

Ask Jeff

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Good evening. 6:30 Central Standard Time here at First Baptist Church of Opelika and obviously I want to welcome you to our Wednesday night, large group, adult Bible study. However, before we get in the Bible study, even those that are a few days delayed on radio, this is applicable to everybody, this Sunday is Resurrection Sunday, what you and I collectively call Easter Sunday and just a reminder, if you're not aware, that we have multiple services every single hour. At 8:30, there is a contemporary service here in 3:16, traditional upstairs in the main sanctuary, same at 9:45. At 11 o'clock, traditional upstairs and the primarily college service here in the 3:16 Center. That being said, if you arrive on our campus any time before 8:30 on this Sunday, there is a service that's happening somewhere. Now, for those of you who arrive a little late after lunch, it will not be in English but there will be multiple services. Just want you to know, we actually have eight Easter services that will take place this Sunday. Even those listening live or on the radio, a little few days delayed, you've still got time to get here for the 11 o'clock hour.

But it is Wednesday night and it's time for Bible study. If this is your first time with us either in person, online, by way of radio, this is a very unique Bible study in the sense that everything that we discuss, everything that we talk about, every question, every concern is originated and derived by you. In fact, this is an audience-led Bible study. There is no curriculum. There is no agenda. There is no outline. It's whatever you want to discuss, whatever you want to talk about. So tonight, if you want to engage and be a part of the process, there are two primary ways that you can be a part of it. The first one, most widely used one, is our text messaging system, area code 334-231-2313. You can be in the room, outside of the room, front row, back row, doesn't matter, when you submit a question by way of text messaging, you are completely anonymous. Your number doesn't come up, obviously your name doesn't come up, we have no idea who you are, so again you remain completely anonymous. You enter a question, it ends up on the portal on the screen eventually. Now if you want to do a follow-up question, we're on a certain topic, a passage, whatever it may be and you want to drill down a little deeper, maybe take it a little to the side, you can do a follow-up question. It will show up in a different font and I will realize that we're quote staying on topic.

Now for those of you here in person, you have the opportunity to raise your hand. Obviously when you raise your hand, you immediately get my attention and, I mean, you are in real time at that point. Now, the only difficulty with raising your hand is you lose

your anonymity, right, because we can see you. We know who you are. Now, if you participate in-house with your hand in the air, we can see you, we can recognize you, however, your voice will not be heard, nor will your image be seen by way of television, internet, and/or radio. So you're anonymous out there, just not in here, but we're all family, so it's all good, right?

So this is what we know as Passion Week, Holy Week, Resurrection Week, so it would not surprise me if maybe a few questions came that direction, but maybe not. Who knows? You're in charge, not me. First question. It says, "What is the red heifer prophecy and how does it tie into, quote, end times prophecy?" Well, there we go. The red heifer. All right, Numbers chapter 19. That favorite chapter of all Baptists. Numbers chapter 19 is the account of the necessity or the need and the purpose of what we know as the red heifer. Now, if you want to open up to Numbers chapter 19 and begin reading, feel free to do so. Allow me to briefly and somewhat succinctly summarize what you'll discover in Numbers chapter 19. Numbers chapter 19, there was sought out by the Jewish people a, quote, heifer, that was completely red with not one single hair differing from. At two years of age, it could then be utilized for the purpose of sacrifice, okay? Now, multiple qualifications here. Obviously, it has to be a heifer. It has to be red in nature. Over the course of its two years growth, when it becomes two years of age, there cannot be found one single hair, whether it be white, gray, black, brown, whatever it may be. At the point in which it is deemed a qualified candidate, then that heifer was sacrificed. Here's what's important to quote end time prophecy, is the ashes of that heifer were then utilized and mixed with the special oils and it was used to anoint the priest who would then perform the sacrificial system. Okay?

So why is that so important? Why is that so critical for what you and I would consider, quote, end time prophecy? Because when you go to the book of Revelation, when you go to the end of the Bible, you discover that it speaks about in those, quote, last days that there will be, again, a temple in a place that we know as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. It's not there currently. When it does arrive on the scene, and the Bible says in Revelation chapter 11, it will, there's no real purpose of a temple if there's no, quote, sacrifice. Well, you can't have a sacrifice if you don't have a priest that's been anointed to do it and so therefore, there is this desire, there is this hope, there is this ambition for a heifer to meet the qualifications so that the sacrifices could commence again. Now, over the last 20, 30, 40 years, there has been a lot of static, a lot of stories coming out about the desire to produce and/or breed one of these proverbial red heifers. Every single one of them in recent days, though, has disqualified itself by the time it became of age to be sacrificed. So much so, it's not just the Jewish community, there are even American universities and research centers that are partnering with the Jewish community in the desires and the hope of producing this, quote, famous red heifer. As of today, there is not a qualified candidate, okay? Now you're asking me when will there be one? I don't know but there will be one someday because of Revelation 11 talks about the temple, it talks about the sacrifice. You cannot have the sacrifices without the priests who are anointed. They have to have the ashes of the red heifer to be qualified to perform the sacrifices.

Yes, sir?

