the presupposing of a sin, they would bring an offering unto the priest, particularly unto the Levites, and when you read the book of Deuteronomy which is also a chronicle of the Israelites coming out of Pharaoh's captivity in Egypt and going into the Promised Land, you begin to read all of the different manners and mechanisms of which the Lord has laid out for them, that if you have fallen into this trespass or this iniquity, offer this type of offering in this type of way, and the Levites were set apart, they didn't have a physical inheritance, the Levites were set apart to be the individuals who these folks would come to, they would make an offering unto the Lord and their sins would be dealt with and/or forgiven.

Now we know about the big ones like the Day of Atonement and such, and the big trespass offerings and the burnt offerings, but as you begin to dig through the book of Numbers and the book of Deuteronomy, every now and then you'll find these little interesting nuggets like whoever is of you that, I don't know who you are that's been reading Numbers 5, but congratulations, you've found one of the interesting ones, that if there is a woman that is, shall we say, accused of infidelity, that going to the priest there was this bitter water that was to be given to her and if her belly swelled and her thighs rotted, it meant that she was guilty. Now I know what you're thinking, "What was that?" My answer is, I don't have a clue. I don't have a clue. All I know is as they're wandering in the wilderness and they're dealing with how to deal with life together, the Lord set up various parameters and structures so as for people to be dealt with both for their righteousness and their unrighteousness and here in Numbers 5 during this wilderness experience, the Lord commissioned the priests to do this certain test in this certain scenario and according to Numbers 5, it actually worked.

Now don't get the idea that you're going to go home tonight and try this, okay, because last time I checked, I don't know anybody outside – here's what's important – outside of the wilderness experience, I don't know of anybody who's ever practiced this and seen this or implemented this. For example, I say the wilderness experience. Remember in John 8? We just studied this on Sunday morning when the woman was caught in adultery and they came to Jesus and said, "Should she not be stoned?" They could have easily said, "Well, Numbers 5 says give her this water to drink and we're going to know real quick." The reason I bring that up is, I'm of the understanding and belief that this specific passage in this specific manner was one that was confined to what we know as the wilderness experience. Nowhere else in the Old Testament when they get to the Promised Land, you don't find a place where it says, "When you get to the Promised Land, give the bitter water to the woman to see."

So there are very unique situations within the wilderness. For example, in the wilderness experience remember that their shoes never wore out and their clothes never wore out. As soon as they got into the Promised Land, their shoes would wear out and their clothes would as well. And so I think one of the things that's interesting about this passage is, yes, it says it worked; no, I have no idea what the Lord was actually doing but I do understand that it was a part of this 40 years wilderness experience of which the Lord dealt with his people in a very specific way, at a specific time, in a specific place.

So I have a funny feeling that if you take this prescription in Numbers 5 and apply it to somebody today in the 21st century, you're going to be sorely disappointed that it does not work or tell you what you may and/or may not want to know. But does it just strike you interesting that her belly would swell and her thighs would rot? That just does not seem appealing at all. And by the way, I wasn't in the wilderness and I'm not a woman, but you know, it's at that point that if you know you're guilty and you know this is going to happen, don't you want to put up your hands and say, "I'm guilty. I'm guilty because I don't want that to happen." But nonetheless, it is there in Numbers 5.

So whoever submitted that question, congratulations, that's one of the interesting little passages there in the book of Numbers. Does anybody have a follow-up on that at all? Does anybody want to go there? Do we have any medical professionals who would like to offer their commentary? No, okay. I'll tell you what, we're just going to let that one lie and just keep going. Is that okay? Alright, that one's good.

Alright, let's go next. Alright, staying in the Old Testament. In God's 10 Commandments, he states the basic instructions for all Christians to live their life by. If one should stray, say, for instance, and commit adultery, how does God handle that situation? If a married man goes outside of his marriage and was with an unmarried woman, for example, if both parties ask for forgiveness as God has instructed, are they truly forgiven of that sin? That is a really good question, in fact, I think there's two words we've got to discuss here. It talks about in the 10 Commandments because, by the way, in the 10 Commandments there are in the first half of the 10 Commandments, really it is the sins that are committed against God. Thou shalt not have any other God before you. You shall not have any graven images. Do not take the Lord's name in vain. Those types. When you get right in the middle, you have the honor your father and your mother for the days of your life shall be long. Then it becomes the sins against others. Do not covet. Do not lie. And yes, the one of do not commit adultery. And so the question is and it brings up that one specific one, but I want to broaden it beyond just that one to all of them. If they are truly sincere, do they receive forgiveness?

