

Ask Jeff

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sermonaudio.com

Preached On: Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Crossroads Ministries

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Good evening. It is 6:30 Central Standard Time here on Wednesday night at First Baptist Church of Opelika, Alabama, and we are live around the world with one exception, and that is on the radio Sunday mornings. It is delayed at 10 a.m., but other than that, we are broadcasting live. Tonight is the opportunity both outhouse and in-of-house to do Bible study in what may be a very unique fashion if this is your first time with us. Tonight, our entire Bible study is going to be directed and driven by you. You have the opportunity to ask the question. You have the opportunity to submit a concern. You have the opportunity to do an original and/or a follow-up question because tonight's entire Bible study, anything and everything we discuss is, quote, your idea.

Now, before we get to kind of the parameters of tonight, let me invite you two weeks from tonight on May the 15th, we're gonna do one of our semester clean-outs. Now if you don't know what a clean out is, y'all are really good at asking questions. You're really really good at asking follow-up questions which means at times we kind of get a backlog of questions and so we select a Wednesday night here and there to do so, May the 15th two weeks from tonight we are gonna answer as many questions as we can in a 60 minute time period. Typically we get through 20, 25, maybe even sometimes 30 questions. Now, that means two things. Number one, the question that you submitted will be answered in a much briefer form than it normally would which means number two, you can resubmit it. It's okay. We just want to make sure that we kind of clean out the queue and we kind of get all those questions refreshed because here's what we don't like and it does happen, that's why we do what we're going to do. We don't like you submitting a question and it's been six weeks and you're like, I forgot the question I even asked at this point. So, we're going to kind of cling through all that on May the 15th.

Tonight, there are two ways that you can submit a question, a concern, a comment, and/or a follow-up. The primary way that most of you utilize is what we know as text messaging. 334-231-2313. When you submit by way of text messaging, you can be on the front row, you can be on the other side of the camera, doesn't matter where you are, you can submit your question, it goes in the portal, ends up on the screen. You remain completely anonymous. We do not even publish your phone number. We have no idea who you are. Now you can not only submit an original question, but if we're on a certain topic you can come in with a follow-up question. You can drill down a little deeper, take a little bit to the right, or you can just be completely original.

Now for those of you that are in-house, you have one very distinct privilege tonight, you can raise your hand. When you raise your hand, you have the floor. You can take the conversation any direction you would like to go. The only caveat is this, you lose your anonymity. Now, one thing to know, your image nor will your voice be seen and/or heard on the other side of the cameras and/or the microphones. That is why when you ask a question, I will repeat your question for those that are listening or watching can hear your question. But we want to make sure that you remain anonymous out there. You're not so much in here, but we're all family and it's all good.

So without further ado, let's do some good old Bible study. Here we go. In Mark chapter 9 verse 29, well I know where we're going, Jesus says that, quote, "This kind of demon can only be cast out by prayer and fasting. What was so significant about that demon?" Okay, Mark chapter 9, the parallel passage to this is in Matthew chapter 17. In both of these passages, obviously it's the same account, is sharing with us an event that takes place after the Transfiguration. Now the Transfiguration is when Jesus takes Peter, James, and John on the Mount. He is joined by Elijah and Moses. His raiment, he appears brighter than the sun. Remember the suggestion, "Let's put up the tabernacles, let's stay here." Jesus says, "No, we've got to go down." When they get down, they find a man and his son. That son has such a demonic presence in his life, this is critical to the question, that he continues to throw himself in the flame. In other words, he is actually desiring not to just harm himself, but to destroy himself. The man is upset, the disciples are upset, because the little boy is in the same condition, even though the other disciples have been praying over him, praying for him, and ministering to him.

Now that being said, in verse 38 of Mark chapter 9, we read these words. I'm sorry, verse 28. I apologize. Got to go back. Verse 28. It says, "And when he had come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could we not cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing but by, quote, prayer and fasting." And per the question that was submitted, Jesus makes a very important distinction here. He's saying that whatever was inside this little boy, whatever's taking place is different than other items that maybe act or possess in the same manner. So if we go back to chapter 1 of the gospel of Mark, you will notice the very first, quote, demon that Jesus cast out actually takes place in the synagogue, our version of an Old Testament church. What's interesting there is that man interacts with Jesus, converses with Jesus, and Jesus calls that which is within him an unclean spirit. It's kind of a general term for that which is obviously not of God. If memory serves me correctly, here in Mark chapter 9, this spirit is called a foul spirit. Now, I know what you may be thinking, well, unclean is foul and foul is unclean. No, no, words mean what words mean. And so therefore what Jesus is saying in this passage is there are, for lack of better terms, certain levels or certain, shall we say, means of demonization by which in some cases, i.e. Mark chapter 1, simply get out and it has to go. In this case, that ain't gonna work. He says, "No, this one only comes out by, quote, prayer and fasting." I can guarantee you, I know what these disciples were doing. They were doing the same thing they'd seen Jesus do earlier in the gospel of Mark, where he encountered the demon, he called it out, he cast it out, and whoever it was was set free and probably wondering to themselves, "Why is it not working?" Because we

have something different. It's not called unclean, it's called a foul spirit. Therefore, somehow the Bible is classifying this as something different, something more extreme, and something that takes, for lack of better terms, a more strategic approach to deliverance.

