

Ask Jeff

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By Dr. Jeff Meyers

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Crossroads Ministries

301 S. 8th Street

Opelika, Alabama 36801

Website: www.fbcopelika.com

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers

Good evening, First Baptist. It is 6:30 Central Standard Time here in the house, unless you're listening on 97.7 FM, it's 10 a.m. on Sunday for you. But nonetheless, I want to welcome you to our large group adult Bible study here at First Baptist Church, Wednesday nights, which if this is your very first time, may be a little bit different than most Bible studies you've ever participated in or attended. Tonight, everything that we discuss, every topic, every concept, every scripture is going to be initiated by you. You have the opportunity tonight to drive the conversation. But before we get to tonight, just to let you know, as far as a Q&A response, we actually have a YouTube channel that answers a question of the day every Monday through Friday. Now, on the YouTube channel, we don't go as in depth as we're about to go tonight. We don't spend as much time. But one of the things that it allows us to do is take a question and answer it in two to three, sometimes four minutes time span.

Now, if you want to submit to our YouTube channel, there's two ways to do so. Both of them are web-based. You can go to askjeff.net or fbcopelika.com/askjeff. Either one will get you to that portal. It goes to the file that goes to the YouTube channel and the reason for doing that is oftentimes on Wednesday night we can get bogged down in a question. We can chase rabbits. We have follow-up questions and it just kind of allows a more of a rapidness to answering of questions. Now here's a great thing, you can submit to the YouTube channel and on Wednesday night, we don't kick you out on Wednesday night if you submit to the YouTube channel and/or vice versa. But Wednesday nights live here at First Baptist there are two ways that you can submit a question, a concern or a thought for our discussion. The primary way that most people utilize is text messaging. 334-231-2313. When you send in by way of text, you remain completely anonymous. You can be on the front row in the room. You can be on the other side of the camera. It can be another day of the week. It doesn't matter when or where. When you submit, we don't know who you are. We don't publish your number. We don't publish your name, not that your name comes with your number. It's simply your question. Now another advantage of text messaging is that if we're talking about a subject matter or concept and you want to dig a little deeper, maybe take a little side road, whatever it may be, you can submit a follow-up question and still remain anonymous. When you do so, it will show up on my screen in a different font that lets me know that we are staying on topic. And then those of you that are seasoned veterans, you are aware that in this place, live on Wednesday night, you have the advantage of raising your hand. When you put your hand in the air,

you lose your anonymity. That's right, we know who you are. However, your image nor will your voice be projected by way of television, radio, etc. It stays in the house. So it's okay, because we're all friends anyway. Not that big of a deal. I just want you to know, if you do raise your hand, you are not gonna be known on the other side of the camera. You can remain anonymous to the world at large. And one of the best ways to do a follow-up question is by putting your hand in the air, because you have the floor and we go from there.

So without further ado, let's talk about some Bible. "Luke chapter 12 verse 34 says, 'For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also.' That reminded me of Matthew 6:19 through 21. What does it mean to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven?" Well, this is a great question because the Bible does say that where our treasures are, that is where our heart is, where we place that which is valuable to us, that which took lots of time, effort, sacrifice to acquire that is typically where our heart follows. And essentially in the context of the gospel of Luke it is saying that if we place that which is valuable and sacrificial into the things into the hands of the Lord then he has quote-unquote our heart. Then you go to the Sermon on the Mount and Jesus says, well, in a lot of that lay up treasures in heaven. What does all that mean? Go to 1 Corinthians chapter 3. 1 Corinthians chapter 3 gives us a little more detailed explanation of the concept. 1 Corinthians chapter 3 beginning in verse 11 we have a passage that we commonly refer to or I guess we claim it to be, what we call the quote-unquote judgment seat of Christ. You say what is that? Well, the Bible speaks about different types of judgments. Most of us are familiar in Revelation 20, that great final judgment where those that have rejected the things of God, rejected Jesus Christ, they are condemned to what the Bible calls the lake of fire. That's not the judgment for believers and in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, the Bible speaks of a time where an individual, you and I, who have come to know Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, we are saved, we are seated in the heavens, we've got a mansion waiting for us, all those analogies, all those illustrations, yet we still have an opportunity, and that word is key in a moment, we have an opportunity to go through what the Bible calls a specific judgment. Now, this word judgment is not used in 1 Corinthians 3. It's used later in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and in Romans chapter 14 where it says we must all, speaking about believers, appear before the judgment seat of Christ. The judgment seat of Christ is not determining your eternity, okay? The judgment seat of Christ is an opportunity, notice I keep using that word, for you and I to express our concern, our love for the things and the person of God on how, per the question, we've stored up our treasures.

Okay, 1 Corinthians chapter 3, beginning in verse 11 it says, "For other foundation can no man lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire. The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward." Notice how I use the word opportunity. Verse 15. "If any man's work shall be burned, it shall suffer a loss but he himself shall be saved, so as yet by fire." Now that last phrase of verse 15 is critical because it basically says that this judgment has nothing to do with eternity. It has nothing to do with heaven versus

hell. These are all heaven-bound, saved by the blood of Jesus Christ folks who one day when we appear before our Savior, verse 14, there's the opportunity for a reward. Oftentimes I think we look at this passage and see it in the opposite, that it is an obstacle, all the wood, all the hay, all the stubble, but did you notice the other side? The gold, the silver, the precious stones. Now, in our culture at times, you may have heard a phrase such as this, somebody did something sacrificial, somebody, quote, took one for the team. Have you ever heard somebody say, "Well, there's a jewel for your crown"? That phrase comes from this passage and the idea is that to do something for the Lord's sake, for his honor, for his glory to be a self-sacrificing, to live a selfless life on his behalf, is one worthy of rewarding. And so when the Bible speaks about laying up treasures in heaven, it's really giving us an illustration of this passage of this concept.

