

Ask Jeff 9.13.17

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Alright, this is your one minute warning. One minute warning. You say why one minute warning? Because I'm running late. One minute warning.

Alright, I enjoy hearing the fellowship but it is time to gather round, gather round. A couple of, I guess, announcements or just house cleaning matters before we get started. 1. You may look around and say, "Well, I see a few folks not here I'm used to seeing." Not only have our men and women's Wednesday Bible studies began, our small groups, but our first fall session of leaders going through Master Life has begun and I was just upstairs and we've got about 40 or 50 of them tonight, another 40 or 50 will be there on Sunday evening, and of course, we've got AWANA and student ministry and such. So if you see a few folks and you go, "They're normally here, what happened?" Most likely they're in one of those Bible studies or they're serving but just grateful you're here.

And one quick announcement I've got to make and this is in regards to next week. On behalf of our trustees here at First Baptist Church announcing a week in advance as is called for, for a special called business meeting for the purpose of discussing what we know as the property related to the Korean Baptist Church of which those of you that have been here a while are hopefully very familiar with. We're going to talk about some of the transition that goes along with that property next Wednesday night. So just wanted to go through the formalities. I promise you it will be a short and brief and yet also exciting gathering as we celebrate what the Lord is doing among that congregation.

So hopefully you have the pink sheet that is here. This is our circle of concerns, otherwise known as our prayer list. Please, if there is a concern, a situation, a person, I just got back from the hospital about an hour ago of someone who was in the hospital, they're not quite on this sheet yet, they will be very soon, and so let us know what is going on so we can be praying for folks in the situation that are in their life.

As always, at the bottom of the front sheet there is a sympathy section for those who have lost loved ones that are related to our church family, and on the back as I always call attention to, our missionary partners and those that are serving in the military. I always want to call attention to those groups because they're giving so selflessly of their lives in various capacities. We want to continue to pray for them, for their encouragement, and oftentimes in the days of discouragement, that they'll be encouraged by the Lord in their

call to serve. But as a reminder, always any situation you know of, please let us know in the office and we will make sure it gets on the sheet as quickly and as soon as possible.

Also, though, maybe there is a prayer concern that has been answered, that person is no longer sick, they've been healed, whatever it may be, let us know so we can remove them from the sheet. We want to celebrate that as well.

Let's pray and we'll get started.

Lord, tonight as we gather in this place, it's a simple piece of paper on the table or in our hands, Lord, it represents hundreds of lives, lives oftentimes of question where medical attention is in the process, surgeries that are impending, diagnoses that are concerning, but it's also a reminder of the loss of physical life as well as those that are willing to give up the treasures of the earthly life to serve you and to serve their fellow brother and sister. So God, today we recognize that this isn't just a sheet with a bunch of names on it, this represents the life of families and communities and this church. So Lord, we're praying for where healing is needed, that you'll provide it, where encouragement is needed, that you will give it. Lord, at the same time, Lord, if there's someone who is either on or not on the sheet that needs the conviction of your Holy Spirit in their life, Lord, we pray that that is what you will utilize tonight as well. And in this campus, God, we just, I'm mesmerized by the number of students and children and soon to be college students and those that are doing Bible study both here and in other places, Lord, how wonderful it is to have such a family of faith that is desiring of the things of you tonight. So Lord, bless our time here. May you guide us in this room to the passages that we need to study, the scriptures that you need us to study so that when we leave this place, we'll be better equipped to serve you. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Many of you or some of you or some of you may be first time with us here Wednesday night at First Baptist either here in person or by way of our media ministry, I want to welcome you to what I consider a unique time as far as Bible study is concerned. If you're not familiar with Wednesday nights here, everything that takes place is because of you. That's right, tonight is based on your questions and the answers from God's word.

Now a typical Wednesday night has two facets to it. There is about a 30 minute Q&A session where you can ask any question you want, and by the way, most of you, the way that you submit those questions is on the website. You go to fbcopelika.com/askjeff you can submit your question there. If you submit your email with the question, you will get a link to the video that has the answer to that question just in case maybe you're on vacation or sick, you couldn't be here when it was answered. Even if you put your email, though, you remain anonymous. Some of you get nervous and say, "I would love to ask a question but I don't want people to know that that is my question." Go to the website, put it on there, nobody will know it's you.

Now when we go through the questions, there's always follow-up questions. You have the ability to raise your hand. Now when you raise your hand, you lose all anonymity because we know who you are, but you're also able to steer the conversation wherever

you want it to go. You can take us deeper into the subject, you can take us completely off subject because when your hand goes in the air, you have the floor.

So that's half of our study. The other half of our study is we're walking through probably one of the most intriguing passages of all of the Bible, what we know as the book of Revelation. The title "Revelation" oftentimes people think that which is hidden. It actually means that which is revealed or that which the Lord wants us to know. The last book of the Bible isn't what God wants to hide from you, it's what he wants to show you.

Typically we begin with the Q&A or the Ask Jeff and then we go into our Revelation study. Last week, we began with Revelation because we looked at chapter 6 through 19 in totality, kind of from a 30,000 foot perspective, just the layout of the book of Revelation and what is this time period that Jesus even referred to in Matthew 24 as the great tribulation. Today, I'm going to bend the rules again and start with Revelation because in Revelation 6:1-2 there is a passage of scripture that is one of the most debated, discussed, and at times misunderstood passages in all of the book of Revelation. And so tonight again, I want to start with the book of Revelation. Next week, we'll go back to our typical format, but this is one of those passages that could elicit quite a bit of questioning much like last week did, and I want to give you the opportunity to do so. I'm fearful that if we end with this tonight without time for Q&A, you may have some questions about this passage.

