

Ask Jeff 9.20.17
By Dr. Jeff Meyers

sermonaudio.com

Preached On: Wednesday, September 20, 2017

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

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

As our prayer sheet, just a few things to make reference to. 1. If you know of somebody or some situation that we as a church body need to be praying for, please let us know. We will get them on here as soon as possible. Also, you'll notice at the bottom there are some out of town concerns but there are, at this time, no sympathy concerns. Typically we print those who have lost family members and such but there are none as of this week that are relevant to this week. On the back of the page, there is a thank you from those whom we've been praying for. And as always, we want to pray for those who are serving on the mission field and those who are serving in the military on our behalf in a very selfless manner. But just a reminder, do not throw this away. Hopefully you will keep this as a means of praying throughout the week for the concerns and situations of those not only in our church but related to our church.

Let's pray and we'll get started.

Lord, tonight as we gather together as a church family, Lord, I think it's fitting that we thank you for what you've done in the Auburn, Opelika, Korean church just right down the road, God, that you took those few believers and you have multiplied them many times over. And Lord, how good it is to be able to come together as a church family and to allow them to be independent and to seek fit as they would see. Lord, we thank you for what you're doing in their lives and, Lord, we thank you for these that are on the sheet that we have the ability to pray for. Lord, we know some of them are hurting physically, some of them are struggling emotionally, Lord, we know some of them are just putting their hands in the air and they don't know what to say or do and, Lord, we pray that whatever is needed at this time, God, that you would be the healing where healing is needed, the peace where peace is needed, and the comfort where comfort is needed. For those who are serving on the mission field, particularly those whom many of us know that are in the Caribbean, Lord, with the storms that are brewing, may you provide not only physical protection but may you provide spiritual fruit for their labor. For those who are serving in the military, God, we know oftentimes it is lonely and it's a challenge and even comes with its temptations, Lord, would you protect their hearts, protect their minds, protect their bodies? And Lord, we pray that you would utilize those men and women on the field that are chaplains to use your word and to communicate clearly the comfort you want to give them at this time. For us on this campus tonight, God, what a blessing it is to be in this facility with these people with a copy of your word. Guide us and direct us

into what you want us to know tonight so we can be better equipped to serve you. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Alright, I do want to kind of begin tonight with somewhat of a promotional plug before we get started. Now this is Wednesday nights here at First Baptist and if you're a first timer with us, as you're about to see in a moment, this is a time where we have a question and answer Bible study as well as walking through currently the book of Revelation, but one thing I want to share with you is oftentimes people are curious, "If I can't be there in person or maybe I'm going to be out of town on vacation, or maybe I'm sick in the hospital like some have been, how can I have access? Well, obviously fbcopelika.com, there's all types of media that is on our website as well as the app. But I want to share with you something that I'm excited to share with you tonight, is if you are a subscriber to OPS as far as your television service is concerned, we have a channel that is 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, channel 801. Now that channel has not only our live services, in fact, we're live right now on channel 801, but it also has archived our college services, our youth services, soon some of the activities in our children's ministry, it has announcements, special events. It's 24/7. Well, thanks to the marvel of technology, many people said, "Well, I don't have OPS. I can't subscribe. I would love to have access to it." Well, guess what? Now you do. It is not being live streamed 24/7 on the First Baptist website and so you have access to the media ministry here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you're using the First Baptist app, at the very bottom if you push the "live" button, it'll go straight to it. If you're using the website, obviously you'll go to the media section.

So one of the things that you can see is not only the live services but also anything that is archived, and so what this gives you access to and it's wonderful. I was in a restaurant today at lunch and someone kind of nudged me on the shoulder and said, "Hey, look up there," and it was me on the tv, alright? So that was kind of scary, just to be honest with you, and then everybody in the restaurant looked and said, "That's him. That's him." Yeah, and I was like... So, but the good news is I'm not on there all the time. We have lots of other programming. But I was excited. I pulled it up the other day just to see what was going on and it was an archive of a message from our college service here on Sunday morning. And so there's all the ministries of our church utilized on there 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including our Wednesday night programming. Just wanted you to know even if you don't have that local access television-wise, that now on the app and our church website 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. But pertinent to tonight, if you cannot be with us live, you can access it live via that access. So just wanted you to be aware of that.

Now Wednesday nights, here's what we do, two phases, number 1 is a question and answer time, we call it Ask Jeff because you get to ask questions and my name is Jeff. The best way to submit questions is on the website, fbcopelika.com/askjeff. You submit a question, you put your email address, you will get a link to the video when that question is answered. It goes into a database. There is no means of predicting when that question will come up, it just happens. Once that question is addressed, you have the ability to raise your hand. Once you raise your hand, you lose all anonymity but you can take it anywhere you want. If you're first time here, let me warn you, we have some seasoned veterans and they know this, and they come wanting to know something, and if the

question from the database isn't what they want to know, they will raise their hand and say, "I want to know about this." And you have access to do that. I love Wednesday night because we study and we learn what you want to study and what you want to learn. And then eventually we'll get to our Revelation study.