Now let me go to the second part of this. Just imagine yourself years from now, you've experienced this, you've had the opportunity to be rewarded and even though the wood, the hay, and the stubble, and by the way, we've all got that in our lives, even though that's already burned away, there is, there is gold, there's silver, there's precious stones. There is reward. There is evidence for your living faithfully for the Lord Jesus Christ. In the book of Revelation chapter 4, guess what it says about those who've received these rewards? It says they cast them at the feet of Jesus. Now the reason that's important is because I think one of the worst things that we can find ourselves in is what I call crown collecting, where we do things for the reward. You do realize that that's the opposite of what this passage is talking about, right? Because if you're doing it for the reward, then you're doing it for yourself. And so the concept of the reward is living a life of sacrifice, living a life of faithfulness, placing the things that are most precious and most dear to us on behalf of the Lord's sake and not ourselves. One day, when we go through this event, we shall be rewarded but here's the beautiful thing, we're rewarded so that we can give that reward back to Jesus not because or can we keep it for all of eternity, if that makes sense. So when we're quote been there 10 000 years as amazing grace says, we're not going to be comparing crowns at lunchtime. I mean, it's just not... Now I know, what do you mean lunchtime? Well, I don't know if we're going to have lunchtime up there, but I'm voting for it. I mean, why not, right? So, but that's not going to be a reality of that. It's really more of an opportunity per kind of the mentality behind it to give even more to the Lord as a gratitude, as a graciousness for what he's done on our behalf.

So, questions, follow-up, thoughts, concerns? Yes, ma'am?

["Criteria, definition or is there a list?"]

Criteria, definition or is there a list? There you go. She's like get the spreadsheet out. What do we got here? In your New Testament, there are actually five places where it talks about a specific, and the word the Bible uses is a crown. Some Bibles will use the word reward, but typically the imagery is a quote, crown. Okay? 1 Corinthians chapter 9, beginning of verse 24, talks about being faithful in our walk with the Lord, and talks about that if we beat our bodies into subjection, meaning we don't yield to the things of the flesh, we will receive an incorruptible crown, and basically that is a crown of faithfulness, of a sacrificial life, of a life of holiness, okay? You get into 1 Peter chapter 5

verse 4 talks about what we call the shepherd's crown. It says those that are under our spiritual authority whether that's within our own respective homes, a Sunday school class, a church whatever it may be, co-workers who we mentor and shape in the faith, that that faithfulness receives a crown. James chapter 1 verse 12 talks about a crown for enduring tribulation. Basically, and I don't want to get into a spreadsheet tonight, at the end of the day, all of these passages can be very simply summarized in this means. When we make decisions and we do things on behalf of the Lord and for him only, and not for what we can get in return, somehow, someday, he notes it, he understands it, and he takes care of it. There's a lot of folks one day that are going to come to this place in 1 Corinthians 3, and they're going to pop their knuckles, "Yep, it's time for my crowns." And they're going to walk away with a whole lot of nothing. And there's some of you that right now you're dreading this. "You know man, it's going to be a bad day for me." You might be shocked what it looks like because we down here get it all reversed, do we not? We think the champions get the crown. Well, in the Lord's perspective, the humble get the crown. And so I think the best thing that you and I can do in regards to this question is just stay faithful to the things of God, the words of God, and just let him worry about it because the minute that we try to figure all this out, we're gonna mess it up real quick. If that makes any sense. So again, don't crown collect because at the end of the day, or shall I say the end of our life, whatever we're rewarded with, we get the opportunity to give back.

Now, just for the sake of cultural, I guess, communication, there has been over the last couple decades, there's been a very well-known, for lack of better terms, Christian contemporary band referred to as Casting Crowns. That's where they get their name from. It's the passage in Revelation of giving everything that they're rewarded with back to the Lord. It's a really good imagery that they used for their name.

So any other follow-up on this concept, this idea? We're good to go? Next says, "What are your thoughts on the 1611 King James Version and the books that were included, specifically the book of Enoch being that is referenced in later editions?" Okay, let's have some fun tonight. So if we were to go back to the 15th, 16th, 17th centuries, you'll discover that we are coming on the backside of what we know as the Protestant Reformation, and we are experiencing something that changed and revolutionized the world. We may call it the Protestant Reformation, but I would say the King James Version became the Protestant Revolution. You say, what do you mean revolution? Because for the very first time since the tomb was empty, humanity had the opportunity to have a copy of God's word in their home. That had never happened before. You know that the early churches, I mean we're talking those early days right after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we're talking about the days of Paul and Peter, we're talking about those early church fathers, they didn't have a copy of God's word. They did not as we do today. It existed, it was accessible, but in specific locations at specific times and not readily like you and I have available today. Thanks to the Gutenberg Press, thanks to the Protestant Reformation, thanks to all the things that occurred there early in the 17th century, for the very first time a mass-produced Bible was available in the language quote of the people and at a cost and price that was feasible for one's home, one's office, business, etc.