There's two words I want to differentiate for you tonight: forgiveness and restoration. Two completely different words, okay, and here's why. When one receives forgiveness, okay, at the hand of God, God forgives them, restoration is to be put in a place as if it had never occurred. Two completely different things. Let me give you a perfect example in our culture today. The judicial system. Forgiveness can be granted and jail time still be served because restoration and forgiveness are two different items and the question that was asked in regards not just to the 10 Commandments but this specific one, allow me to answer it with a New Testament scripture in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins." I want to show you tonight one of, I think, a key example from the Old Testament of how to differentiate this.

Go to the book of Hosea. Now Hosea is one of the minor prophets in your Old Testament and we're going to deal with Hosea's wife tonight. Her name is Gomer. There's a reason we don't have a whole lot of young ladies running around by the name of Gomer, not

only does it sound a little interesting but her life was one of ill repute. There are certain names in the Bible that we don't see a lot. We don't see many Gomers, we don't see many Bathshebas, we don't see a whole lot of Jezebels, nor do we see any Nebuchadnezzars running around. But nonetheless, in the book of Hosea we have the story of a prophet of God by the name of Hosea who has as a wife a woman by the name of Gomer. She is going to do exactly what the question asked, she is going to step out on her husband, she is going to be a woman of infidelity, she is going to commit the sin of adultery that's explicitly spoken of in the 10 Commandments.

Now I want to show you beginning in verse 2, I guess we could go ahead and begin in verse 1 but there's a lot of names I can't pronounce so let's go to verse 2. It says,

2 The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD. 3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son.

Mark that verse or just put your finger by it real quickly.

4 And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel. 5 And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel. 6 And she conceived again, and bare a daughter.

Do you notice a difference between that and verse 3? Verse 3, she bore him a son. You notice in verse 6 it says, "And she conceived and bore a daughter." That word "him" is not there. Now some of you may be thinking, "Well, you're getting a little picky." Am I? There's three children born of this woman. The first is said to be born of him, the second two, it just says she bore a child.

Now if in my Bible you turn the page to chapter 2, it says in verse 7,

7 And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.

I think the story you see laid out in all 14 chapters of Hosea, is you have a woman who is with her husband, they have a child, then she seeks after her lovers, she breaks the commandment that was alluded in this question.

Now as you read through the book of Hosea, you're going to discover particularly in chapter 6 that Hosea redeems her unto himself, he purchases her. She is literally put on the auction block. She is being sold as a material item for indentured servanthood. He purchases her. Do you see the parallels to Christ here? He purchases us. He buys us.

But back to chapter 1, here's what I want to bring up. In chapter 1, verse 10 it says,

10 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. 11 Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

By the way, the valley of Jezreel is otherwise known as what we know as the valley of Armageddon.

The reason I shared all those verses with you and I apologize for the brevity because the brevity of our time, what we see throughout the story of Hosea and Gomer is you see a woman who commits an act of infidelity, you see a woman who according to the question commits adultery, you also see the picture of her husband and ultimately the picture of God forgiving her, her being brought back into that family structure, but the consequences and the results of her sin, particularly with her children, historically speaking if we read the whole book of Hosea, go for 40+ years.