So there you go. So you see it all through, and by the way, while we're in the gospel of Mark, I want you to turn a few pages to the left and I want to show you something in chapter 1. I mentioned, obviously, Jesus delivers chronologically the first demonized person in Mark 1, but I want to turn to verse 32 of chapter 1. I want to show you something very important that the Bible shares with us in the gospels related to this issue. Verse 32, "And at evening, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils and all the city was gathered together at the door. He healed many that were sick of diverse diseases, and he cast out many devils. He suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him." You say, "What's so important about that?" Because Jesus was able to diagnose and differentiate there's a difference between a physical illness and a spiritual illness, and when the whole city gathered, it's almost like he's dividing them into two sections, those that are sick physically and those that are sick spiritually. Now the reason that is important for us today is we live in a culture, particularly in the Western world, in our Western world, y'all have heard me say this before, we think everything can be cured with a pill or a program. Everything's physical. Do you know, in the Eastern world, it's the opposite. In the Eastern world, they believe you can pray everything out. I've got news for you, sometimes you just need an ibuprofen. It's okay. Alright? Sometimes you need a prayer meeting. And so understanding, Jesus said sometimes it's physical and sometimes it's spiritual. Let me caution us, I think at times we have a tendency to either go all in on one or the other and not see that you can have similar manifestations with different root causes, if that makes sense. So just a little side note on that question.

Any follow up on Mark 9? Everybody's good? And we're good. It says, follow up from last week. "What about the great cloud of witnesses? Were they looking at earth from heaven?" This is Hebrews chapter 12. It said a follow up from last week. If you were not with us, last week at the very end, we went into great discussion regarding what those who have passed from this life to the next, those that are in heaven, what do they observe? What do they not observe? What do they experience? What do they not experience? What is their experience? First, what it was on earth, relationships, this and that. And the concept or the struggle is, or I guess the question really is, are those that have passed from this life to the next, do they have the capacity to see, observe, or, per this question, witness that's what's happening on earth? Now, the proof text for this is found in Hebrews chapter 12 verse 1. It says, "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, the sin which so easily besets us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Now, allow me to share with you the struggle with this verse. When you read that verse, it says, as a believer, as we struggle with the weights of life, the sins of life, we have a great cloud of witnesses that are championing us on in life. That's essentially what it says, right? It appears on the surface to allude to those believers that have gone on before us that are championing us to finish our race as they finished theirs. Here's the problem with that

quote interpretation, the first word in the verse, "Wherefore." You cannot separate verse 1 of chapter 12 from what we read in chapter 11. It's connecting the ideas. It's connecting the thoughts. And why is that important? Because what we know as chapter 11 of the book of Hebrews, that is the Hall of Fame of faith. There's over 30 individuals, men and women, beginning with Abel going to David and others, who it talks about their faith in God, what he revealed to them, how they responded, and that they walked in what we would call the Hall of Fame. And it talks about the life they lived. In fact, at the end of chapter 11, it says these are those that believed in spite of persecution. It says they were martyred, they were torn asunder, they were sawn in two. They had this happen, they had that happen, and yet they did not see the promises that you and I have in Christ Jesus. Wherefore since we are surrounded with such a great cloud of witnesses, this passage doesn't speak about those in heaven championing us on right now. What this says is that you and I are continuing a faith tradition that they were a part of that you and I get to see with great privilege that they did not in those days. The witness isn't those above. The witness is those in the past who connected the proverbial dots to the faith that we have the opportunity to experience today.

Now, I've said this before. I'm going to say it again, those that are in heaven right now, those that we dearly love and we appreciate, I'm telling you, if they could see what's happening on earth, they would not be in heaven, they'd be in hell. You do realize this place is broken, messed up, and nasty, right? And by the way, they got their eyes on Jesus. That's all I've got to say, right there. But the great cloud of witnesses isn't those above, it's those in the past who led the way for us. Hopefully that helps out a little bit with that clarification.

Follow up, it says, "If we don't remember anything from our earthly time, why does Revelation 21:4 say God wipes away our tears?" Great question. Same process. Go to Revelation chapter 21. Last book of the Bible. [music] Seriously. There you go. Yes, yes, yes. That was very appropriate. Thank you very much, sir. I appreciate that. Yes, all right book of Revelation chapter 21 verse 4, as alluded in the follow up question to the follow up question, it says, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are quote passed away." And so the question rightfully says if God has to wipe away our tears then obviously there's got to be quote-unquote some remembrance. Again, same thing as in Hebrews chapter 12. Chapter 12 comes after chapter 11. Chapter 21 comes after chapter 20, okay? The last thing you see in chapter 20 is what we call the Great White Throne Judgment. And you know what that event is? That event, if you read the end of chapter 20 beginning in verse 10, go all the way to verse 15, it is describing those that are cast into the lake of fire for all of eternity. And that is an event that according to verse 10, it's one page to the left in my Bible, actually verse 11, it says, "And I saw a great white throne and him that sat on it from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away and there was found no place for them." In other words, the picture that we get at this Great White Throne Judgment is that everybody and anybody is there. The only question is, which side of the throne are you on? You're either behind the Lord as he judges, or you're in front and you're being judged. That's the picture we have. Can we all just come to a conclusion tonight, this is not going to be a fun event. I'll be honest with

you. I don't care if it's a complete stranger that I've never met in my life, I've never intersected with in my life, I've never observed in my life, I want you to read in this passage, they are cast into the lake of fire. That is an image that I never want to see but I'm going to one day. That is a picture that I never want to observe, but I'm going to live through one day. And I think the key to verse 4 isn't the, quote, memories we put in a scrapbook on earth today. I think the key to verse 4, chapter 21, is the last thing that we saw according to time as we know it is this horrific judgment of those that we knew and those that we didn't know being cast into the lake of fire. So what does he do? He removes all former things gone. In other words, no recollection, no recall, no reliving, any of it. Again, what we've got to do here is we've got to connect the chapters, we've got to connect the stories, and we've got to put them in their context, which is critical.