Now, the question is, well, what about these quote-unquote other books, specifically what we know as the book of Enoch? Now, as you go back and you look, there is a section of sacred, notice I put a big clearing my throat there, books of the Bible, that we refer to as being apocryphal. It's called the Apocrypha. If anybody here or anybody knows somebody that has a Roman Catholic or an Orthodox tradition, those are books that are very critical to them, and they would consider them a part of the scripture. Okay? Obviously, the Protestant tradition does not. Now, I'm going to answer this question biblically in a very unique way, then we're going to flesh it all out. Go to Malachi chapter 4, the last book of your Old Testament. I'm going to share with you a very important prophecy in regards to this question because when we talk about apocryphal works, there's works out there, you can go and research them. You've got 1 and 2 Maccabees, Bel and the Dragon, The Shepherd of Hermes, all these other things. I'll talk about the book of Enoch in just a moment. But when you go back to the book of Malachi, I want to begin in verse 4, of chapter 4. This is the end of your Old Testament. It says, "Remember you the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto you in Horeb, for all Israel with the statutes and judgments." Verse 5. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." Now that passage we just read is a very critical Old Testament prophecy that basically says that what we know as scripture, what we know as the words of God are not going to be readily available until whom we know as John the Baptist shows up. Now I know what some of you are thinking, "Well my Bible said Elijah, not John the Baptist." Do you remember the debate about who John the Baptist was? And in Matthew chapter 14, Jesus made this statement, "If you receive me, then he is Elijah." Because it said he came in the spirit of Elijah. We could flesh all that out if necessary. So here's basically what the end of the Old Testament says, that from this point, Malachi, up until the time of Christ, no more scripture. We're done.

You say, "Well, why is that important?" Because all those apocryphal works that I just referenced, they were all given during that time frame. Now, are they valuable historically? Absolutely. Absolutely, they're valuable historically. You read 1 and 2 Maccabees, you hear about the famous Maccabean revolt that basically established the celebration that we know as Hanukkah today, not a biblical thing but it is a historical help, if that makes sense, and those books of the bible help us understand the thinking, the philosophy and the events of these 400 plus years of this time frame but they're not quote scriptural, okay, and that's what's important. Now going back when the Bible was quote mass produced in the early 1600s in what we know as the original King James Version, first edition 1611, second edition 1613, I could get into all that mess. But here's what you need to understand. What we know as those books were included, but they were not included as being scripture. What they did originally, by the way you could go to some museums and such and find some of these first and second editions, is you will discover they had the Old Testament, then there was like a blank page, an explanation, then they had the Apocrypha because we're just going in chronological order here, then the New Testament. Why is that important? Old Testament, New Testament, not Apocryphal Testament. Do you see the difference? Apocryphal by definition means that which is not received as sacred. It's valuable, but it's not received as being quote-unquote

a sacred text. Later on there was some pushback and they said, "You know, we're glad you gave us the apocrypha but that's a waste of pages and paper and we're not gonna read it anyway," so they started kind of putting it as an appendix. By the time you get to the end of the 1600s early 1700s, it just drops off and that's no longer being published because these were never in the Protestant tradition and by the way the early church either, these were not received sacred texts to begin with, they were more historical texts and Bibles back then were a lot more expensive to print and nobody wanted it and it was costing a lot of money and they said we're just going to drop it anyway.

Now the book of Enoch. The book of Enoch is not actually one of the original apocryphal works, however, I was maybe on key there, I don't know, however, it was written during the time frame of the apocryphal works. The book of Enoch is more of a Hebrew mystical work than it is an apocryphal work, even though it fits in the time frame. You say, "What is the book of Enoch?" Well, if you go research it, it's called the book of Enoch, sometimes they call it 1 Enoch. That's just what they refer to it as. That book of the Bible is attributed to whom we know as Enoch of Genesis chapter 5. Remember the man who walked with the Lord and then was not? The man who all of a sudden just ascended up on high and just was in the presence of the Lord? That is whom it is attributed to.

Now the book of Enoch contains, if memory serves me correctly, I think it's five main sections within the book of Enoch. Now, by the way, I'm going to walk through it real quick. If you go and research it tonight, one of the ways you know that you know that you know that you know that it's not, quote, biblical is because it doesn't sound like the Bible. I mean, it just doesn't read like the Bible. See, the reason the Bible reads the way it does is because God inspired it, and God breathed it, all right? And when man just wrote it, it just has a different feel to it. But nonetheless, in the book of Enoch, you've got five main sections. The majority of its content is on impending coming judgment, okay? Now, think about when Enoch lived in Genesis chapter 5. I'm not a mathematician, but five comes before six, right? Six of Genesis is Noah's flood. Was there not impending judgment? Oh, absolutely. It's one of the big ones, correct? In fact, so big, God said, "I'll never do this with water again," but he will do it with, quote, fire.

So why is the book of Enoch such a big deal? Because unlike the Shepherd of Hermes, unlike Bel and the Dragon, unlike 1 and 2 Maccabees, the traditional apocryphal books, there is a passage in your Bible that sounds very eerily similar to Enoch. Go to the book of Jude. Turn to Revelation and hang a hard left. You'll find him. He's one page, maybe two pages. In the book of Jude, there is a passage that if I were to be completely transparent with you, basically is a reference to the book of Enoch. Now before we read this, let me remind you, truth is truth whomever wrote it. I mean, in other words, truth is truth but one thing you need to understand about your Bible is there's a lot of things that are quote-unquote outside of your 66 books of the Bible that the Lord uses as a reference. For example, in your Old Testament, there's a place where it talks about the Book of Jasher, the Book of Kings. In other words, here's what the Bible's saying. If the non-God-inspired works are saying this and it is true, then why aren't you listening to the God-inspired words?