So tonight, we are going to go to the database to begin with, push the little button here. It says: I have heard some people say, "All paths or religions lead to the same God." Can this be true? That's a good question. I want to answer this question from a strict biblical response and then I also want to address it somewhat from a logical perspective. So the question is can all religions lead to the same place, or can multiple religions ultimately lead to the same destination or to the same goal or desire?

Now before I begin, allow me to use some words to help with our definition. I think some of the words that we need to know and I'll write these up on the board tonight, the first word is syncretism. Now these are going to help you out if you play Scrabble, okay? These will give you lots of points. Then we have pluralism. And then we have what we call universalism. Now let me define these words because they're pertinent to the question.

Syncretism, meaning that which is in sync, essentially syncretism is that all faiths and all beliefs are on the same road, however, they are occupying various lanes. In other words, you might have Buddhism over here, you might have Christianity over here, and Islam over here, and though they say and/or profess different things, syncretism says they're really all in the same road all leading to the same place.

Pluralism is a little bit different than syncretism. It states that there are multiple roads, if you allow me to draw this out here the best I can, and what this says is that I'm just using Buddhism, Christianity and Islam just for the sake, is that these three roads go different paths and different directions and at times may even cross or divert, but eventually they all end up in the same place.

So syncretism is everybody's on the same road, pluralism is they're all on different roads but headed to the same place and universalism, hence the word universe, is basically a collective term that states no matter what one believes even if they believe in nothing, everybody gets to the same place. So universalism is even more collective than that, you don't even have to be on the road and you get there. It means that all peoples end up in the "same place or same destination" whether they adhere to a religious faith, whether they were what we might call heathenistic or even paganistic, it doesn't matter what they believe, everybody goes to the same place and the same destination.

So same road, different lanes, different roads, same location, doesn't matter, we're all getting there together, and the question is: is it possible that either of these three or all of them could actually be correct? Now let's speak strictly biblical and then let's speak logically. Now biblically speaking, John 14:6 nullifies the question because Jesus made a very clear statement. He said, "I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life and nobody comes to the Father but by me." So Jesus was not into syncretism. He was not into

pluralism. And he was not into universalism. Jesus, and this is politically incorrect, he was into exclusivism. He said, "It's exclusive. It is only me." In fact, 1 Timothy 2:5 later on the Bible says this, "There is only one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." So that being said, C. S. Lewis, the great Christian apologist of years gone by, said that when we look at Jesus and his claims in reference to these questions, that Jesus was either a liar, he was a lunatic, or he's Lord. In fact, if you look at Jesus' statement, what he's really saying is, is Jesus is either the Savior for all or he is the Savior for none.

So biblically speaking, there is zero evidence that other faiths are actually the same validity as Christianity because even Christianity itself says it is exclusive from. Secondly, there is no way that this question is compatible with the teachings of Christianity because when Jesus said he was the only way, that would nullify the destination of other paths that are contrary to. And when it comes to universalism, allow me to repeat what Jesus said in Matthew 7, he said broad was the way of destruction but narrow was the path of righteousness. And all throughout scripture, in fact, twice as much as he talked about heaven, Jesus talked about hell.

So Jesus in scripture in totality advocates against universalism, against pluralism, and against syncretism. That's the biblical perspective. Now let's just think outside the box and let's think logically. How could three differing belief systems all be correct? Because when you look at Buddhism and I'm just taking these three randomly, Buddhism teaches that it is through the process of meditation and through the emptying of one's self of the evil in one's life, that that process of spiritual pruning and becoming a oneness with the cosmos is the answer to the problems of life. Islam, as you well know, says it is the teachings of the Koran through the prophet of Mohammad and direct allegiance to God in the name of Allah. And Christianity says, no, that Jesus is the Savior sent for the salvation of humanity of which belief in him provides forgiveness of one's sins. Are those three the same teaching? No. So how can they all be on the same road? How can they all be on differing roads ending up in the same path? It is much like claiming that you can be a married bachelor. You cannot be both at the same time.

And when you begin to investigate the religions and the faith systems of the world, here's what you're going to notice, they all have differing personalities. For example, the personality of Islam is Mohammad, the personality of Christianity is Jesus Christ, the personality of Buddhism is Buddha. They all have a specific person in their history that is kind of the profiled individual. Secondly, they all have differing sacred texts, the Bible, the Koran, the Vedas, all these other "canons" of their scripture of which contradict and contrary to one another. And finally, they all claim different paths and different destinations of what they claim to believe.

So in a nutshell, there are four questions that every belief system answers. Where did we come from? What's the problem? How do we fix it? And where are we going? So let's address this question just from these three and then I think it will seem somewhat illogical that they can all be true, whether it's the same path, different lanes, or different paths, same destination. We've already dismissed this one.

So let's take the idea of Buddhism. Where did we come from? Well, we came from a previous life, a previous existence. What's the problem? The problem is that we have too much filth and dirt and junk in our lives. How do we get rid of it? We meditate and concentrate on nothingness. Where are we going? To the next level. That's, in essence, Buddhism, alright?

