

Ask Jeff

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Well, good evening. It is 6:30 Central Standard Time here at First Baptist Church of Opelika. It is my privilege to welcome you to our midweek, large group, adult Bible study. Now I mentioned a large group, adult Bible study. It is what we know as the summertime. However, let me remind you and please hear me I'm not trying to remove you, get rid of you, or quote encourage you to depart, but beginning in a few weeks in fact on August the 16th, we will have our, what we might call, breakout adult Bible studies that will begin this fall. We have a whole bunch of them that will be featured on Wednesday night on August the 9th. We're going to be having an open house. Two out of the last three years we've tried to do this outside and it has rained, so we're doing it all inside. All the respective ministry areas including our adult Bible studies will have places where you can not only see what's being offered but you can sign up. And here's the best part about August 9th, you ready? You may think, well, I'm not really interested in student ministry. I don't have a student. The choir, I can't sing. Every one of our ministry areas is going to be offering a different dessert. We're going to have the First Baptist Church of Opelika Dessert Trail. Okay? Afterwards when you complete the task, we'll be providing complementary insulin for everybody on the campus. No, but it's gonna be a lot of fun, a lot of enjoyment, but I want you to know particularly for Wednesday nights if you're curious or interested, we'll have men's Bible studies, women's Bible studies, coed Bible studies. If you're interested to see what's being offered, that Wednesday night we'll have that open house and you can kind of peruse and see all that is available.

But tonight you're stuck with me. Large group, adult Bible study where, that's right, everything that happens is your fault. You say, what do you mean it's my fault? Well, tonight we're going to do a Bible study. If you're new to us, either in person, online, or listening on 97.7 FM radio, if you've never been a part of this study, every question, every concern, every issue, every passage we talk about is originated and derived by you. Now, let me address our daily question, then we're going to talk about tonight. If you're interested in your question, probably getting to it a little bit quicker than some others, and you're not, you don't mind a two to three minute answer rather than maybe a 20 to 30 minute in-depth discussion, we have a question on a YouTube channel, Ask Jeff, every single day, Monday through Friday. The way to submit a question to the YouTube channel is either through the church website, fbcopelika.com/askjeff or askjeff.net. Either one of those websites will take you to the database that addresses our daily YouTube question. On Wednesday nights, which is where you are, the two means by which we

have questions submitted or concerns submitted is either by text messaging area code 334-231-2313 or by those of you in-house by the simple raising of your hand. Now understand, if you utilize our text messaging system, it is completely anonymous. Your number does not show up. Your name does not show up. It is simply your question that will show up on the screen so if you're embarrassed, if you're shy, if it whatever may be you can participate tonight without anybody knowing that that you are the one who originated the question of the concern. Now, for some of you who are a little bit more brazen, you put your hand up in the air, and you get to take the conversation any direction you would like. You lose your anonymity in the room, but not outside the room. What I mean by that is this, those that are watching online, TV, or listen on the radio will not see your image, nor will they hear your voice. So you're anonymous out there, just not in here, but we're all family, so it doesn't matter.

So, tonight, on a typical Wednesday night, I would go to the, quote, screen and say, first question, however, we're going to deviate just a little bit. Now, let me address the, quote, unquote, elephant in the room. You're thinking, how are we going to get the questions on the screen because Chris Wood is not there. He's not here. He's at a conference in Dallas, Texas. But guess what? Matt Tabor is in the back. So we still have access here. So we're good to go.

Now I have been told by Mr. Tabor and by Mr. Wood that we received an influx of questions since Sunday regarding the sermon on Sunday morning and folks wanting some clarifications. Now, before we go to the questions, a couple of things to make note of. I understand and realize that we addressed a passage of scripture on Sunday morning that at times can be complex. Unfortunately, at times it can be a little bit confusing. And so I do want to spend a few moments, whatever these questions may be, hopefully clarifying some issues, okay? The second thing, for those of you who do not know, on Sunday morning we are preaching through what we know as the book of Revelation. Now, if you are brand new to Wednesday nights, anytime we go to the book of Revelation, we have a very special ceremony here in the room and so we're just gonna begin with that ceremony, okay? So I need you to help me count down the ceremony. We're gonna start with three, ready? Three, two, one. [fanfare] It took zero to get to Revelation tonight. It's a brand new record because, well, I'm presuming, I was told the question is about the sermon from Sunday and we were in Revelation chapter 20 so I'm just presuming that was accurate.

Here's the question. It says, "Please explain the verse in Isaiah chapter 65 verse 20. Will age be nonexistent? Also does this passage, Isaiah 65:17 through 25, refer to the millennial reign or the quote, new heaven and the new earth?" Now this is a really great set of questions that hopefully will bring some clarity to what I tried to address on Sunday morning. So a couple passages here, Isaiah chapter 65 as well as what we know as Revelation chapter 20. For those of you that were not here with us on Sunday morning or maybe need a little clarification, Revelation chapter 20 beginning in verse 1 ending in verse 7 to 8 addresses a subject matter where it's described as Satan being bound in the bottomless pit, Jesus is reigning with his saints, and it talks about a time period of a thousand years. Now, a lot of people say, well, that's just figurative, it's metaphorical.

