

## Ask Jeff 11.28.18

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**Crossroads Ministries**

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All right, if I could call your attention to what we know as the Circle of Concerns, otherwise known as our prayer sheet, you will notice at the top that as of this very moment to our knowledge East Alabama Medical Center is vacant of people that we particularly know connected to our church. If you do know of someone that we don't know of, please let me know afterwards or let us know as soon as possible. Which reminds me, if you know of somebody, some situation that you would like lots and lots of people to be praying for, please let us know. We typically print this about 90 minutes before we gather so we try to keep it as updated as possible. You will notice those that are in facilities and places around town as well as at home, and all those that are out of town at the bottom.

On the second page or on the back, you will notice that there are two families in our church body who have experienced deaths in the last week or two. We'd encourage you to continue to pray for them in this time of loss, as well as those that are serving on the mission field and those in the military.

You will notice at the bottom, again there is another trip headed toward the Panhandle of Florida for disaster relief in light of the recent hurricane. You can go to this website that's listed [fbcopelika.com](http://fbcopelika.com), you will see when you scroll on our website, it's on the bottom lefthand side. You can click the box or the icon for the mission trip. Just to let you know or remind you that the deadline to go on the trips is about 48 hours before it takes off. These are very simplistic trips, very rudimentary trips, but unlike some of our trips overseas, we don't need passports of three month's notice, we literally just need a couple of days. So over the course of what we know as this Christmas season, if the Lord lays upon your heart to go down and help with disaster relief up until about December 27 you can let us know and we'll make sure that you are on that trip.

There will be many many more to come, and let me give you some advance warning. For many years our college ministry and our adults have been going down on spring break in a trip known as Amplify to this specific area, and we are anticipating this year we'll have a great number of people who would like to go down and assist because of the hurricane relief efforts. So when it comes to Amplify, though, we do need a little more advance notice because you are actually staying onsite for multiple days, not just a couple of days.

So just to let you know in advance if you want to be a part of those ministry opportunities, we would love to plug you in.

Let's pray and we'll get started.

*Lord, tonight as we gather, Lord, we are so grateful in the midst of not just a community but a world that is so heartbroken for so many issues, whether it be sickness in the home, whether it be separation within the home, whether it be just the ramifications of what we call a natural disaster, Lord, we know we live in a world that is very hurting but we also know that you are the healer, you are the restorer, and you are the deliverer of any and all situations. So Lord, to all these names and the names that are not even listed on the sheet, Lord, we lift them up to you. We know it doesn't matter what they're dealing with, it doesn't matter what the diagnosis is, it doesn't matter what the experts claim is impending, we know that you can supersede any and all those things. So Lord, we yield to your sovereignty, we yield to your supremacy, Lord, we yield to your power in all areas. We do pray for those that are struggling, Lord, just particularly this season with the loss of family members both recent and distant, Lord, that you would be the comfort they need, Lord, that you would be the help that they need in this time of many memories and recent loss. Lord, for those serving on the mission field and those in the military who when we're celebrating family and we're having parties of the season and they're all alone, God, we pray that you would be their comfort, that you would be their family, and that the Holy Spirit would so move in their lives, Lord, it would as if they were surrounded in the physical realm. Lord, bless them for their sacrifice. Bless them for their willingness to give on behalf of us. And Lord, we do pray tonight whether in this room or in the respective Bible studies or the different age ministries on campus, that your word would have supremacy, that we would yield to it in all areas, situations, all questions, all scenarios and, Lord, we believe and we know that your word as Isaiah said does not return void. And so, Lord, for tonight to be what you desire it to be in our lives, we need to embrace, we need to digest and then we need to go out and to live it. So help us tonight to be word-centered. In Jesus Christ's name we pray. Amen.*

