

Ask Jeff

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Good evening. It is 6:30 Central Standard Time here in Opelika, Alabama. It is my privilege to welcome you to our midweek Wednesday night, large group, adult Bible studying. A little bit of a shameless plug to begin with, on August the 9th we are going to have a First Baptist Church of Opelika open house. You say, "What is an open house?" All of our ministry areas are going to be featured with on this side of the campus. Our student ministry is going to come over here. All the respective ministry areas. The reason I'm advertising that tonight, not only to let you know in advance about that evening, is that it is that night that you have the opportunity, if not already, to sign up for our fall midweek Bible studies. If you include our morning Bible studies, afternoon Bible studies, Wednesday night, Sunday night Bible studies, we have over 20 options for you this fall as far as the respective Bible studies, men's Bible studies, women's Bible studies, co-ed Bible studies. Hear me clearly. I'm not trying to kick you out of here on Wednesday night. I just want you to know that there are other options, okay? But we will continue to do our large group adult Bible study here at 6:30 in the 316 Center but on August 9th, you're going to have the opportunity to see what else will be available this fall. Most of those studies run anywhere from 6 to 12 weeks. Some are a little shorter, some or a little bit longer. But tonight we have come to have and do Bible study.

Now, before we begin tonight, let me talk to you about how you can be a part of this on a daily basis. If you're new to us either in person, online, or by way of radio, each and every day, Monday through Friday, we feature a biblical question answered on our YouTube channel. Now, the way that you can be a part of that is either use the askjeff.net website or fbcopelika.com/askjeff. If you go through one of the websites, it goes into a database for our daily question. Typically, I spend anywhere from 90 seconds to maybe 3 or 4 minutes just simply addressing a question each and every day. It's on Wednesday nights tonight where we go a little more in-depth. We have follow-up questions, we chase the proverbial rabbit trails, whatever it may be. Feel free to submit both to the daily and to the weekly databases.

Now, as far as tonight's concerned, our weekly gathering, there's two ways that you can participate. You can facilitate tonight's Bible study because if you don't facilitate tonight, then it's going to be very quiet in the room because everything is originated with you. The number one best way most utilized means is text messaging. Area code 334-231-2313.

You can be on the front row. You can be outside of the room watching online. It doesn't matter where you are. It goes directly to the database to my left. It ends up on the screen. You can submit an original question, concern, biblical passage, whatever it may be. Or you can answer or ask a follow-up question. If you do a follow-up question, it will show up on the screen in a different font and when it does so, we can kind of keep on subject or keep on task.

Now, for those of you that are in-house, you know that you have a distinct privilege. You can raise your hand and when you raise your hand, you have the floor. You can take the conversation any direction you want, any subject matter, whatever it may be. You lose your anonymity. If you use our text messaging system, we don't know who you are. We don't announce your telephone number. You are just hidden behind that cloak, that veil of anonymity. If you raise your hand, you lose your anonymity because we know who you are, or at least hopefully we do. Now here's the thing though, you remain anonymous on the radio, TV and by way of the internet, your voice will not be heard nor will your image be seen, okay, but you lose your anonymity in here, and as I say, every week doesn't matter because we're all family. Good deal, right?

So without further ado let's do some Bible study. Does that sound good? Alright, question number 1, it says, "How long were the Israelites in captivity in Egypt." Now I know on the surface, that sounds like a really simple question, doesn't it? Because we have been taught since we were in first grade with the flannel board. You all know what the flannel board is, right? We have been taught that they were there for 400 years, right? Turn to the book of Exodus chapter 12. Exodus chapter 12 and then we're going to go into the book of Acts, I believe chapter 7, if memory serves me correctly. Exodus chapter 12 toward the very end. Ah, here it is, verse 40. It says, "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years." Alright, sounds right. Go to the book of Acts in the New Testament. Acts chapter 7. We're going to be at the first part. We're going to be in verse 6. Acts chapter 7, verse 6. It says, "And God spoke on this wise, that his seed should sojourn in a strange land, that it should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years." Now the reason this is an important question, and obviously I don't know the desire, the intent, or the motivation behind the question that was asked, is this is one of those subject matters that oftentimes people who are curious and maybe at levels skeptical about scripture point out to claim that there is a contradiction. Why does the Bible say in Exodus 430 years? It says in the New Testament 400 years? Last time I checked, 430 is not 400, correct? So, do we have a, quote, contradiction? This is a very common concern with people, whether it's the reign of a king in the Old Testament that says a time span that's a little bit different than another, a number of people that came into the land, or in this case, the number of years. What's important is actually not the number that's used, as much as the language that is used around the number.

Now, if you're still in Acts chapter 7, notice that evil was done unto them for 400 years. Correct? You remember all the way back in the Exodus story, it says there arose a Pharaoh that knew not Joseph. Remember that story? So, in other words, there came a point where bondage, or to use the term slavery, ensued. When the Egyptians began to do

much evil, when they began to mistreat the Israelites, according to what we just read, that was 400 years. So, if you go back into Exodus, though, it said they sojourned for 430. Thirty years before that moment is when God called Abraham to go to a land he knew not of. If you'll read Exodus chapter 12 verse 40 very clearly, it says they sojourned and they were in Egypt for 430 years. The Bible does not say they were only in Egypt for 430 years. So again, what we have here is an explanation that from the time that God called Abraham out to go till the time that Moses was utilized to deliver them out of was 430 years. Of that 430 years, 400 of them, they were highly mistreated and enslaved by the Egyptians.