Now, that being said, when you get to the book of Jude, verse 14, it says, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of thee, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed of all their speeches, which the ungodly sinners have spoken against them." Do you think he's calling them ungodly? Yes. But the thing that's interesting is it actually references the person of Enoch and it references messages that he proclaimed. Now here's what your Bible does not do. Your Bible does not say according to the book of Enoch. Your Bible says according to Enoch. Now you understand that Enoch was alive during Lamech's day and Noah's day and all those kind of famous guys in Genesis chapter 5. And so therefore his prophecies would have been known, would have been readily orally available throughout time and tradition. So just because there's a reference to Enoch does not validate the book of Enoch as being scriptural. What it does for me is it says this, if there are writings out there from men of God that are not considered scripture, that are saying the same thing that scripture is, maybe we ought to pay attention to it. Maybe we ought to really focus on, hey, this is almost doubly true because even non-scriptural references contain the same works.

So follow-up says, "So who wrote the book of Enoch? Enoch himself?" Again, the book of Enoch is attributed to about second, third century B.C. during that apocryphal time that, as we often do, scrolls were found, writings were discovered, you know how that is, that are attributed to whom we know as Enoch. Now, if you want to go tonight and you want to go and read the book of Enoch, I'm going to warn you in advance, you think Revelation is tough. Whoa boy, I mean it just jumps around from topic to topic and it has got some really wild imagery there. But in the very first section, I think it's in the second or the third chapter I don't remember, this reference that we have in Jude it sounds a whole lot like it, almost as if the concept has been... because it talks about ten thousand coming in judgment with the Lord. So again, when we look at these apocryphal books, or books that are written during what we call the inner testament time, okay, it doesn't mean everything written is false, it just means it's not inspired by God. And guess what? $2 + 2 = 4$ is not God-inspired, but it's true. And so just because something happens to be true doesn't mean it's inspired by God, but that which is inspired by God will always be true. Does that make sense, what I just said? But the book of Enoch is a fascinating read. All types of dystopian, eschatological, end times imagery, but one of the problems with the book of Enoch is it's real easy to get in a rabbit hole because there's a whole lot in it that is not justifiable by the book of Revelation. And so we've got to be careful to make sure Revelation inspired, Enoch not. But where they cross, we can agree.

Any other apocryphal, Enoch, intertestament questions, concerns, thoughts? Nothing?
Oh, yes ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Yes. Oh, absolutely. So in the book of Enoch, I think it's still in the first book, maybe in the second book. Do you know how long it's been since I've read the book of Enoch? And

whoever submitted the question, great question, it's just I haven't read it lately because it's not inspired by God. But that's okay. There is a very long discourse, ma'am, you're correct, on the fallen angels. And listen to this, on the fallen angels desiring physical intimacy with females of the human origin and coming and having relations with them and creating giants that have to be destroyed by God because man can no longer control them, what does that sound like? Chapter 6 of Genesis. Now, a lot of people say, because when you get to Genesis chapter 6, it says that the sons of God went in to the daughters of men, created men of renown, etc., etc. A lot of people argue and say, well, if you take the idea that the sons of God are angelic beings and the daughters of men are humans, then all you're doing is agreeing with the book of Enoch. You're not agreeing with scripture. The problem with that is, the term sons of God in the Old Testament only exists four times and the other three times it exists is in the book of Job, and every time it's in reference to what we know as angelic beings. Here's the thing about Enoch. Enoch was there. He saw what was happening. And so therefore, we have to give his book some legitimacy, but that doesn't mean it's inspired by God. You know, right now I've got two sons that are in college and they're reading textbooks and they're giving their professors, they're giving them legitimacy, they're giving them the fact that you're the expert in this field, you know what you're talking about, but not one of them would say those books are inspired by God even though they're legitimate research and legitimate information. And so just like, please don't laugh when I say this, just like we would claim that a journalist would tell us the truth about a story, please don't laugh, okay, but we would never claim that the nightly news is inspired by God. Definitely not, okay, or the morning news, or the afternoon news, or any of it. But let's take the high road, if they get the information correct about what was observed that didn't mean it's inspired by God but that which is inspired by God would be observed correctly. But you're correct, the book of Enoch does reference this almost deity-humanity union that can be substantiated by Genesis 6. So it's there.

Yes, sir?

[unintelligible]

Yes. Cain's first son, so remember Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, you're absolutely correct, sir. Cain's first son's name was Enoch. Notice that in Jude it references the seventh from Adam so therefore you've got subsequent generations. Now if you go back into Genesis 5 there's people that have discussed and argued and said, well, hold on now, if you do a strict chronology he's actually not the seventh generation after Adam. But I'm not gonna get in the weeds here but Jude doesn't say the Adam that was married to Eve that had Cain and Abel. You don't think there could have been other Adams? We don't get... you do realize in Genesis 5 we don't have every name of every person on earth, right? I believe that the book of Jude is referencing the Enoch of Genesis 5, who was a quote, prophet of his day, so beloved by the Lord and so walking with the Lord, he was caught up to be with the Lord, and those prophecies continued, they're alluded to, they're referenced to, but the work that is attributed to him is not canonical, God-inspired scripture.

I saw a hand, I thought I saw a hand. Maybe I didn't see a hand, I apologize. I'm talking about the book of Enoch and now I'm seeing things. Wow, the book of Jeff, that would be frightening. No more Enoch or apocryphal thing?