All right, folks, welcome to Wednesday night at First Baptist, Opelika where as far as our adult Bible study in here, it is typically divided into two sections. Now I know many of you are seasoned veterans and you could probably come up and give this spiel on my behalf, but for those that are new with us, allow me to share. The first half of our Bible study is a question and answer time. You have the opportunity to ask any question you want. Now the advantage is that you can remain anonymous. You do not have to notify us who you are. You can hide behind that veil of the web. That's right, [fbcopelika.com/askjeff](http://fbcopelika.com/askjeff). You can submit a question. It goes to a database. That database is completely random. We do not know when you submitted that question. I do not know who submitted the question even if you put your email address because when you put your email address, when I click the "answered" button it sends you a link back to when your question was answered just in the event that you were not here to participate with us. So when the question comes up on the database, I do not know who is asking the question. So maybe you're shy, maybe you're somewhat embarrassed, maybe you just

don't want to admit that you're struggling with this issue or curious about this concern, feel free to go online, that's the best way to do it.

Now if you're a little bit more on the bold side or maybe you want to take the conversation in a little different direction, or maybe you want to go a little deeper into what we're discussing, you have the absolute right to raise your hand and say, "I want to talk about this." Now you do lose your anonymity but you get to take the conversation wherever you want.

Then as we head toward the second half of tonight, we will continue our Bible study which is in what we know as the book of Revelation. But tonight we're going to kind of clarify and continue what we studied two weeks ago, a subject matter that comes up in Revelation 14 regarding what we know as the gospel.

Now I mentioned the word "typically." You know, that's the description, we typically do it a certain way, however, I had somebody make contact with me today and say that because of in light of a lot of current events and things that are going on, would it be okay if we would address a certain issue. So I'm going to ask for said person to.... Now that's how you ask a question on Wednesday night.

[unintelligible]

The history of Israel and how it impacts today. Well, what we know as Israel was initiated or begun in the book of Genesis 12 with a man by the name of Abram. Now he became Abraham when his son Isaac was born, and what we know as Israel actually was not Israel for three generations. Now remember in Genesis 12 and again in Genesis 15, Abram is called out to initiate a new people. Now that's important because this new people, and we'll go to several verses in just a moment, these new people were to, shall I say, inherit or facilitate two very distinct things. 1. They would be the mechanism by which the Messiah or the Savior would be incarnated, whom we know as Jesus Christ. This would be the lineage of the Savior. 2. They would receive, and this is apropos to our community, they would receive a divine land grant as we know as the Promised Land that would be an everlasting covenant to them, a place not only for them to inhabit but a place of their refuge and their protection.

So their calling out was for an earthly purpose as well as a relational purpose. Abram has a son of promise by the name of Isaac. Isaac has a child by the name of Jacob. Jacob was renamed Israel. So we get the name Israel, it's actually Abraham's grandson renamed by God. So and by the way, his name means "one that struggles with God." Now that's pretty apropos because not only did Jacob struggle with the angel of the Lord, that famous vision that he had, but you see the people of God, the Israelites struggling with God in their entire existence and their entire journey.

So the people of Israel, if you read all throughout your Old Testament, you see good times, bad times, you see rebellion and all types of scenarios and consequences thereof, but when you get to the gospels, when you get to the ministry of Jesus Christ, all of the

promises, all of the prophecies, none of them have been voided. In other words, Jesus Christ was born of the tribe of Judah, the lineage of David just as was prophesied even in their rebellion. In fact, you move on forward to other passages that we'll turn to in just a moment, even what we know as that land grant has not been forsaken.

Now before we go to these passages, a couple of things I want to address, what I would believe would be erroneous thoughts of today. There are some people who believe, and by the way there's lots of different names for it, are called like replacement theology. They believe that the church, the body of Christ, has replaced Israel and therefore what we know as Israel proper does not have an impact anymore. There are others that say, well, because Israel as we know it today is predominantly a secular Israel and not a theological Israel much like in the Old Testament days with the temple and the tabernacle and such, that you can no longer apply the scriptures.