What about Islam? Islam says you came from God, it really does. The problem is that we've rebelled against God. The answer is that we must surrender total allegiance to God through the teachings of his prophet Mohammad. Where are we going? They don't even know. Did you know that Islam, if you get someone who is an adherent to the Islamic teaching, if you ask them, "Do you know one day you're going to go to a place that we would collectively call heaven?" They will say, "I don't know." They say, "That is only up to Allah. When I show up one day, he will make that decision."

Christianity says you came from God, the problem is sin, the answer is Jesus giving his life on the cross, raising from the dead, and we can know beyond a shadow of a doubt when we believe on him, it is a destination known as heaven and without it, it is a destination called hell.

You do understand that none of those taught the same thing. Completely different founders, completely different writings, completely different teachings, and completely different destinations. So therefore it is completely illogical that they could all be teaching the same thing.

So to the question: multiple faiths, multiple religions, can they get us all to the same place? Absolutely not, which brings up one final point before I bring it up for questions. I have the privilege oftentimes of sharing with those of other faiths, whether these that are mentioned or other ones, and you may be surprised but I'm pretty cordial when I have these conversations. I don't beat them over the head with the Bible. My goal is not to show I'm right and they're wrong, my goal is to bring them across the bridge and let them see the truth that Jesus is. When I'm sharing with someone and you have those conversations, you can just tell they're not going to believe, you can just tell that it's not going to happen tonight, one of the things that I love to communicate with anybody of another faith system is this, I'll ask them, "Do you believe what I believe?" They'll say no. I'll say, "Do you believe what I believe?" No. "Do we believe the same thing?" They'll say no. "Is there any way that you can be right and I can be right at the same time?" They always say no, to which I end with, "You'd better hope that you're right. Have a good day." That's my tactic. Why? Because I know that Christianity is true, I know that Jesus is the answer, and what I want them to do is I want them to go home and I don't want them to sleep all night long. I want them to sit there and contemplate, "Am I right? I don't know, am I? Am I not?" And I want the Holy Spirit to begin to work on them and work on them and work on them so they will see that what they are adhering to their life now and in eternity is not compatible with the claims and truth of Christianity of which Jesus Christ is the only one of those personalities who's not dead. He's still alive. You know all these other faith systems, they take the bones of their founders and they

celebrate their bones. Guess what, folks? When it comes to Jesus we don't have any bones. Those bones have been raised from the dead.

So any questions, follow-up, thoughts, concerns, issues? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Ah, okay, now. That is a collectively very charged question. What he desires me to do is to take Buddhism here and let me find my little marker. Here we go. Well, let's get fun. Let's take this out. He wants me to put another...and the question he is asking is what if one of those lanes or one of those paths is what we collectively call Catholicism? Alright, now, the word catholic means universal. That's what it means, and so when someone says the term the Catholic Church, it means the church universal. That's what that means. However, someone who is an adherent specifically to what we would call the tenets of Catholicism is typically what we would call Roman Catholic background which is very specifically different than the church universal, it means a specific belief system. Now this is where it gets interesting because sociologists, notice I didn't say theologians, sociologists classify religions based on how they identify themselves. For example, Protestants, Catholics, Mormons, all claim to be Christian, so sociologists put all of us under one big umbrella and say those are the Christians, okay? However to be "a Christian faith" means to line up with the biblical teachings of what that faith is, correct? Just because you say you are one doesn't mean you "are." And in standard issue, broad stroke, Catholic understanding, okay, Catholicism essentially teaches that one is "saved," to use that terminology, by receiving in the implementation of the sacraments of life. Sacrament is a fancy word for the means of grace. Typically that begins with baptism at one's infancy where they believe in the doctrine of original sin, that that sin must be washed away and they have a baptismal service for a child and infant. Then there is what we know as the process typically when they're about 11 or 12 years old where they go through confirmation. There is marriage, etc. and eventually you get to last rites. Those seven stages of which throughout between them they have what they would call communion to which they receive the bread and the wine as the body and the blood of Jesus Christ. In all those things, understand they're using the same words with different definitions. In other words, you and I would use the word baptism but not for washing away one's sins. You and I would use the term communion as a celebration of the Lord's death but not as a means of receiving forgiveness of our sins. Is that correct? I mean, we would use those terminologies but in different ways. The struggle with broad stroke Catholicism is that it advocates that forgiveness of one's sins and salvation of one's soul is based on what one does rather than necessarily whose one is. What I mean by that is, you, myself, you and I, we've talked, I believe my forgiveness of my sins and my salvation and my eternal destiny in heaven is not based on anything I do, it's based on what Jesus Christ alone did. And that is why in Catholicism they believe that if one dies with unrepented sin, they go to a place called purgatory for those sins to be purged because they're not prepared for heaven. Well, in biblical, what I understand the Bible to say is our preparation for heaven came through the blood of Jesus, not through the means of me doing the next stage of life.