Now, the question was not asked, but just to show you how this works out in scripture a lot, if someone were to ask you, and this is one of those rhetorical questions, to go to the Promised Land. So they were in the wilderness 40 years.

Y'all good? I'm good? We're all good.

Question number 2. "What does the Bible say about living together before marriage?" With your Boo thing. You know, my job is simply to read what you write. Appreciate you all. So, again, let me remind you. Can you not edit these, my brother? I mean, seriously. Oh yeah, that was funny, there you go. Oh, the whole world just saw it. Don't worry about it. It's all good.

All right, so what we're dealing with here is the question of, a concern that obviously the scripture has, and obviously our culture deals with on a regular basis, is how do we, as a man and a woman, how do we interact with each other on an intimate level, not only in, quote, the marriage union, but in the case of this prior to. So let's begin this with 1 Corinthians chapter 6. Now, again, let me remind each and every one of us this is a Bible study. So we're going to simply see what does the Bible say about this issue. 1 Corinthians chapter 6, we're going to go to verse 18. There's two words. Now in the context of chapter 6, it's dealing with what we might call sexual purity or in the case of the church at Corinth, sexual impurity and mannerisms and behaviors and conduct that were contrary to God's will way and to his word. In verse 18, the first two words of this verse say flee fornication. Now, some of your Bibles may actually read flee sexual impurity. Now, the reason we need to draw a distinction here is because when it says sexual impurity, how do you necessarily define that? Well, in a moment, Deuteronomy is actually gonna do it for us, but that word fornication literally means any type of sexual behavior that is contrary to how God has prescribed that we behave when it comes to this behavior. Okay.

So what has God said? Go to Matthew chapter 19, Matthew chapter 19. Jesus is being, shall we say, he's being criticized, he's being questioned by those that, number one, don't want to believe he's the Messiah, but number two, they're trying to entrap him in his words and try to get him to say something contradictory to what he has already taught and/or preached or spoken of prior to. Verse 3 of Matthew chapter 19, it says, "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? He answered and he said unto them, Have you not

read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female and said for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and the two shall be one flesh." Now in the Bible when it says you are quote-unquote one flesh that's biblical language for the subject matter that is at hand. Notice the order that even Jesus gave, that they cleave one to another, they get married, and then they quote become one flesh but all of this is actually grounded and rooted in what we know the Old Testament.

So let's go back to the book of Deuteronomy and we're gonna start in chapter 22, for the sake of time we're probably not gonna dig through all of these passages unless you ask the follow-up questions and you want to, but beginning in Deuteronomy chapter 22 beginning in verse 13. We're not going to read all these scriptures, but let me just share with you, beginning in verse 13 of chapter 22, pretty much all the way through chapter 24, it speaks of how they were to interact of the union of marriage. One of the things you'll discover if you begin reading those verses is that the woman's family was to provide a dowry. It was a year's worth of income to the husband, and that that dowry provided them, as described in chapter 24, if you want to fast forward a little bit, the means to the man would not work for a year, they would establish their home, they would establish their family, they would get things quote-unquote off on the right foot. That dowry comes up a whole lot in these chapters because if there's a situation or a scenario where they felt like they should no longer continue the union, the dowry was to be given back to the woman so that she could, quote, start over. Okay? It's a very important aspect to this.

Now, you say, what does this have to do with the question that is at hand? If you look in verse 22, actually verse 23 of chapter 22, it begins a context where it basically says this, if a man marries a woman and he lies with her, which is biblical language for the subject matter, and he finds out that he is not the first person she has been with, he has the right to change the conditions of the union. You say, well, what does that have to do with the question? Because basically, the book of Deuteronomy is giving instructions for the people of God that is then ratified in 1 Corinthians 6 and in Matthew chapter 19 that acting like a husband and wife before you're husband and wife is not condoned anywhere in the Bible. Did I say that as nice as I could?

And so again, to the question, what does the Bible say? Can I just summarize it? No. That's what it says. No. Now, there are times where I have conversations with folks about this issue, and when I say, well, the Bible says no, they'll say, but what about? Aren't we always good about the but what abouts? Go and read Deuteronomy 22 through 24, and you'll discover that every one of your but what abouts is answered by God.