That being said, go to the book of Romans 11 and there's a lot of verses that we could go to tonight and I'm sure there are going to be a lot of follow-up thoughts or possible other follow-up thoughts because Romans 11:25-26 has a passage I want to address and then I want to go back to Matthew 24 and hear how Jesus addressed, I believe, a fulfillment of a prophecy that's made all the way back in the book of Hosea 9.

So Romans 11, beginning in verse 25. "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery." Now I'm going to stop there for just a moment. The term "mystery" is used seven times in the writings of the Apostle Paul. He speaks in 1 Corinthians 15 of this moment, this time period in life where that which is mortal becomes immortal, when we are caught up together with the Lord. He calls that a mystery. Ephesians 5, the fact that Gentiles and Jews can be one in Christ, he calls that a mystery. The fact that the Holy Spirit can dwell within us, Colossians 1, he calls that a mystery. Every one of those items that I just mentioned are mentioned, they are prophesied in the Old Testament, they had not been fulfilled yet and had not been realized yet. So when it says it's a mystery, don't like, oh, this is some new thing that we've never heard about before, think now something is coming to fruition that has been spoken of that had not been manifested as of yet.

So, "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Now let me give you kind of a 30,000 foot view here of what's happening. The first eight chapters of the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he is building a case that it doesn't matter whether you're Jewish or Gentile, we're all sinners. We're all in need of a Savior. That Savior is the person of Jesus Christ. Chapter 6, the wages of sin is death. Chapter 7, there is nothing in our flesh but sin. Chapter 8, that in Christ there is now no condemnation who walk after the spirit not after the flesh. There is nothing that can separate us from the love of Christ Jesus. Then you get into chapter 9, chapters 9 through 11, he reaches back into the Old Testament and he talks about the identity of Israel and the fact that the Lord established a covenant with them that has not been broken, therefore the covenant that he places with us, Jesus Christ, has not and cannot be

broken. Chapters 9 through 11 are incredible illustrative materials of how we can parallel his relationship with Israel to his relationship with the church.

Now chapter 11:25 and 26 says that Israel, that entity that was initiated in Genesis 12 and 15, is blind in part. In other words, in Romans 2, he said, "What is an Israelite? Not one who has been circumcised of the flesh but one who's been circumcised of the heart." Now remember that covenant had two parts, right? There was a land grant covenant and there was a relationship covenant, and so what he's saying there blindness in part to Israel, is that they are blind as a whole in part to the relationship side but that does not negate the earthly component until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled. If you were to look at your Bible from beginning to end, you notice that the primary mechanism that the Lord is working through humanity is through the Israelite people. By the time you get to the end of the gospels, by the time you get to really Acts 10, you see as a whole the Israelite people have rejected Jesus. I mean, these are the same guys that said, "Let his blood be on us and our children." These are the same folks who marveled that the Gentiles could be saved. And then you read the letters of the Apostle Paul, Thessalonica-Gentile, Galatia-Gentile, Ephesus-Gentile, Philippians-Gentile. You see this incredible era of Gentile ministry but as we've studied in the book of Revelation there's coming a day where his instrument of working again is going to be through whom we know as the Jewish people. Revelation 7 and 14, the famous 144,000 come out of the 12 tribes of Israel.

And so you see almost this bookend of the Israelite people as the primary mechanism, then the Gentiles, that's most of us, and then the Israelites again. Why is that important and critical? Because for those who say the church has replaced Israel, what do you do with that passage? For those who say that that covenant is no longer valid, what do you do with that passage? Because it says there will be a resurgence or a revival again of the Lord working through these people.

Now go back to Matthew 24. We're going to get the words of Jesus, then if you so desire we will chase this rabbit because as you addressed, sir, there's a lot of present-day prophetic implications for this question, particularly when you can't go a day without reading a news story involving this very small piece of dirt on the other side of the world that is probably the most valuable piece of real estate on the planet.

Matthew 24. I want to begin by reading in verse 1. Now we're going to get to verse 38, I promise, not all the way through. Here we go. It says, "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Pause. This was the place that was desired by David, built by Solomon, rebuilt by Herod. I mean, this was the place of worship here. Jesus is saying, "That place right there is about to come down," all right?