But that's a good follow-up to the follow-up, and it's the end of the world as we know it. Is that our new song now for Revelation? I've got a really important question. We are going to have a private conversation in front of everybody. Did we just get kicked off social media for copyright violation? OK, now we go. Any other follow-ups on that? That's literally going through my mind while that song's on. I'm like, we just got kicked off the air. OK, great.

It says, I love this, "Why does the Baptist church only take communion monthly or quarterly and not weekly?" All right, so for those of you who have been a part of, attended, or facilitated with what I call a little course we call Baptist 101, one of the beautiful, beautiful things about being a Baptist, and by the way, yeah, you got Baptist, Baptist, and Baptist, okay, is we champion ourselves on several things. The first one is this, okay? Number one is biblical authority. Okay, so biblical authority when it comes to what we know as the Lord's Supper. Okay, I want you go to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. I'm just gonna progressively walk through this. 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and then we'll get to the quick answer here. But 1 Corinthians chapter 11 tells us, as a New Testament local congregation, about taking what we know as the Lord's Supper. By the way, the term communion that was used in the question, the only time that word is used is actually in 1 Corinthians 10, where it's talking about Jews and Gentiles having communion together as a local church. What we know as the, quote, bread and the juice is actually referred to as the supper of the Lord. It's just one of those words that we've kind of transposed through the years. But nonetheless, when you read in verse 23 of 1 Corinthians 11, it recounts what Jesus did with the apostles the night before his crucifixion. I want you to fast forward to verse 26. "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till he come." That is the only direction we have in the Bible for how often we're to take it. It just says as often as you do it, okay?

Now, here's the second thing about Baptists that you need to know. Number one, biblical authority. That's our authority on this issue. It doesn't tell us how often to do it, just as often as you do, correct? The second thing is the autonomy of the local church, which means that as a local group of believers, we as this local church, somebody else down the road, they have the right, they have the privilege to do things as they so desire. I know Baptist churches that take the Lord's Supper every week. I know them. I know Baptist churches that do it once a year and then a correlation of in between. The question though

was brilliantly crafted, why do most of them do so quarterly? I mean that really is kind of a general rule of thumb that you'll discover. Now by the way, just as a public service announcement, coming up at the last Sunday of May of this year, what we know is Memorial Day, we will be taking the Lord's Supper in every one of our morning services. It is a memorial to the Lord, it's Memorial Day, and that is the greatest memorial in the world. So we will be participating in the Lord's Supper on Memorial Day at every one of our morning services. So just to let you know, that's coming up very quickly in the life of this local church.

But the big question is this, why quarterly? Well, it actually goes back to a guy named Huldrych Zwingli. Huldrych Zwingli is kind of pictured as the Baptist forefather. You say, "What do you mean the Baptist forefather?" You go back and you look at the Protestant Reformation 500 years ago. You've got Calvin. You've got Luther. You know, you've got all these great theologians and all these great writers. And then you've got a guy named Zwingli. You say, "Who was Zwingli?" Zwingli was one of these guys, he was kind of, he was on the edge. Yeah, he was a Baptist. It is what it is, right? He and Luther got in a lot of discussions about a lot of different things and one of them was about what we know as the Lord's Supper and here's the one thing most people don't realize or understand about Martin Luther and the Lord's Supper is that he came out of a faith tradition prior to the Reformation that believed in this big word called transubstantiation. I know it's a big word. Here's basically what he came out of. They believed, prior to the Reformation, they believed that when you partook of the bread and when you partook of the juice or the wine, whichever tradition you were in, that that actually was the literal body and blood of Jesus. It transubstantiated, it changed its form into the body and into the blood of Jesus, okay? It was called a sacrament, a means of grace. Luther removed himself, the Protestant Reformation removed us from that, but Luther only took one step away. He believed in what was called consubstantiation. You say, "What does that mean?" He believed that it did not turn into the actual body and blood of Jesus, however, that the Spirit of God was more present in the Lord's Supper than it was any other part of the service. Zwingli took a step back and went, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, hold on. I don't see that in the Bible." And so Zwingli took this great theological stretch and said it's a symbol of what Jesus did, it's a picture of what Jesus did, but Jesus is no more a part of the service whether we're doing it or not.