And so the picture we get is of a woman who does commit adultery, I know the question mentioned a man or a woman, it takes two, forgiveness was offered, forgiveness was granted, forgiveness was received, however the consequences oftentimes rarely ever go away even in the midst of the forgiveness of God and of others. There were still two children that were born out of that relationship. There were still two children who if you read their names, they're called Not My Sons, Not My People, I will be avenged. And so to answer that question, when we have sinned, whatever that sin is, if we seek forgiveness of God and we are genuine about it and we are sincere about it, he says in 1 John 1:9, "I will grant you forgiveness." Here's the thing I've discovered, though. Oftentimes we're really more interested in restoration than we are forgiveness. Here's an important question we need to ask ourselves: are we repentful or are we sorry that we did it, or are we sorry we got caught? That's an important question to ask because when we're sorry we got caught, we want restoration, when we're sorry we did it, we want forgiveness. The desire for forgiveness no matter if restoration occurs or not, to me is a genuine spirit of sincere repentance. Just wanting things to be like they used to be no matter what happens, sometimes you have to question are they really repentful or do they just want to pretend it didn't happen?

So to that question, the 10 Commandments whether it is a false idol, whether it is an adulterous relationship, whether it is coveting one's property, or whether it is dishonoring one's mother and father, all of those 10 things can be forgiven. By the way, if you'll study the Old Testament, they broke them all. In fact, when Moses comes down from Mount Sinai, most likely at the bottom of the hill all 10 were being broken simultaneously as they marched around the golden calf. So, yes, forgiveness but you know that when he

came down there was restoration that had to take place. Do you remember what the Lord had Moses do with the golden calf? He had him grind it up, this kind of pertains to Numbers 5, they had to grind it up, they had to drink it, and the Bible says that it was unpleasant on its departure. Does that communicate? It's kind of picturesque, isn't it? By the way, the Bible is very picturesque in what it tells us.

But here's the thing that's interesting, did the Lord forgive the Israelites for breaking all 10 when he came down? Yes. Even though Moses broke the tablets, did he not go back and did the Lord not write them again? Forgiveness took place but restoration, they still had to bear the consequence of their sin, they still had to live with the ramifications of their sin. I'll take it a step further, these same Israelites who wander in the wilderness and began to gripe and argue and say, "Man, we had it better in Egypt," remember the Lord said, "You're not going to go into the Promised Land"? All the Bible says is that they would die out but they would not be allowed to go. That is a consequence. The Bible doesn't address, in fact, there is no illumination given to us what if they sought forgiveness? Guess what, if they sought forgiveness, I believe God grants it, restoration not so much.

Moses at the end of the wilderness, I could go on and on and on. Remember when he taps the rock when the Lord says don't tap the rock and he does it? What was his consequence? He was not allowed to go into the Promised Land. But he sought the Lord's favor and the Lord continued to commune with him, and at the end of his life, you get the picture that he and the Lord are in a vibrant relationship, forgiveness has taken place, but the consequences remained. And so when it comes to not only the sin mentioned in the question, but any sin, there is no sin beyond God's forgiveness but all sin has consequences and oftentimes consequences are not removed with forgiveness. Hopefully that's been made clear.

Clarifications? Concerns? Thoughts? Issues about any of that? Some of y'all are going, "I'm not touching that." Oh, yes, sir. The brave soul down here.

[unintelligible]

We want to go back to the woman drinking the potion?

[unintelligible]

There were.

[unintelligible]

Correct.

[unintelligible]

Correct.

[unintelligible]

Allow me to kind of expound on what he's saying. I know you weren't able to hear. He was talking about the fact that the sprinkling of the blood for the sins in the Old Testament, remember when the priest would go in to the mercy seat and they would sprinkle the blood seven times, etc., and now the Bible's made it very clear for you and I that according to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, we have been purchased by the blood of the Lamb. As Isaiah 1:18 says, our sins have been washed white as snow. Later in Revelation it talks about the washing as well.

Allow me to, if you don't mind, I'm going to sketch it out kind of out here. Let's begin back here with the garden of Eden. The reason I begin with the garden of Eden in Genesis 3 is I think we can agree this is where it went real south, real quick. I mean, things didn't go good after this, alright? So we enter into and we are now a part of a sinful, depraved, I don't write very well, forgive me, humanity. We are inclined to sin, that's what we do. That's how we come, that's our nature now is sin. All the way through this Old Testament, I'm going to put this as the Old Testament, all the way through the Old Testament what do you see happening? The Lord making this statement such as the 10 Commandments, "If you do these things, you're my people and I am your God." I mean, you go back to Noah and he says, "Hey, here's the deal, Noah, you build the boat we're good, if you don't you're going to get real wet real quick." And so you see the Lord establishing things and it is not until the person of Moses where we get the specific laws about the sprinkling of the blood on the mercy seat, the ark of the covenant, etc. etc. etc.