So before you is an outline that is a comparison of Revelation 6:1-2 and Revelation 19:11 through 15. Now the reason these passages are significant is they are the bookmarks for that time period we discussed last week known as the great tribulation. Just in summary, remember that chapters 1 through 3 of the book of Revelation are the island of Patmos experience by the Apostle John and the letters to the seven churches beginning with Ephesus and ending with Laodicea. Chapter 4 and 5 is a picture of the activities around the throne room of God in a place that we call heaven. And then in chapter 6, all of the activity again begins on planet earth. So from chapter 6 through 19, we have this time period known as the great tribulation, we discussed it last week, Jacob's trouble, Daniel's 70th week, and it begins with the opening of the first of the famous seven seals. You remember we discussed in chapter 5 the person who opens the seven seals is Jesus Christ himself.

So chapter 6, this passage known as the great tribulation begins and then ends in chapter 19 with two interesting characters. It begins with someone riding a white horse, and it ends with somebody riding a white horse. There are some that believe this is the same individual. There are others that believe they're distinctly different. Whether they are the same or they are different determines how we view this entire section of the book of Revelation.

So Revelation 6:1-2. It says,

1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it
were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. 2

And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

Now verse 3 begins the second seal so that's all we've got of seal number 1. Now I want you to go back to chapter 19 of the book of Revelation and we're going to see another individual who also is on a white horse beginning in verse 11 through 15, and then what I want us to do tonight is analyze verses 1 and 2 of chapter 6, verses 11 through 15 of chapter 19, and I think we're going to see something important and distinguishing about these two characters.

Verse 11, it says,

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Can we just all confess there is no question of who this character is in chapter 19? This is Jesus Christ. There is no question. On his thigh, "Kings of kings, Lord of lords." It is his job to pronounce the wrath of the almighty God. It is this passage along with the one in chapter 16 where we hear about the battle of Armageddon with the blood that goes to the bridle of the horse. This is one of the passages that verifies that. So this is Jesus, there's no question about it. The issue becomes when you read chapter 19, 11-15, you go back to what we read in chapter 6 and you'll notice there's another character who is riding a white horse, and there are some that claim that that is also a picture of Jesus Christ, just like chapter 19 is definitively the person of Jesus Christ.

What I would like to postulate tonight is this: that they are two distinct different entities, and that what I think we're going to see tonight in chapter 6 with the opening of the first seal is none less than the person of the Antichrist being revealed, and here's why I want to share that with you other than what's on your outline. The term Antichrist is not found in the book of Revelation. It's not there. It's found in the book of 1 John, but we're going to be introduced to a term known as the beast, same guy, okay? That being said, the term Antichrist doesn't mean the opposite of Christ, it means not the Christ. The Antichrist character that we're going to be introduced to in the book of Revelation isn't the antithesis of Jesus, he is the attempted – listen – he is the attempted replacement of Jesus. It is his desire to be the one worshiped. It is his desire to reign over all the world, and what we're

going to see, I believe throughout the book of Revelation, the Antichrist does not come with horns, a red suit and a tail, but he comes imitating Jesus Christ expecting the response of humanity as if he were God. You remember what happens in 2 Thessalonians 10, the famous abomination of desolation, the Antichrist goes into the temple of God and what does he do? He claims he is God. So what I would claim tonight that chapter 6, verses 1 and 2 look so much like chapter 19, 11 through 15, because when the Antichrist is revealed, when this seal is opened, he will look so much like Jesus that people believe he is a Messiah figure, but as we're about to see in a moment, he is so distinct from, he is a false representation.

So on the outline that I gave you tonight, I've given you kind of a chart, the rider of chapter 6 versus the rider of chapter 19, and I want to show you the differences but also the similarities. The rider of chapter 6 rides to earth on a white horse.

The rider of chapter 19 rides to earth on a white horse. So far so good. The rider of chapter 6, he has a bow. The rider of chapter 19 has a sword. Now I want to stop for just a moment. Notice he has a bow but he has no arrows. A bow without arrows appears to be effective but is actually not. A sword has the essence of what it can do in and of itself, it doesn't require another item.

Thirdly, the one in chapter 6 has a crown, singular, but if you have chapter 6 open, notice that that crown is, what? Given to him. It is not his inherently. The rider in chapter 19 has many crowns and the way that is written, nobody gives them to him, they are naturally his.

The rider in chapter 6 is followed by death and famine. The rider in chapter 19 is followed by the armies of heaven.

And so in these two passage, I think we see similarities. We see a white horse. We see a weapon. We see the presence of a crown versus crowns. And so you can see that on a causal observation you might be tempted to say, "Well, this might be the same guy." But when you really dig down deep, we discover these are very distinct entities.

Why is that important? Because when the Antichrist does show up one day, and we'll talk more about him when we get to chapter 13, the casual observer is going to fall for the lie that he's the real deal. Only those who are discerning, only those who are willing to investigate, only those who are willing to do what 1 John 4:1 says, test the spirits, are going to see what he truly and really is.

Now if we're going to claim or if I'm going to claim these are two distinct characters and that chapter 6 when the first seal is opened is the Antichrist, chapter 19 is Jesus Christ, let's take it a little bit further. The Antichrist by definition would be Satan incarnate, Jesus Christ would be God Incarnate. Pretty simple there. So let's look at these two characters as far as the satanic movement and influence in scripture versus God's movement and influence. Both of them have similar characteristics but in a different perspective. For example, Satan or the Antichrist has a city that is called a bride. In chapter 17, we're

going to be introduced to mystery Babylon, we're going to be introduced to this place that has a rider of a horse and debauchery comes forth, but it's called, this city is called his bride and it is clearly the Antichrist bride. Jesus Christ has a city that's a bride too, does he not? Revelation 21, it's called new Jerusalem.