Well, you can imagine their friendship parted at that point, okay? And Zwingli started a movement that we today called Anabaptist. You say, "What are Anabaptists?" Well, the word A, or the letter A, means again or not, depending on the context, but an Anabaptist means to baptize again. What you had were adult individuals who were believers in Jesus Christ that had been baptized as infants in their previous tradition that said, "I need to be baptized biblically." And so they started baptizing each other, which, by the way, was illegal in those days, and Zwingli, listen to this, said he believed that the Lord's Supper, this was back from Zwingli, should be observed approximately four to six times a year. The question is, why did he come up with that number? You know what his response was? It needs to be done so frequently that we remember its importance, but so infrequently that it does not become a sacrament again. And so therefore, in most Baptist

traditions, four, five, six times a year, to kind of give that healthy balance, if that makes sense. We don't want to make too much of it, but we want to make something of it, right?

Again, I know Baptist churches, local autonomy, every single Sunday. And you know what? They have the right to do it. We just read the verse. There's nothing that says you can't do that, all right? All it says is, as often as you meet meaning, as you decide to do so, go for it. But that's a really great historical question to answer that which most of us are like, "I have no idea why we do and why we don't when we do and when we don't." So but just to let you know, Memorial Day weekend we will be taking what we know as the Lord's Supper as a memorial on Memorial Day. Any other Lord's Supper questions? Everybody's good? Nobody's good? Man, the food's had heavy time. Oh yes ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Correct. Yes. It's the same today. So the question was, she said, I'm not going to... This is her words. I'm not going to reveal my age, but when I was a child, the only people that were allowed to participate were those that made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. That should be the same today. That is the requirement of. Now again, in this local congregation, I can't speak for other churches, but I can tell you, we emphasize that. And I'm going to tell you one of the most beautiful things that I see every year. In what we know as our Christmas Eve service, I know we have several of them in different locations, but the one that typically meets in this room is called our family service. And when we do the Lord's Supper, rather than passing the elements by way of trays, as a family, whether that's a single or whether that's three generations, they come down and take it as a family. One of the most beautiful things that I see every Christmas Eve is a young child going to reach for it and a mom or dad saying, "No, honey, we'll talk about this later." It's a beautiful, beautiful thing. Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Yes, ma'am. Yes. I commend you. I commend you. I don't care what "I" they gave you. I commend you. Alright? I commend you. So, again, what we know as the ordinances, by the way, that's the biblical word, ordinances, okay? The two ordinances that we find in the New Testament are baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is a one-time demonstration of one's faith in Christ, so post-salvation. The Lord's Supper is a remembrance of what Christ did for our salvation. They're to be done on the other side of salvation, not on the front side. They're ordinances of the church. They're not ordinances of humanity. And I want to commend you, whether you're a foster parent, biological parent, or just a pretend parent, doesn't matter, to make sure that whomever the Lord allows you to shepherd, that we do so properly and in the right ways. By the way, if you read the rest of this chapter, it doesn't go good if you do it wrong. In fact, it says many of you are sick and have fallen asleep. You know what that means in Bible terms? You dead.

Now, I'm gonna go and answer the question that's a sub question to the follow up question that nobody's asked, and I'm gonna ask it. Okay? Why do we tend here to do the

Lord's Supper in what might seem as obscure times? The night of Palm Sunday. Memorial Day. Is because the last thing that I want is somebody to show up to church one Sunday, they've been fighting with their kids, they've been fighting with their wife, they run in the church and all of a sudden, "Oh, OK, Lord's Supper." We go. That's not why you take the Lord's Supper. It should be something that is well notified in advance. It is something that we should, when we leave our house, say, "This is what I'm doing today and why I'm doing it." It should be contemplated over, prayed over. It should be taken seriously. It's not just something we do because we show up. Okay? Again, local autonomy. Any church can do anything they want to do. That's their business, not mine. The more frequently you take the Lord's Supper, the easier it is. It's just something you do every time you show up. So, there you go. A little more history than you probably wanted.

Yes, sir?

[unintelligible]

What about the church? Define the church. Ah, great series of questions. Let me repeat your questions, make sure I got them right. Define the church, establish what it is, and the next question was, and why does it, quote-unquote, need to be raptured before the tribulation? Great series of questions. Typical Wednesday night question, couched as one, it's actually three. All right, here we go. Number one is, what is the church? The church is the body of Christ. Okay, you as a believer when if there has been a time in your life anybody's life where we have acknowledged our sin condition and asked Jesus to save us. Okay at that point, it says that we are hid in him. All right. In fact Colossians chapter 3 verse 3 says that our life is hid in Christ. We're in him. So the church which by the way just means assembly, that's what the word means, but the term church biblically means the body of Christ. It is all of those who are believers in Jesus Christ. Does that suffice for a simple, clear definition?