So you see the Lord working all throughout here with this and I hate to use this, I know it's an old computer term, just kind of if/then. If you, then I will. In other words, if you continue, then I will be. If you allow, then I will allow, etc. Until you get to and I'm going to put it right here in the middle, when you get to the cross, it changes everything because according to Hebrews 7, Hebrews 10, the blood that was spilled here was a one time offering. One time and you and I on this side of the cross have something to experience or we have the opportunity that these guys, even Gomer and Hosea and the 10 Commandments, they didn't have the opportunity because according to the book of Colossians 2, we are circumcised not with physical hands but with, it talks about being spiritually circumcised, having the body cut off from the soul.

And so you and I are now the temple of the Holy Spirit. Where did the Holy Spirit reside? It actually resided in a specific place over here, did it not? It was in the temple in Jerusalem in that one location. They would come to it, offer their sacrifices. Here's the great news, you and I today, we are the temple. You're the temple. I'm the temple. There is not a specific geographical location because of the pouring out of the blood of Jesus Christ. And so you see the sprinkling of the blood, you see the 10 Commandments, all these things as Paul said as a foreshadowing of the things to come. It was a picture of what ultimately was going to be fulfilled by Christ which, by the way, was prophesied all the way back in Genesis 3:15 where it said that the seed of the woman will come and crush the seed of the serpent or the head of the serpent. So to your point, we see all this

stuff taking place in the Old Testament, I think one of the difficulties comes as we look back here and then we look over here and go, it just, it looks so different. Well, it was different because this was a picture of what was to come, today is the reality of what has been realized.

Does that help with the question somewhat? Not really? I just went on for five minutes for nothing? I apologize.

[unintelligible]

Yes.

[unintelligible]

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Oh, okay, so we're talking about the forgetting of your sins. Okay, to forget your sins, hehe, sorry, that doesn't happen until Revelation 21 because at that point it says all former things are passed away. Now here's the great news and I'm just writing it in the middle for whatever reason. In Psalm 103:12, I believe it is, if I've got that backwards, forgive me, it says that when he forgives us our sins, it is as far as the east is from the west. I'm not speaking to you specifically but to all of us. You know, sometimes it's easy to recognize God forgives us, sometimes it's harder to forgive yourself. Why is it harder to forgive yourself? Because you're living with the consequences, you're living with the results, you're living with the things that have naturally occurred because of, you know?

I'll use an example, it wasn't addressed in this specific question but if I decide, and not that I would ever do this, but if I decided to go out on the interstate tonight and drive 150 mph, not that I would, but I would enjoy it, okay? And I look up and there's about 18 sets of blue lights coming behind me, I'm going to face some consequences. I know some in the room who told me specifically what I would face and it's not going to be pretty. That is something that, and I'm using a very simplistic example there, I can receive forgiveness but I'm still going to receive jail time. I can receive forgiveness, I'm still going to have to pay a fine. And the problem is, okay, that's all taken care of but down the road when I have to explain to my children, "Dad, why is it you still can't drive a car?" "Well, son, one day I decided...." Does that make sense?

So it's still brought up because of the consequences, not because of a lack of forgiveness because we have been washed in the blood but the consequences, they do remain. You know, we cannot deny that fact and it's harder to forgive ourselves. But he says forgiveness as far as the east is from the west, but it's until Revelation 21 where it says all former things are passed away. No more pain, no more heartache, no more sorrow. So if you're wanting that day where no longer will you dwell on the sins of you past, no longer

will you dwell on the failures of your past, I've got good/bad news, that day is coming but not until then.

That didn't help you, did it? Not really. Sorry. Anybody else on that fun one? Boy, this is positive tonight. We've got belly swelling and thighs rotting and all kinds of fun things.