The problem with that is, within these seven verses, the term a thousand years is used six times. Okay? That's a lot of references to something if it's just, quote, metaphorical. Now, that being said, this time period, we often refer to as quote-unquote the millennium. The reason we do so, that's just a Latin word for a thousand years.

Now, if you have your Bibles open to Revelation chapter 20, if you read through the rest of chapter 20, we get to that famous great judgment. When you begin in chapter 21, verse 1, we have a time period that we know as the new heaven and the new earth. Now, what's interesting, and I'm gonna hopefully draw some distinctions here, is in chapter 20, verses 1 through 7, we have what we call the millennium. Just leave it at that, that one thousand year time period. Okay? Now, then in verses 10 through 15, we have what we call the great white throne judgment. That's where Jesus is on the throne and those that obviously were not a part of the resurrection, they are brought up and judged to the quote lake of fire. In chapter 21:1 and following, we have what we call the new heaven and the new earth. Now the reason I want to draw some distinctions here is at times it is very difficult, particularly in Isaiah and other passages, to discern are we talking about this or are we talking about that because in both of these scenarios, Satan is not a part of the picture. In chapter 20, verses 1 through 7, he is bound in the bottomless pit. In chapter 21 and following, he has been summoned to the lake of fire. In chapter 20, Jesus is on his throne on earth. In chapter 21, he's on the throne all over creation. So do you notice how you have a lot of parallels that at times can be a little difficult to distinguish?

Now, the actual question was from Isaiah chapter 65 so if we can make our way back to chapter 65, beginning in verse 17, there is a description of these events. Now, the thing that is so difficult at times is to do what 2 Timothy 2:15 says, to rightly divide the word of God, okay? We're going to read these verses and verses 17 through 19 are going to sound very similar to verses 20 through 25, however, there's some very important distinctions that we have to use these passages in Revelation as well as other passages to discern what is actually being spoken of. Okay? So, in verse 17, it says, "For, behold, I create," which the word create in the Bible means to begin from nothing, "I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying."

Now if you take those three verses, it is unequivocally lining up with this passage right here. So in chapter 65 verses 17 through 19 what do we have? We have a situation where multiple times it says, "I'm creating. I am making new." Okay? "There will be no more remembrance of things. There will be no more weeping." Those are descriptions that Revelation chapter 21 and following describes.

[unintelligible]

I don't even know what that is. You got it? Okay. I was getting a little concerned. For those that are listening on the radio, you're going, what is going on? I thought there was some kind of machine coming after me. Okay, here we go.

In chapter 21, it says, "Behold, I create a new heaven, a new earth, a new Jerusalem," and what does it talk about? It says there will be no more weeping. It talks about there will be no more remembrance of former things, just like what we read. However, when you pick up the story in verse 20, it says, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." Now the first light bulb that should come on there is the mention of death because there's no mention of death in the new heaven and the new earth. The second thing should be the aspect of a sinner. In fact, in Revelation chapter 21 verse 8, it makes it very clear, it gives us a list of sinful behaviors and sinful activity that will not be present in the new heaven and the new earth. So what you can do is you can default when you get to verse 20 and go time out. We've kind of taken a new path here. We've got a new direction, because understand, the prophecies of old that were given to Isaiah and Jeremiah, Ezekiel, all these great prophets, they're speaking of multiple scenarios and multiple events and one of the best things to do is when we see these, is kind of look at them from 30,000 feet and go, okay, this sounds similar, but it's, quote, very different.

Verse 21, they will build houses, inhabit them. They'll plant vineyards, and they shall eat the fruit thereof. They shall not build and another inhabit. It goes on and on and on. But then it's verse 25 that's critical, "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD." And so again, you have these passages or these verses that are describing, for lack of better terms, a heavenly environment but in a very earthly context, okay? Days being recorded. Infant, old, death, sinner, those that are natural enemies somewhat congregating together. And so therefore when we quote rightly divide these first three verses are talking about chapter 21, I think the last five ones are actually speaking of this quote millennial time period which per the question is the issue of age is that you see that during this earthly reign of Jesus Christ, as described in chapter 20, what we see because of Satan being bound and a host of other issues is we see not just the the change of but the difference of life. I mean, I addressed this Sunday morning, if the wolf and the lamb can play ball together, and the lion can sleep at the foot of your bed without fear of any retribution, then we would have to agree that Earth's existence as we know it is completely different as we're aware of today. However, it is not a place without weeping. It is not a place without pain. It is not a place without sorrow because as we addressed Sunday morning, you still have those individuals that were there when Jesus came to the battle of Armageddon that there were residuals of. They did not fight with the Antichrist. They were not necessarily believers therein but they were those that are now the dwellers within mortal bodies that are still in a quote sinful state that would still struggle with those issues that nobody will struggle with in the new heaven and the new earth. In other words, when you get to chapter 21 and 22, there's no concept of aging, okay, because at that point we are, as 1 Timothy 6 says, we're immortal with Christ, okay? There's no concept of sin because it's all been banished to the lake of fire. There is no death, no remembrance of former things.