Follow-up question. Oh, not on that subject matter, but it's there. It says, "Do you think that an unsaved person can lead a person to Christ?" Now, I know what you're thinking on the surface. You're thinking, mm, I don't know about that one. Why? Because my definition of evangelism, okay, by the way, it's not really my definition, I'm actually plagiarizing here, it's somebody else's definition of evangelism, is one beggar telling another beggar where to find food. I just love that definition. I think it's a great definition that somebody who was starving, i.e., lost, found food, i.e., the gospel, Jesus, till

somebody else where they, starving, lost, can find food. Okay? It's a pretty decent definition if you ask me. The question is, can an unsaved person, can they, quote, lead a person to Jesus? Technically, no. Because you can't lead somebody where you've never been. However, as an asterisk to this question, when you go to the book of Romans chapter 10, one of the things you will discover is that in the context of Romans, it is talking about the Jewish people, the Israelites, as a whole, as a whole, have rejected the person of Jesus Christ and the gospel of salvation. As a whole, the Gentiles are the greatest recipients of that salvation. What's interesting is in that passage it talks about that the salvation of the Gentiles is to cause the Jews to be jealous of what they have that they do not have, and that the resistance of the Jews is to prick the hearts of the Gentiles about what they have forfeited. And so again, at the end of the day, I don't think a lost person can lead a person to Christ, but I do think that somebody's defiance of the gospel, the rejection of the gospel, can cause somebody to so question why they're so antagonistic, why are they so contrary to, what are they so angry about, that it is their approach to the gospel as a lost person that may actually cause them to ask questions and investigate and get saved.

So they can't lead somebody, however, their rejection of may cause somebody to investigate further. But that's actually a really good question and I kind of like the definition that I used of evangelism, even though it's not mine. I apologize for that.

Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Okay. Okay, so the question is, the illustration was given, that in a previous state, a previous church, they had a youth minister, a student pastor, who, quote-unquote, grew up in a Christian home, claimed to be a Christian, ended up becoming on staff at this church, and then at a later date, as an adult, I'm presuming, then claimed, "I never really was 'saved,'" and then became saved, and the question was, well, what about when he was, quote, lost, how did he, quote, lead people to the Lord? Well, here's the beautiful thing. The gospel is true no matter who says it, if that makes sense. And one of the things I love to say all the time, a broken clock is right twice a day, okay? So, that being said, the fact, 1 Corinthians 15, 1 through 3, says according to the scriptures, Jesus died, he rose from the grave, and that he's the only means of salvation. Whether you see that written on a wall, or spoken from somebody's mouth does not change the truth of that, and the Holy Spirit can use those words to convict your soul of your need of salvation. Okay?

Now, the thing that I think, and again, I don't want to get in the weeds on this and so, yes, at some level you could have a lost person communicate correct information that would lead somebody to the Lord. Okay? But at the same time, you really can't take someone someplace you've never been. Now, the information and the truth of it led them to the Lord. Does that make any sense? But but at the same time, I don't get the weeds on it. Here's my suggestion: get saved and lead other people's to Jesus, alright? I wouldn't trust on lost people to lead you to Jesus. It can happen. It does happen in rare instances but as

my lovely wife says, the exception to the rule does not make the rule. But it can happen. I know a guy personally who got saved in his own sermon. True story. He grew up the son of a Baptist preacher and fell into the trap of, "I'm going to do and say what Dad expects me to do and say," so much so, kind of like the story you gave, he went to a little Baptist college, actually, it was a larger Baptist college, went through everything, became a summer missionary where they would go out to these churches and do youth revivals and such. True story. He was preaching one day a sermon that his dad had written. He plagiarized his dad's sermons, because, I mean, it's kind of hard to write a sermon when you're lost, right? And he actually got so convicted during the invitation, he told the pastor of that church, "I need to get saved." Now, had the Lord used him? Sure. It is the exception to the rule and let me remind each and every one of us, God spoke truth through a donkey in the Bible so he can speak through you too. I'm just saying.

Now, okay, now, as an aside, and some of y'all have heard this story, particularly the men on Tuesday morning, but it's absolutely true, and my wife will testify to it. When we lived in Texas, we had some friends of ours that were just, they were just dear friends in the church that we served, and every time that I preached, every time I preached, this man would come up to me and say, "Jeff, I just wanna remind you, God preached through a donkey, he can use you tonight." It's very true.

Anybody else? We're good? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Oh yes, so the question is how does this question relate to times in the Bible where God used kings and rulers, Nebuchadnezzar, Sennacherib, a lot of guys, they led the people to the truth of God, they personally were not believers but they spoke words of truth and God used them to speak truth to reach other people. So again, I think, and this is where I'm getting in the weeds here, can a lost person communicate and somebody get saved because of it? Yes. Can a lost person actually lead somebody to the Lord I would struggle with. Does that communicate? Just a slight difference, but I think a very important difference because Nebuchadnezzar was as lost as they come and yet he claimed that Daniel's God was the one true God. So is it possible there were people watching going, well, if that's the case, I need to pay attention. Nebuchadnezzar didn't lead anybody to the Lord, but he communicated the truth of the Lord.

[unintelligible]

Right. Absolutely. God used him. So again, very good analysis.