Here we go. Alright, this might be a good transition and y'all are going to be surprised. It says can you recommend a book or two about the book of Revelation for those who would like more indepth knowledge? What is the purpose of the thousand years when Satan is banished from the earth in Revelation? Do Bible scholars think it's literally a thousand years or just a term used to mean a very long time? Does God.... Okay, it goes on and on.

Alright, I'm going to make a recommendation to y'all that you may find surprising, okay? What are some books that will help you understand the book of Revelation outside of just reading scripture itself? There is a series of books, please don't laugh at me when I say this, okay? There is a series of books called "The Bible for Dummies and the Idiot's Guide to the Bible." Shockingly, they're very good. They just lay out the variety of views, they lay out the chronology, and there is actually a book of Revelation for dummies, "The Idiot's Guide to the Book of Revelation." And they're written in that style, and I like to recommend those to people because anytime you get into a specific commentary or you get into a specific personality, you're going to get a specific perspective and you're going to get a specific – that's a hard word to say on a microphone – you're going to get a specific perspective, okay?

And so in the study of the book of Revelation, rather than having somebody's view overlaid with, you know, the scripture, I like to just go and say, okay, here is what it says about this subject matter, here's what it says. So you've got "The Idiot's Guide to the Bible," you've got the "The Book of Revelation for Dummies," and for those of you who are absolutely a glutton for punishment, there's a little book back there called "Simple: A Guide to the Book of Revelation," written by somebody who stands up in front of you every Wednesday night, where I just took various subject matters such as Armageddon, the tribulation, the Antichrist, and just said what does the Bible say about this variety of issues. But what is the absolute best way you can learn the book of Revelation? Read it. It'll take you about 30 minutes, maybe 45 at the most, to read it from beginning to end. If you struggle with the book of Revelation and want to know more about it, just read it over and over and over and over again, but there are books out there to help you.

Now let me warn you. I'm not against search engines but be leery of Google searches for commentaries on Revelation because it is probably the one book of the Bible that more books have been written that should not be read than should be read, because there's all kinds of wild and crazy theories out there. And so I would start with something very simplistic that just lays out here are the variety of views, here's what these folks say and what those folks say, and then begin to work your way back.

So speaking of Revelation, chapter 5 tonight. We continue in our study and for those of you who maybe you've been disappointed, saying, "Man, I really want the crazy stuff in the book of Revelation. I mean, I want the wild stuff." Next week is your week. Next week we start chapter 6 and, boy, we're going to have the four horsemen of the apocalypse, later on we're going to have hail and brimstone coming out of the sky, we're going to have the creatures coming out of the sea, we're going to have some wild things. In fact, from chapter 6 to chapter 19, it's going to be nothing but pure unadulterated biblical craziness from this point forward. But the reason we've taken so much time leading up to this is an understanding of the setting that the Apostle John was on the island of Patmos in chapter 1, to get a grasp of the seven churches laid out in chapters 2 and 3, what did they mean for those individual congregations, what did it mean looking at it from a historical perspective, and in chapters 4 and 5, we got a view of heaven, a view of what did it look like in the throne room, what does it look like in the third heaven in 2 Corinthians 12 says. And we see John and we see this image of one who's on the throne and we saw the creatures and the elders and the four with all the variety of faces worshipping and saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty!"

We got to chapter 5 last week and there is this book that is sealed with seven seals and it is opened by only one person worthy and that's Jesus Christ himself. The book has been opened and as we're going to see next week, the first seal opens up and, boy, does someone show up and it changes everything. But beginning in chapter 5 of the book of Revelation, right there in the middle in verse 8, the book has been taken and there's something I want to discuss as a transition to chapter 6. 1. To go through all these verses, there's an interesting response to this book being opened. Verse 8, it says,

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. 11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. 13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne,

Now hopefully when you entered tonight, you received an outline in regards to these verses of scripture and the thing that I titled it is "The Heavenly Choir" because what we see taking place here is in the heavens here in chapter 5, beginning in chapter 6, all the activity or at least the majority of the activity is going to be on earth from this point

forward. So the last activity, we've got this group of people, in fact, we're going to see tonight there's three different groups of people who sing three different songs, for lack of better terms.