[unintelligible]

Well, there are several potential candidates that, if you allow me to say, are in the stalls. Okay, but this happens on a regular basis. Okay, on a very much regular basis, you'll hear these stories that there's 12 potential candidates, 14 potential candidates, all the time. The issue is that they have to become two years of age, and for some mysterious, divine reason, in those last weeks or months of that time period, all of a sudden they spring a non-red hair, which completely disqualifies them.

So, yes sir?

[unintelligible]

I wasn't going to call it out but it is Texas A&M University. It's all their fault.

[unintelligible]

All right, so if you could not hear what he said, read a report that not just Texas A&M, but there's other institutions they're partnering with, and supposedly there has one that has reached maturity and has met qualifications. I will make you a promise, if that actually really occurs, it'll be on CNN News. It won't be on some obscure email website that we're subscribed to. It will be a big, big, big deal because at that point, you understand that right now, there are three organizations based in Israel that claim to have everything ready for the temple except this red heifer. They're sitting on go. And so, do you really think these groups sitting on go, A&M calls them and says, we got one, "Eh, we'll wait till next week." They're on it. So again, I want you to hear from me. I'm not disqualifying this story, but I want you to hear. If I had a dollar for every news story that told me they had a candidate that was ready to go that failed, we'd be doing well. So again, it might be, might not be. I will tell you this, if that if it really happens and you really start seeing priests anointing themselves with the ashes of the red heifer and they start dragging out all this equipment of warehouses, you might as well just get ready. We about to go see Jesus quick. Okay, I'm just letting you know.

Yes, ma'am?

[unintelligible]

It is correct, yes, ma'am. Correct. It has not happened for at least 2,500 years actually. Right. It's a great, great question. For those of you who could not hear, how do Orthodox Jews, or Jews of any specific branch thereof, how do they have their sins atoned for? How do they become, quote, right with God when you do not have the proper, quote, sacrificial system? Now, let me bring this into our current week here, okay? You look back at what we know as the week before Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection during that time period when Jesus died on the cross, according to Matthew 27, remember it says the veil tears? When the veil tears, what would they have been able to see? What was inside.

You realize that since the Israelites came back from the Babylonian captivity, there had not been an ark of the covenant in there since then. So it's been 2,500 years since you could have a quote-unquote proper sacrifice even in that sense, okay? Now, we're talking about, you know, different flavors, ma'am, of different aspects, whether it be the priest qualified, the ark of the covenant, all these different things, which brings up a whole other question is, okay, great, we got the red heifer, we got the ashes, we got the priests, we gotta have a mercy seat. Well, that opens up a whole other series of questions about people who claim that they have that as well, but that's for late night cable TV.

So, all that being said, the question is, so what about an Orthodox Jew, what about a Jewish person today, particularly Passover coming up, not this week, but it's actually in April, what do they do? They would claim, because I've had many conversations, that even though the system is not applicable materially, it is the intent, it is the desire of their heart that they trust the Lord if it were there to do it on their behalf. That's a very theological, nice way of saying it can't work, but we hope it might work, because it doesn't work. That is why Jesus, or the Apostle Paul particularly in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 says, if Jesus Christ did not raise from the dead, we are most miserable. We are like those without hope. There's no hope in a current sacrificial system because there's no proper elements, there's no proper methodology, there's no proper location. You don't have a temple, you don't have a priest, you don't have a mercy seat, you don't have any of it. And so you have the hope of, but yet it's actually without hope. Does that help a little bit?

Yes ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Okay. Right. Okay. I'm pushing, I'm calling a time out. I'm not a Jewish priest, and you're not a part of the Temple Institute. I'm sorry to say, you better confess to eating pork, you in Alabama. Alright. My point is this. I don't know and you don't know and I'm just going to ask a rhetorical question, do you really trust the media? I'm just, I'm just asking. You know, understand again, listen, we don't know. I promise though, if it is really real, we will know when it is real. Does that make sense? Well, I'm ready to go too. So, hey, I tell you what, if y'all want to just go out there and just throw like a wild slider tonight, did y'all know that the cartoon "The Simpsons" predicted that the rapture is going to be on May 19th? Did you not know that? Oh, yeah. "The Simpsons," yeah, they predicted it. And I'm going to go ahead and tell you, May 19, 2024 is the only year that what we know as that date is 50 days or Pentecost after Easter. So y'all say they're building the tabernacle. I'm telling you, Bart Simpson's right. Again, I laugh about that, but you hear the speculation, right? I want you to know, just go back in time. I'm telling you, in days past, there have been qualified heifers that have literally come within 48 hours of the qualification being disqualified. So seriously, do not buy into until you're post-date, verified, and you're actually seeing it happen.

Yes, sir?

[unintelligible]

Oh, boy. I heard a news story. Here we go. I'm going to make my own media outlet. OK. Who knows? Who knows? Who knows? Here's what we know. In the book of Revelation, there is a temple. In that temple there are sacrifices, okay? That temple has not been built, those priests have not yet been anointed, and that heifer as of the quote broadcast of this evening has not been verified.