The next question was, based on that definition, why would it be that the church, the body of Christ, would need to be quote-unquote raptured before this Great Tribulation event, which gets us back to the book of Revelation stuff. Now this is a great debate that we've been having for hundreds and hundreds of years. Is what we know as the church, does it get taken out before the tribulation, in the middle of the tribulation, at the end of the tribulation, there's all kinds of debate and there's all kinds of discussion. Now allow me to defend what you presuppose, that the body of Christ will be removed before the Great Tribulation. Okay, you ready? Number one, Matthew chapter 24. Jesus talks about the tribulation as the most horrific event on earth since the creation. Pretty dramatic event, right? In Revelation chapter 6, we have the first seal that is being opened. The very first seal is a rider of a white horse that I would defend as the Antichrist. So Jesus said it's the worst event in the history of the world and the first thing that happens is the Antichrist is revealed. And who opens up the seal? Jesus, right? The same Jesus that in Matthew 28 said, "I will never leave you and I'll never forsake you." I cannot equate not forsaking with the Antichrist being unleashed. I can't equate that, if that makes sense. And if we're the body of Christ, go to Ephesians chapter 5. This is a wedding passage that

we're going to go to on a Wednesday night. You ready? Ephesians chapter 5, this is one of the quote unquote great mysteries in the New Testament. It talks about the church. It's paralleling that Christ is to the church as the husband is to the wife. We read it, or at least I read it, in almost every wedding ceremony that I do. That being said, remember, we're making a parallel. I'm going to go all the way back, I'm going to go back to verse 23. "For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church and he's the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, let the wives be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself as a glorious church, not having spot, wrinkle or any such thing, but it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies; he that loves his wife loves himself for no man ever hated his own flesh but he nourishes it, he cherishes it even as the Lord does the church." How does unleashing the Antichrist on the body nourish the church? It doesn't. In fact, it does just the opposite, because that Antichrist figure in the Bible is the judgment of God, not the nourishment of God.

The second thing I would do, and I don't want to take the whole hour here, is I would argue that when you get in the book of Revelation, particularly in chapter 11, it talks about the temple of God and it talks about their worshiping. Well, you can't have two temples. Right now, as a believer in Jesus Christ, according to 1 Corinthians 6, your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. You can't have the temple in your body and in a building in Jerusalem. You can't have two. You can only have one. And so therefore, one has to be removed for the other to take place which is why I've told y'all, if you turn on the news and you start seeing people build a building in Jerusalem, just go ahead and pack your backpack. We are going up quick. Because you can't have both. Now they might have a building, but there are certain elements of that building that make it a temple. That's a whole other question. Hopefully that helps your church question. Are we good? Yes sir.

[unintelligible]

The verse, what now? You don't know where the verse is. Okay, the verse that says what? "I keep you from the hour of testing." I'm good with that. Works for me. There's a lot of passages that I think defend this position. But again, the most important one for me is, if the role of Christ is to nourish, cherish, love, and adore his body, the church, why would he unveil the worst event in human history on himself because he's the one that opens up the seal. Just makes logical sense to me. By the way, I know, I know I've teased you all the time. There's a lot of different opinions about this. There's a lot of different opinions about it. But I've got friends of mine who do not agree with me, who have actually had the honesty to say to me, "Jeff, I don't agree with you, but I hope you're right."

Okay, here we go, follow up question. Back to the previous question. "In Revelation chapter 3 verse 5, if your name is in the book of life, how can it be blotted out?" Ooh, this is a good question. Go to Revelation chapter 3 and be prepared. We're gonna go back to the book of Exodus in just a moment. Revelation chapter 3. I'm getting there. Revelation chapter 3 verse 5. We are at the church of Sardis. It is the fifth of seven churches in the

book of Revelation. I'm just going to go ahead and read verse 5 as it says, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment. I will not blot out his name out of the book of life but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels." Now, I don't know who submitted the question. I don't know what pretense it was questioned. But it does appear on the surface to make you a little bit nervous. How can a name be blotted out? How can a name be taken out? Right?

Now go all the way back to the book of Exodus. I believe we're going to go to chapter, it's either 31 or 32. Forgive me. The book of life. It's the first mention of the book of life. Forgive me. Y'all may have to be my Google tonight. The first account of the book of life. Can y'all help me out tonight? It talks about the book. Ah, here it is. Verse 32. Chapter 32, I'm sorry. Verse 33. 32, 33. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." That's the very first reference that we have in the Bible to this famous book of life, or the Lord's book. The idea that we get here is that when we come into existence, our name is in the book and upon our unbelief, and I would say putting pieces together upon our death, the blotting out happens once our opportunity for salvation and redemption has passed with our last breath. Which means, I think this advocates that we've all got a shot. We've all got an opportunity. We all are in the book until we're blotted out and basically it says there in Revelation 3:5 whoever overcomes, by the way, 1 John 5:4 says we overcome because he, Jesus, is our overcomer, basically saying Jesus there that whoever overcomes, whoever believes in Jesus will not have their name written or blotted out of the book. So therefore, I think the evidence there is that that taken out is not because you're a believer today and you fall into sin and say, "Oh my, I'm out." There's never a time in your Bible where it ever says somebody's written back in a second time. If you could, quote, be saved, lose your salvation, be in, get blotted out, whatever page the name Jeff Myers is on, I guarantee there will be a hole in it from the angel and the eraser. Right?

So therefore, because I'm a believer in Jesus Christ, because his blood has redeemed me from my sin, my name will not be blotted out. If you are here tonight, or watching or listening, and you're like, "Eh, this Jesus guy is interesting, but not really into him, I don't know what to think," upon your last breath, according to what we just read, your name will be blotted out and that's not a good position to be in at all. In fact, in the book of Colossians, in chapter 2, one of the things it says there is that when Jesus Christ shed his blood, it says he blotted out the handwriting of accusation that was against us. In other words, anything and everything that can be held against us has been blotted out by the blood of Jesus. And so either A, your sins have been blotted out, or B, your name is gonna be blotted out. It's really simple.