The Antichrist character is called an angel of light, 2 Corinthians 11 says that marvel not that Satan himself disguises himself as an angel of light. Jesus Christ is called the light of the world.

The Antichrist figure according to Job 41 is the king of the children of pride. Jesus Christ is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

The Antichrist figure is called the prince of this world in John 14. Jesus Christ is called the Prince of Peace in Isaiah 9.

The Antichrist character quotes, or shall I say, misquotes scripture three times in Luke 4, particularly when he quotes Psalm 91 and he twists it, and yet in the same passage of the temptation, Jesus quotes scripture three times.

The Antichrist figure is called a lion. Satan is called a lion in 1 Peter 5:8, who roars around desiring to destroy us. And of course, Jesus Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

The Antichrist of satanic figure is called the god of this world in 2 Corinthians 4:4. Jesus Christ is called my Lord and my God in John 20.

Now I abbreviated this. I could have gone on for about three or four sheets of paper here, but what I wanted you to see tonight is that the characteristics, the titles, the attributes of the movement of Satan in scripture are a false representation of the true movements of God in scripture. And so when we find the Antichrist character, when we see him developed in the book of Revelation, he is just close enough to be absolutely wrong. And so when he shows up in chapter 6 on a white horse, carrying a bow and a crown on his head, we see how the world will be deceived by his promises. In fact, in chapter 13 it says he comes with lying signs and wonders so that people marvel at his ability and his words.

Now that being said kind of there in the middle part, this bottom part of your sheet really is more of an elaboration of chapter 6 because this character known as the Antichrist, one of the things I shared with you last week is when the seals open up, the seventh seal when it opens up, there's silence in heaven for 30 minutes and then we have the trumpet judgments, and then we have the vial or the bowl judgments. I'm of the opinion and the belief that the seventh seal opens up all the rest of the judgments.

Why is that important? Because this very first seal, this Antichrist character, all we get are two verses. He's on a white horse with a bow and a crown and death and famine come behind him. But there are ample passages in chapter 13 and 17 and others that describe

who this guy is, how he operates and kind of the way he does things. And so I just want to give you a list of some things that hopefully will kind of prod you to explore and to think and we're going to deal with all these passages in more specific when we get there eventually.

But there is the famous mark of the beast. This is found in chapter 13, verses 16 through 18. One of the things that you'll notice there when you read it, it's actually found in the forehead or in the right hand. I know there are many Bibles out there that say on the forehead or on the right hand, but the word that is used there is "epi" and epi is a Greek word that means anything, it can mean "under, above, behind." It's a word that is completely used in context. Anybody ever had an EpiPen which actually injects the medicine inside of the body? And so what we see this famous mark of the beast is incredibly deceptive but there is a mark. When God breaks the mark open in chapter 16, it causes a grievous sore on the body. So there's a time where the famous mark of the beast will be revealed upon all those who take it. Other references to this famous mark are in chapter 19 and in chapter 20, but I think the critical aspect of this famous mark of the beast for tonight's study is it's the Antichrist's followers who are the ones who wear it or who bear it, not the Antichrist himself.

So this character in chapter 6 that is so deceptive, he does have this famous mark of deception that eventually will be revealed that those who buy into his lies will bear, not he himself. There's also the famous number of the beast, this famous 666 number, and this, to me, has had a history of, shall I say, humor. There's been oftentimes we have attempted to claim that somebody was the Antichrist because of the number of the letters that are in their names. My favorite example, you've heard me use it, is people said in the '80s that Ronald Reagan was the Antichrist because his name was Ronald Wilson Reagan, 666. And so oftentimes we try to read into the scripture what we possibly want it to be rather than what it just says.

The number 666 outside of Solomon counting the weight of his gold, is only used twice in the entire Bible. It's used in Revelation 13 talking about the number of the beast, it's also used in the book of Ezra 2:13. Now this is interesting to me because Ezra 2 is one of those snoozer chapters. Do you know what I mean by that? The snoozer chapter is this guy came in and he had 14 kids, this guy came in and he had 29 kids, and this guy came in, I mean, it's just a list of names and numbers and in your daily Bible reading, you go, "Whoop, let's go on to chapter 3. Whoop, can't do that, we find out it's boring too. Let's go to chapter 4." And so in Ezra 2, it's a list of people and numbers of descendants. Interesting that as they're going back into the Promised Land, there is a man by the name of Adonikam who is listed as having 666 descendants. His name means "the man of rebellion." That being said, we'll study more of this when we get to chapter 13, but I think we can conclusively say that this one who bears this famous number, this rider of chapter 6, he is the man of rebellion.

So he not only has a mark that he instills, he has a number of which he bears, and then he has what I call an alliance. He does not operate alone. He has, for lack of better terms, a system of government that is around him. His government has 7 heads and 10 horns,

that's found later in chapter 17. His heads are called the mountains in chapter 17, and his horns are the leaders. He reigns from Jerusalem, the famous temple event where he goes into the temple, and yet at the same time Rome. Also, he will be both a political and a religious leader. So we see in this character known as the Antichrist a coalition of the world's powers, not just geographic power or sovereign entities, but also with various personalities who rally around him.