But just let me pull it up, wrap it up together before we go to the next question. When somebody says that a book of the Bible or a book is apocryphal, what they really mean is that historically it was written after Malachi and before what we know as the New Testament, it is not God-inspired, it's not God-breathed, but it is valuable for the historical record and an understanding of what is happening. But the key issue is the inspiration of God. The book of Enoch, though not a part of that apocryphal work that's usually attributed to that group of writings, it happened in the same time frame so we can call it apocryphal, but it's not in the apocrypha. That make sense? Clear as mud? All right, we're good.

It says, "If someone has been saved but then becomes an atheist and speaks against God, are they still saved?" Now, here's the great thing about this question. You've hit the big gray area. You say, "What do you mean you've hit the big gray area?" Well, let's go to 1 John chapter 2. 1 John chapter 2 because again, this is one of those questions that I would be willing to say there's a lot of different opinions on in the room. But here's the good news, God doesn't care about our opinions, mine either. The big issue is, what does the word of God say?

Now in 1 John chapter 2, we're going to begin in verse 18. By the way, what we're about to read is the only time in your Bible where the word antichrist is used. Typically, when you use that word, we're thinking about that world ruler of a very narcissistic, anti-God nature. In the book of Revelation, he's referred to as the Beast. 2 Thessalonians, the son of perdition, the man of lawlessness. In 1 John 2, that's the time where we get the term or the name of an antichrist, which basically just means not the Christ, okay? That being said you're about to see this word in plurality. This isn't referencing the Antichrist. It says he will come one day. It's talking about those who act like him in their own personal lives.

Verse 18, "Little children, it is the last time and as you've heard that antichrist shall come. Even now are many antichrists," plural, "whereby we know it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us but they went out, that they might make manifest that they were not all of us." So what is that saying? What does that say? What that says is there were individuals that were part of this group of believers who most likely worshiped alongside of them, went to Bible studies, fellowshiped, did all the things that you and I do together, but there came a time where they departed from the faith. Now, I don't know who submitted the question, but if somebody claims to be an atheist and speaks against God, it sounds pretty similar to what we just read, correct? But what does it say? They departed because they were never a part of us. Now I've given this statement in days past. It's been a long time, but I'm gonna give it again because I think it really works. You ready? A faith that fickle before the finish was false from the first. Now try saying that fast a couple times. And so I think what 1 John chapter 2 is communicating very clearly to us,

it's not saying, so someone says they're a believer, okay, someone says all the right things, goes through all the right motions, and by the way, neither you or I know what's really in somebody's heart. We can observe what we observe, but we really don't know what's going on on the inside. I will say this. I'm not trying to be ugly. I'm not trying to be crass. The only person in this room that I know that I know that I know is saved and going to heaven is me. Thank you. Because I really don't know what y'all believe. You say, "Well, we're at Bible study. We're Baptists." That doesn't mean anything. All right, so again I know that I know about me. I don't know about you. Now you might be out there going I know that I know that I'm not saved but I don't know about you. I mean, it's possible, right, because you don't know what's in my heart.

Now the reason that is important is because when we have questions such as this, someone who quote said the same things we said, went to the same Bible studies, went through some of the same, shall we say, religious activities, and now all of a sudden, they claim there is no God, they're vile and they speak against him? I think what 1 John 2 helps us out with, it says, you know what? We may have heard the right words. We might have seen the right actions. But we never saw the heart. We never knew what was genuinely there and the biblical evidence is that someone who departs from us, according to what we just read, was never actually a part of us. And so I think that brings a lot of clarity to the issue.

Now what that does not address, now the question is very precise and whomever submitted it, I want to thank you. You didn't say somebody who went through a season of prolonged rebellion. You didn't talk about somebody who went through a season of doubt and questioning. You didn't talk about what Jeremiah said, backsliding. In this question that we just addressed, we're talking full blown, God doesn't exist, and I despise him. That is different than seasons of rebellion or seasons of falling into temptation and such. It's a completely different question because I think when we say, "Oh man, somebody, they were just faithful to the things of the Lord, but man, if you look back at this time in their life, ooh, it was a struggle. They fell into sin, they fell into this, they fell into that, but thank God they came back to the Lord." You would never claim this verse for them. You would go back to Jeremiah and talk about those who backslid and came back unto the Lord. Does that make sense? There's a distinction. This question is a very outright blatant rejection of, not a rebellion towards. Hopefully that's a little bit clearer on that one because guess what? All of us, all of us have had periods of rebellion. All of us have had periods of waywardness. Have you ever gotten mad at God, frustrated with God, say, "God, I'm done with you for a while"? Sure you have. All right, that happens, right? But that's really different than this question. That's a whole lot different.

So, any follow-up, any thoughts? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Oh, good old Hebrews 6:4, here we go. You my friend, brother, Hebrews. All right, Hebrews chapter 6, verse 4. Again, and I say this often, I think it's one of the most taken out of context verses of the Bible and by the way, that's not because you brought it up,

okay? I promise you that. Hebrews chapter 6:4, here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to read the verse as it is written, just the verse. We're going to talk about it, and then we're going to do something fun. Here we go. Hebrews 6:4, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, have tasted the good word of God and powers the world to come if they shall fall away to renew again under repentance seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame." My friend, it looks like that if you go that way you're messed up, right? You're in trouble. Here's the thing, I say everybody, a lot of people like to go to this passage to take, shall I say, larger parameters with how I just answered this question. In other words, if you go wayward, if you backslide, if you no longer are faithful to the things of God for a season of life, then guess what, there's no hope for you, it's over, it's done. However, we need to read it in context, right?