Yes, sir?

[unintelligible]

Revelation 22, we're going to the last page, brother. Revelation 22 and 19. "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part

out of the book of life, out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Yes, sir. That is not a good position to be in, is it?

[unintelligible]

Well, I'm not going to argue with that statement, sir. So the third to the last verse of your Bible basically says that if you remove from or add to what God has said, your name's gonna be taken out. Now here's what I would argue that point. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, he saved you, he redeemed you according to all that he did, nothing you did. Why would you want to change what he said? In other words, there's gotta be an ulterior motive there. Right, there's gotta be something going on behind the scenes. And so I think we, to your point sir, I think we connect all these dots. But again, I think verse 19 to 22 is more of a picture of the behind the scenes than it is on the front of the scenes. But you're absolutely, I'm glad you brought that up because it does say, if you do this, your name's gonna be taken out. Well, why would it be taken out? Because if you're a real believer, why would you change it? You know, good point.

I thought I saw a hand. Maybe I didn't know. Yes, sir, again. Did you find your verse?

[unintelligible]

1 Thessalonians 5:9. Is this the verse you were talking about earlier? Okay, you found it. Congratulations. I knew it was in there. 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 verse 9, did you say? It says, "For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." In other words, because we are in Christ, we are never under the judgment of God which by the way, that's what the tribulation is. It's judgment. And a whole lot of it. And it's really ugly. It's really bad.

All right, here we go. "Are you familiar with the Eliakim typology argument for the papacy? And if so, how do you refute it?" You know, I'm enough of a nerd. I actually know what this means. Any time we talk about the papacy, any time we talk about the individual who, just in casual terminology, is the head of what we know today is the Roman Catholic Church, there has to be a defense for why would you claim that there is a human being on earth that is the head of the body of Christ? I mean, that's a simple explanation, right? And so there's a lot of different aspects and discussion points but the typology here, it's actually, it goes all the way back. In fact, two things we have to do. Go to Matthew chapter 16. Matthew chapter 16. Matthew chapter 16 is typically what we call the proof text for modern day papacy. We'll refute that in here in just a moment. Matthew chapter 16. It's a famous event, verse 13. By the way, we're about to go to the book of Isaiah here in just a moment. But in Matthew chapter 16, verse 13, remember the famous scene, Caesarea Philippi, "Who do men say that I am? Who do you say that I am?" "You're the Christ, the Son of the living God." Pick it up in verse 17. "And Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. But I say also unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatsoever

thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loose in heaven." Now, verse 19, you need to kind of put your finger there because that is the relationship to this question that's the typology, okay? But hold on for a moment. Let's back it up to verse 17 and 18. What does Jesus say? He says, "Peter, upon this rock I will build my church." Now I know many of you have seen me illustrate what I'm about to do, but I'm about to do it again because I think we need to see it. We need to observe it. Okay? I want you to imagine the scene. Jesus is there teaching, he's preaching, he's leading these guys, and they are you. Now please understand, it's just an illustration, but for the sake of a visual, I get to be Jesus in the story. Okay? Alright? You are the disciples. This was kind of what it would have looked like except probably a smaller scene. All of a sudden, Jesus says, "Who do people say that I am?" Someone says, "Oh, you're John the Baptist. Some people think you're Jeremiah." I mean, y'all just start popping it up, right? And then Jesus says, "Who do you say that I am?" And Simon Peter stands up and says, "You're the Christ. You're the Son of the living God." Jesus says, "Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, for thou art Peter and upon this rock." Now I want you to understand that. If Peter's out there, why would he use the word "this"? In other words, if Peter was the first pope, you know what Jesus would have said? "Thou art Peter and upon that rock I'm going to build my church." You know what Jesus did? He said, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church." In fact, in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 it talks about Moses striking the rock in the Exodus and it says, and that rock was Christ Jesus.

Upon this rock. So I've got news for us. Peter was never referenced by Jesus as a pope. I'm sorry. He never was. Okay? Jesus made it clear, he's the rock, nobody else is the rock. But it's verse 19. What about the keys? I want you to read what it says. "And unto you are given, unto you, are the keys to the kingdom of heaven." Right? In other words, access into what all God has, you have access. You have the ability to enter. Got it. Go back to Isaiah 22. You're stretching me tonight. Isaiah 22. Back in the Old Testament, there is a priest that is foreshadowed for what we might call second coming or last time things. Isaiah chapter 22, verse 20. Isaiah chapter 22, verse 20. It says, "And it shall come to pass in that day," now hold on to that phrase, "that I will call my servant, Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah: And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder." Now, let's walk through this per the question. This is a passage that what we might call papal apologists use to say all that the pope is per Matthew 16 is a fulfillment of this passage. Number one, go back to verse 20. It shall come to pass in that day. You know the phrase "that day" in your Old Testament, that means end times. That's the last step, that's the book of Revelation stuff, okay? So number one, we got an issue there, we're talking about the end of days, not all days. "I will call my servant, I'll clothe him with a robe, commit a government, he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah." Is, per previous question, is the house of Judah the church? It's not, is it? The church isn't the house of Judah, correct? It's the next phrase, "and the key of the house of David." That's not the kingdom of heaven. In other words, even though there's a lot of imagery in Isaiah 22 that has been adopted by defenders of the papacy, it's not even talking about the church. It's talking about the tribe of Judah and

the house of David. There's nothing there involving the church at all, because it's in that day, which means those last days, which according to the book of Revelation, deals with the twelve tribes and a whole lot of Jewish stuff, if that makes sense. So you can't use that as a typology of, because it has no reference to what you and I know is the church. But again, any time you're stretching something to get what you desire, you have to stretch the scriptures to make it say what you want it to say, if that makes sense. So, I'd call it hermeneutical gymnastics. You're just making it dance.