Now that being said, this is something I like to use as a qualifier. There are some people, and I use the word "some," there are some people who if you asked them, they would say they are "Catholic," and they understand that Jesus is the only way, and they understand that he is the only means of salvation, and there are some people that are Baptists that are going to blow open the doors of hell one day. What I mean by that is just because it's a label that someone may give themselves does not necessarily identify what they believe. So if somebody says, "I'm a Baptist." I say, "That's great. What do you think about Jesus?" Someone says, "I'm a Catholic." I say, "Fine. What do you say about Jesus?" Does that make sense? But as a whole, Catholicism teaches a works based salvation of which forgiveness is earned throughout life by going through certain ceremonies, performing certain deeds of human endeavor, whereas I believe biblically speaking whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. It's all what Jesus did, not what man can do. And by the way, I know some folks that we would call Protestants or non-Catholics who are trying to earn their way to heaven and they're just as misconstrued even though they would not adhere to a Catholic understanding.

Does that help at all? I appreciate that question. You got the sweat glands going. I appreciate that. Anybody else? Anything else on that one? Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Related to last Wednesday. Those of you that are first time guests, do you see what she just did? She said, "I don't care what y'all are talking about, we're gonna talk about last week." Go ahead.

[unintelligible]

Oh, that's a big word. Go for it. Okay.

[unintelligible]

Talked about being sealed. Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Not able to lose their salvation, yes.

[unintelligible]

Ah, okay, great question. Here's the question at hand. That's good, I like that. The question is can a born again Christian who converts to Islam go "to our heaven"? Now "our" not meaning we have a different one than they do, but the biblical understanding. Alright, go to the book of 1 John 2. I hope this will address the question and then I'm going to give you a statement that I hope will stick, at least in our minds. Verse 18 of 1 John 2, it says, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last

time." Listen to verse 19, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." So here's this statement that I like to use: a faith that fiddles before the finish was false from the first. In other words, the question was can a born again Christian who converts to Islam, I would come back and say a born again Christian cannot convert to Islam because they were not born again. They were in name only that they identified themselves. Does that make sense? Does that help?

And then later on in the book of Jude, it talks about that those that have crept in, even denying the truth of Jesus, that they're in the church, they're even in leadership among the church but they're advocating that it's something other than Jesus that provides salvation. The same thing, that they left us or they left the true teaching of us because they were never a part of us. So a faith that fiddles before the finish was false from the first. Have fun saying that five times real fast. Does that help out, though? That does help?

Anybody else on this subject matter? We're good to go? Oh, yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Correct. He's referring to an I know he's soft-spoken, Matthew 26, the garden of Gethsemane, the night before the crucifixion of Jesus where three times Peter, James and John are left to the side and the Lord goes in this intimate conversation with the Father and he says, "Lord, if it be possible, if there's any other way, let this cup pass from me." And what Jesus was saying is, "I'm willing to give of my life, I'm willing to sacrifice myself because this is," to your point, sir, "the only way." There is no other means. We can never be good enough. We can never be religious enough. We can't even switch teams and just say, well, I know some folks that are what I call cafeteria religionists, they've got a little Christianity, a little Islam, a little Buddhism, a little this, and they just have... by the way, you know who these people are, they have a sticker on their car that says "Coexist." Do you realize how illogical that bumper sticker is? And it's basically saying that all these faiths who have all these different beliefs and all these different writings somehow are all saying the same thing. They're not saying the same thing. Jesus said, "I'm the only means, the only way. If there's any other way, this is it." And he's the only one who came back from the dead.

Now this may sound somewhat crass but this is a statement I've used for years because people say, well, and I could get into a very academic argument. Well, how do you know Christianity is really the truth? Have you investigated the Bible versus the Koran? Well, I technically have but we won't get into all that. Here's my statement. I don't want to follow anybody who beats me dying. Does that make sense? All these other guys are dead. We can go to their graves, we can find their bones. But I've been to Jerusalem and I've been to the place where they believe they laid the body of Jesus and it's empty. It's empty. And by the way, some of you have heard this story but it bears repeating and my wife's not here, she's coming back from Texas from helping her family with the hurricane relief and

when she's not here, I can tell stories because I don't get in trouble because she's not here unless she's watching live.

Okay, that being said, a couple of years ago, some of you have heard this story, my wife and I were in Jerusalem, we were there in Israel, and we're in the tomb of Jesus. I mean, this is a solemn occasion. This is a serious moment. I mean, I'm in the place where we believe they laid him for three days, and we go in and it's just the two of us and it's this very sincere serious moment, and all of a sudden my wife gives me a drive-by. Do y'all know what that is? It's a pat on the backside. In the tomb of Jesus. She goes, "Let's get outta here. He's not here." Do you realize, though, how theologically profound that is? Here I am taking in the moment and she's like, "What are we doing? He's not here." Scripturally speaking he's at the right hand of the Father, evermore making intercession for us. I just think it's funny that my wife gave me a drive-by in the tomb of Jesus. Just letting you know our marriage is healthy.