Go back to chapter 5, go back to chapter 5, verse 11, and I wanna set the stage for Hebrews 6. It says, "Of whom we have many things to say and hard to be uttered, seeing you are dull of hearing." Push pause. The audience is struggling in their faith, right? They're dull of hearing. Verse 12, "For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again, which is to be the first principles of the oracles of God, have become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat. For everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs to them that are full of age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." What is Hebrews 5 saying? That these individuals should be mature in their faith, but they're immature in their faith. They should be teaching and mentoring others, and they're needing to be taught themselves. Read the first word of chapter 6. "Therefore." Now, y'all know why therefore is there, right? It is there for a reason. "Therefore" is the answer to the problem and the problem in Hebrews 5 is you have young, unskilled, babe believers who have not matured to the level that they should. Now, do we have lost people here? No. Do we have people that have lost their salvation? No. Do we have people that have, shall we say, blasphemed God? No! We just have people that have been believers for 40 years, but they're diapers in the faith. That's the illustration I like to use.

"Therefore, believing the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith for God, of doctrine of baptisms, the laying on the hands, of resurrection of the dead, of eternal judgment, and this we will do if God permits, for it is impossible for those who are once enlightened," and I just read that passage. So we say, what is so critical about that? Because if you are not where you should be with the Lord, okay, and if you have not grown to the level you should and you have been wayward, lackadaisical, whatever word you want to use, I'm going to make you an absolute 110% promise, the devil is going to speak into your life that you never were saved or you got lost. That's how he operates. You know one of the biggest issues, in fact, a couple years ago I had the privilege of kind of putting some of these questions in a book. Quantitatively, the number one question out through 25 plus years that I have been asked is in regards, "Can I lose my salvation?" And the reason that people ask the question is because there was a time they were faithful, there was a time they were fervent, there was a time they trusted God, and then

they went a little wayward, they got caught up in some sin, they backslid, whatever word you want to use, and then they began to be convicted by the Holy Spirit and they start thinking, "Uh-oh, maybe I really wasn't." What does it say here, verse 6? If they should fall away to renew again to repentance, it says here that if you truly fall away, the Holy Spirit's not going to convict you. If you truly were lost and got saved, then you can never get saved again. By the way, and I know this is one of those issues that some people really struggle with, in the Baptist world, we call it once saved, always saved. The formal term is the security of the believer, okay? Well, let me tell you something, if you really believe that you can be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, and then you can get lost again, then according to Hebrews chapter 6, you can never be saved a second time and most people I know that believe you lose your salvation, you can get it back. Not according to what we just read. See, Hebrews 6 actually says the opposite of what most people think it says. Most people think it says we can have such rebellion and such sin in our life that eventually we're no longer saved and it's over. What it really says is grow up is what it says.

Now, let me give you a very good real life illustration. If you claim as a parent that this has never happened in your home, then you're a liar. I'm not asking for a show of hands because I know who it is. Anybody here who has raised a teenager, God bless us all. Yes. Alright? In raising a teenager, has there ever been a time where you have used a phrase such as, "You should know better. You were raised better. Have you lost your mind?" What's your phrase? I mean, those are just ones I use on a regular basis. Right? Right? Never once, never once in those type of conversations, never once have I ever gone to one of my sons and said, "You're no longer my kid." What do I say? "Get your act together. Grow up." In other words, in our everyday lives, that's how we operate and that's what we're seeing in Hebrews chapter 6.

Now let's go back to the original question because you asked about Hebrews 6. If someone says, "I'm an atheist now. I don't believe." I mean, then we would have to go back to Hebrews 5 and say are they even a believer in the first place? Because an immature believer... I mean, if I looked at one of my sons in a conversation that I just alluded to, and I asked him, "Are you saying, son, that you're not my child anymore?" He'd probably say, "Dad, have you lost your mind? I mean, yeah. I'm your kid. Just we're not doing well right now," right? You see the analogy? Works really well. So really the answer to that is going back into chapter 5.

Did that help at all with that one? By the way, and I know you heard me say this on Sunday morning, I'm going to say it again tonight, context, context, context, because when we start taking verses out or even passages out and we remove them from what's before it and what's after it, it can cause trouble, is what it can do. Yes.

Anybody else on this? Yes ma'am, front row. No, no problems.

[unintelligible]

"Come Thou Fount." Yes. One of my favorite hymns in the whole world. Yes. Yes. I would hope so. Great question. So for those of you who could not hear, number one, she's on the front row, number two, she's soft-spoken, is one of the great hymns of our faith, "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing," okay? How about that line, "prone to wander, prone to leave the God I love"? The author of that hymn, in his last days, somewhat disavowed God, claimed he no longer believed. However, let me put a big asterisk beside that. There's also thoughts of mental issues, emotional concerns. In other words, there are times where we can have chemical imbalances, we can have things in our life that cause us to say things that are really not true. Now I'm going to tell you an absolute true story, not that I would ever lie to you, but don't you hate when a preacher says I'm going to tell you a true story, like what you've been doing? But the reason we do that is because the story I'm about to tell you is so good, you're gonna be like, "Yeah, you just made that up," you know? This is actually a true story, okay? Individual I know whose dad was a pastor, okay? So for years and years and years and years and years, he got up, he preached, he taught, just like any pastor you would know and love. Got later in his years, and he began to form some mental illness and we know what some of those diseases are. He was diagnosed. He was in a hospital situation. And what I'm about to share with you is what his son shared. He said, "Son," he said, "this disease is eating my brain." He said, "When you see it get to the point where you know I'm not really who I've been," he said, "I want you to get the medicine, knock me out." He said, "because I don't want a couple of months of mental illness to ruin a lifetime of a testimony." Now the reason I tell you that story is, don't you think in those last three months of his life he might have said things that possibly would have been contrary to his whole life of faith and belief? Because I've got news for you, when we're mentally distressed, when we're physically, chemically imbalanced, we say things we don't believe and things we don't mean. just because of the pain, the agony, and the things that happened.