[unintelligible]

Ah, that's the question. For those of you who could not hear, what good would the heifer do if there's no temple to sacrifice? Because those who have the materials for it and those who have the desire to build it would then have the motivation to enact it because it could actually fulfill its practice. Right now, if they went to the political capital of trying to make it happen, they would be making it for a structure but with no purpose. Once you get the heifer, once you get the priests, then you can do the sacrifice. Now all we gotta do is build what we already got the materials for.

[unintelligible]

Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. And he said, tear down the mosque. Not so fast, my friend. Here we go. This is the Temple Mount as seen from a bird in days past, in days present, a drone. There you go. See, I'm trying to be relevant there. Here is the Temple Mount, and I'm gonna give y'all a little bit of direction here. Obviously, there is the north, there is the east, there's the south, and there is the west. This is the famous Eastern Gate that Jesus entered on what we know as Palm Sunday, okay? So, do you notice anything about the gate that is unusual for those that are in person and can see? It's not in the center. It's actually off to the side. That's unusual. Secondly, you mentioned the famous mosque known as the Dome of the Rock that's right there in the middle. That's the famous Dome of the Rock, okay? That Muslim mosque that sits there to this day and has been for centuries, right? So, the big issue is, the big question, because he made the statement, rightfully so, don't blame you, so if you have the building of a, quote, third temple, how are you going to get rid of this mosque? You talk about, I hate to use the phrase, political suicide, but good night. I mean, we're talking World War III, IV, V, and VI all at one time, okay? That's what would take place at that very moment. But here's what's fascinating. Even if the Jewish people were allowed on the Temple Mount, which by the way, they are not, does anybody know what country this land actually belongs to? Jordan. Isn't that fascinating? And remember when all the wars throughout time, particularly 1967, when the Jewish people got Jerusalem back, they kept the Temple Mount as Jordanian territory as a, quote, olive branch of goodwill, because what use is the dirt without the building, without the sacrifice? You get the progression, right? That being said, to this day, Jewish people are not allowed on the Temple Mount. Even if they were allowed, they would not go on it, and the reason is they would be concerned and shall I say fearful of stepping upon what we call the Holy of Holies, okay? So for example, Temple Mount. If you were to stand upon it, realize that the ground level in the days of David, the ground level even in the days of Jesus, are probably a good 80 to 100

feet below your feet. How many times has Jerusalem been fought over, conquered, destroyed, rebuilt, just over and over and over and over again? Which, by the way, as an aside, makes this building an absolute farce because they claim that the rock inside is the rock that Abraham sacrificed Ishmael on. There's no way it could be the rock because that rock would be about a hundred and twenty feet below the surface, case number one that that faith is not true. There's a thousand other cases, we won't go through all 999 tonight. But the reason that's important is when Jesus enters on Palm Sunday, you remember what the Bible says? It says he entered in and he went straight way. Now straight way. Fascinating, straight way would be that direction right there, right?

Now, for those of you who may or may not know this, let's just say you had a large track of land. A little bit west of here, I call this the Texas Ranch mentality. If you had a large track of land and you want to build a house, where do you put your house? No, you don't put it in the middle. Put it on the highest point. You don't just stack it in the middle. My wife's family, has some land out in Texas, and has a house on it. It's nowhere near the middle. It's on the highest point. Why? Because it only rains eight inches a year out there, but it does it one day. Okay, I mean, seriously, so you gotta have to monitor those things. Plus, if you're in an event where somebody wants to try to take your land, you want the, quote, high ground, correct? So, what brings this up is interesting is what if, just for the sake of illustration, what if the location theoretically was there. Now here's where it gets fascinating is currently right now there are archaeological studies being done under the Temple Mount going down to those original layers to see where everything is. Wouldn't it be fascinating, could it be, they find the cornerstone of the original temple location and it's not actually in the center and it's over here exactly where Jesus would have entered quote straight way which creates a fascinating situation that you would not have to tear down anything to build that which should be there.

Now that would be fascinating to say the least. By the way, when you go over there, there is a little marker over here. It's actually more about right there where there are those that claim that that's actually the true site. Whether it is or not, I don't know, you don't know, nobody knows until we find that cornerstone. But to that point of rebuilding it, it would not necessitate, potentially, if archaeology lines would not potentially involve that. Now, here's what's also fascinating. Here you are on the Temple Mount. If you go over here on the north side, and I don't have room and space to draw, but you know, you understand Jerusalem, there's all these churches, all these faiths, all these buildings, they're everywhere, right? There is actually on the north side, there is a small mosque and a small synagogue that share a common wall. Now does that not strike y'all as odd? They have a common wall in the middle and two buildings on the side existing next to each other. Just fascinating that it's been proven they can, quote, coexist in that manner. Wouldn't it be fascinating if one day it happened in like manner? Just a thought. But that's a great question.

Anybody else? Yes, sir?