So, all right, we're done with that one. Good. All right, here we go. Moving on. "How does a person know when the Holy Spirit enters him? On the other side, did Judas know that Satan had entered him?" Oh, this is a double fold question. Here we go. By the way, let me answer the last question first. How did Judas know that Satan entered him? Understand that if you look at the whole person of and the whole saga of whom we know as Judas Iscariot, it is in that passage, I believe it's in Matthew chapter 21, I'm almost positive Matthew 21 is the passage where it says Satan entered him. When Satan entered him, he then went and he betrayed Jesus. Okay? Not a good thing. In fact, nobody else in your Bible is ever described as ever betraying Jesus. Denying Jesus, i.e. Simon Peter, but not betraying. What did he do? He fulfilled a prophecy all the way back in the Old Testament that this would take place. It's a whole different thing.

But let's go to the first question. How do you know, how do I know that the Holy Spirit has entered us? That's a really good question, right? Because the Bible tells us if we believe in Jesus as our Savior, that we become the temple of the Holy Ghost, correct? All right? But I'm gonna go back to the day that I was saved. I remember it like it was yesterday, even though it was over 40 years ago, okay? I do not remember something coming into my body and neither do you, right? None of that. So how do you know the Holy Spirit is in you? Go to Galatians chapter 5. We call it the fruit of the Spirit. All right? Actually, I'm going to back it up. Galatians chapter 5, we're going to begin in verse 17. The fruit of the Spirit's in verse 22, but I want to walk it back into 17. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Look at verse 22, what's that word? Come on. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

So let's just, we're not going to go through all of them, because by the way, do you know the Bible says they're singular? It's called the fruit of the Spirit, not the fruits of the Spirit. What's the first fruit? Love. What's the biblical word love mean? It means to put somebody else's interests above your own. Okay? What's the next word? Joy. Joy means to actually have a countenance that is opposite of what the environment you may be walking in or through. Temperance. Self-control. In other words, I did not see the Holy Spirit come in me. I did not feel the Holy Spirit come in me. But the fact that I have the

capacity and the ability to biblically love, biblically have joy, and to have temperance means the Holy Spirit's in me because I just read to you what the flesh does. The flesh is nasty, right? But the Holy Spirit in me. I've heard testimony after testimony. I'm gonna share with you one of my favorite testimonies, okay? This was years ago. A man shared this story with me. He said that before he got saved, and he was a grown adult when he got saved, he said he had a temper of tempers. Raging, raging temper, okay? He got saved. Now, once he got saved, I mean, do you really think that temper went away day one? No, because last time I checked, once you catch a fish, you've got to clean it, right? That's kind of a nasty process. But nonetheless, he tells the story that about three months after he got saved, he was merging on a busy highway, okay, one of the interstates. As he was getting on the highway, somebody cut him off. Now, can you imagine what he had done months earlier? He said, months earlier, he said, I would have screamed, I would have yelled, and I would have given him the universal sign of love. That's what he told me. He said, but as it happened, and as it took place, and as this man cut him off, he said he noticed he didn't respond like he used to. He didn't yell. He didn't cuss. He didn't wave at him. He said he was so overcome, he had to pull on the side of the road and he just started to weep and he said, "I'm a different person than I used to be." Now why is that important? Because this same man said, when I got saved I didn't feel the Holy Spirit come in, I didn't see it come in, but I know because of what's coming out. That's the difference. Not what's coming in, but what's going out.

And so how do you know the Holy Spirit's in you? Because love, joy, peace, gentleness versus all the other things that we read. That's a really, really good question because I think one of the problems is many of us, we get saved and the first thing we say is, "Why don't I feel different?" Well, it's not about feeling. It's about fact. You are different. It may take a while for you to see the difference, but you bear different fruit than you used to bear. But that's a really good question.

It says, "But the Bible says we can quench the Holy Spirit. That has to do with our sin, correct, the Holy Spirit doesn't, quote, leave us?" You're absolutely correct. So when we talk about the Holy Spirit, quenching the Spirit, all those different things, by the way, quenching the Spirit is found in Ephesians chapter 5, that being said, basically it's the difference between relationship and fellowship. Okay? Once you get saved, you've got all the Holy Spirit you're ever going to get. Question is, how much of you does the Holy Spirit have? To quench the Holy Spirit, like if you were to quench something, means to lessen its impact, lessen its difference-making capacity, correct? So when you quench the Holy Spirit, basically what it says is, this is my visual, so forgive me, it's almost like you're taking the Holy Spirit that wants to completely encapsulate you and you're relegating it to a very small part of your life. In other words, it doesn't impact all the things that it used to impact. It's being relegated to a small difference maker, quote unquote, in your life. That doesn't mean it's left you. In fact, I'm going to give you a phrase that's all through the book of Acts and all through your New Testament. When it talks about that the apostles, the early church, it talks about that they were filled with the Holy Spirit. You know the term being filled with the Holy Spirit doesn't mean they got more of the Holy Spirit. It means the Holy Spirit got more of them.