Next question. "How long did each plague last, a day, a week, etc.?" So this is one of those great, we just don't know questions. How's that for honesty? There are no indicators in the book of Exodus of how long the plagues lasted. Now we're gonna go into chapter 7 of Exodus in just a moment and kind of look at these plagues, but let me kind of introduce the question by stating this. There are a lot of times in your Bible where we are given specific dates, in the certain year of the reign of a certain king, in the certain year

after a certain important event, whatever it may be. When you get into the New Testament, particularly the Gospel of John does an excellent job of doing this, it tells us that, you know, a couple weeks before the Passover, before the feast, or then, you know, in between the feast, whatever it may be. You don't have that much within the book of Exodus. In fact, if you'll notice, in the book of Exodus chapter 7, beginning in verse 15, it says, "Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand. And thou shalt say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear." We know the story, right? Moses puts the rod in the water, boom, it turns to blood, okay? Now, I want you to notice that when you get to the end of this, verse 25, "And seven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had smitten the river." Seven days, right?

Okay, the next plague, verse 1 of chapter 8. We get to the next plague, which is the plague of the frogs, okay? When they get done with the plagues of the frogs, you get to the end of it, verse 11, "And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only." Verse 12, "And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the LORD because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh. And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields. And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank. But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said." Verse 16, "And the LORD said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod." Notice that between the second and the third plague, there's no time frame given. Between number one and two, there's seven days. Between two and three, we're not given any. In fact, between most of these plagues, we are not given any.

So the question is, is it a week? Is it a day? I think really the answer is, yes. I mean, there is evidence of seven days, but there's also evidence of no time frame at all and as you get further into the plagues, it's almost as if it's compound interest. It's just building on itself, if that makes sense. And so most people, I'll go ahead and say myself included, most people claim that the plagues happened probably within a couple months. It wasn't, you know, some people say, well, maybe it was once a year for, you know, 10 years. Nah, or, you know, once a month. I think that you have a pretty expeditious process here from the beginning to the end. Now, when they end, when the last plague, remember? Famous one with the death of the firstborn. It is there in chapter 9 that God establishes the Passover. Okay, remember that famous meal? And you realize that that meal was to be held on the 15th of the first month every year and what's interesting is after the plagues, we have a recalling of the Passover regularly in scripture where we can start dating things as compared to that famous event. But the plagues itself, if you really press me on it, I would say I don't think the totality of them was more than a year. I think it's probably more like 60 to 90 days, if that makes sense.

We just don't know exactly. How's that for honesty? But, interesting, we read the plague about the frogs, one of my favorite illustrations in scripture. Do you remember that that

plague lasted one day longer than it should have? You remember? Moses said, "When do you want me to get rid of the frogs?" You remember his answer? "One more night." Does that strike you as odd? Why would Pharaoh want one more night with the frogs? That's just a strange request, because these creatures are nasty. And it says they were in his bed? They were in his living room. They were everywhere. And I don't know about you, but that's not just something I'd want for one more night. But my name's not Pharaoh either.

Any questions about the plagues? We're all good with the plagues? All right, you do? Moving on. Man, y'all are, man, Chick-fil-A made y'all go quick tonight. Here we go. It says, "Do you think, quote, matter as we know it, atoms, protons, neutrons, etc., existed before God spoke the universe into existence?" Okay, go to Genesis chapter 1. The very first verse of the Bible, I'm sure you have it memorized, whether you know it or not. So when you come to the book of Genesis, and what we call the creation narrative, there are multiple angles, multiple approaches, multiple philosophies of how people, I guess, address this passage. We're about to focus on verse 1, but it is verse 2 that incidentally has caused many people to prescribe or subscribe to this theory that God simply took what was already in existence and just fashioned and formed it to what he desired it to be. However, I believe that verse 1 speaks much to the contrary.

It says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Now, I don't do what I'm about to do often, but I'm going to do it tonight. I read the Bible in English, I study the Bible in English, but there are just times where it's a little bit necessary to just kind of dig down a little deep. That word create is the word bara, okay? You say, well why is that so important to understand? Because there's not a single person here, there's not a single person watching, there's not a single person listening who has ever baraded anything in your life. Not one of you have. To bara is to make something exist that prior to that did not exist at all. There's not one of us who's ever done that. Now, y'all have made a lot of things. Some of you have made furniture. We've all made mistakes. Okay. In other words, to make something.

Okay. Now I know what we mean when we say this, but we're, let's imagine that you have an incredible craftsman. Okay. Someone who's able to make furniture or decorative materials, whatever it is. Okay. What do we typically say, man, it was a beautiful creation. It's not a creation. To create means to bring into existence that which was prior to not in existence. So remember in John chapter 1 when it says that Jesus spoke and it was? So to answer the question specifically, the atoms, the protons, the neutrons did not exist until God said, "Let there be." He did not take that which pre-existed to him and fashion it to his desire. He actually originated it. He created it. And in Mark chapter 13, by the way, Jesus is talking about the second coming, the tribulation, all that, he compares that time event that we've been studying on Sunday morning, it hasn't been this way since the creation. So even Jesus himself used this word to reference Genesis chapter 1 verse 1.

So again, I understand that I do not have a degree in any type of physics or biochem or any of that stuff. However, biblically speaking, all those things that people look through telescopes and microscopes to understand more, did not exist until according to the Bible

God spoke them into existence. He did not take them and shape them. They have the shape they have since he spoke them. Hopefully that according to the scripture.