Now don't get so overly-literal tonight about a song. They're responding verbally, they're responding out loud to what they're seeing. Now remember, the previous scene, the book with the end of the world, the book with the seven seals was brought forth and nobody could open it. They're disappointed, in fact, John weeps. He's so upset, "I want to know and I can't know." So when it's finally brought forth, when Jesus takes it, they're so excited they start singing, they start responding.

Now in this response, there are three "sections." There are what I want to call the redeemed, the angelic, and the "creatures," and we'll explore that more in just a minute. But there are three different responses. Now I'm of the absolute belief that the book of Revelation is a lot more simple, hence the title of what I wrote some years ago, and more clear than people give it credit for. For example, chapter 1, it says the picture of Jesus that John sees on the island of Patmos, he has the seven stars in his right hand. Well, people say, "Well, what are the seven stars." Well, in verse 20 it says the seven stars are and it just tells you what it is. I will confess to you tonight, I will explain that in these verses there is actually a part of Revelation 5 that is somewhat less clear because there are so many titles given to so many people that are saying so many words, that sometimes it's hard to differentiate who is the person saying what. But we have three different responses.

The first response or the first song is the song of the redeemed. Who are these people? Interesting, the beast, the creatures and the elders. Now let me go back a couple of weeks. Remember the elders, they are those that wear the robes of white, they've been washed in the blood of the Lamb. The picture we get of the elders, these 24 individuals, that they are what we would call born again believers. Now another emphasis on that fact is the song that is sung because it says they sing a new song.

Now this is where I can have some fun tonight because I think all of us, it doesn't matter what our age is, it doesn't matter what our preference is, I think all of us can get in this trap that we want to express our Christianity the way we want to express it, we want to sing the songs we want to sing, the songs we've always sung, but I've got news for all of us, when we get to heaven one day, we're all going to sing a new song. And one of the fun questions I like to ask people, "Is that a hymn or is that a praise chorus?" You typically say what you want it to be because it doesn't say. It doesn't say the style, all it says are the words that are sung.

It says that a new song is sung. Wouldn't it be interesting with all the issues that we have in our world about "style" of worship, wouldn't it be interesting if we got to heaven and the style of worship was different than anything we ever did here? It would mess us all up. Somebody said, "Probably." It may be. You know, in fact, it reminds me, we've got a little time tonight, it reminds me of a joke of Luis Palau, y'all have heard me refer to Luis Palau several times, South American evangelist who now lives in Portland, Oregon. He

tells this story and this is very apropos for our culture today, a story of two men who grew up together that were best friends, best friends their whole lives, lived next door to each other. Their favorite activity was to go fishing. It just happened that one of them was a white man and one was African American and every time they'd go fishing together, they would fight is God black or is God white. That's what they fought about their whole lives. One day they're out there fishing, having a good time, and a storm brews up. They're so busy arguing about what color God is, they get killed in the fishing boat. They're there at the Pearly Gates. They're still arguing, "He's black. He's white." They show up and they say, "Hey, we want to meet God. Is he black or white?" The angel says, "Well, he's right around the corner. Why don't you come out and see." God comes around the corner and he says, "Que pasa, seniors?" In other words, not what we thought it would be. That's what we call a preacher joke. Not very funny but really communicates a good point.

Again, they sang a new song but why did they sing it? Because they said, "We have been redeemed. We have been saved. We have been bought by the blood of Jesus." And so it's two things, redemption and we used this word earlier, restoration. What is redemption? Save that which is lost. Notice the phrases that were used, how they were saved. "Thou wast slain by the blood." In Acts 20:28 it's talking about the churches at large, it says the church of Jesus Christ that he bought, listen to this, with his own blood. And then this passage of scripture, the song that they sing, they say, "You are worthy to take the book and to open the seals for you were slain and redeemed us by the blood." So the song they're singing when he takes this book isn't about, "Oh, we're about to see the seven seals. Oh, we're about to see the end of the world unfold." They sing that, "We would not even be here if it were not for the cross of Jesus Christ."

Isn't that interesting? All the end time events are about to unfold, the first seal is about to be opened, what we're going to describe as the Great Tribulation is going to unfold, and what are they focused on? Are they focused on the chronology of the seals? No, they're focused on the one who got them where they are. A lot of times we talk about, "Well, what's a lot of heaven gonna look like?" There's going to be a lot of focus on Jesus because the song they sing is about the one who redeemed them.