So I want you to think about this analogy, okay? I want you to think that you have a vessel, i.e. you, that is consumed and filled with the Holy Spirit. If you begin to fall into temptation, if you begin to defend sin, if you begin to relegate yourself to the things of the world, you will quench the Spirit and the Holy Spirit will have less of an impact in your life. However, if you begin to yield to the Spirit of God, you begin to yield to the word of God, you begin to bear the fruit of the Spirit, what's going to happen? Much like a flame that you begin to put oxygen on, it's going to begin to grow and fill you with a more full capacity. You don't have a new Holy Spirit or the absence of, it's how much of you or how much room does the Holy Spirit have been accessed to you, if that makes sense.

So it says, "What does giving up control mean and look like?" I'm going to give you an illustration. Now this can come to a whole lot of different things, but I'm going to use this. When we talk about control, our life in general, there are two ways you can do it. The first way is you can do this. Now, those of you listening on the radio, you can't see what I'm doing. I've got a water bottle right now that I'm holding on to. Okay? Now, I'm probably not the strongest in the room, but I'll challenge anybody to come take it out of my hand. No takers? Okay, good. Great illustration. All right? So, you can't take this out of my hand. Right? Not right now. Just work with me, please. Just work with me. Just work with me. Okay? But can I get anything else in my hand? That's all I got, right? Alright, when it talks about giving up control, you know what can happen? Can you take that from me? Okay, but you know what God can do? He can give me a bigger water bottle. Can he not? He can give me a better water bottle. The problem is, we want control. We want what we got. And the problem is, we're basically saying, "God, I don't want to be blessed anymore because I'm satisfied with what I've got." You know what the sad part is? If you keep squeezing, you keep squeezing, you keep squeezing, I don't have the strength to do it, you're going to blow it up. Right? Giving up control basically says, "God, I put it in your hands, not in my hands. You do with it as you choose. I'm gonna be willing for you to take it, but also gonna be willing for you to replace it with something that's greater than I could ever imagine or think." That's quote unquote, giving up control. I mean, that's the best illustration that I've got and you could have probably taken it and I'll give you that. Okay.

"As per the Bible, does God treat nations' misdeeds differently than man's singularly?" Ooh, this is a really good question. Go to Matthew chapter 11. We're down to just a few moments, but I want to talk about what Jesus said about this. Now, by the way, nations, let's talk about that for a moment. In our context, in our culture today, when we hear the word nation, we think of a country. That's what we do. We think of a sovereign state with borders, you know, whatever it may be, okay? The word nation in the Bible simply means a people group, okay? That being said, you can correlate the two for the sake of the question. Really what the question is asking is this, does God treat groups of people differently than he does individuals?

Now, the Bible says in Hebrews chapter 9, verse 27, we must all die and face the judgment. Basically that means as an individual you will stand before God alone. However, Matthew chapter 11 verse 20 says, "Then he," Jesus, "began to upbraid the

cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." Now, can we all just agree Jesus has some pretty harsh words, did he not? He was not identifying individuals. He was identifying groups. Bethsaida, Chorazin, Capernaum, Sidon, all these different places. Now, here's the thing that I want you to see about this passage before we close. The first thing is this, Jesus makes it sound like that in the judgment and the subsequent punishment thereof, there are some levels of gradation of. Now, I'm not gonna go as far as Dante's Inferno and say there's nine levels of hell, but at the same point, he basically says it's worse for these than for those. Secondly, yes, we all stand before him individually, but somehow, somehow, there is a quote-unquote day of judgment. You say, "What would that day of judgment be?" My personal opinion, Matthew chapter 25, it says that Jesus parts the sky, comes out, battle of Armageddon. You know what the Bible says he does? He says he judges the nations and then he reigns for a thousand years. In other words, I think this judgment isn't a heaven or hell thing. This judgment is how's it gonna bode for this area, this nation, this whatever it might be entity in the day that the Lord reigns on the earth. And what did he say? It is more tolerable for this group than for that group.

And I wanna close tonight, I'm gonna close by quoting the late great Dr. Billy Graham. The late, great Dr. Billy Graham was famous for a lot of different things but one of the things that he was famous for was the statement that I want to close with. He said this, "If the United States of America does not repent, we're going to have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah one day." Now, I don't know where you come from, but where I come from, that'll preach. In other words, that which God judged with brimstone, we now celebrate. How dare we think we don't fall into the same trap and go down the same path? He warned us. The question is, will we heed it?

All right, let's pray.

Lord Jesus, as we depart from this place, Lord, I know that we quoted a reference, Hebrews 12:1 earlier, but that next verse says that you're the author, you're the finisher of our faith, and so, God, tonight we recognize that there was nothing before you, there shall be nothing after you, it is all yours. And God, I do pray that whatever it is, whether it's a question about this issue or that issue, a struggle in life, whatever, that we would, as that question, we would allow you control of our life, control of our heart, control of our mind, control of our everything. God, may we yield to you. May we allow you total, total sovereignty over our lives. It is in the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.