[unintelligible]

We're going back to the heifer. Yes, sir. No, I know. Go ahead, sir. Yes, sir. Yes and no. The question was, if you couldn't hear, the red heifer, if y'all read Numbers 19, not only has to be red without any other colored hair, but it has to be perfect as far as its dimensions, can't have any scars, everything has to be perfect as far as its faculties are concerned, etc. The question was, can we parallel that to Jesus? The yes part is perfect without flaw. The no part is a lamb and a heifer are two different entities, if that makes sense. And the lamb was the animal by which was used to symbolically place the sins of the people on the animal for the purpose of what we call the scapegoat. You know that's a biblical word, the scapegoat, that would run out. John the Baptist said, "Behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." The lamb is a theological picture versus the heifer. The perfection part I get, but the lamb is more the theological imagery of one that is innocent for the purpose of being slain. Again, yes and no. Does that help a little bit? Yeah. So John the Baptist didn't say, I don't mean to say, he didn't say, "Behold the heifer of God that takes away the sin of the world." The lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world because that was the entity that was utilized to picture flawlessness, sinlessness, and one that would bear the sin thereof. But yes, on the perfection part, which is interesting because in order for the red heifer to actually qualify, it has to be considered perfect. It can't just be one that you just grab, "Eh, this one will do."

You know, any other red heifers? We're good with heifers? That's why what? Well, there you go. Yes, ma'am. Last heifer question. Not heifer. What are we doing?

[unintelligible]

Okay, go for it. Yes, ma'am. So the issue about what if they start to sacrifice. Now, this is where we get into the chronology, y'all want a fancy term? The chronology of eschatology. I'm gonna speak southern, when this gonna happen. All right? Understand, according to Hebrews chapter 7 and chapter 10, Jesus is not just the perfect, he's the final sacrifice, okay? Jesus made it very clear, as well as the prophets made it clear, you cannot have two competing systems both be true at the same time. We call that the law of non-contradiction. That is why not just because of biblical text but just because of logical thinking it would make sense for the body of Christ to be removed, or we like to use the phrase raptured, prior to all this happening because you cannot have the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ on a cross and a sacrificial system and a Jewish temple both at the same time. You cannot have both of them. That is why the veil tore, as you mentioned, ma'am. And so the thought that because the Bible speaks of an end of these things happening, then obviously those that are redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ have to be removed prior to. Does that help a little bit, that one?

There's a follow-up. It says, well, kind of sort it. It says, "Can you explain the burial customs around Jesus' death?" Oh, yes. Go to John chapter 19. John chapter 19, you're gonna meet two of my favorite characters in the Bible, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. These are the two men that are mentioned in the Bible as being personally responsible for the quote unquote burial custom. Now, we can go through the whole quote shebang of burial customs, and I'm sure we will tonight, but I'm gonna read for you beginning in verse 38 of what it says particularly about Jesus' body. It says, "And after

this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and he took the body of Jesus. There came also Nicodemus, which at first came to Jesus by night. He brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now, in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein never a man had yet laid. There laid Jesus therefore, because the Jews' preparation day for the sepulcher was nigh at hand." Flip a few pages to the left to Matthew chapter 28. Matthew chapter 28, which we know as the resurrection chapter of the gospel of Matthew, but it does relate to the burial customs. In Matthew chapter 28, I apologize. Go to Luke 24. I got my gospels mixed up. I apologize. There we go. Luke 24, I apologize. Verse 1. It says, "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the sepulcher bringing the spices which they had prepared and certain others with them and they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher." The reason I wanted to go to Luke chapter 24 is because the custom of burial in Jesus' day was actually a two-fold event. There was the initial entombment and then there was the final entombment. We see this displayed in John chapter 11 with Lazarus. Remember when Jesus tells them to remove the stone for Lazarus to come forth? And they said, "Behold, he stinketh," because it was on the fourth day. And so the typical burial process is they would take a body. They would wrap him with the spices, with the linen, with the cloth. Basically, if you allow me to use this phrase, almost a Jewish mummification. They would place it in a tomb. And then on the fourth day or after three days, they would go as the women were doing, they would take the final spices, lock it up, and they're done. That's it. Those are the burial customs as far as the simplicity thereof. It was a very expensive process. In fact, when Nicodemus did what Nicodemus did, when you start looking at the amounts and what he used, it was about the amount of a working man's annual wage. It was a very expensive process. Nicodemus was a very wealthy man to do what he did. Obviously, Joseph of America allowed him to use his tomb, which according to the end of John 19 was right around the corner from what we know as Calvary.

Any more details, concerns, questions, thoughts about that burial process? That's pretty much how it went. Everybody's good? Are you sure you're good? All right, Matt, get the timer. "Are the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates Satan's angels?" Revelation chapter 9. It's y'all's question. Here we go. Revelation chapter 9. There it is. We knew we were going to get there. Revelation chapter 9, this is the sixth trumpet. For those of you who have not been through a study of the book of Revelation, there are three series or three descriptions of judgment within the book of Revelation. There are the famous seven seals, there are the seven trumpets, and there are the seven vials. Okay? Here we find ourselves in what we know as the sixth trumpet. And here in the sixth trumpet, there is a statement made in verse 13. It says, "And the six angels sounded, I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God, saying to the six angels, which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels, which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, a day, a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were..." and it goes on and on and on. Now the question is, are these, in

simplistic terms, are these the good angels or are these the bad angels? It's kind of hard to differentiate. Why? Because it is not out of the realm of possibility for the Lord to utilize his ministering spirits or his angels to invoke death. You know, in the book of Isaiah, there is one angel who in one night slays 135,000 men with one sword. Okay? And so it's very plausible and possible that these are actually angelic beings that are, quote, on the Lord's side prepared for this prophetic event.