We see that he has multiple locations by which he reigns from, strategic places of great world power. Primarily we're going to focus as we study through this place known as Jerusalem, the city of peace where the temple of God will reside and where the abomination of desolation will take place.

And last but not least and this is where it always goes when people like to have a good time, notice the first word of the final bold statement on your paper, "The theoretical possibility of identifying the Antichrist scripturally." I'm incapable and you're incapable of completely positively identifying who this character will be, however, we have a very interesting parallel in scripture to the Antichrist character. The Antichrist in 2 Thessalonians 2 is called "the son of perdition." There's only one other person in your Bible that is given this name or this description. In John 17, Jesus calls Judas the son of perdition and can we just agree tonight, at least that is a horrible parallel to be made to? I mean, he is described in the same description as the Antichrist one day will be.

Jesus in John 6 calls Judas a devil. He says, "The 12 of you I have called and one of you is a devil." Judas in the book of Acts dies and it says he "goes to his own place," and the Antichrist according to chapter 17, was, is, was not again, and comes out of the bottomless pit. Now am I saying that the character that we see in scripture known as Judas is going to be the Antichrist? I'm not saying that at all. The reason I brought up that illustration is Judas Iscariot looked like the other disciples, he walked where they walked, he was where they were, but at the end of the day he was very different than them, was he not? He had a different intent. He had a different motive. He had a different destiny. He had a different outcome because he was not there for the same reasons as the other guys, even though he looked and walked and talked a lot of the same stuff. The Antichrist is of the same picture. He's going to look like a messiah, he's going to talk like a messiah, he's going to make the promises of a messiah, but one day he's going to go into the temple of God and he's going to demonstrate that he is the devil in flesh himself.

So all that being said, back in chapter 6 the very first seal that is opened up is a character that I believe we can identify as the Antichrist. We are not given all the details in chapter 6 in regards to his number and his name and the mark and his alliance, but he is the first one that comes. Why is that important to our study? What we know as this great tribulational time period, that's what Jesus called it, Daniel's 70th week, Jacob's trouble, the wrath of God being poured out, I believe we've got scriptural evidence that the tribulation, all the wrath of God begins with the presentation of the Antichrist and it ends with the presentation of Jesus Christ. It is the Antichrist that is the initial seal and it is Jesus Christ who comes back and says, "Enough is enough. It is finished." So what we

know as this great tribulation has bookends of individuals on horses. One is a false representation, and one is the true person thereof.

Alright, that was like an entire fire hydrant of information and scripture at once. Questions, comments, thoughts about anything in regards to this character or these scriptures, Revelation 6 through 19? Go. Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Not withstanding. Y'all just can't get off this whole rapture stuff, can you? There was nothing on here about the rapture. But you raised your hand which means you can ask anything you want. Okay, go for it.

[unintelligible]

Okay, alright, twofold question. 1. There is the whole question or the issue of the timing of what we know as the rapture, this calling out of the saints of God. We discussed a little bit about this last week where I think we see some various timings of that. And he said irrespective of that view, the question is how would I know or how could I know if I happen to be present when this guy shows up that I would be able to, or could, refute him, right?

Now I'm going to answer this two ways. 1. I don't believe you're going to have to worry about it. 2. We're going to hypothetically pretend you do. Does that make any sense? So please hear me. I don't think that you personally or I personally am going to have to face the receiving of the mark of the beast from the Antichrist himself, okay? But for the sake of illustration, let's pretend that we do. How could I as a Spirit-filled, born again believer face this situation and come out the side that God would want me to? Is that the question?

[unintelligible]

Pretty compelling argument, yes. Alright, so, go to 2 Thessalonians 2, one of the famous chapters regarding the Antichrist. Of course, that term is not used in this chapter as well, and I think there is a term or, shall I say, a phrase that is used in this passage that will, I believe, answer your question because there is... and by the way, I believe scripturally, doctrinally speaking, I believe I can, if given the time I could give strong evidence that you're not going to have to worry about this. But there are those that are concerned and they say, "But what if you're wrong, Jeff?" Okay? So let's just pretend that I'm wrong. Who laughed? I heard a laugh. Just pretend, and that the day is going to come where you might be faced with it. Now I don't believe that's going to happen. Have I said that enough? Okay, alright, here we go.

2 Thessalonians 2 is about this Antichrist character, okay, and it begins to talk about him in verse 3. He's the man of sin. He's the son of perdition. I'm going to go ahead and pick it up in verse 4,

4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

That's that famous abomination of desolation. Verse 5,

5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?
6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

Now those verses, I believe it's basically saying this: the only thing keeping the Antichrist from taking over is the Holy Spirit of God himself, but that when the Holy Spirit of God comes to this point where it says "when he lets," in other words, pulls back or draws or, shall I say, going back into what I believe, when he calls out his people, alright, then this character, he runs amok.

Verse 9, it says,

9 Even him, whose coming [this is the Antichrist] is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, [He's going to be pretty convincing, right?] 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Phew, that's pretty strong, isn't it? The thing that I find it's interesting about this passage in verse 10, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, are you perishing? No. You're saved. The deceivableness, the lie is one that works on those who have not the presence and the power of the Lord in themselves, kind of like 1 Corinthians 1:18 says, that the cross of Jesus Christ, it is power to those of us who are saved but it is foolishness to those who perish. So I think this passage says those who are deceived, those who are wooed by his ways are the ones who are not believers and who are not focusing on the things of God, which would say hypothetically if this were to occur in your life and in your presence because you are not one who is of that classification, you would not worry about being deceived.