And so at times they sound very similar because they have some contextual similarities, but once you start drilling down, you'll notice that there are some distinct differences. And so I apologize if on Sunday morning, I either A, was not able to or did not have the time allowed to show those distinctions but hopefully, that would help just a little bit.

Any other ways I can clarify or help? Yes, sir?

[unintelligible]

Well, those that are believers today are described as reigning with the Lord then but we are in a glorified body. We're not in, you're not gonna look like you do now and I'm not gonna look like I do. And the proper response is, thank you Lord, to that. But remember those passages that the dead in Christ and the alive in Christ will be caught up together to be with the Lord and they'd be transformed? That which was mortal is now immortal? That which was of the earth? In other words, we as those who reign with Christ, we are in our immortal glorified bodies reigning with him. The quote and I hate to use the term, the subjects are those that were there when Jesus came to the battle of Armageddon that didn't necessarily fight with the Antichrist, but they're human just like you and I are today they have not been changed, shall we say, into a glorified state. Does that help a little bit?

[unintelligible]

Yeah. Correct. There is no age. So when it speaks about the infant being old of age, that's speaking about those that were dwelling as you and I are today when Jesus returns, not those who come with him because at the point in which we are caught up to be with the Lord, where our bodies are changed from mortal to immortal, at that point, age is out of the equation. There is no more aging. There is no more death. None of that is relevant for you and I. So right now, and hopefully this will help out, seated in this room, watching on that camera, listening on the radio, if you're a believer in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord, there's coming a day where the Lord is going to call and you're going to go up to be with him. You'll receive a glorified body and in chapter 19 of Revelation, you will descend with him. And then according to chapter 20, you will reign with him in a glorified state upon the earth. Does that help out a little bit? So you and I, we don't have to worry about this passage per se, except from the part of what are we doing on behalf of the Lord in the environment they're in.

Does that help a little bit? Okay. Any other clarifications or things that need to be said, not said, maybe said? Yes ma'am.

[unintelligible]

He will be loosed a season. That's what it says, a season. He deceives the nations. Yes ma'am. Great question. So again, let me if I can do this hopefully, let me try something right here. So let's talk about the respective persons during the passage we read on Sunday from chapter 20. Okay, let's go in the order of priority. 1. We have Jesus, correct? That's number 1 priority because without him none of this is happening, correct? 2. We

have those that I'm gonna use the term saints because that's the term used in the book of Revelation describing those who quote-unquote rule alongside. Per the previous question, that's you and I, okay? That us. In fact, I'm gonna go ahead and be bold tonight. Y'all ready? Here we go. That's us, right? That sound good? That's us. All right, number 3, you have what I would call the quote-unquote subjects which are, and I hate to use this term, but I don't know any better one, they are quote-unquote mortals that are there and that is going to be them. Does that make sense?

Now the reason that's important is because us, there is no according to Matthew 22 and other passages, there are no marital bonds and family matriculations because we're in a glorified state. But for these, it would be as if, and this is a horrible illustration, I don't want to cause more confusion, I want you to imagine, because it's not how the Bible describes it, I want you to imagine if all of a sudden, it just happened now. Well, you and I are in mortal, carnal, depraved, sinful, fleshly bodies, but we would be in an environment where Jesus is on the throne, Satan is bound, and life is completely different where the processes of procreation, etc. would continue, right? And so the point is, the question she asks is, at the end it says Satan is loose for a little season and so what you have in number 3 here is you have people not only A) alive, but B) born that never rendered a decision on behalf of Jesus Christ. Because I want you to think about it. Let's imagine for the sake of illustration, and this is just an illustration, let's just imagine you're born in the year 454 of this time period. I don't know why I picked the number. It's just a big engine from days past. All right, there we go. So 454, that means you're going to live five and a half centuries only knowing Satan bound and Jesus on the throne. All you know is this environment. There's never been that point where you say, "Hey, I've got to make a decision here." And so when Satan is loose for a little season, it says he goes out and deceives the nations. Well, Satan deceived Adam and Eve. He deceived you and me. He has given the opportunity, I hate to use it this way, for all of us to say are we with Jesus or not?

And so again, the best way I can describe it, and it's probably not a good way, what that means, the importance of verse 7 here, where it says he is loosed for a little season, the reason that verse is important is because it basically means there are no, quote, free passes to heaven. And when I say free passes, just because you happen to be born at that time doesn't mean you're automatically good. There has to be a decision, or as I said Sunday, a verdict rendered. Does that help a little bit there? And so hopefully it'll help when we start delineating who these individuals are at the time period that we're dealing with.

Now do you understand why this has been such a troublesome passage for a whole lot of folks throughout all the years? And all of the chronology of what we know as the book of Revelation is all based on this passage. Have you ever heard the terms pre-millennial, post-millennial, amillennial? Basically either Jesus is coming back before the thousand years, after the thousand years, or there is no thousand years. Basically every chronological position regarding the book of Revelation is based off of this passage that at times can cause a little difficulty.

Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

That's the us, yes, ma'am. You're in your glorified state. Yes, ma'am. No, we're not, we're not having a family barbecue. Correct. Great question. So the question is and I'll see if I can rephrase it in a succinct way is, if quote-unquote what we know as the believers, it's not like we are today, we're in our glorified state, we're on behalf of, Jesus is on the throne in Jerusalem, how is he communicating with, how is he represented to everybody? That's where I think Revelation 1:5 and other passages are so important. It says that we shall be kings and priests with him in the earth, okay? So a king represents on behalf and a priest intercedes on behalf, and so remember the famous parable of the talents? Remember the guy who had five talents and two talents and one talent? And the one that had five and two actually did something with it and matriculated it. The one that had one was scared, nervous, and he gave it away. Take the one that's at the higher end. Jesus' interpretation said, quote, "You will be over ten cities." And so the idea that we get is that we are his representatives of. We are that connection. Because here's the beautiful thing. You ready for this? We use this phrase all the time, and we know what it means today but I want you to think about what it can mean, quote, in this period. You and I are the body of Christ. Correct? In other words, in the glorified state of this time period, this is really seen as it is. We're in a glorified state. We are according to 1 John 3:2, we are as he is. We are truly his body during that time period because there is no more carnal flesh. There's no more, you and I no longer have the trappings of the... We are as we should be representing him as he is.

I saw a sign for a follow-up on the screen. "Who are 'the many' in Daniel?" We've had us, them, and now we have many. Here we go. Daniel chapter 9 verse 27, which by the way has everything to do with what we know as the book of Revelation, which is why we had our countdown today. If you're not familiar with Daniel chapter 9, it is probably one of the most critical passages in regards to a study of what we know as the book of Revelation, particularly the total of it, but in Daniel chapter 9, beginning in verse 24, it addresses that famous time period that Revelation chapter 6 through 19 describes in detail that Jesus spoke of as the great tribulation. In verse 27 it begins with "and he will confirm." That "he" in context is that antichrist figure. It says, "and he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured out upon the desolate."

Now for the sake of time, allow me to kind of flesh out how this works out. In that time period that we know as the great tribulation, the Bible describes a one known as the Antichrist who takes the totality of the world under his tyrannical reign, that famous mark of the beast, right? He observes everything they do, they can't buy, they can't sell without it. He is, as we described in previous studies, he is a messiah figure. He has come in signs and wonders and doing the things of chapter 13 that made people basically just ooh, ah, and wow who he is. At that point, according to what we just read, the abomination of

desolation, which Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24:14, and it's also spoken of in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, it says that during this time period, what we just read in the middle of the week, meaning in the middle of it, three and a half years in, it says that he, according to 2 Thessalonians 2, will go into the temple of God, and he will claim he is God. Okay?

But let's back it up. It says, previous to that, he's made a covenant with many. Now, you say, well, who are the, quote, many? Again, we're dealing with the Antichrist putting a temple on the Temple Mount of Jerusalem. Can you just work with me for a moment of the geopolitical miracle that will be? I want you to imagine how many people in today's context have to be willing to agree to that. Now, just think for the sake of an illustration. I want you to imagine that tonight, okay, that a group of zealous Jewish folks decide to march onto that temple mountain and start building that building right now. How do you think that's going to go over? Not real well, right? Okay? In other words, we know that that temple would be despised by a whole lot of people. There are groups of people, I'm just gonna call it out to our contemporary context today, the Muslims, not real fond of it, right? When it says he makes a covenant with many, last time I checked, many means more than one. So it's not just an agreement with the Jewish people. It's an agreement with a host of people to orchestrate and articulate his design for how he's doing things. And so he makes this covenant that, "Hey, if you'll do what I want you to do, I'll give you what you want." But what does he do in the middle? He breaks it. Well, according to 2 Thessalonians 2, that's when he goes inside and he says, "I am God." According to Matthew 24, you know what Jesus said? When that happens, now remember, we're in the tribulation, not today. What does he tell him to do? Run for the hills. Take off. It's bad.

So hopefully by way of the question, the "many" there is more than just the Jewish people of which it primarily involves. It is a host of others that allow it to take place in exchange for whatever he has promised them. So hopefully that'll help.

All right, are we done with our Revelation question, sir? Or we still got more? Is there just one more? Oh, here we go. "What is the difference between Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38 and Revelation chapter 20 verse 8?" Wow, how much time y'all got? No, I'm kidding. Here we go. This is important. In Revelation 20 verse 8, we are at the end of this famous millennial time period. It says, per the young lady's question earlier, Satan is loosed for a little season. He goes out and he deceives the nations. Where? Gog and Magog. It says that when that happens, when the deception takes place, that God destroys them. This is verse 9, by the way. He destroys them with fire and brimstone immediately. It's over. I wouldn't call that really much of a battle, would you?