Now, I can understand why somebody would say, well, it sounds pretty nasty. It sounds pretty destructive. Are you sure they're not, quote, Satan's angels? You say, well, why would you think they're Satan's angels? Because if you read chapter 16, you'll discover that when the great river Euphrates dries up in chapter 9, it makes the ways for the kings of the east to come in and ransack Jerusalem. So therefore, it was the enemy Satan preparing and doing all these things. At the end of the day, we don't know, quote, whose side specifically these four angels are on. However, we do know this, even if they were, quote, Satan's angels, according to the book of Job and a host of other passages, they are on God's leash and only can go as far as God allows and only do what God says. So when you're dealing with these prophetic events, irrespectively which side they may be on, they cannot go and/or do. Notice it says they were prepared for a year, month, week, and a day. They knew the exact day, the exact time where this was going to be enacted. What I did not read is it says then there's this massive incredible army that literally comes out of the bottomless pit and wreaks havoc on mankind. So again, I hate to be somewhat vague. It doesn't say, traditionally we've said these are, quote, the Lord's angels. There is the possibility they could be Satan's, but they would be under the direction as far as the limitations God would have authority over, if that makes sense. But it is an actual event that one day is going to take place. It is right there in Revelation 9.

Everybody's good with that one? Man, we're flying now. Here we go. "Who are the two men standing in white clothing at the ascension?" Ooh, this could be a good right turn. Go to Acts chapter 1. Acts chapter 1. This question, I don't know who submitted it. You may or may not realize you've not only submitted a question about the ascension, you've also submitted a question about the resurrection. Okay? Acts chapter 1. Jesus is about to ascend. Verse 8 is a very famous statement, "You'll receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. You'll be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the uttermost parts of the earth." Verse 9, "When he had spoken these things, while they beheld he was taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, You men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken from you into heaven, shall come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven." Now, the traditional interpretation of this passage is that these are two angelic beings, okay? Two men in white apparel.

Now, turn back to the book of Luke again, which we just were, in chapter 24. Luke chapter 24. Remember, we read the story about the women coming with the spices. Luke chapter 24 says, "Now upon the first day of the week very early in the morning they came upon the sepulcher bringing the spices which they had prepared and certain others with them. They found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher. They entered in and found

not the body of Jesus." Verse 4, "And it came to pass as they were much perplexed there about, behold two men stood by them in shining garments and as they were afraid, they bowed down their faces to the earth. They said to them, Why seek you the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spoke unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful man, be crucified, and the third day rise again." Now what's fascinating is in Acts chapter 1, it does not specify the, quote, nature of these men. Are there angels? You say, well, why would it say men if there were angels? Because every angel in the Bible appears as a man. What's interesting in Acts chapter 1, it says specifically they were in white garments. That's all it says. Well, in Luke chapter 24, these men are in shiny garments.

Now, lest you think it's, I guess, improper to correlate them, you know the famous story of the rich young ruler? Famous story, right? Do you realize his story is told in two different gospel accounts and in one account, he's called rich, and in another account, he's called a young ruler. So we combine those accounts and call him the rich young ruler. There's not one account that calls him by all three descriptions. Therefore, there are many that have said, aha, these two men, these two entities that are there at the tomb are the same two that are in Acts chapter 1 in these white, quote unquote, shining garments. So the question is, so why would we claim definitively they were, quote, an angel is because in the resurrection account it says the angel of the Lord is the one who moved the stone, and so it has been interpreted for years that these were part of the angelic hosts, messengers communicating the truth of the story. Let's go all the way back to the beginning. When what we know is the Christmas story or the incarnation, who communicated to humanity what was going to happen? Angelic beings. Does it not make sense that there would also be these entities involved at the end of the story as well? The Bible doesn't specify, it does not say two angels, it just says two men in white and then in Luke 24 it says two men in shining garments. So great question because it actually parallels or brings together not only the ascension story but also the resurrection story verifying to humanity the truth and the nature of what has happened. In Luke 24, Jesus is alive and he is risen. Acts 1, he's going up but he's coming back down. Those are very important biblical truths much like that child is of God and not a man, i.e. the virgin birth. Same thing, clarifying the story at times of critical need for clarification.

Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Great question. Could they be the two witnesses? Now the two witnesses this young lady is speaking of are found in Revelation chapter 11. They are described, one is described as speaking and not raining for three and a half years. Obviously that would be whom we know as Elijah. One is said is able to turn the water into blood, Moses. I agree, that sounds very plausible. Here's the difference. In Revelation 11, it never mentions white garments, and it never mentions shiny garments. It just says these two men, okay? You go back to Matthew chapter 17, Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, remember where his arraignment was really white and shiny, it says that he was joined by Moses and Elijah. It never describes their clothing. I agree with you. It sounds like, oh wow, we kind

of have a chain reference here. We got two on the mountain, we got two at the resurrection, we got two at the ascension, and we got two in Revelation. For some reason though, those two in Acts are described with their garments, the two witnesses, their garments are never specifically described.