[unintelligible]

Ah, the question: is it impossible for Satan to deceive a born again Christian? Hehehe, let me answer that two ways. I've been deceived several times. I mean, I've thought something was of God and I was wrong. Please admit you've done that too. Okay, thank you. So only the two, everybody, nobody else has done it but you and I have, right? I

think the difference here is this is on an issue of eternal matter. It says that they shall perish, they shall not be saved. Does that make sense? You and I, now nobody else in here but you and I, we've been guilty as children of God of at times listening to the wrong voice, have we not? There's times, and we've been deceived but it has not affected our eternal standing with the Lord, nor has it determined our eternal destiny with the Lord, but it messed up our fellowship with the Lord, did it not? Absolutely. This isn't about fellowship, this is about sonship or daughtership, let me be politically correct, about your relationship with the Lord. Does that make sense?

It says they are so deceived they should not be saved, and so the picture we get here is his deception with the mark and his alliance leads people to reject the claims of Jesus and enter a place the Bible calls hell because they believed him over the Lord whereas you have received the claims of the Lord, believed on the claims of Jesus and it's on the little things of life on your way to heaven that you've been deceived on, thinking you were hearing from God but you weren't. Does that make that clear as mud?

[unintelligible]

You got it! Well, if he's got it, we've got it. I'm so glad that all of you have never been deceived except he and I, so that's always good to know.

Anybody else on this famous Antichrist? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

I believe that. Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

He can fool me.

[unintelligible]

For those of you who could not hear because of soft-spokenness, John 10, Jesus makes this statement that our belief in him, our standing in him, that he holds us in his hand and it says there that no one or no thing can pluck us out. Well, the devil or the Antichrist would be one thing or one person. And it's an issue that we often call the security of the believer, alright? And I know there's a lot of difference of opinion on that, I've got some of my friends who say, "Well, I know that no thing or no one can pluck you out, but what if you decide to jump out?" Okay.

[unintelligible]

Yeah, someone just said you're sealed. You're absolutely right. You're sealed. I mean, the Bible says you're a down payment, you've got a reservation. There is so much biblical evidence for what we call the security of the believer, the problem is our emotions and our feelings because most of us, if not all of us, have experienced a relationship go bad, promises unfulfilled or people who have lied to us, and so we see oftentimes we're guilty of seeing our relationship with God through the lenses of relationships with each other.

You know, I'll never forget some years ago and if you've heard this story, forgive me because it's good enough to hear a second time. Some years ago, I was on a college campus speaking at a chapel service and when I got done, the man who was in charge of the chapel on the campus came to me and he said, "Do you want to meet the greatest evangelist on our campus, the person who wins more people to Jesus than anybody else?" I said, "Absolutely." We go sit down to lunch and it's myself, the chaplain and a man who appeared to be about 80 years of age. We're beginning to eat and I said, "Where is this person?" He said, "You're sitting right in front of him." I said, "You're the guy?" He said, "Yes, sir." I said, "What do you do on campus?" He said, "I'm the mailman. I work at the post office. When they come to get mail, I'm the guy that makes sure that they get it all right." I said, "You've won more kids to Christ than anybody on this campus?" He goes, "Well, that's what I hear." And I said, "What's your secret?" He said, "It's real simple." I said, "What?" He goes, "I look like the guy that when one of their parents moved out or left them, I took them in and took care of them, granddad." And he looked at me and he said, "Son, I hate to tell you something but you look like the person who walked out on them. I look like the one who brought them in." That's profound, is what that is.

Now for those of you who have more white hair than I, you might be the best evangelist we've got nowadays because you don't look like the one who walked out on them. But the reason I bring that up is how many people view their relationship with the Lord based on what they saw with their earthly dad, earthly mom, best friend, uncle, cousin, boss, fill in the blank. And so it's that human mess-up that taints truth, if that makes sense, so much so and this isn't a shameless plug but, you know, a couple of years ago, I had the privilege of kind of putting in context in a book kind of the top 10 questions I've been asked quantitatively. The number 1 question far and above any other question I've ever been asked in 20 years of doing this is, "Can I be saved and always be saved or can I lose my salvation?" And I believe the reason is not because of what the Bible says but because of what we've seen around us and we interpret God in light of this rather than interpreting this in light of God. Because Jesus said, "I'll never leave you. I'll never forsake you." Jesus said, "No one can pluck you out of my hand." How many times have we heard somebody say, "Don't worry, I'll never turn my back on you." And what do they do? They stab us in the back and we say, "Well, if they did it to me, I guess Jesus would too."

So to your point, yes, I do believe in the security of the believer. I think we see it erroneously when we see it in light of other relationships and not his. Hopefully that helped a little bit there.

[unintelligible]

Oh, absolutely. He's talking about it says give thanks to God in all situations, circumstances. You know, I love working with students, teenagers, college students. I just do, and one of the verses that I've learned throughout the years that is the most impactful with young people and it could be with adults too, by the way, is Psalm 27:11. It says, "When my mother and my father forsake me, the Lord will lift me up." Now you can fill in the blank. "When my brother and sister forsake me. When my boss and my best friend." I mean, you can fill in the blank there but I love that verse because it says no matter what you see horizontally around you, the Lord will never forsake you. So anytime we believe he's forsaken us or he's abandoned us, it's not because that is true, it's because we see it through the wrong lenses, if that makes sense.

So back to this young man's question. Did you like that, sir? Young man, did you like that? Thank you. The issue we've got here with the Antichrist is you've got people basing their eternity on a false understanding. They're buying into their emotions. It feels good. It looks good. It sounds good but there's no substance to it.