Now the reason that's important is per this question. In Ezekiel chapter 38, you have an entire chapter, and by the way it goes over into chapter 39 as well, describing a global conflict at what we know as, quote, Gog and Magog. What's interesting is that just from a, I guess a cartography or from a map explanation, Gog and Magog, literally from a biblical context, is modern day Turkey and Russia, okay? And if you read Ezekiel chapter 38, it says that the battle doesn't just take place there, but they descend down in Jerusalem from there. It is a global conflict of a massive scale. It's not chapter 20 verse 8. It's the

same location, I would argue at least a thousand years apart involving completely different parties.

So many people, and I know this is not necessarily a good context but it's a good explanation, many people have described Gog and Magog of Ezekiel chapter 38 as World War III just in the sense of it's the big one, okay? The one we just read in chapter 20 verse 8, that's not really a battle. Satan deceives, God destroys, end of story. It's not the same as chapter 38. Plus, once you get past chapter 38 and 39 of what we know as Ezekiel, chapter 14 and 41, it describes a temple and it describes the Lord reigning in a temple. And so if you'll think about the chronology we've been talking about, we have this famous battle of Armageddon, we have this horrific event, we have the famous thousand years, we have this loosing for a little season, we have the judging but in between that, we had the quote unquote temple, which would not match up chronologically if it's in chapter 20.

Hopefully that was quote clear as mud. Yes, sir?

[unintelligible]

Just a thought. We like thoughts. The nations. Yes. Oh yes. So the question or the comment, the thought is in that famous millennial passage, it talks about the nation's worshipping. Nations literally means people group, is what it means. Now, here's the interesting, because you did mention our country that I'm very fond of, okay? The United States. How, and he said, point, how nice would it be to actually have our nation worshipping the Lord? Great commentary, by the way, okay? Here's the interesting thing, and I don't mean to go there, but I kind of am. We live in a country, in fact, we live in the only country in the world that's actually designed behind an idea and not a people. Have you ever thought about that? If someone says I'm American, what does that mean? I mean, in other words, if somebody says I'm Italian, hello, you're from Italy, right? I'm Portuguese, hello, you're from Portugal. I'm an American, what does that mean? I'm from Alabama. I mean, how many times have we joked that we're the Heinz 57? So here's the thing that's interesting about your question, sir. When we speak about nations, we speak of people groups, okay, and therefore, there are Sudanese, there are Croatians, there are Moroccans, but America is really just a place of all those people that have collected around an idea. So when we speak of the nations, I don't know if that necessarily discounts or includes what we would know today as the United States, because how many, quote, nations have existed in days past that don't exist today present, and how many will be formed in days future that aren't... I think the key to it is all peoples, wherever they are, are worshipping the Lord. And if that does include this great land, then better for it, if that makes any sense.

So anything on Gog and Magog? We're good.? Are we done with Revelation? We're not done with Revelation. Okay, here goes. We kind of got into this. "Why did God release Satan again after shutting him up in the bottomless pit for a thousand years?" Let me just kind of reread for a moment. I think the critical aspect of that is, per the born in 454, those who have known no other must render a verdict. Everybody must render a verdict.

Follow-up question. "Will people die during the thousand years when Jesus reigns?" That's a great question. Now remember, we just read Isaiah chapter 65, and it spoke of death. Now, I'm gonna go ahead and project something. If you are living in that time period, and Jesus is on the throne, and you die, it's not good. You say why? Because the wages of what is death? Sin. And when you look at all those passages that involve this time period, you have Jesus on the throne, you have his priests and kings, you have an opportunity, Satan is bound. Now, by the way, this doesn't involve... it's them, remember it's them. It's not us and so therefore, you know, every now and then on Wednesday night, could it be, y'all know what could it be means? I see the follow-up, another follow-up. Thank you. I'm gonna "could it be" for just a moment. Here we go. Could it be, could it be means let's think about something maybe from a different light than we've never looked at before, okay? Now I know that not all of you have been, but some of you have been a part of our Sunday evening service in the last few weeks and months where we've not only been walking through the book of Matthew, but we've been very strategically walking through what you and I know as the Sermon on the Mount. Okay, begins in chapter 5, ends in chapter 7. Okay, for those of you who have not been a part of our study, give me just a few moments to kind of catch up, because I want to allude to something that is very critical, okay? In that passage, okay, there are no, quote, born again Christians. Jesus hasn't gone to the cross. He hasn't raised from the grave. The entire audience are people of a Jewish background practicing a Jewish faith to make atonement for their sins, okay? "Blessed are these and blessed are those," okay? I get all that, right? Here's what's interesting. In chapter 5, it talks about all the ways that humanity can sin in relationship to each other. In chapter 6, it deals with all the ways that humanity can sin in relationship to God directly. In chapter 7, it talks about the consequences of those sins.

Now you say, why is that important? Because it begins in chapter 5 by talking about, "Blessed are they, they shall inherit the kingdom. Blessed are the meek, they will inherit the earth." I don't know about you, but I don't want to inherit the earth. I want to be in my mansion, okay? You say, well, why is that important? Could it be, have I said that enough? Could it be that the famous Sermon on the Mount isn't just a means to disclose all the ways that humanity falls short of the glory of God, which we do, but could Jesus be laying a blueprint for the expected behavior while he's on the earth reigning? Because what does he say? He says if you've had a fault against your brother, what do you do? Make it right before you go to the altar. Woe to him who says Raca to his brother. He is in danger of hell fire.