Verse 3, "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and

of the end of the world?" Now the reason it's important that I started with reading verses 1 through 3 is that Matthew 24 is the longest discourse we have in scripture from the mouth of Jesus about his Second Coming. You cannot interpret the red letters unless you've read the question in the black letters. They're asking him very strategic questions: when and what? Those are two questions, right? They ask when shall these things be, what shall be the sign of your coming and the end of the world, which are together they're put together there. Interesting, two questions are asked of Jesus though the second question has two parts. If you look at Jesus' answer in Matthew 24, there are two "sermons" with a parable in the middle. It's almost as if Jesus laid it out and said, "All right, guys, here's the deal. I'm going to answer your first question, give you a little illustration, then I'm going to answer your second question." A lot of times, I think, people go to Matthew 24 and they read a sentence here or a sentence there and say, "Oh my, can you believe this is happening or occurring." You have to interpret it in the light of what was the question that they asked.

Now the middle part of this address begins in verse 32 in between what I would believe the answer to these questions where Jesus says, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree." Now the fig tree, obviously figs are very prominent in the Middle East and in Israel, but in Hosea 9 and in other passages in your Old Testament, Israel, the people, the place are oftentimes associated with or used synonymously with the fig tree. The fig tree is never used to reference the Philistines. The fig tree is never referenced to use just agricultural in general. The fig tree is not used to represent the future understanding of the church. The only entity that you can remotely identify the fig tree with is whom we know as Israel.

All right, he says "learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." A very famous passage but notice that his parable is in reference to what he's already been talking about which was the answer to the question of when are these things going to happen. Notice what he says, when all these things. Not some of them but when all these things, know it is near, even at the doors, this generation shall not pass.

What's interesting about this statement from the mouth of Jesus is he uses the parable of a fig tree with more times than not as a reference to Israel in the Old Testament. He says that when it begins to put forth its buds, when it begins to blossom again. By the way and we won't spend all the time, but if you went back three chapters in chapter 21, do y'all remember what Jesus curses on the road? A fig tree and he says the fig tree will no longer bear fruit. Three chapters later, he says when you see the fig tree start to bud. Are you putting the pieces together here? Just like Romans 11:25 and 26, Jesus is saying even though this has been a thriving entity, there's going to come a time where it's not but it's going to bud again.

You and I are living in unprecedented times because we actually have seen what you could call the rebirth of at least the entity known as Israel. And just some key dates for

you to know. The first one is 70 AD, that's when Israel as we know it went into complete diaspora or they dispersed across the whole world. The land, the area that we know today as the Promised Land, it was not theirs, they were not inhabitants thereof, they were removed from. Almost 2,000 years later, technically about 1,900 years later, it was declared by what we know as the Balfour Declaration in 1917 that they had the right to their land again. That did not take place until 1948.

Now it is at this point where a lot of people would disagree with me and say, "Well, it's not theological Israel, it's not spiritual Israel." I get that but Jesus said Israel would come back. You do know that between 1939 and 1945, six and a half million Jewish people were exterminated, and in 1948 with no help from anybody else, they win their independence. If that's not miraculous, I don't know what is. That is a rebirth. You understand that they have been as a whole, they have been hated by everybody forever. Everybody wants to get rid of them and yet all of a sudden they revive. In 1967 with what you and I know as the Six Day War, every country around them attacks, they win and they get what we know as the city of Jerusalem. 1973, the Yom Kippur War, on their holy day, it would be the equivalent if in the United States, particularly in the South, at 11:30 on Easter Sunday we got attacked because most people were in church. Well, in Israel they're all resting on the Sabbath day. They actually got attacked during the Sabbath day. Story after story after story where there should have been a thousand people on stand-by, there was only 10 and somehow they win? You know, you can't rectify that with human logic and knowledge.