Any other Antichrist concepts, thoughts, issues? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Oh boy, you had to go there, didn't you? Well, well, well. I love you, friend. Ah, it's okay, I appreciate you. Alright, the question he is asking, if I could write a book, my 10 least favorite question to answer, that would be one of them. I appreciate you. Here is the question, who is it, it says, that sends the lie? God. Woo, that's tough to hear. It says God sends the delusion so that they may all be damned who believe not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. So let me share with you the two main thoughts here. We're going to kind of peel away the onions and see what we find, alright? The whole issue here, I think based on the entire chapter, is there's coming a time at some point and I know we can discuss the different time frames here, but there is coming a time where the Spirit of God is going to call up the people of God and then the Antichrist is going to reign over those who rebelled over or in or with God, right? We've got that part. The question is what about those who believe the lie? Do they have an opportunity, do they not?

So here are your two streams of thought. Thought 1 is that those who are "left behind," a famous book series some of y'all have heard about, that they will have an opportunity just like chapter 7, verse 9, says that there were all nations and all tongues and all people who believed in the power of the... Okay, they got left behind, not a good thing but they've still got a shot to reject the Antichrist and to believe in Jesus Christ. Thought 2 is that those who heard the truth and rejected the truth, that when this event comes and the Antichrist shows up, that the lie of the Antichrist, the delusion sent by God is so strong that because they heard "on one side" and rejected, that they do not receive an opportunity on the other side.

Now here's the deal. I've read this passage of scripture hundreds of times. Half the time I read it, I see it one way, and half the time I read it, I see the other. The moral of the story is if the Spirit of God is calling you to be saved, get saved. Period. Because a lot of folks go, "Oh, I've got one more day." Or I've heard some folks say, "Well, rapture comes, so be it. I may be left behind, got to fight the Antichrist but all I've got to do is worry about seven years." Yeah, that sounds fun, doesn't it? I wouldn't mess with this verse, if that makes sense.

Now again, I can defend both positions in the sense of every time I read it, it looks a little different. So I'm not going to write it in concrete, if that makes sense, but I wouldn't mess around with this passage. Half the time I read it, the idea is if you've heard the gospel and you rejected it, then the Antichrist takes over, that you do not receive an opportunity to receive it on that side of the equation. Does that make sense? That is a hard truth to grasp and it sounds harsh but allow me to share a very not fun story in my life. I'll make it brief. I won't tell you the whole thing. I was in high school. I was in, I believe it was third period, and it wasn't one of those really bad rainy days, not like we had the other day but it was pretty bad, and I noticed that the seat next to me was empty and didn't think much about it because people get sick, people are absent, you know, it just happens, until the principal came in and shared with us that the young girl who normally sat there had been killed in an automobile accident that morning. It broke my heart for a number of reasons. Number 1, I grew up with her. Number 2, I had sat next to her for months and months and months and months and months and months and never shared the gospel with her. And it just tore me up. I couldn't handle it. I mean, I still get emotional today thinking about it. As soon as that period was over, I went immediately to our counselor's office there in our high school. We had three counselors, one of them was a sponsor of our Christian organization on campus. He was a believer. And I just knocked on his door and I said, "I don't care what you're doing unless it's life threatening, I need to talk to you." He said, "Come on in, Jeff." And I mean, I spilled my guts. I got tears going everywhere, you know, I'm just breaking down. And he had kind of a little smile on his face and he said, "Jeff, I don't know where she is right now but I know in the same chair you're sitting in today, I shared the gospel with her last week. She has heard."

What I'm saying by that little illustration is we don't know who has and we don't know who hasn't, and at this event, it says there are those who do not believe, they do not receive, and they are damned. I don't know if it's those who have heard and rejected, or if I don't know those who have never heard and still never believe but I wouldn't play around with it, if that makes sense. This is one of those passages of scripture that if I wasn't saved, I'd get saved after reading this because if it reads that one way, if it is, that means that if that "rapture event" occurs tonight and I've heard the gospel and the Antichrist takes over tomorrow and this passage is that one way, that means I don't have a chance tomorrow.

You see, the "Left Behind" book that Tim LaHaye wrote which, by the way, is a fiction book based on biblical principles, in that book everybody left behind had a chance, right? Y'all remember that? Everybody had a chance. He took the other position. Half the time I

read it, I see that position, and half the time I read, I see the other position. How was that for non-conclusive?

[unintelligible]

Perfect. Did y'all hear that?

[unintelligible]

Oh, absolutely. Don't let it go by. And I'm just going to share my own personal testimony. By the way, this Sunday morning we're going to talk out of John 9, we're talking about the power of a personal testimony. I mean, we can argue facts, we can argue figures but, man, you cannot argue when you see somebody's life changed by the gospel. You just can't argue. That being said, I can tell you part of my testimony. When I got convicted that I was lost, I didn't sleep for a week. I didn't sleep. I don't know how lost people go to bed at night. I really don't. If you don't know where you're going to wake up tomorrow if you don't wake up on planet earth, if it's heaven or hell, I couldn't sleep because I want to know where I'm going to end up forever because that's a long time. It's a real long time.

So the picture you get, though, no matter which side you take, is that these folks involved here, they weren't concerned about eternity. They were so consumed with today they never considered eternity. That's a dangerous dangerous position to find yourself in. And so, yes, don't let a witnessing opportunity go by and if you're presented with the gospel, don't let that opportunity go by. Don't let it go by.

Anybody else, anything else on this one? We're done with the Antichrist? We're done with this guy? Oh, yes, sir. Front row.

[unintelligible]

The mark of the beast.