It's really interesting. I'll give you an assignment. Go home tonight or sometime between now and next week and read Matthew 5 through 7 with this "could it be" thought. Is it possible that Jesus is describing the expectations and the understanding of what it will be like when he's on the throne and the consequences if it is not done as he has commissioned? Because the question is, will people actually die? You just read in Isaiah 65, it says people will die. He warned us in Matthew chapter 5, if you do this, this will occur. And so just an interesting, "could it be."

Another follow up is, "At the end of the millennium, how do mortals who stay faithful to Jesus obtain their mortal bodies and escape the purging of the earth with fire?" Back to Revelation, here we go. Now for some of you who are brand new going, "Do you ever get out of Revelation?" Eh, rarely. Okay. Numbers, thank you. Let's let's go to the wilderness. I appreciate you. All right, so to Revelation, of course, we're in chapter 20. In chapter 20 verse 10, it says, "The devil that deceived them was cast in the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are. They are tormented day and night forever." Verse 11, "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. And I saw the dead, small and great," that's that second resurrection, quote unquote, "stand before the Lord."

Now, here's the interesting part about the question. Let's say, for the sake of this question, that you've got that individual that's born in 454, okay? They've lived five and a half centuries. They've been faithful to everything but they are in a quote-unquote mortal body. To whomever submitted this question, you are absolutely right, there is no description anywhere at the end, in the middle of chapter 20 or 21 of those individuals somehow becoming glorified. There is nothing of them being translated, transfigured, changed. We don't have anything. So go to chapter 22 of Revelation and I'm gonna share something really interesting with you. Here we go. Revelation chapter 22. Now remember, we're in the new heavens and the new earth, right? Okay? It says, "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, on either side of the river, there was the tree of life." Push pause for a moment. Why do you need a tree of life? You don't need it. You're in a glorified state. Jesus doesn't need the tree of life. You, the us, we don't need the tree of life. What was the purpose of the tree of life? To maintain life, correct? You don't need it but the "them" do.

Now what does it say about them? It says, "They bear twelve manner of fruit, yielding their fruit every month, and the leaves on the tree were for the healing of the nations." Didn't we just talk about the nations during that time period? "There shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him. They shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads." You don't need his name in your forehead. You've already got a glorified body. Do you see the distinction that we're making here?

And so therefore, again, when we get there one day, it'll be clear because the Bible says we look through a glass darkly now, but the Bible does not mention those that make it through this glorious period, quote unquote, in the right manner. It never mentions them being glorified, never mentions them being translated, never mentions them being raptured, etc. And why would you need a tree of life if everybody's in a glorified state? Again, I'm just bringing up questions that we may or may not have answers for.

Yes, sir? Is it the same tree from Eden? I would think so because it never says trees of life, it's the tree of life. And remember when humanity in the Garden of Eden sinned, remember God protected it and said, "I'm not going to give them any more access to it."

But in chapter 22 of Revelation, all of a sudden he says, "No, you need access to it." But not us. We're in a glorified body. When you're in a glorified body and you're immortal with Christ, you have no need of the tree of life. So why is it there? Somebody does. Who's that somebody? Does that make sense? Which is interesting because when you look at chapter 21, when the Lord recreates everything, he creates a new heaven, a new earth, and a new Jerusalem. Okay, where did he say your mansion was going to be? In the heavens. Where is the home of his chosen people, the Jews? Jerusalem. Is it possible these are the dwellers of the earth for all of eternity?

Now, we've done a whole lot of speculating tonight. Can I just make something very crystal clear? Nobody gets into Revelation 21 and 22 apart from Jesus. Okay? So I don't want to lose the forest for the trees, if that makes any sense. Which is why sometimes we call this the quote, Age of Grace, if that makes sense, that we're not having to worry about all this stuff. So hopefully that will help a little bit.

The screen says we're leaving Revelation. Does anybody want to stay there? We're good with leaving? Okay, let's leave. Here we go. It says, "I've always believed that Lazarus was the first person that Jesus raised from the dead," that would be found in what we know as the gospel of John chapter 11, "however, listening to your teachings," oh goodness, that always makes me nervous, "on the book of Jonah, was Jonah the first?" Okay, let's go to Jonah, all the way back in your Old Testament, what we know as one of the minor prophets. Now just understand minor prophet does not mean a lesser message, it just means a smaller text typically. So within what we know as your Old Testament and by the way, when it comes to the book of Jonah and Obadiah and Nahum, never apologize for going to the table of contents. Never. These are hard books to find, okay? They really are, okay? And so, in the book of Jonah, now, we know the famous story. By the way, before we talk about Jonah, I need you to do me a really big favor. Don't think about Pinocchio. All right? Unfortunately, most of our Jonah theology comes from Disneyland, okay? It really does, all right? And that famous scene in the movie and such. But we know the story. We know that Jonah, by the way, Jonah is the only prophet in your Old Testament that is commissioned to the Gentiles. He's commissioned to Nineveh, he doesn't wanna go to Nineveh, so what does he do? He goes and he gets on a boat and he says, "Deuces, I'm out," right? He gets on that boat, chapter 1, doesn't go well. Storm brews up, bunch of pagans start casting lots, "What do we do? Must be this guy. Is it you?" Jonah says, "It's me. If you'll throw me overboard, it'll stop." They don't wanna do it. He says, "Do it." They do it, guess what? It stops, right?