So again, going back to that song, "Come Thou Fount," I think I'm gonna have a mansion next to him in heaven, okay? There were so many issues in his life toward the end of his life that caused him to have some serious issues. I don't think those statements were a reflection of his heart as much as they were a reflection of maybe chemical imbalances and other concepts. Does that help just a little bit?

[unintelligible]

I don't know. No, the question is, did he go to heaven or hell? I don't know. I'm gonna presume he was a true believer that fell on some very difficult medical, emotional times later in his life. And by the way, I'm just gonna be honest, some of the sweetest, I mean sweetest believers that you've ever met in your life, in the end of their life, if they have any type of mental, emotional issues, woo, that sweetness gone. It's gone, all right? And when that person is your grandmother, when that person is your beloved aunt, you don't sit there and go, "I guess her whole life was a lie." What do you say? "She's out of her mind. This isn't the person that I've known." So I would kind of take that same to this man, that those latter year statements were not a reflection of what we saw earlier, if that makes sense. So hopefully that helps a little bit.

Anybody on this one? We're good. Ah, here's a good one. They're all good. "Do we sin because we're sinful or are we sinful because we sin?" That's a really good question, okay? Now, I'm going to answer it in reverse and I'm going to answer it corporately and then I'm going to go individually. Okay, the last thing, are we sinful because we sin? That's the human condition from the guard of Eden. Adam and Eve were not sinful creatures. They were in the image of God. They were in perfection, right? However, in Genesis 3, they sinned and when they sinned, they became sinful and according to scripture, 1 Corinthians 15 and other passages, because of that, the sinfulness of Adam got passed to us. So today, you and I, because we are sinful, we sin. Does that make sense? Originally, we sinned to become sinful, now we're sinful and thus we sin. And by the way, I do agree with the old adage, every baby's cute. They really are, okay? Babies are cute. Oh, they're sweet, right? However, it doesn't take long before we realize they're sinful creatures. And by the way, I told this to young parents and I know they look at me, particularly if you are pregnant with your very first child. All right, I don't mean to upset you, but I'm gonna be honest with you. Your first child's word is not gonna be mama. And it's not gonna be daddy. It's gonna be no. It is, isn't it? Now maybe I raised the only three hellions in the world. I don't know. But my kid's first words were no and mine. You know why? Because they're sinful. Guess what my first words were? No and mine. Right? Absolutely. So again, hopefully you understand the paradigm there. For you and I, we sin because we're sinful. Originally, it was that first sin that made us sinful as a humanity, corporately. Hopefully that helps a little bit there.

Any follow-up, concepts, thoughts, we're good? Sunday sermon question, "Could the return of the Good Samaritan on the third day to repay also be in relation to 2 Peter chapter 3 verse 8 and 9?" Ooh, somebody was listening. Go to 2 Peter chapter 3. 2 Peter chapter 3. Now this is a passage that oftentimes, I guess this could go into the, I guess out of context passage of scripture, all the time that we use to go to the book of Genesis and we talk about creation but the passage really has nothing to do with creation and has everything to do with what we call the second coming because it talks about a days a thousand years, a thousand years as a day, and sometimes we go back into Genesis and we try to make those parallels. But Peter chapter 3. I'm gonna begin in verse 4. Well, actually, I'm gonna begin in verse 3. "Knowing this first, there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lust, saying, where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things to continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, the earth standing out of the water in the water, whereby the world that was then was overflowed with water perished. But the heavens and the earth, which are now by the same word, are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But," this is the verse's reference, "'beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord a thousand years, a thousand years is a day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us for not willing that any should perish but all should come to repentance."

Now for those of you that were not a part of our Sunday morning service, we were in the gospel of Luke chapter 10 and we talked about the Good Samaritan, okay? Good Samaritan is a wonderful story about being generous, being altruistic, being giving, being

sacrificial. Of course it is. However, if you read it in context, it's actually the answer to a question that a man submitted regarding how do I have eternal life, okay? And can I earn my way to heaven or does it have to be done a different way? Then Jesus answers and tells the famous story of what we know as the Good Samaritan. Remember the man on the side of the road was robbed by a thief, he was naked and half dead. Is that not the picture of humanity not only in the Garden of Eden, but today? Absolutely. That's who we are. Who's the Good Samaritan? He bound his wounds. He put oil, he put wine on it, put him in an inn, and said, "Here's enough for two days, and on the next one, the third day, I will repay whatever the cost is." I kind of made an illusion there to what we know as the empty tomb, right? Third day, okay? This question says, is there more to it than that because if a day with the Lord is a thousand years, and a thousand years is a day, could the third day be that time period after two thousand years that you and I would know as the return of Christ. Okay?