Who? Every kindred, every tongue, people and nation. You know, we're in a building right now that has a title called the 316 Center, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life." In this passage of scripture, it says that not only does he open the seals, "You've redeemed us by thy blood out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation," evidence there that the multiplicity of languages and cultures and colors, that there is no person that is left out of the opportunity to be redeemed.

So it's a song of redemption, but it's also a song of restoration because it says, "and you have made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth." Now I could go for about an hour on this verse but how about two minutes, is that okay tonight? "You have made us." Now this is interesting because one of the things that I love about the book of Revelation is a lot of what we're about to study particularly in the next weeks

is rooted back in the book of Genesis, okay? It's almost like the Bible is circular. We read all the way through it, it takes us back again. In the book of Genesis, there are two words utilized for what we know as creation and that which was made by the Lord. The word "create" means "to make out of nothing." The word "made" or "to make" is "to take something which already exists and to shape it and/or form it in a specific capacity." Let me give you an example. None of you have ever created anything. You haven't because you've never made something out of nothing. What you've done is you've made stuff. You've taken that which the Lord has already created and you have formed and fashioned it, alright? Why is that important? When it says "and you've made us unto our God," that means he took that which wasn't worthy of, he took that that wasn't qualified and he's reshaped it and formed it so it can be. That's critical for our understanding tonight. Why is that critical? Because we've been redeemed. It is only through our redemption that we can have restoration.

"You have made us," versus create, "kings and priests." That's interesting because I remember a parable that Jesus told about the parable of the talents, and remember the man who comes back and he's invested the talents and he's done good with them, do you remember Jesus' response? "And you shall be a ruler over 10 cities"? That's interesting. Jesus tells us this parable about ruling over or having authority over and here in Revelation it says, "and we shall be kings and priests." Now a priest is someone who intercedes on behalf. By the way, when we finally get to chapter 20, I might have grandkids by then, but when we get to chapter 20, you're going to see that the Lord is reigning on the earth, and as he reigns on the earth, these believers, those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, we are his kings, we are his priests with authority and the ability to be the representative thereof.

Here's the critical phrase, "on the earth." Now I don't know if you remember way back when we started our study of the book of Revelation, I put on this board all the different variety of views that people have on the book of Revelation. There are some people and, by the way, this belief has somewhat gone by the wayside, that are called what we call post-millennialists. They believe that this thousand year reign of Christ in Revelation 20 where sin has been abolished, that it is brought in by the church, by the people of God, and after it is brought in by the church after a thousand years, then Jesus shows up and he returns. That is what we call post-millennialism. Pre-millennialism, the very opposite of that says everything gets worse and worse and worse, it gets so bad that Jesus has to come and clean up the mess, and that's when he reigns for a thousand years. There is almost an X when you put it on the board because they're the exact opposites.

You say, "Why is that important?" There is a word in this verse I want you to see, okay? It says, "and he has made us," right? But earlier it says, "and we shall be." In other words, those who subscribe to a post-millennial theology – listen – believe that they can be kings and priests today when this says one day we will be kings and priests later. There's a time coming for that but that day is not today. In fact, we studied this verse last week in Ephesians 4. It says to the church he made some to be apostles, some to be evangelists, some to be prophets, some to be pastors, some to be teachers. He didn't mention kings

and he didn't mention priests. In fact, in Hebrews 7 it says there is only one high priest and that is Jesus Christ.

But there is a day coming where he shall reign on the earth and it says that we shall be kings and priest with him on the earth which brings up something I'm going to share real quick. I know time is short. I believe that most erroneous beliefs not only of scripture but particularly the book of Revelation – listen to me clearly – the right teaching for the wrong time. The Bible says we'll be kings and priests. Did you know the Bible speaks of 144,000, these witnesses, but they're not the ones who come to your door on Saturday morning. Right concept, wrong time. There are those today who believe in the name of Jesus they should be reigning the earth. Right concept, wrong time.