[unintelligible]

Yes, they do. There are some that reject the mark of the beast, yes.

[unintelligible]

Ah, the question is those who've rejected the mark of the beast, are they not "saved"? I think the picture you get in the tribulation is, it's honestly pretty cut and dry, you're either with the beast or you're not. You take the mark or you don't. However, those who reject the mark of the beast according to Jesus, he said run for the hills. You can't buy, you can't sell, you can't do business, that you are a hunted person, for lack of better terms. In fact, we see in the tribulation period the number 1 means of taking one's life is by decapitation. Isn't that interesting? With all the advancements and "evolution" of humanity, one of the

ways we see people lose their life still on tv today is by decapitation, particularly in the part of the world that the Bible takes place in. I find that intriguing but, nonetheless, yes, there are those who do not take the mark, there are those that are mentioned as "being redeemed" in Revelation 7, and so I think you can kind of put 2 and 2 together and say, yeah, those who reject the mark and believe on Jesus, absolutely they're a part of the redeemed. Does that make sense?

[unintelligible]

It's possible.

[unintelligible]

Right. Yeah, the question he's asking, I know being on the front you can't hear on the back is, what about these people who find themselves to use the book title "left behind"? They're in the midst of the tribulation, the mark of the beast goes forward but they either had family, friends, or someone who were evangelical born again believers that they heard, they saw the testimony, would it not be convicting upon them? It goes back to his question about 2 Thessalonians 2, do they even get that opportunity having hear or not, which goes back to half the time I read, I see they do, and half the time I read it, I see they don't, you know? My positive nature says, "Oh yeah, they get an opportunity." That's my positivity. My negative nature says humanity is depraved and rarely chooses the things of God.

One thing, though, I do think is interesting, Sermon on the Mount. Go to Matthew 5 for just a moment. Jesus makes a statement that I think is in complete correlation with what you're asking, sir. This famous mark of the beast, and then if there's no other question, we'll go to the database but we can stay here for weeks, it's pretty easy. In Matthew 5 in what we know as the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus makes a very interesting statement, actually it's a series of statements. Now remember, this famous mark of the beast according to chapter 13 is either in the forehead or the right hand, correct? Alright. Matthew 5:29,

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. 30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Is it possible, could it be that when Jesus is saying these words to your question, sir, you'll wake up one day and realize you've believed a lie? You wake up one day and realize, "I followed the wrong guy." The only way you've got to get rid of this famous mark of the beast, what did Jesus say? "If your right eye offends you, pluck it out." Notice he didn't say your left hand. What did he say? Your right hand which is the hand. Notice the eye, that it is a part of the forehead, the area of your body. Jesus used two

specific body parts that happen to be the same places that the mark of the beast is placed into in Revelation 13 which, again, I apologize that I'm flip-flopping here, makes me believe there's the possibility for those whether they've heard or not beforehand who believe the lie afterwards who see what he really is and go, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, I want to reject this." How do you get ride of it? Jesus said if your right hand offends you, cut it off. Well, I would think that would be the only way to get rid of this thing is to remove from your body. So I almost see in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus is saying it is better to cut off your arm than it is to go to hell, even if you have surrendered yourself to the wrong guy. Now I may be reading too much into the Sermon on the Mount but I find it interesting that Jesus uses those two body parts. He didn't say if your shoulder offends you, if your ear offends you. He says if your right eye or if your right hand.

But to your point, that's right, there is this testimony. There are going to be those who fall for the lie and I'm going to go off of your question for a minute, there are going to be those who follow the Antichrist who never heard the gospel, who never have an issue, they've never even heard of Jesus so they're easily going to fall into the trap, but at the same time, they're going to hear the testimony of the truth during the tribulation as well. Will they respond as Jesus challenged them? Do you see how you get into kind of all of this...?

Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Yes, the 144,000.

[unintelligible]

Okay, okay, question, who can they, okay, the 144,000 are not the ones who show up to your house on Saturday morning, I promise you. The 144,000 according to Revelation 14, they're all men and they're all virgins which cancels out everyone who's ever come to my door on a Saturday morning, okay? Nonetheless, the question is who do they witness to if none can be saved?

Alright, back to 2 Thessalonians 2. The question that was brought up earlier is the problem with 2 Thessalonians 2 is there are those who have heard and have rejected and then find themselves in this tribulational period. That is up for debate. But those who have never heard, carte blanche have access to the truth. Does that make sense? The only issue with 2 Thessalonians 2 is if those who have heard and rejected find themselves at this "famous rapture event" still rejecting, the question is do they still have a chance? I don't know but those who find themselves in the midst of the tribulation, never heard the gospel, never have an opportunity, every single one of them you get the picture has a choice, has the opportunity. Absolutely.

So according to chapter 7, verse 9, it says a number that cannot be numbered is saved, meaning with a human perspective. You look at this massive group of people and say, "I

can't even number how many there are." So there will be, there is redemption, if that makes sense. There are those that are redeemed absolutely. Sorry I made that confusing. I apologize.

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Two part.

[unintelligible]

Are you talking about in 1 Corinthians 3? Okay, in 1 Corinthians 3 beginning in verse 10, I believe, it says there is no other foundation on which may be laid but the foundation that is Jesus Christ, and then that we build upon wood, hay, stubble, gold, silver, precious stones, but that one day they shall all be tried by fire. That passage is oftentimes referred to as the judgment seat of Christ. In verse 15 of that passage it says so shall they yet be saved from fire or by fire. My personal belief, 1 Corinthians 3, written to believers, written to Christians, it's saying that once you're saved, you're still held accountable to the life you've lived of faith, I still have to stand before Jesus one day, I have to give an account of what I've done with my faith whether good or bad, and guess what? All the bad stuff is burned up. All the good stuff, I had the opportunity to present at his feet like we see in Revelation 4. I think what verse 15 is saying is shall be saved by fire, is I may go through a time of judgment, I may go through this but I don't have to worry about going to hell as a believer. Does that make sense?