Now, again, I've said this before, I'm gonna say it again. One day when I get to heaven, if the Lord himself says, "Myers, you got that one wrong." I'm still good. All right, I'm still good. All right, aren't you grateful that heaven is not based on identifying who the two witnesses are at the tomb? I mean, seriously, all right, I'm grateful. But it's good insight, but I'm glad you observed that because you see again two witnesses, very different witnesses, because you actually have former humanity returning to the scene. So that's a good insight. Anybody else on these two guys showing up? It's kind of more the Passion Week. Oh, I'm sorry, yes ma'am.

[unintelligible]

That's correct. You're going to go eventually. Okay. Well, yeah, you can get kind of in the general location. Yeah. Correct. Right. I got news for you, I didn't either and I've been there four times. Now, the question or the frustration she's experiencing is, for those you don't know, she was scheduled to go with us to Israel last year and she had some health issues, wasn't able to go with us. She wanted to see, for lack of better terms, the mercy seat, the place where the two angels stood on the end looking, which is where the quote unquote blood was spilled. Ma'am, let me put you at ease here. That blood was already gone before he ever got in the tomb. There wasn't a single drop of blood that made it into that tomb. Number one, it all came out. Number two, they bound him with cloth. By the way, if you stay up late at night and watch cable TV, they're gonna talk at some point about the Shroud of Turin. You know the problem with the Shroud of Turin? The problem with the Shroud of Turin is it had all kinds of blood on it, right? Well, according to the story, all the blood was out. And don't you think these guys had enough sense to wrap it good enough instead of just some...? These were very wealthy men who had the best products at their hand. They didn't have some thin little mosquito net. In other words, it's not true. Let me put you at rest there, okay?

But my point is, that place inside the tomb, okay? Here's the thing that we don't have. If you walk in that tomb today, which we believe to be the Garden Tomb, there's actually three places where you could put a body, okay? We don't know which one. So again, when it says they stood one side on the other, we don't know which one. So in other words, when you get in this general vicinity here, here's the beautiful thing, that's where it all happened. We don't know exactly where it all happened, but we know how it happened, and we know that it was sufficient for what we needed to happen. And that's the great news. Do you realize, I've already picked on them once, I'm gonna pick on them twice, here we go. When I talked about the religion of Islam, do you realize that one of the pillars of Islam is that you have to make a pilgrimage to Mecca? You have to go physically. Can you imagine if God said, "Hey, in order for you to be in my good graces, you have to go to Jerusalem"? I got news for you, you never have to go to Jerusalem. You never have to leave Lee County to go to heaven. I'm serious. You never have to

leave where you are to go to heaven because it's not about physically going to the place or physically seeing the item or touching it because it's not a religion, it's a relationship. There's a big difference. Religion is doing and practicing and continuing. Relationship is trusting what you said is still good and sufficient for me. Very, very, very big difference.

Now, for those of you like her that may be saying, man, I wish I could..., let me tell you what going to the Holy Land does. I've been multiple times, I'm going back. I love being there. Going to the Holy Land does not change one bit of the story. Doesn't change it. Doesn't change the characters, doesn't change the chronology, doesn't change anything. Here's what it does. Those of you who are of my age and older will understand. It's like going from a black and white to a color TV. That's what it is. Now, those of you who remember those days, okay, where you're watching a black and white TV and you're watching your favorite show, and you finally got the color TV, and you turned it on, and you went, "I had no idea that was a red suit. I had no idea that was a blue car. I had no idea." It didn't change the characters. It didn't change the story. It just, you went, "Ah. Now I see." And per the "now I see," you don't actually see a mercy seat. You don't actually see the cherubim. You don't actually see the angels. What you see is a tomb in a garden around the corner from a mountain that has the picture of a skull on it, i.e. the biblical description, that really is the only viable candidacy for where they put him. And I'm going to go ahead and share with you the little deep dark secret: it's empty. Now, I'm serious.

Now, some of you have heard this story. For those of you who have not heard this story, I'm going to tell this story. For those of you who have heard it, take a two-minute nap. The first time, the first time that I ever went into that empty tomb, first time ever, I'd been waiting my whole life. I could not wait to go in it. They give you about 20 seconds. That's all you get, but it's wonderful 20 seconds, okay? I couldn't wait. I mean, I'm inside that tomb. I am taking it all in. And my wife, gives me a drive-by. Y'all don't know what a drive-by is, do you? That's a pop on the rear end. My wife pops me on the rear end and says, "He ain't here, let's go." That's one of the best theological statements I've ever heard in my life. And ma'am, the reason I want to share that with you is because my wife had a better theology that day than I did. I wanted to see where the body was. I wanted to see where the angels were. I wanted to see all that. And she's like, "Why do you care? He ain't here."

The story isn't about where he was laid. The story is about the fact that he rose from where he laid. The story isn't that he was crucified though he was. The story was it wasn't the end of the story. The resurrection makes the story. The rest of it is nice to see. And the verification of it, I had a long conversation with somebody today in regards to other matters biblically, but it's so pertinent to tonight, is every time we turn around we see evidences for the truth of scripture but all those truths of scriptures don't mean anything if Jesus didn't raise from the dead. That's why this week is so critical. So again, that's what's important. We don't have to physically go there. It's nice to go there if we can go there. It's nice to go up here and see where things could possibly have been. But I got news for you, it doesn't matter where that temple might have been or might one day be, Jesus still overturned the tables when he went there. Doesn't change story. It just might be, well, I

thought it was going to be there. Oh, it's over here, you know, at the end of the day. But it is great to look and study and verify.