So one of the things that we can do ourselves, the biggest favor of studying the book of Revelation is not just what it teaches but getting it at the – listen – the right time. You and I today, 21st century, North America, we're not kings and priests, okay, we're ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's what we've been called to be today. There is coming a day where that happens but that day is not today.

Now beginning in verse 11, the angelic, who are these folks? It says they're the angels, the beasts, the elders, and for the sake of time, here's where it gets really fun: how do they sing? It says, "I saw 10,000 x 10,000 x thousands and thousands." Now I'm not a mathematician but I do know how to multiply and when you multiply those numbers out, you get 1×10^{14} and I actually looked at the word, I'm probably going to mispronounce it but I'm going to give it a try, that is one quadrillion angels. You know that's a lot, right? Think about that. That's one with 14 zeroes behind it.

You say, "Why is that significant?" Because when these angelic beings begin to sing, it says there are this many of them, alright, and when they sing, in Hebrews 12:29 it says the number of angels is innumerable or not able to be numbered by man. Remember when we've discussed this in the past, this big discussion how many angels actually fell with Satan? Is there a future fall coming because the Bible speaks of a third of the stars falling in chapter 12 of Revelation. Alright, just think about it, this number of angels is just the number of angels around the throne. That's it. This is not the total number of angels in all of the Lord's creation. Just pretend for the sake of fun tonight that that's the total number. We know it's not. Even if a third have already fallen, which I believe that passage is about the future, we'll get to that later, do you see how big a third of that is and how impactful that would be in our world today?

There is an incredible number of angelic hosts in the known universe greater than even humanity, but it says that this number, that is a massive number and I apologize to mathematicians everywhere if I mispronounced that word, they are singing the song, they say, "You have power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory and blessing." Does it strike you odd that in heaven they declare the Lord is worthy of riches? What's the currency of heaven? I have no idea but they make the declaration in the heavens that he is worthy of even the riches and yet it's the angelic beings who make that declaration. You

say, "Do the angels have their own currency system?" I don't know. All I know is it says he is worthy of riches.

Then last but not least, beginning in verse 13 and 14, it says, "And every creature which is in heaven, in the earth, under the earth, they began to declare that he has," and I put this on your sheet, the same as above except it does not mention riches and it does not mention wisdom. What's interesting to me, though, is here in verse 13 and 14, it uses the word "every." Do you know what the word "every" means? Every. That means without exception.

Why is this significant? Because next week we're getting into chapter 6 and when we get to chapter 6, that's the stuff everybody wants to learn about. That's all the stuff in Revelation that people are so fascinated with, and the last thing that's mentioned before we get to chapter 6 is that every creature, every creature is acknowledging the person of Jesus Christ and his validity, and yet we get to chapter 6 and we're going to see the wrath of God poured out, we're going to see this item that Jesus himself called the Great Tribulation, and right before it in the heavens it says that every creature above and below recognized his worthiness. We're about to go into a time period where very few people recognize his worthiness beginning in chapter 6.

The thing I want to leave you with in chapter 5 is that in that place known as the heaven, in that throne room of God, the focus no matter if it was the elders, no matter if it was the four creatures, no matter if it was every entity, their focus was on the person of Jesus, they declared his worthiness. And do you all remember what we called collectively the Lord's Prayer? "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Let me give you kind of a paraphrase of that when that prayer is said, in other words, what's going on in heaven should be what's going on on earth in our own lives. Think about what they were doing, they focused on Jesus and they gave him honor, glory, riches, power, authority. We should be challenged to do the same thing.

Let's pray and we'll close.

Lord, as we depart from this place, we're not around the throne room yet, we're not in the midst of the angelic host but, Lord, tonight we've been empowered that we can live in the same excitement as they are. And so Lord, I pray that as we exit this place, as we pick up our kids, as we go back to the house, as we get up in the morning, that even though we don't see a throne with a book sealed with seven seals and the Lamb of God taking it in his hands, but whatever our eyes do see, whatever our ears do hear, Lord, may we declare your greatness, may we declare your glory, may we focus on you as the centerpiece of everything in our life. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

God bless, go pick up your kids. Next week, chapter 6, gonna get crazy.