Anybody else, Genesis 1:1? We're good? Everybody's good. Man, y'all quiet time. Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

The reverse in. Oh, we're going oh, oh. Ah, I can avoid the special sound. 2 Peter 3, verse 7. Go to 2 Peter. There's always a way around. Some of you that are here for the first time are going, what are you trying to get around? Oh, don't worry, it'll happen. 2 Peter 3, verse 7. It says, "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store reserved under fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." To your point, sir, yes, in the very end of the Bible what we know as matter is overcome by fire. This is the prophetic passage.

Now if you want to, turn back to Matthew again, we were there previously in Matthew chapter, hold on, let me think what it is. I think it's chapter 19 again, but it's not the subject matter we were dealing with. In Matthew chapter 19, is it verse 28? Yes, Matthew 19, 28. It says, "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say to you, that you which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, you shall sit upon the 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel, etc. etc.. The word regeneration means to take something and to remake it and what we know as the new heavens, the new earth is referred to as being regenerated. Now, here's the big question and again, I don't wanna get too much in the weeds here. We know that in Genesis 1:1 it didn't exist. God spoke it and it did. When it is regenerated, when it is consumed by fire and there is a new heaven and new earth and new Jerusalem, here's where we can kind of get fun, does he take the matter that is now in a different form and reconstruct it? Or does he, because he's God, eliminate all the matter and recreate new matter? And to which my answer to you is, I don't know. How's that for honesty? But the Bible does say what we know today will be consumed by fire and that there will be a new heaven. There will be a new earth. There will be a new Jerusalem. Again, we could kind of debate that a little bit, but it's a good road to go down.

Is that good? We're good. Everybody's good. Ah, question number five, man, we're flying tonight. "How will we recognize one another in our glorified bodies?" Well, I'm going to be six foot four. I don't know what y'all are going to look like. Again, we know the Bible speaks that as a believer in Jesus Christ, one day you will get a glorified body. Okay? That glorified body in scripture is described in its mannerism, but not so much in its appearance. Let me tell you what I mean by that. Jesus in his glorified body, okay, in 1 John 3, verse 2, it says, as he is, one day we will be. So that glorified body that Jesus possessed at his resurrection, that gives us an idea, okay? Now you say, why is that important? Because that glorified body walked through walls. That glorified body ate fried fish. Oh, come on, can I get an amen there? Come on, guys. I mean, don't you remember breakfast in the Gospel of John where they're eating fish on the side? Oh, yeah. Now, you say, well, how do you know it's fried? I just believe it is. But we see a glorified

body doing things a non-glorified body cannot do. What's interesting is when it comes to the, quote, appearance of, how will we know who's who? The best way I can answer this question, this is my best way of doing it, is in Matthew chapter 17. It's called the Mount of Transfiguration. Jesus on this mountain, he takes Peter, James, and John up there with him, right? Remember, he transfigures before them. His raiment is brighter than the sun. There, where two people that are having a conversation with Jesus, there's Moses and Elijah. Peter does not ask who they are. He knows who they are. And last time I checked, the Bible doesn't say they were wearing name tags. And so again, somehow, someway, there is an understanding of, there's a recognition of, that I'll be honest with you, I just cannot fully explain, but Peter was the epitome of not being the sharpest knife in the drawer. Y'all know that, right? And if Peter knew that's Moses, and if Peter knew that's Elijah, I just got a funny feeling that when we're there one day, somehow, someway, we're going to be able to experience the same thing. And so in the glorified body, obviously, that waits us one day there is recognition, there is understanding. Hey, here's the deal. We're going to be in a glorified body, and we have all eternity to introduce ourselves to each other if we have to. It'll be okay, it'll be good.

Anything else on your glorified body? And by the way, I joke about height, but there's nothing given about what the height will or will not be. But I am praying about it. Next question, man, fast tonight. "Could cryptocurrency," here we go, "and the digital banking system be an early sign of receiving the mark of the beast?" Well, that famous mark of the beast takes us to Revelation chapter 13. [fanfare] There we go. Y'all knew it was going to happen. It happens every week. Revelation chapter 13 beginning in verse 16 is the famous mark of the beast. Now we're not going to talk about the location of the mark or even the instrumentation of the mark, but what I do want to talk about is the implementation of the mark. So, that being said, in verse 17, "that no man might buy or sell save he had the mark." So today, and I know the question is specifically about cryptocurrency, and we're gonna talk about that in just a moment, but today, when it comes to the means by which you buy or sell, there's a lot of options, okay? We can, still today, we can use old-fashioned cash and currency, right? Some of you still know how to write a check. Now, if you're under age 35, you might not, okay, but some of us still know how to write a check. We have debit cards, we have credit cards, we have Venmo, cryptocurrency. Now, here at First Baptist, when it comes to our Wednesday night meal, we're pretty flexible here. Now, we're not taking cryptocurrency yet. Okay? That being said, I think the important thing about the quote, mark of the beast, isn't so much the technology behind it, though that is relevant to the question, is the fact that it is the only means of transacting. It is the only way that you can purchase food for your family. It is the only way that you can do any type of business. Not one of many ways, or in the case of cryptocurrency, one that is quote, off radar, okay? It is the only means.