Alright, anybody else? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Ah, Islam. Yes. Historically speaking the question is does that come from Ishmael? We talked about the question that both Islam and Christianity say we came from God and really both will claim that the problem is sin. They differ on what's the solution. Obviously Christianity, Jesus is the answer, and Islam it's the teaching of the Koran through Mohammad. But they both claim father Abraham, okay? And so lineage-wise you've got Abraham who had two very distinct children, one by the name of Ishmael who was the oldest, but was not the seed of promise, and then Isaac who bore Jacob and the 12 tribes that was the seed of promise, and what we know as Islam today, they claim that it was Ishmael in Genesis 22 that Abraham took on the rock, or to the sacrifice, whereas biblically speaking and in even Judaism, it was Isaac that was there. And basically today when you see the news and you see the Jewish people and the Islamic people fighting, that is the Hatfield and the McCoys of the Bible and it's still going on today because those adherents are still arguing. But the difference is one claims Ishmael, the other one claims Isaac. That's the difference. Interesting, Ishmael through Hagar, not the child of promise. Isaac, even though the child of laughter, what his name means, was still the child of promise.

So anybody else before we get to Revelation? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Going back to the cup. Yes.

[unintelligible]

Correct. The question goes back to Matthew 26 when Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane in his prayer to the Father says, "Father, if it be possible in any way that this cup," alright,

he speaks about the famous cup. This is not Indiana Jones, alright? Y'all seen Indiana Jones? You know, remember the scene, "You chose wisely." Okay, no, it's none of that. And that's a great question because what cup is he referring to? And I believe that he's referring to the cup of the wrath of God on the sin of humanity, the rebellion, because what did he take for us? He took the punishment of our sin. He took the price of our sin. In fact, if you want another big Scrabble word, the Bible speaks of propitiation. Propitiation is a big word that means the punishment deserved thereof. And it says in 1 John 2 that Jesus is the propitiation of our sins. He took what we deserved. 2 Corinthians 5:21, "He who knew no sin became sin for us." So that cup, I would believe, would be the wrath of God, the deserved punishment of God on the rebellion of humanity that he bore in his body.

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

You do.

[unintelligible]

Great question. Okay, now the question he asked is when did this happen? Alright, now, in other words, in the cross experience, when did the cup, when was it poured out, when did the transfer take place, if that makes sense? Now please understand there are people who differ probably even within this room on this. Can we all agree tonight that we're past the cross event, we're past the resurrection, and Jesus is still the answer even if we disagree on this question? Does that make sense? Are we good there? Alright, so there are seven, whoop, that didn't erase. Alright, we're just going to write over here.

The seven statements of Jesus from the cross. We put them here. Alright, first one, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." I know my writing is bad. My dad's in the room, he's a pharmacist, I inherited his writing. I apologize for that. So, "Father, forgive them." Alright, number 2, "Today you will be with me in paradise." 3. "Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother." 4. It's the quotation of Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Sorry. "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" 5. "I thirst." 6. "It is finished." 7. "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

Now these are the seven statements of Jesus in chronological order. Let's work from the bottom part, not the top. I think the most important statement of the seven, believe it or not, is the last one, "Father. Father, forgive them." I have a doctrinal issue if Jesus is bearing the punishment of the sin of the world saying, "Father." Does that make sense? Now he's bearing the punishment, okay? That being said, a lot of people claim it's when he said, "It is finished." Alright, in other words, that's when he took it. If that's when he took it, then why is he still saying, "Father"? Does that make sense? The question on number 6 is, and this is why I defer from a lot of folks, "It is finished," the question is, what is "it"? The cup possibly, or is it the fact that number 5 was the fulfillment of the

last prophecy that had to be fulfilled? "It is finished," alright? And we could back our way up but this is usually where we're going to hang out as far as this question is concerned.

What I find interesting about the last statement, it says, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit," and as soon as he says that which, by the way, back in John 10 Jesus said, "No one takes my life lest I give it," it says and he gave up the ghost immediately. Here's my theological question: can you kill a sinless man? The wages of what is death? Sin. The only thing that causes death is sin, and so when it says he gave up the ghost immediately, that's when, this is just Jeff's opinion, alright, now we're now 2,000 years removed, that when he gave up the ghost and it says immediately he died, when death entered the picture, to me that is the sign that sin took over because death ensued. If it was, and by the way, when I get to the gates of heaven if the Lord says, "Meyers, you were wrong. It was number 6." I'm like, I'm still getting in. It's good. Alright? It's okay. So if it is finished, if this is the place, then why does death not occur until another statement is made because the wages of sin is death. When Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit, they immediately knew something was different. The effects of sin are not delayed. It is immediate.