Now, that being said, go to Matthew chapter 17. Matthew chapter 17 is the story of the transfiguration of Jesus Christ. Remember, he's on the mountain. Peter, James, John, Moses, and Elijah show up. Matthew chapter 17, it's a very famous passage where Peter says, "Hey, we need a couple of tabernacles." He says, "No, we need to go down." I want to begin... now, we know the passage, the transfiguration passage of Matthew 17 is a picture of the second coming. Can we agree with that? Jesus' raiment is brighter than the sun just like it is in Revelation chapter 1, okay? Moses and Elijah are with him. Those are the last two characters mentioned in Malachi chapter 4 and they're also the witnesses of the book of Revelation. It's very second coming-ish, right? Read the first statement of chapter 17, "After six days." Well, isn't that interesting. Why would the Bible say after six days? Because if you go back and just look at the chronology of the characters in your Bible, okay, I'm not arguing geology, I'm not arguing cosmology, I'm arguing genealogy. The genealogy of your Bible goes back to about 4000 BC and so the thought of after six days, a day with the Lord a thousand years, a thousand years a day, the concept of on the third day being after that event of being the Good Samaritan which we know the crucifixion event obviously is the key part in Jesus' relation to us, the question is, is it possible that what he was saying more of was that after that time period then the second coming events would take place, okay?

Now, it's a wonderful thought, it's a wonderful ideology and a theology. The problem though is not the theology, the problem is the calendar because our calendars are messed up. And I don't care who you look to or look at, you're not gonna get a right answer. But if you were to hedge your bets, I'd go with the Jews every time. The Jews get it right every time, right? You know what year it is to them? It's like 5770 something. Is that right? Somebody can Google it right now. In other words, according to the Jewish calendar, we're a couple hundred years away from 6,000 years. All right? And I know what some of you think. Well, it's the year 2023. When's the last time we were smarter than them? Not happening, right? By the way, Romans chapter 3, you know it says the one advantage to being a Jew is? They've had the oracles of God since the very beginning. In other words, they know it better than we do, correct? And the Jewish calendar, it's not even the year 5800 yet and so this concept of the two days, the six days, it makes a lot of people really nervous when you read this, go, "Whoa, it's 2023." That's

according to our calendars and when you go back and look at the Gregorian calendars and other calendars and a lot of different theories that are out there, it's just a big mess is all that it is. The problem that you and I have since roughly 313 AD, when Constantine not only declared Christianity the official religion of Rome, but basically we had an initiation of what you and I call the Dark Ages, is no longer did we do things the biblical way, we did it the worldly way. You say, "What do you mean by that?" In your Bible, do you know how they date things? Three years after this king became king and five years before the earthquake. After Constantine, we said in the year 475. Well, according to whose calendar year 475? In other words, what we stopped doing is we stopped saying that event happened in the fifth year of this emperor's reign and eight years before the volcano exploded. We quit doing it that way. That's the way your Old Testament does it. That's the way the Jewish people do it. And according to the Jews, it's the year 57 something. And I would be willing to say they've got it more accurate than you and I do.

So is this a proper theological position? It absolutely is. But don't panic that we're, whoa, time out, we're in overtime here. We're probably not even there yet, if that makes sense. Hopefully that helps just a little bit. And by the way, just because I like to have fun with y'all, for everybody who thought at 1:20 today it was going to happen, sorry. Was that not one of the most anti-climactic events in all of my life? Now for some of you that would go, "What are you talking about?" Today at 1:20 Central Time, the Federal Emergency Management Agency sent out a signal to every phone, every TV, every device in America, and people said, "This is it. Jesus is coming back." I had a fresh cup of coffee. I was sitting. I was ready. But you know what happened? It happened at 1:18. That's the first time they've ever gotten in a hurry. But nonetheless, it was what it was. I say that hopefully humorously to say, don't get too caught up in the dates because Jesus warned us in Matthew 24. He said no one knows the day or the hour, but he did say we'd know the season. Remember when the fig tree blooms? And so again, I think we can look at these concepts and see ideas, but thanks to the calendar mess, we can't get in the weeds. We just can't pull it off.

Last but not least, we've got just a couple minutes. Yes, what? I'm sorry, follow-up.

[unintelligible]

Oh, hi. Sorry. Yes, sir. Your phone didn't go off because you prepared properly. Some of us, I wanted mine to go off. I wanted to see what would happen. I'm not scared. You know my joke is if something goes bad, she's rich and I'm better off. I mean, I'm good. I'm absolutely good. But I literally had a cup of coffee staring at my phone. Beep. That's it. I'm not joking. I have...there are hours of videos on YouTube of people talking about what was gonna happen when the signal happened. Nothing happened. By the way, and I know I can't get this in, we've got one minute left and some of you've heard this before but let me remind you, in 1988 there was a man who wrote a book called "88 Reasons Jesus is Coming Back in 1988," In 1989, he wrote a book, "89 Reasons." And people bought it. So don't get caught up in the weeds. Kind of take a step back.

I'll close that question with this. The idea of the two days being the two thousand years, the six days six thousand years, that's a pretty biblically definable concept, but you can't get in the weeds on it because we don't have a clue where we really are on the time frame. But it does say after six days, which is kind of interesting.

All right, let's pray and we'll roll.

Lord Jesus, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the security, not only temporally, but eternally, that only you and your shed blood and empty tomb provide for us. God, thank you, thank you that your word says in 1 Peter chapter 3 verse 15 that we're to always have evidence, always have an answer for the hope that is within us. May we continue to study, may we continue to just digest your word. God, help us so that we can have more confidence in you as not only the author but the finish of our faith. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.