Now, I think what's important about this question is this, that all of these technologically based means of economic systems, what they're doing is conditioning us for the mark of the beast, is what they're doing. They're conditioning us. Now, if you were to go back to the '70s, and those of you that were active adults and relevant to the economic system of the 70s, when what we know as credit cards came out, Christians panicked. They're like, that's the mark of the beast. All right. And there was a lot of different reasons that they

claimed that it was, but 10 years later we said, maybe we missed that one. We kind of, we do that a lot. Right. And then a new system went, that's gotta be it. Okay. Now cryptocurrency, here we go. I got news for you. There'll be something new. There'll be something else that comes down the road. And I know we talked about this about the location of, there are stores in Europe now where you can have your financial information embedded in your body and you can just scan your palm and you can purchase, okay? It exists. It's conditioning us.

Now, I am not here to throw stones. I'm not here to run the proverbial bus over, but I'm talking about conditioning, not the mark of the beast. Have I made myself clear? You realize that we're about to embark on the holy season of the South. Football, right? And if you like to wear blue and orange and yell about Eagles during the game, every purchase for that food is cashless now. That's right. You try to pay cash for a bottle of water. You can't do it. And you say, well, but it's just so much easier. It's easier, but we've been conditioned. We've been conditioned that unless you bring this, you're not getting any Chick-fil-A. Do you see how that's working? I don't think your debit card is the mark of the beast. I don't think Bitcoin is the mark of the beast, okay? However, we are being conditioned to a non-tactile, non-visible, non-I-can-put-it-in-my-hands means of buying and selling, so that one day, when this does take place, everybody will say, well, this is just the next best, easiest thing to do. I'm convinced that when the mark of the beast comes out, I don't think humanity is going to go, oh, the thought of it! I think humanity is going to go, oh, this is so easy. This is so nice.

Now, let's be honest with ourselves, okay? I'm not advocating for the mark of the beast, and I'm not going to be here to take it. So I'm good with that. But would you all just agree with me that because you are employed at a local grocery store, you do know you're all an employee of a local grocery store, right? Have you self-checked out? You're an employee of a local grocery store. I just want to know, when I check out, why don't I have an option for a 401k? I'm just curious. Why not? You would have to admit that if you are feeding, I don't know, a family whose three boys weigh as much as mine do, that you have a lot of groceries, all right? And it's not fun. How much easier would it be just to put all that in the buggy and walk out the door and you get charged to whatever account because it can monitor everything you put in there and your information's already registered? It would be easier, right? Again, the reason I say that is the cryptocurrency, all the means that we have now, Venmo, it's so much easier. Yes, and so I think one day we're headed to, I don't think it's necessarily of.

Yes, sir?

[unintelligible]

It is associated with worship of the beast in this sense. Now notice you can't buy or sell, right? If you get into chapter 13 a little bit earlier it says they worshiped him. Now I'm gonna define worship, okay? Worship is our willful response to that which is expecting our attention. Now, if I were to use that in a Christian context, did I say music? When I say, oh we had worship today, most people think, oh we had music, right? No, no.

Worship isn't limited to a certain genre. Worship is when you do what God has called you to do, you're worshipping. So I think when we read worship, our natural Bible-believing mind is, oh, they gathered at a certain time, a certain place, and they all buzz themselves in. Worship is simply doing what that which you adore expects in return, okay?

Now, I talked about the holy season that's coming up, right? There is a SEC football stadium that most of you are probably not real fond of in South Louisiana. Is that an accurate assessment of the room? In that stadium on Saturday night, before kickoff, they play a video and they put words on the screen. They describe their football venue and the event that's about to play. They say, "This is the cathedral of college football and worship happens here." Go look it up. They play it before every home game, okay? Now, the reason I bring that up, sir, is what are they expecting you to do in that environment? To cheer for them. And so to worship is to respond willfully to do that, correct? The mark of the beast, when you have the tyrant of the Antichrist saying take this or die, you are willfully responding to him to get in return. How I've just defined worship means we worship a whole lot more things than we think we do. We're better pagans than we give ourselves credit for, okay, because it's a willful response to that which is expected of us by the other party.

So the worship, don't think group setting, don't think music, even though Nebuchadnezzar as a type of the Antichrist used it. He said when the music plays, bow down. But basically he's saying, let me put it in, let me read between the lines. Instead of Nebuchadnezzar saying when the music plays, get on your knees, basically the Antichrist says, by midnight of this date, if you don't have it, you die. By getting it, you're worshipping. Does that help out a little bit? In the true concept of worship, okay, and it says that the false prophet, the second beast, causes all to worship the beast. There's a lot more than just the mark of the beast. There's a lot of other behaviors as well.

But again, the famous mark of the beast, we're being conditioned for it. We are being conditioned as a society, as a global citizenship we are being conditioned to not question authority and to do whatever it takes to get whatever we want. Is that not the case? Did y'all not live through the last three years that I lived through? Is that not what's happening? We are being told, if that's what you want to do, and if that's what you want to participate in, not until you pass the test I give you to do so. These are conditions that are preparing us. You know what Jesus called us, right? He called us sheep. Baa. We just go off to do whatever we're willing to do to get whatever we want. There are people that will do anything to get whatever they want. Well, I got news for you. When you can't buy and you can't sell, all of a sudden there are going to be a lot of people that said, I would never follow him, they're going to follow him because they're hungry and they're willing to. But that's a really good point.