That is my perspective but you will get a differing of opinions particularly with number 6 and 7. Some people will go back into number 4, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The thing that I would go contrary there is that's actually a quotation from Psalm 22 and Jesus is quoting scripture, not the whole thing because he's going up and down, i.e. physical death of asphyxiation. Psalm 22 is quantitatively the richest messianic Psalm we've got, eight specific prophecies about the cross in that one Psalm. It's the one where it says that they will gamble for his clothes, they will pierce him in his hands. But what's interesting is what happens for three hours before he makes that statement? There is darkness over the land. The Bible says that God is light and in him is not darkness at all.

What did Jesus do every time he was tempted in scripture? He did, what? Quoted scripture. That's the only place he quotes scripture of the seven. So is it possible that he is responding to that three hour darkness and spiritual temptation and he's saying, "Oh no, no, no. I'm not giving up. I'm going forward with this." Final prophecy, "I've done all I was called to do. I'm taking on the cup." Death takes place. Does that help at all?

[unintelligible]

Gave up the ghost, gave up his spirit, yes.

[unintelligible]

Right, the ghost, and by the way, 77 times in your New Testament you get the phrase "hagion pneuma," Greek for Holy Spirit, and we typically translate it Holy Ghost 71 of those 77 times, alright? You say, "Why is that significant?" Because and we joke about Caspar the friendly ghost and, I mean, all those kind of stuff, but the term "ghost" is a

representation of someone who is no longer here just by definition, right? The term "Holy Ghost," remember what Jesus said? "It's actually good for me to leave for when I leave I will send you another," meaning just like me, "who will dwell within you." So when the term says that you shall be empowered by the Holy Ghost, that's in Acts 1:8, Jesus is saying the Holy Spirit will be just as if I never left you, the same as if I'm still with you. When the term "Holy Spirit" is used, it's the power of God, the presence of God but it's dealing more with power versus presence as far as his person. That being said, when he says he gave up the ghost, I would say it's at that point that he yielded himself to the plan of the Father and said, "Let the transfer happen."

Now if you were to go back and I'm not a medical doctor, I know that, but if you go back and you look at what they did to Jesus physically on the cross, he should have been a dead man before he said the first statement, and I believe the only reason he was alive on the cross is because he had no sin. Now a lot of people say, "Well, they beat him 39 times with the whip." No, they didn't. It was Romans that beat him, not Jews. The Jews had a law you couldn't beat somebody more than 39 times, the Romans had a law you beat them until you're tired of beating them. If you've ever seen the movie "The Passion of the Christ," pretty good picture of it. He was so physically beaten that someone else had to carry his cross, and I believe, this is just Jeff here, I believe and, by the way, Isaiah 52:14 says that he was marred or beaten more than any other man. He didn't even appear as a man. I believe his body was medically, physically beyond the point of death but what causes death? Sin. That's the only reason we have death now. If there was no sin from the garden of Eden, we wouldn't be dealing with death. Sin is the cause of death. When he took sin, death had to take place.

So to your point, the question is did it happen here and there was a delay in the death or did it happen immediately? I side with immediately. I've got no problem if you side with a delay because here's the point: he did die and three days later he did rise, and he did take on the cup or the propitiation, the wrath of God. Did that help at all? We're good. We've got a thumbs up.

Anybody else? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

What did he mean by number 3, "Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother." Understand two things. 1. When, you understand Jesus even though he was born of the Holy Spirit, born of the Holy Ghost, that he would have been the oldest in his family. He would have been, okay? His earthly father, Joseph, was passed away. We know that historically so he was the oldest. Well, the responsibility in Jewish custom was to transfer the now authority of the home, particularly of his mom, financially, economically, relationally, etc., would have been to the next oldest. The Bible speaks at various times of Jesus having brethren or brothers, what we would call step-brothers, okay? Because Mary and Joseph had other children because in Matthew 1:25 Jesus is called the firstborn. Well, if you have firstborn, that usually means you have a second born. How many times do you remember in the gospels where it said, you know, "Hey, your mother and your

brethren are out there," and he says, "Who are my mother and who are my brethren but those who believe my Father has sent me." You do not see those of earthly kinship believing and following Jesus in his ministry. John, however, the son of Zebedee, was actually related with what we would call by way of being a cousin. I believe the reason not only John was the only male figure at the cross, four women and John, that what he was giving over as far as authority was concerned, this is a life lesson for all of us, Jesus was more interested in the spiritual value of the relationship more than the physical value of the relationship and John would have been the oldest, most related believer in what he was doing, and therefore said, "Behold, your mother. Woman, behold your son." And we know historically that John, the Apostle John, was the pastor at First Baptist, Ephesus. Some of y'all caught that. And Ephesus, interestingly, is where you mentioned the question of Catholicism, is where Mariology came from or the veneration of Mary elevating her higher than just humanity. It originated in Ephesus. Why would it have originated in Ephesus? Because that's where she would have lived her last days. By the way, you also have the evidence of Polycarp and some of the early church fathers that John was the caretaker of Mary until his death. But the reason that Jesus did so is because that authority, that figurehead for her life would have had to have been a believer in what he was doing, not just the next born.