Now, here's where it gets fun, go to Jonah chapter 2. Jonah chapter 2 verse 1. Now remember he's in the quote whale's belly, right? And later he's gonna get spit up just like the Bible says and technically Pinocchio. Here we go. Verse 1. It says, "Then Jonah, he prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly." Now, can I keep it simple? Don't you think you'd be praying too? I mean just think about it, right? Verse 2, "And said," this is Jonah's prayer, "I cried by reason of my affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me," listen to this next statement, "out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice." Now I realize not every one of your Bibles uses the word hell. If you don't have the word

hell there, you have the word sheol, correct? You know what sheol means? Place of the dead. Literally he is saying, "I'm dead and I'm praying to God."

Listen to this, verse 3, "For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever." I've got news for you, his soul is not in that whale. His flesh is in that whale, but his soul is dead. Now, I think specifically the Bible says he was in hell because context says so.

So what happens at the end of the story? Verse 10, "the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land. And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them." If you keep reading, they even did it to the animals. You say, what do you mean? Can you imagine what he looked like? You know the show "The Walking Dead"? That's it. Three days his flesh is in whale stomach acid. Now, I've never tested the acidity of a whale's stomach, but can we all just agree after 72 hours you're going to look pretty nasty, okay? But the key to the question is, he claims he's dead. He claims he's at the bottom and the bars are surrounding him and God raised him to go preach.

Why is this so important? Go to Matthew chapter 12. This is why it's important. Matthew chapter 12. Jesus is being surrounded by those that are contrary to him, antagonistic toward him and in chapter 12, this is why this is so important of a question. Not just that he was the first one that God raised from the dead, okay? Alright? But the reason it's important, in Matthew chapter 12, there's a group of people, very much against Jesus, obviously. They're asking him, according to verse 38, "Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee." Now, many of you may be familiar with this, but in the Bible, a sign is literally a miracle on steroids and what I mean by that is there are miracles in the Bible that even the pagans at times duplicate. Read Exodus 7, 8, 9, and what we know as Pharaoh's sorcerers duplicate some of those. A sign is only something that God can do and man cannot replicate. For example, behold, in Isaiah 7, a virgin will give birth. That's something man can't duplicate. That's a God thing, okay?

Now, they basically said, "We want a sign." Verse 39, "he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas." Now, just push pause for a moment. I want you to think about all of the Old Testament characters that Jesus could have alluded to. He could have talked about Moses and David and Abraham and Isaiah. He could have gone back to

any of these great, Noah, all these great characters. You do know that Jonah is one of the most questioned and disputed stories in all of your Bible. Some of you have heard this story before. If you have, forgive me, you get a two-minute nap. Years and years and years and many years ago, I was interviewing at a church to be a youth pastor and they were asking me all the questions that you're supposed to ask many years ago. There was a stately gentleman in the room, a little bit seasoned of years, you could tell. And they got done asking procedural questions and his task was to ask the theological questions. He asked me this question, he goes, "What do you think about Jonah?" I said, "What about him?" He said, "Was Jonah literally swallowed by a whale and spit back up on the shore just like the Bible said?" I said, "Yes, sir." He goes, "He's good." And they said, "What do you mean?" He goes, "If he believes that, he believes it all." Think about that for a moment. Of all the stories isn't it the craziest one? It's the wildest one.

So why would Jesus pick the wildest story to answer the question? It's the next verse. What does it say? He says, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Now I pick on Pinocchio, but Jesus was not around a campfire in his tomb. Jesus was dead and he came back to life three days later. Guess what? You know what he said? "If you wanna know what I'm about to do, all you gotta do is look at Jonah. That boy was dead and guess what? He came back and it was three days." And so it's a very important question about not only Jonah being raised from the dead, but the connection that Jesus made to his own ministry and his own resurrection.

So again, Jonah was not hanging out like Pinocchio. The Bible says, even if your Bible doesn't say hell, it says Sheol, which means place of the dead. And he confessed, "I was dead." He confessed it. Now, that's typically what we don't teach on the flannel board in Sunday school to the little ones. Correct? But it's what your Bible says. He says, "I was dead." That's a really good question.

Any Jonah questions, follow-up questions, thoughts? Yes, sir. Excuse me?

[unintelligible]

How did he pray when he's dead? I got news for you, everybody in hell right now is praying. They're praying to get out. Luke chapter 16, rich man and Lazarus. What does the rich man do? He begs God, "Send somebody to talk to my brothers." See, here's the irony, there's a whole lot of people that blow open the door to hell because they don't want a thing to do with God, and I'm convinced everybody in hell is trying to talk to God because they don't want to be there.