It says, follow up, "I've heard theories that the Antichrist will be the Pope but I've also heard that he'll be of Jewish descent. Can the Antichrist be a Jewish Pope?" Wow! Let's just go for the jugular. Here we go. Now one of the origins of this theory was actually Martin Luther himself. Martin Luther, who obviously is kind of that original entity that started what we know as the Protestant Reformation, made it very clear in his writings

that he believed this question to be true. But this is a Bible study, not a church history study. So let's go to Revelation 17, a few pages to the right. Let's talk about this famous Antichrist character. Again, I know we've spoken of him, but the thing that's important is when you get to chapter 17, understand that the the Antichrist is at the head of the pyramid and below him it talks about the different heads, it talks about the nations, the kings of the earth, and so you have a very organized system of bureaucracy, for lack of better terms. And then it all kind of flushes out and in Revelation chapter 17 the totality of his government is called Mystery, Babylon. Okay, that's the name the Bible gives it. In fact, it's there in verse 5. It says, "And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."

So here's the question. Why would somebody, for a lot of multiple different reasons, believe that this question to be true? I'm going to begin in verse 1 of chapter 17 and I want you to hear the description that the Bible gives of how the Antichrist and his reign appears in the earth. It says, "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters." By the way, that description is of what we know Mystery, Babylon, the totality of his system. Verse 2, "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness." Push pause. Listen to the next description. "I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication."

Now, I'm not here to disparage any one individual in particular, but if you have ever attended or watched a quote-unquote worship service from Vatican City, you just heard a description of what that character looks like when he leads the Mass. That's how he's dressed, and that's what he has in his hand. Now, some of you think, oh, you're just reading. How am I reading into anything? That's just the description, okay? So again, there is evidence beyond just Martin Luther that you have an individual. Now, remember the names of blasphemy, right, said, well, the names of blasphemy. Do you remember that Jesus made a very famous statement? He said, "Call no man your father." What is one of the descriptions that this character allows himself to be called? Father. You realize that one of the descriptions that is used of this character is the Vicar of Christ, which means the representative of Christ. He claims to be Christ. You know what's funny is that in Revelation chapter 13 and in 2 Thessalonians 2, when the Antichrist walks into the temple and claims he's God, we all say that's an abomination but when somebody comes on TV at Christmas Eve and calls himself God, we celebrate it. I went there, didn't I? Because the reality of the matter is, I'm not speaking to you or your neighbor or your friend as an individual, I'm speaking to an individual who claims to be something that the Bible says to forbid and is dressed identically to what the Bible describes as the great whore. If it looks like a duck and it walks like a duck, it might be a duck. And the Antichrist, if you read chapter 17 and 18, comes under the stealth of people adoring, believing, and coming alongside of the Antichrist. We studied this on Sunday morning a

couple weeks ago. He doesn't come in a red suit with horns and a tail. He comes under the auspice of a false messiah. "I come to provide answers. I come to bring everybody together." And the last I checked and I do so recently, is this character today is making a regular habit of verbally communicating those of religious backgrounds that have been historically contrary to each other need to put aside differences and just all come together. Isn't that interesting how things are being played out?

Now, the bigger question is this, of, quote, Jewish descent. You do know we live in a global Heinz 57 now, right? And I know I've shared this with you, and trust me, it's for entertainment purposes only. There is a book out there called "The Antichrist and a Cup of Tea," okay, which claims that King Charles is the Antichrist, okay? Now, I'm not claiming King Charles is the Antichrist, but in that book, per this question, it shows his descendancy to the tribe of Judah. So it would not be unfathomable if King Charles can claim to be of the tribe of Judah, then surely any of us can claim to be of the tribe of Judah at some point, right? So again, I don't think that's gonna be as difficult for the Jewish people to accept as maybe we think it would be because nowadays there are so many people that can claim so many descendancies of so many different areas.

Okay, I've opened the can. Anybody want to dump it out? Here we go. Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

That he could be the false prophet? The question was that this character could be more the false prophet than the actual Antichrist. Can you and I as friends just agree that whether you're the Antichrist or the false prophet, you're pretty much in conjunction with the wrong side of history? Okay, yeah, it's not good. So whether you're the actual Antichrist or you're the false prophet who makes people worship the Antichrist, you're still a literal tool of Satan. And just, again, the way they're arrayed, the way they're decorated, the way that they present themselves is eerily similar to what we see on a quote-unquote regular basis. You're like, I ain't talking about that subject. All right, we're good.