Does that help out? Okay. Anybody else? Alright, we've got 14 minutes to get through Revelation. Y'all ready? In other words, keep this outline.

The four horsemen of the apocalypse. Revelation 6. Those of you that were not with us last week, we focused primarily on the first rider of the first horse. These are the famous seven seals of Revelation. Just a little recap. I know we're short on time but we're going to have to lap over until next week anyway. What we know as the seven seals, I'm of the opinion and belief that these seven seals progressed chronologically. The seventh seal opens up, when it opens up, it reveals the trumpets, which then ultimately reveal the vials or the bowls. So in other words, you do not have seven judgments of God that are just repeated three times cyclically, but I believe you actually see 21 acts of the judgment of God with each of them becoming not increasingly but exponentially "worse."

The first what we know as the first rider in verse 1, 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. 3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. 4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. 5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures

of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. 7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. 8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

I think we can all agree as we've studied earlier that this is not a pleasant time in human history. Jesus, in fact, referred to this time period beginning in chapter 6 through chapter 19, as the great tribulation. That's in Matthew 24. The book of Daniel calls it Daniel's 70th week and the prophet Jeremiah refers to it as Jacob's trouble. Why is that critical to the question that was asked earlier? Jacob, the descendant of Isaac and Abraham, it was because of the rebellion of his lineage that the wrath of God is taking place in this earthly environment pictured in the book of Revelation.

Now there is interesting parallels between Matthew 24 and Revelation 6. I want to allude to this strategically. Matthew 24 is, in my opinion, one of the most difficult chapters in all of scripture. It is apocalyptic. It is eschatological. It is end times, end days. Give you a little setting, it's just a few days before the crucifixion of Jesus, they're up on the Mount of Olives, oftentimes it's called the Olivet Discourse. They're up on the Mount of Olives, they're looking down on the Temple Mount and the disciples are bragging to Jesus about how great this temple is, the one that was rebuilt when they came back from captivity. It took 46 years and let me give you a plug for Sunday night because we're going to talk about this Sunday night, the door hinges were even coated in gold, it was so precise. An incredible place. And they're looking down and they're bragging about it and Jesus makes this statement, he says, "There's coming a time where every one of these stones will be taken down." And the disciples ask a very important question in Matthew 24:3, they said, "When shall these things be and what shall be the sign of your coming and the end of the world?" Now I think what's important for our discussion tonight in Matthew 24, is the disciples asked two questions: when will this happen, the event he was speaking of, and what is the sign of your coming in the end of the world? Two questions and Jesus, I believe, provides two answers. If you study Matthew 24, the first basically 30 verses are dealing with answering the first question, then there's a parable of the fig tree and then there's the rest of the answer. Jesus was a master teacher. You ask two questions, I'm going to give you two answers with an illustration in the middle.

That being said, Revelation 6 and Matthew 24 line up very much in a parallel. Why is this important? Because as we've studied throughout the book of Revelation, there is a discrepancy, there is a disagreement on the timing of these events, the adherence of these events, who's present, who's not present. We can all agree based on our study of Revelation 6 that you are in the tribulation. The seals are being opened, the wrath of God is being poured out, and in Matthew 24, the same issues that are being dealt with in Revelation 6 are being spoken about in Matthew 24 which leads me to the conclusion that Jesus in Matthew 24 wasn't speaking of events of current day but events of future days.

The reason I bring this up is because I channel surf Christian television a lot and there's a lot of preachers who preach from Matthew 24 and then read the headlines from the paper and say, "Look, it's right here." However what Jesus was teaching in Matthew 24 lines up with Revelation 6 which means that if what is happening in Matthew 24 is really happening today, then the seals have been opened and the problem is if the seals are being opened, the first seal was who from last week, who was it? The Antichrist. Well, we know there's no unified world leader. We know that the mark of the beast has not been implemented to humanity. And so the first seal has not been opened as of yet, so therefore Matthew 24 cannot be what is happening before our very eyes. I wanted you to see there's a parallel here that I wanted to just kind of give you a little warning shot that you'll hear a lot of this in Christian context in regards to Matthew 24.

Alright, first rider was the one of false hope, that was the Antichrist. This second rider, the rider of war. Now there are many passages in the book of Revelation that speak of wars and conflicts and violence, but particularly this second rider, he's on a red horse and it says "and power was given to him." That's critical. He did not naturally possess this ability. It was given to him. You go back to the book of Job, why was the devil able to do what he did in Job's life? Because the Lord gave him the leeway to do so, and so power was given unto him. We studied 2 Thessalonians 2 where it says the Antichrist could not take over until the Spirit of God was removed and from the present situation. And so when this takes place, it's not because the devil has the ability, it's because the Lord made the allowance. Does that make sense?