[unintelligible]

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Right.

[unintelligible]

Ah, wonderful question. The question is we have this beautiful picture in Revelation 4 of which the great old hymn, "Holy, holy, holy," talks about, you know, casting down our crowns there at the crystal sea, okay? Beautiful picture of this happening, that taking these rewards, so to speak, and saying, "Jesus, I give them back." The question he asked is, okay, those that are "saved during the tribulation," when is the picture, do they get the picture of them doing the same thing? Let me remind us that the picture of throwing down the crowns at the feet of Jesus is in chapter 4, the tribulation begins in chapter 6. And so I don't think you see the opportunity for the tribulation saints to have that experience, if that makes any sense. So they're still redeemed, though, they're still saved, they just don't have the privilege of putting the crowns at his feet.

Does that make sense? Does that work? That's works? Is that both parts? Phew, I did it. Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Ah, the question is can I give you a scripture that shows that the rapture is a one time event? I can give you scriptures that show that there are several events that look like a rapture in the Bible.

[unintelligible]

Okay, alright, okay so the one scripture, okay, two main scriptures here. The first one is in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, the second one is in 1 Corinthians 15:51-55 that describe an event where those who are dead in Christ and those who are alive in Christ are caught up by the Spirit of God to be with Christ in the air forever. We call it the rapture because in 1 Thessalonians 4 it says they are caught up with him and the word "caught up," the word is literally to be raptured. That's what that word is. That's why we use that term. That being said, that is, those are the conclusive, I hate to use this term, those are the proof texts that there is this mass event where the dead in Christ and the alive in Christ are taken up to be with Christ. That is what I would call the big one, if that makes sense. However back in Matthew 27 it says that when Jesus rose from the dead, many of the saints of old rose with him. That's rapturesque, if that makes any sense. Then when we get to Revelation 11, it says that the two witnesses, by the way, it says that their bodies are going to lay in the street for 3 ½ days, their heads are going to be decapitated, their heads are going to roll back on their body. Hollywood didn't come up with this, folks, first, the Bible did. Heads roll back on their body and then they are, look at this, they are caught up into the air to be with the Lord. That's very rapturesque, if that makes sense. That one in Matthew 27....

Is that me? Oh, I thought my phone was ringing. I thought that is....I'm sorry. Okay, I was going to answer it and just have some fun. I was going to go, "Welcome to Ask Jeff. How are you doing?"

In Matthew 27, we have a rapturesque event and in Revelation 11 we have a rapturesque event but, ma'am, to your question, I think the 1 Thessalonians passage numerically, quantitatively, that is the overwhelming majority of believers. Does that make any sense? That's the harvest. I think if we were to quantify, I think Matthew 27 would be 1%, Revelation 11 would be 1%, but that 1 Thessalonians passage is the 98%. And so that is the one passage that says the dead and alive in Christ shall rise, but there are other passages that describe events in other times that are rapturesque.

Does that help at all? But the thing that's interesting, I know we've talked a little bit about this, in 1 Thessalonians 4 and in 1 Corinthians 15, there is no language at all, there is no hint, there's nothing that sounds like the tribulation. There's no talking about the abomination of desolation. There's no talking about running for the hills, any seals being

opened. It just says, "I'm going to show you a mystery. There's going to come a time where the dead in Christ and those alive in Christ shall be changed in Christ," as if it's just any other day and there it happens. The interesting thing is Jesus in Matthew 24, which I believe was alluding to Revelation 11, says there is coming a time in the midst of all this craziness and chaos that there's going to be two in the bed, one will be taken and one will be left, two in the field, one will be taken, one will be left, and the context of Matthew 24 is very tribulational. You've got horrible events taking place, it talks about the end of the world, and so I think one of the things I think all of us, myself included, are guilty is we take all these passages, we put them all together and say it happens right here. Well, the Bible says to rightly divide the word and so I think we need to take these passages and say, "Okay, this one is talking about this event. This one is talking about this event, and this one is talking about the big event." But there's that passage that says there's the big one.

Does that help at all? Not really. Kinda, sorta? Sorta?

[unintelligible]

Oh, the question is what about the passage where he says where two in the bed, one is taken, one is left, is that not the rapture for that person? Oh, absolutely but it's rapturesque, the question is who and when. Does that make any sense? Because as we talked a little bit last week, I think there's very good evidence that there is a rapture type of event at the end of the tribulation but I think there's strong evidence there's a rapture type event prior to the tribulation. And so this whole question tonight about what about believers now versus believers then, I think there is on both sides there's a picture of redemption and there is a picture of rapturesqueness. I just made up a new word, rapturesqueness. That's not in the dictionary, I promise you. I just made that up tonight.

So hopefully that helps. Time has run out. I'm going to pray for us. I love you, I love talking about this but I've got to go to a meeting. So when I run out, I've just got to go to a meeting. Alright, let's pray.

Lord, we love you tonight and thank you that in the midst of all of the questions and all of the we just don't know, this one thing we know, that salvation and forgiveness of sins comes through Jesus Christ alone. Thank you that we don't have to question that. It's in his name we pray. Amen.

God bless. Sorry I've got to go to a meeting. Sorry, sorry, sorry.