Question seven, "What happens to us and Jesus during the period of Satan being loosed for a season?" Ooh, that's a really good question. Why don't y'all stay in Revelation? Here we go. Chapter 20, we just keep on, we're almost done, just a few chapters and we're there. At the end of chapter 20, we studied this a couple Sundays ago, at the end of this famous thousand-year period where Jesus reigns on the throne, it talks about in verse 7 of chapter 20, "When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle. The number is whom the sand of the sea." Verse 9, "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and they compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast in the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." So the question is, okay, it's been a thousand years. Jesus has been reigning, we've been reigning alongside of him, and now all of a sudden Satan's

loose, there's this rebellion that takes place, and God just, he immediately judges. The question is, what about us? What happens to us? What's interesting is there is absolutely no reference at all in the scripture to us being impacted at all by this event. You and I, the us here, we're already in our glorified bodies. We're already reigning with the Lord. We're already at that stage where everything is good. Those that are deceived, as we talked about a couple Sundays ago, these are those that when Jesus came to reign were still in mortal bodies. They still have a depraved, sinful nature. A little child is as an old man. They're living elongated lives. Those are the ones that must render the decision. Those are the ones that are being targeted. The "us" here, we're good. In fact, it says there that God brings down fire and brimstone and judges. What's interesting, in 1 Corinthians 6, it says that one day you and I shall judge angels. That's actually a reference to the latter part of chapter 20 when they are sent to the lake of fire. If you and I are reigning with Christ, doesn't it make sense that we shall judge with Christ as well? And you say, well, why is that a critical aspect? Because if we've been living and reigning with him a thousand years and now we judge with him, how many times do you and I today, I'm just going to go ahead and go there, how many times do you and I want to act out on the judgment of God now? You do realize that you're going to one day, this is just not the day. One day, you will, according to this passage, rain judgment down with him, but we don't have the privilege of going before him in this case. But it is a very insightful question.

Anything else about the deception at the end? Gog and Magog? Yes, ma'am?

[unintelligible]

It's what the Bible says. Those that have rebelled, yes, ma'am. We're just going to keep going through Revelation. Keep going in chapter 20. Here we go. Hey, by the way, y'all getting a head start on this Sunday morning, y'all get a two minute nap in the service Sunday. Here we go. Verse 12 says, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." So you've got death, hell, Satan, e'rybody, I like to use that word, who has rebelled against God now finds themselves in the lake of fire. And we know there were angelic beings who rebelled, correct? And so they are judged and they are sent as well. 1 Corinthians 6 says we shall judge angels. You say, well, what does that mean? This is your head start for Sunday morning. I got the question, where are "us" in this one? Us is not being judged. Us is behind him. By the way, do you realize that when he comes down in chapter 19, we're behind him? I think when he judges, we are behind him. So in other words, when he judges, we shall reign judge with him. The judging of the angels isn't you and I personally saying, you're good, you're bad. It's when he pronounces that judgment, we are there confirming that judgment as his glorified saints. Does that help out a little bit? It does, good deal.

All right, here we go. "Does," we're almost out of time, but we got time, "Does accepting theistic evolution destroy the gospel? There is death in the evolutionary fossil record that would put to death before man's sin, quote, right." Now some of you go, whoa, how can we solve this in two minutes? Theistic evolution is the idea that what we know as the scientific explanation of evolution is as the textbooks say, however, the term theistic in front of it means that God initiated it. Theistic evolution basically says that all of the process of evolution was initiated by God. The question is, does it destroy the gospel? I'm going to go ahead and just be very transparent. I do not subscribe to theistic evolution personally. I don't. Okay? You might, and that's okay. I've got friends that do. Okay? However, the gospel of Jesus Christ says man has sinned, Jesus paid the price for our sins, and that if we believe on him, we shall be saved from our sins and be with him forever. Okay?

Now, I understand that if you really get in the weeds of evolutionary theory, that can be troublesome. As I like to say somewhat humorously, if you believe that you went from the goo to the zoo to you, okay, because then you start dealing with, well, when we were small microorganisms, did we have souls as a redemption? I mean, we could get really in the weeds, okay? However, the thing that I would draw your attention to is in Genesis chapter 1, on the sixth day of the creation account, it says, "And God created man and woman." Remember that question about creation? When God said he created man and woman, he said, "I am creating something that has never existed before." So I would draw a distinction of theistic evolution between maybe what we might call a materialistic evolution versus human evolution and when we subscribe to a biblical account, you cannot biblically subscribe to human evolution because God uses the word "create" there and not "make." He did not use something that already existed to form or fashion. The Bible says they did not prior to exist and now they do. And so, therefore, that theistic evolution has multiple lanes that I think if you see the human lane the proper way, you still have a proper gospel when you get to John 3.16.

All right, we're out of time. We've got to close, got to pray, and then we're going to flip this room. Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, tonight, thank you that at the end of all the day and at the end of all the questions from Genesis to Revelation, it really does boil down to the gospel. God, we are sinful creatures that you were willing to save. And God, we thank you that your love for us was greater than our sin, that you were willing to shed your blood for the redemption of our souls. And God, thank you that even though we question about glorified bodies, even though we wonder what it's all going to look like, that you said in John chapter 14 if we believe in god, we're to believe in you also, that you would come and you would take us and you have a place prepared for us. So God today, even though we can get a lot of complex concepts and I'm guilty of it, too, may we rest on the simplicity that you are a Savior of sinful humanity. It is the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.