So power was given unto him to take away peace from the earth. Now that's presuming that there's a lot of peace on the earth. You know, we sing a song at Christmas and this is just a personal pet peeve of mine, it's a beautiful song, "Joy to the World," okay? Peace on earth, good will toward men. That's not what the Bible says. It's a great song, by the way. The Bible says "and on earth peace, good will toward men." In other words, we can have peace while we're on the earth, not that there would be peace on the earth. And what we see or takeaway piece, the issue, I use a phrase we like to use, world war. That's obviously a contemporary phrase because what we know as World War I was actually called the war to end all wars. How did that go for us? Not real well. World War II, and now in the news, I don't want to sound like those "preachers," but in the news we're starting to hear people question, "Are we on the verge of World War III?" We're starting to hear those phrases.

In Ezekiel 38 and 39, there is a tremendous battle that takes place. I would be honest with you, I've looked at Ezekiel 38 and 39, I've studied it frontwards, backwards, upside down and I still don't know what it means, okay? I mean, I know what it means in the sense of a big battle, the question is the timing of this battle. There are so many conflicts in the book of Revelation, is Ezekiel 38 and 39 what's happening in the second seal or is it what happens at Gog and Magog because those words are used, and it's just kind of fuzzy to me. But what I want you to see is if you read Ezekiel 38 and 39, I think it will give you a picture of how bad this is going to be when the second seal is actually opened when it said that power was given to him to take peace from the earth, which means that it's even

going to be worse then than it is now. Last time I checked, we got a lot of peace on this earth? Not a whole lot. It's a horrible situation and it's going to become even worse.

And it says that a great sword was given him. You know, we talked about the Antichrist by definition means "not Christ," not completely contrary to but just not the Christ. Notice that Jesus is pictured with a sword coming out of his mouth. Here this one has a great sword. It says that power was given to kill. When we go over to Revelation 11, we're going to meet the two witnesses, the two men who stand up and oppose the Antichrist. In fact, they have the spiritual gift that I wish the Lord had given me. Y'all know what it is, right? It says they breathed fire and killed anybody who was in front of them. Don't y'all wish y'all had that? I mean, seriously, don't you wish somebody could come up to you and just really get all in your face and you just go, kkk, and they're gone? Okay, maybe I'm the only one who's got issues. But when these two men are killed... I know, I just shared I've got issues, don't it? I know it. Please tell me I'm not the only one in the room who wishes that could happen. I mean, there are times in life you just wish... Are you with me? Phew. We're the only ones but we've got it, right? Who said what? Yeah, join your club. But it says the two witnesses, that's their spiritual gift. Now that's not listed in 1 Corinthians 12. You don't have that. It says the spiritual gifts are much different like the gift of mercy. Yeah, and faith and healings. But they are killed by the Antichrist in Revelation 11. Y'all know how they're killed? Their heads are severed from their bodies. So here not only is the sword figurative, it's also literal and we see that all throughout the book of Revelation that there is a very brutal form of martyrdom.

So that second rider comes out. We'll get to the third one here and this is where I want to probably lap over until next week because there's a statement made in this third rider that I find so intriguing. The third rider is famine. By the way, when we get to chapter 12, and chapter 12 is a parenthetical, meaning it's out of the chronology of Revelation. Chapter 7 is parenthetical, chapter 10, chapter 12, in other words, we're coming out of kind of the timeline. In chapter 12, it talks about the people of God running from the Antichrist, that the Lord gives them supernatural food or manna from heaven because they're running for their lives. Well, not only do they need it because they're running for their lives, but the great tribulation, there is this great famine.

So I want you to think about this. According to the first seal, there is a character who comes with a messianic agenda who, by the way, has a very demonic intent. The second seal is opened and peace is no longer and death reigns over the land. And if that wasn't bad enough, now we've got famine. You realize we're just in the third of 21 and it's only going to get worse.

Now what I find interesting about this one in verse 5, when he opened the third seal, "I heard the third beast," by the way, these beasts are those four creatures we saw in chapter 4. It says, "I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts." Well, who's in the midst of the four beasts in chapter 4? It's the Lord himself. And, sir, to the question that you asked earlier, what we're seeing here, this is not just humanity gone bad, this is not just a bad time in earth's history, this is the specific

judgment of God being spoken out on humanity. So even though there is famine with the third seal being opened and the balances, the Lord himself is directing what we're seeing happening in this passage.

Now next week, I want to kind of pick up next week with this statement, "Hurt not the oil and the wine." A very famous statement throughout scripture, lots of different ideas and different opinions but I want to look at it, I want to kind of pick up next week looking at "Hurt not the oil and the wine," and then we'll go to the fourth rider.

That being said, let's wrap up. Let me pray for us and we'll close.

Lord, as we depart this night, Lord, we've had a lot of discussion, in fact, there's been times where maybe not verbally but internally we somewhat disagreed or even confessed we didn't have all the answers and may not know a whole lot but, God, one thing we know, your word is true and you've commissioned us to walk forth in truth. And so Lord, we thank you that you are the way, the truth and the life, grateful that because of you we can be forgiven, we can be saved. Help us, O God, to take something tonight from this study and to live it out in the days ahead. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

God bless. See you later. I love you but I've got to go pick up kids. Oh, by the way, get your kids too.