[unintelligible]

Yes, ma'am. Good old Jonah. Yes. Yes, ma'am. Yes. All right, that's a great question. So the question goes back to chapter 1 of Jonah. He gets thrown overboard. Now remember, he confesses to them that he worships the one true God. Okay, so in other words, these are a bunch of pagans, right? They're worshipping their idols and all whatever it may be.

This Jonah character confesses to them, "I don't worship who you worship, I worship a different God, the one true God." And then he's thrown overboard, the sea calms, and it says they worshiped. I think Romans 1 addresses this more explicitly, that we respond to that which we have been made aware of. That's the only testimony they had and at that moment, they knew there was a different God Jonah worshiped than the one they had been worshiping. That happens again in the book of Daniel. Remember Nebuchadnezzar? Nebuchadnezzar, as crazy as he was, and he was, what does he tell Daniel? "You serve the true God." He recognized that.

Now what we don't have is the rest of the story. To your point, ma'am, was it a one night, God got me out of the foxhole, let's go on? Or was that a true lead to conversion? We don't have the end of that story. In fact, that is one of many reasons, did you know that the book of Jonah, if you still have it open, ends differently than any other book in your Bible? Look at the last punctuation. It's a question mark. Every other book of your Bible ends in a period. It ends in a question mark. In other words, ma'am, I think there's so much about this book that's not resolved. In other words, the question mark, what does his illustration really show us? Matthew 12, those sailors, what really became of them? I got one for you, Jonah, where is he? You say, "What do you mean, where is he?" Have you read chapter 4? Jonah was not real pleased with the Lord. I don't know where he is. No, I'm not being facetious, I'm being serious. I don't know where Jonah is. You say, one day when you get to heaven, is Jonah there? But there's a question mark. I don't know. And I promise, I'm not trying to make light of it at all. We don't know the answers to a lot of these questions, and I think that's one of the many reasons there is a question mark at the end. So I would be careful, I know you're not doing this, ma'am, I'd be careful to put a period where God puts a question mark. So they did recognize Jonah's God, they worshiped. What does that really mean? Was it like Nebuchadnezzar? It was just a fleeting moment? Or was it a genuine... We just don't know. But it is very insightful.

Any other Jonah questions? We're good with Jonah? It says, "I attended a non denominational church and noticed people falling backwards while being prayed over. Is this normal?" Y'all want the short answer or the long one? No. So let me describe what this question is asking or what it's stating is there is a practice, and by the way, whomever submitted this question, it's not just non-denominational churches, churches of a lot of different flavors at times practice this. The term or the phrase is called being slain with the Spirit. Okay, that's the phrase. That the Spirit of God is so overwhelming in the moment that they cannot stand up, they lose control, and they fall backwards. In some cases, they flop on the floor. There's a lot. So, I want to draw three very important conclusions to this question. 1. Show me any place in your New Testament during a gospel presentation that somebody is slain in the spirit. You won't. 2. Is there a place where people fall backwards in the presence of God? Yes. It's in the gospel of John. Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane and Judas and the men come with him and he says, "Who do you seek?" And they say, "We seek Jesus." He says, "I am he." And the Bible says they all fell backwards. Is that the group you want to identify with? And number 3, number 3, there was a man in Mark chapter 5 that we call the demoniac. He was out of control. He was flopping around. He was doing some things that we might call unconventional. Jesus delivered him, Jesus healed him, Jesus touched him, and he was

seated and in his right mind. He was clothed too, but I'm assuming these people are clothed as well.

Now, again, I am not disparaging those that claim of this mannerism. However, the amount of biblical evidence for it being of God is zero. It is all based on, "That's what I experience. That's what I believe." And that's a dangerous position to put yourself in when you claim that your experience triumphs over. There's nothing in your Bible. By the way, there is nothing in the early church, there's nothing in the Middle Ages, there's nothing in the Reformation. This practice started about 120 years ago at a famous revival called Azusa Street. This slain in the Spirit has only been around about a hundred years and it came out of a quote-unquote revival movement that has, per the Jonah question, more question marks than it has periods. So again, it is a modern phenomena that is not described in the Bible, it's not mentioned in the early church fathers, it's never experienced by the great thinkers and theologians, and it comes out of a revival movement that was, listen, Azusa Street was outside the context of the local church, and it was haphazard at best. And thus we have slain in the Spirit. You just don't find it in the Bible.

So again, if that's our guide, it's our guide. Unfortunately, we're out of time. So, that being said, I appreciate next week we'll gather up again, and I have a funny feeling we won't be in Revelation as quick as we were this week, but it could be. You never know what y'all are gonna do. All right, let's pray.

Lord Jesus, we are grateful that your word makes it clear that when we believe upon you as our Savior and our Lord, that we are filled with your Holy Spirit. God, that you empower us Lord, if I can say it this way, not to be knocked down, but to rise up. Lord, to rise up to live a life that is powerful and mighty on your behalf, a life that stands up to and rejects temptation, a life that through the power of your Holy Spirit proclaims truth in a world full of error and darkness. God, help us to be so filled with your Spirit that we rise to whatever ministry opportunity you give us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.