Any others? We're good? Moving on. Yes ma'am. You're going to pivot? Pivot all you want. Yes ma'am. That's correct. They did not. Correct. Okay. Correct. Correct. For those of you who could not hear her very soft-spoken voice ask this question, it is in regards to the fourth statement that Jesus made on the cross, if memory serves me correctly it's in the gospel of Luke where he says, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Okay. By the way, I'm not gonna try to pronounce it because I'm not real good in Aramaic But he actually said it in Aramaic. It was translated into that text for us in the Bible that the issue or the question of that that statement is also found in Psalm 22. What is my opinion that Jesus was actually referencing or quoting that? But the secondary part of her question was and I think you confessed to something we've all struggled with is irrespectively if he's quoting Psalms 22, this whole concept of a broken relationship, a fracture in the Godhead, what do we got going on here, right? So that is actually the fourth statement that Jesus makes. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Okay, right there in the middle. Now, this is kind of critical. If you've done any kind of study of Hebrew culture and literature, what I've put before is what we call a chiasm and what that means is a chiasm, you have the first and the last statement, the second and the next and the last, they all correlate to each other, and the middle statement is the statement that all other statements hinge on. In other words, this statement isn't just about what he said, is it Psalm 22, it's the middle statement, which makes it even more weighty and a more important question.

So the question is, did this break, quote unquote, relationship? The fifth statement he said was, "I thirst," okay? The sixth statement he made was, "It is finished," okay? The final statement, ma'am, I believe answers your second question, which then will relate to the first one, when he said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." If there was a brokenness, why did he say Father? If there was a fracture, why did he say Father? Okay? Which means this cannot be anything that is, I guess, picturesque of that. Which takes us back to Psalm 22. Okay? So Psalm 22 is where this phrase originates in your Bible. It begins with, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," and if you'll read all through Psalms 22, there's several things you'll discover. The first thing is this, of the 48 prophecies in the Old Testament regarding the birth, the life, the death, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, eight of them are in Psalm 22. I mean, it is the most crucifixion-rich section in the whole Bible, okay? That would make sense because Jesus, from a physical standpoint, was dying of asphyxiation. Obviously, we know he gave up the ghost, never physically died due to natural causes. We know that. Making statements could not be very lengthy. They had to be short, brief statements. That's a very distinctive statement in the Bible. In other words, anybody with any type of Old Testament understanding would have recognized that statement. Number one, because it's a very strong statement. Number two, it's very rich in its messianic prophecies. Okay, that is the chapter that says that they would gamble for his clothes. That is the chapter that says he would be pierced in his hands and his feet. That is the chapter that calls them a bunch of dogs and all that stuff. The thing about Psalms 22 that I find fascinating is what happens before this statement. So the first three statements, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they're

doing," you know, "this is your mother, this is your son," okay, all that stuff. Do you know that between statement three and four is three hours? Three hours of what? Darkness. Okay? So it's the statement made after three hours of darkness. It is the only statement that is claimed that when he makes it, it says he shouts it. And it's the only statement that's a direct quotation of scripture.

Now, if I go back to Luke 4, Matthew 4, and a host of other places, when Jesus was tempted by Satan, what did he do every time? He quoted scripture. Three hours of darkness. You do realize that even the smartest scientists in all the world cannot find a, quote, eclipse with years on either side of the crucifixion of Jesus. Okay? And by the way, thank you all for not asking me a question about April 8th yet. Okay, now moving on. My point there is, whatever that darkness was, it was supernatural. There's no eclipse. I mean, they've done the research, there's not one. No matter when you date the crucifixion, you go multiple years, there's not a natural explanation for that even though non-Christian Roman historians will say that there was darkness on the day of Jesus' death. So even the secular world said it happened. So you got three hours of darkness, you got Jesus shouting and he quotes scripture. Here's the fascinating thing about Psalms 22. It's not how it begins, it's how it ends. Psalm 22 appears to be a Psalm of agony. It appears to be a Psalm of defeat. "I'm pierced, they're mocking, they're making fun of, they're ridiculing, they're gambling." But read how that Psalm ends. It says and all nations because of this will come and bow down before him. And all nations because of this will honor him. It actually ends as a declaration of victory over the darkness, which is actually what's happening on the cross.

And so rather than being this fracturing of relationship or desperation of statements, I really think that when Jesus raised up physically and he made that famous statement, he was declaring after the three hours of darkness, "This may have been what has happened to me, but victory will be the byproduct of it." Because then it's very benign. "I thirst. It's finished. Father, we're done." And by the way, if you do the time frame of the last three statements, it's like boom, boom, boom. I mean, it's just over. The first four statements take place over about five hours. The last three, about 10 minutes. I mean, it's just boom, boom, boom. Like, we're done here. Let's move on. And that final statement, "Father, into your hands, I commend my spirit," that is a willing, if you allow me to say, rational declaration, "I know what I'm doing, I know the byproduct, and I'm willing to do it." It's not out of, it's not out of the gravity of Psalm 22, if that makes sense. So, hopefully that helps a little bit with that. That's a statement that's caused all kinds of anguish with all kinds of people, including myself, I get you. It's a tough one. If, and by the way, Jesus quoted Psalm 22, in my opinion, if, and it did not happen, if Jesus had said, "My Father, my Father, why have you forsaken me," we'd have issues. But he didn't. He was actually quoting scripture. That's a good one.