So therefore you have this entity now known as Israel that has been resurrected as an entity that is not just a player but has become the number 1 distributor of fruit to Europe, the greatest concentration of Nobel Prize winners, and yet 2 ½ – 3 generations ago were in prison camps all over Europe. And yet Jesus said it will happen and they will come back. The thing I want us to know or us to understand is that all throughout scripture it said that they would disburse, then it said that they would come back. You and I are the benefactors of seeing them come back and it's in the news in front of us.

Now I did not say that the end was tomorrow. I didn't say that. But one thing I do want to say is this. When people say, well, what makes Israel Israel? Well, number 1, land. We got the land. 2. Jerusalem, they got Jerusalem. 3. The temple. They don't have a temple. So don't go to Matthew 24 and start doing a lot of dating about the last generation and such because there is no official temple there yet which would truly identify them as what we know as Israel.

I know I've talked a long time. Does that help the question at all? Steve, does that help you because he asked for you? Does that help? You're good? I'm just checking.

Any follow-ups, thoughts? I know that was kind of a quick summary statement of 2,000 years of history that hopefully made a little sense. Any other Israel questions? Nope, no Israel questions? All right. Everybody is good with Israel? Oh, yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Why is it that they cannot see the miracle of the rebirth?

[unintelligible]

Okay, so the question is...they do see it. When you speak to anybody of that descendency or that background or you actually go over there and you're walking among them, they claim it is a miracle from God.

[unintelligible]

Oh, we're good. [laughter] Well, not gonna argue with that one either. Again, not everybody is going to see it for what it is.

Now when you go and when you begin, and by the way, you can do this to Baptists too, by the way, you can divide us into different groups and such, typically when you talk about Israelites, the vast majority of them today are what we call secular Jews, residents of the land, hopeful of the land, you've heard the term Zionists, but very few of them are religious Jews as far as desirous of a relationship with the Lord, the sacrifices, the celebrations, the feasts. Does that make sense? So there's very few that are looking at it through the God-lenses, if that makes sense.

So that would explain a lot of why very few of them see it as the miracle it is and just claim that they're just good. Those who are religious see it as a miracle from God. The struggle is and this, by the way, this happens for us Gentiles too, they can see the hand of God but they still as a whole are ignoring the Savior that came on their behalf and that's the heartbreaking part, that they can see him bring something up from the dead that was dead 1,900 years but can't see one that came up from the dead after three days. And the same prophecies that said that they would come back as an entity, there are prophecies in the next chapter that say that Jesus would be the Messiah that would come back from the dead. So that's the struggle there.

Yes, sir. Back.

[unintelligible]

Well, hm. All right, so, and by the way, I know I've had a lot of conversations privately about the question that's at hand so just, you know, endure me for a moment. The question that was put on the table is, we talked about the land, we talked about Jerusalem, what about this temple? And the question really becomes when, how, where, those are really the questions. Now this is going to be very rudimentary but I want you to imagine that this is what we know as the Temple Mount. This is going to be north, east, south and west. The primary place if you were to either A, visit, or B, look at video and such, where you see the Jewish people gather on this place today is right here with what we know as the Western or the Wailing Wall, that famous place that we hear of all the time. This is that place right in here.

The key issue that most people will bring up in regards to this is that right here in the middle there is an Islamic, it is an Islamic, really a shrine known as the Dome of the Rock. This is one of their three holy places in all of the world. This is the place where you've probably seen this famous mosque with the gold domed roof. This is the place where Mohammad claims that he was taken in a vision, a dream by God or Allah, in his words, where he saw that this is where, there was a rock there, hence Dome of the Rock, where Abraham sacrifice Ishmael. Now you know that's what the Islam faith believes, it was Ishmael, not Isaac. There's a rock here in this building where he claims that that sacrifice took place. Multiple reasons or problems with this. The first one is this, if you go to this wall right here, they're excavating it, this rock that's here is about 200 feet above the ground level where Abraham would have been thousands of years ago. There's been, you know, building and destruction, building and destruction for thousands of years so there is no way that that rock that was sitting there in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD was the rock that Abraham used for Isaac as well.