Anybody else on that one? We're good. Thank you for bringing that up. Yes, sir. And then there's another one back there. Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

So the questions he's asked, if you couldn't hear, is 1 John chapter 5 verse 7, if you want to go ahead and turn there, it is known as the Johannine comma. The reason it's known as the Johannine comma is, as you mentioned, there is a great, shall we say, textual dispute over this verse. Again, I could play Carnac tonight like I like to do when I put a Bible up to my head, but it's real simple. If 1 John 5:7, is an extended long verse that says there are three that bear record, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, these three are one, you have what we call a King James Version of the Bible. If you have any other version, that statement's not there. It's completely removed. And so the point he's bringing up, does that verse and its removal of it add to the agony here? Yes, because that is the most definitive single verse we have in the Bible regarding what we call as Trinitarian theology that the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, these three are one. So therefore, you don't have any fracturing and you don't have any division because they're of one without division. But there is, we call it the Johannine comma, and by the way, lest some of you think, you know, we kind of get in the weeds on these issues, one of the things that you'll notice is that every one of your versions of the Bible, I don't care which one you have, all of them have the number seven. Okay? Even though they've removed that verse completely out of the Bible, what they've done is taken the first three words of verse 8, made it verse 7 so you don't think anything's missing. In the legal world, that ain't right. In other words, can I be honest what they've done? They lied to you. They've absolutely lied because they've removed an entire verse, but made you think they haven't because they took part of another verse and stuck it up there and it is the most definitive verse that we have in the Bible in one single verse regarding the Trinity, these three are one.

So, by the way, I joke about when I get to heaven one day. You know, they're not going to ask me who the two witnesses were and all that. But I will make you a deal. When you get to heaven one day, some of you may get there before I do, okay? I don't know exactly how it's gonna work, but pretend it works this way. If you get to heaven before I do, sir, and you go up to the Apostle John, and you ask him, I guarantee he's gonna tell you verse 7 was there.

Yes, sir?

[unintelligible]

Oh, absolutely. They use that verse in newer versions to preach against you, because they'll claim the Trinity's not real. Absolutely. They'll do the same thing with John chapter 1, verse 8. In John chapter 1 verse 8 it says no one has seen God at any time the only begotten Son, Some of your newer versions say the only begotten God which they'll say there's two Gods there.

Okay, real quick. We are rolling up on time. We're down to just a few minutes here real quick last question it says, can I go to that question? Okay. Okay. It says, "Where is the doctrine of Sola Scriptura found in the Bible?" All right, go back 500 years. What we know as the Reformation. God, I love you. The Reformation, there are three statements that are kind of the hinge pins, linch pins of the Reformation. Sola, meaning alone, okay? Sola fide, faith alone. Sola gratia, grace alone, and Sola scriptura, scripture alone. By

grace alone, through faith alone, according to scripture alone. That's kind of the three pillars of the Reformation. The question is, we know grace, get it, we know faith. The question is, where is, by scripture alone, found? What that meant 500 years ago, what it still means today is, how do we know these things to be true? It's not based on our personal experience. It's not based on our perceptions. It's based on what scripture has communicated, quote, to us. Now the question is, what definitive Bible verse? Well, my first one would go to Matthew 5:18, where Jesus made the statement, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my word will never pass away." That's a pretty clear statement, right? Secondly, John chapter 17, verse 17, the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus makes this statement. He says, "Father, sanctify them through your truth. Thy word is truth." In other words, Jesus said the scripture is enough. It is enough for us to know what is true.

So when you use those famous statements, by grace alone, by faith alone, according to scripture alone, really we know it's by grace and faith because of what scripture says. If that makes sense. And there are a host of passages verifying the inspiration, preservation of scripture all throughout the text. Basically what the Reformation was saying, but I'm going to advocate tonight, is this, that what you know about the grace of God, what you know about faith in Jesus Christ does not come from what a man says, a religion says, a denomination says, or anything but what scripture says. That's how we know it's by grace alone, through faith alone, which is good news, particularly this week.

All right, time is up, let me pray, we'll roll.

Lord Jesus, thank you for the privilege, Lord, the privilege of doing Bible study. Lord, I cannot imagine even tonight, in what we know as Holy Week or Passion Week, how many believers there are all across this world that don't even have a copy of the Bible, some of them just praying for a page of the Bible, and God, you've given us all of it, most of us multiple copies of it. God, thank you that we can wrestle with it, we can do what 2 Timothy 2 says, we can study it, it can challenge us. God, I pray that it would shape us, it would mold us into what you would desire us to be. Lord, we are grateful that it is by grace alone that you saved us through faith according to your scripture. It is in the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.