Nonetheless, you have this building here. Most people claim, well, there's no way that a Jewish temple is ever going to be built on this Temple Mount because there's no way the Muslims are going to let go of it. I agree with that except there's one intriguing aspect of this. When you go and you look at this and y'all can go to Google Maps and you can look this up, there is a famous Eastern Gate right here. This is where Jesus rode in on the donkey, what we know as, you know, this famous Palm Sunday. Today if you go, this Eastern Gate has not only be closed off, there's actually an Islamic cemetery there to desecrate it. What's interesting is when you read the biblical story about Jesus coming into the Temple Mount, it says that he came in and walked straightway into the temple. Now I'm not a genius but straightway means straight. It doesn't say he entered, took a hard left, took a hard right and then went in. He went straightway. By the way, John 2 when he overturns the tables, straightway. Matthew, overturns the tables, straightway.

So as archaeologists are digging, there is a thought that it is possible that the cornerstone and the original site of what we know as the temple would actually be right here, straightway from this Eastern Gate. I don't know, you don't know, nobody knows, but what we do know is when you get to Revelation 11, in these final days it mentions a temple, it gives the measurements thereof, and that it is an active place of Jewish worship which means somewhere, someday, this place is going to be built. The issue is will there be a deal brokered with the Muslim people possibly by way of the antichrist? Who knows. For this spot, will it be built adjacent to it maybe with a common wall which would represent really the theology of the antichrist that we're all going to get along, so to speak, and share everything? Nobody really knows, we just know it's not there right now and it will show up one day, and there are at least three groups on the planet who claim that they have all the materials and they could build it within a week. Now I've said this before. If you wake up one morning and there is a construction crew on the Temple Mount and they are building a temple anywhere, get ready to go home to Jesus because it's getting close.

So I don't know, does that help a little bit with the temple? So it's going to be built. I don't know when. I know where as far as it's going to be on here somewhere. To this day, Orthodox Jews will not walk anywhere on the Temple Mount because they don't know where the cornerstone is. They don't know and so if you were to ask Orthodox Jews, "Well, you know the temple is going to be built right there in the middle." They'd say, "We don't know that." Because the cornerstone is hundreds of feet below and they would never build it where it's not supposed to be built. So they're excavating it as we speak today. Who knows where it's going to go with this. So it's intriguing, it's interesting, it's going to happen. We just don't know when, by whom, where or how but it will.

Any other Israel questions? We're good with Israel? Everybody's good?

All right, to your sheets. Here we go. Revelation 14. By the way, I appreciate that question by way of Steve. Thank you, sir. I didn't realize on Wednesday nights that was actually an option. You can ask a question and blame it on somebody else. That may be a new, we may add that to the website, you know, you submit your email or you may say, "I'm submitting this for my friend who really wants to know the answer."

All right, Revelation 14. We looked at this last time we met and had a lot of folks very intrigued by and said, "Oh, I'd like to cover that again." Had a lot of folks that weren't here for a variety of reasons and so in Revelation 14, we find ourselves in a passage that's known as parenthetical. Now for those of you who have not been in our Revelation study, parenthetical simply means that you're outside of the chronology of time. Understand that there have been these famous seven seals, these seven trumpets, these seven vials, these judgments that are taking place, these events that are happening. When you get to several passage in Revelation such as chapter 10, chapter 7, chapter 14, 13, they are parenthetical in the sense that you do not necessarily interpret them in light of between this seal and that seal but you interpret them in light of the time period that Jesus called the great tribulation, okay?

In Revelation 14, we have communication to us, really it is clarity about the famous 144,000 that we read about in chapter 7. Now in chapter 7, we saw their descendancy, the 12 tribes of Israel, and we even saw that there were some tribes that are mentioned in Revelation that were not mentioned earlier in the Old Testament. There were some tribes mentioned in the Old Testament that have kind of, for lack of better terms, been replaced in the book of Revelation. For example, the tribe Ephraim that was wrought with idolatry is no longer but yet Joseph is a tribe in Revelation. But nonetheless, 12 tribes, 12,000 each, the famous 144, 000.

Now just as, I guess, a reminder, beginning in verse 1, it says,

1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 And they sung as it were a new song

before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. 4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Verse 6, here's where it gets interesting for tonight.

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

Now the reason that this is important, it's actually very apropos per the question about Israel. Remember we talked about Israel, there are really two covenants or two agreements that were given. There was an earthly material agreement and there was a spiritual divine covenant relationship agreement. And one of the things that we addressed last time we gathered but I want to kind of go over again here, is that there's actually several phrases in scripture that describe or are utilized to describe around the term "gospel." Now the word "gospel" simply just means "good news." That's all it means. You can have the gospel of fill-in-the-blank. It just means the gospel according to, like the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Mark. That's the good news of Matthew, the good news of Mark.

Now I know I'm a sports junkie. There is a 30 for 30, and ESPN special called "The Gospel According to McCartney." It is a history of the Colorado Buffaloes football program under Coach McCartney years ago. That's not blasphemous, it just literally means the good news of this coach. So the word "gospel" though it means "good news" is qualified by the statements and the words around it.

Now that being said, as I've got listed here and we're going to walk through these, there are phrases that are used in scripture such as "the gospel of the kingdom, the gospel of the grace of God, the everlasting gospel." And I believe, that's just my thought tonight, that we're too quick to take all these descriptions and to make them all the same thing when the Bible says in 2 Timothy 2 "rightly divide the word of God." So what I've kind of laid out for you is something I find interesting or distinct in regards to Revelation 14:6 and I believe this is a wonderful study to help us not just with the Israel question but to see what's really happening in our relationship with the Lord in relationship to his relationship to what we know as the earth and the creation as a whole.

So as I mentioned, the word "gospel" just means "good news." The Bible actually speaks of different gospels. In Galatians 1 and this is kind of a review, the Apostle Paul makes

this statement, he says, "I am upset that you have removed yourself from the gospel of Jesus Christ. Whether I or an angel preach another gospel, let him be accursed." Do you see what we just had in Revelation 14? We had an angel preach a gospel and what we're going to see in just a moment is that what the angel pronounces is different than what the Apostle Paul taught, but what I want you to hear is, it's when it's taught, where it's taught, and to whom it is taught to. That's the important criteria for tonight.

So that being said, the phrase "the gospel of the kingdom." Anybody doing the Bible reading plan today? Anybody read Matthew 5 today? I'm just checking on you. Three times Jesus talked about the gospel of the kingdom, in fact, this is a phrase that is found predominantly in the gospel of Matthew. You say, "Why is this important?" I had somebody share with me just the other day as we began to read through the gospel of Matthew, this individual said, "You know, I've read through the Bible but on this Bible reading plan, I'm actually listening to the Bible." And it's different when you listen to it than read it. It's just a different dynamic. This individual shared with me, "I never realized how much of Matthew is just a fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament." In other words, this is what the Old Testament said Jesus would be, what would happen, what would be fulfilled, and here it's happening right before your eyes. Of the four gospels, what we know as the book of Matthew is just, I mean, it is rich with these fulfillments of Old Testament prophecies that are related to Israel and this covenant that the Lord has made with them.

So that being said, what is the gospel of the kingdom? It is, as you read through scripture, a very, and I hate to use this word, a very political, don't think our politics, very political, think rulers, and earthly message. In fact, 2 Samuel 7:16 says the Lord has given them a land that is an everlasting covenant. Now here's where I'm going to get very theological and some people think it's political but it's not. That piece of dirt on the other side of the planet known as Israel, that's theirs and nobody else's. That's not a political statement, that's a theological statement because the Bible says that the Lord said, "That's yours forever." Now are there times where they didn't reside in it? Of course, but guess what? After 1,900 years they're back. That is their land. It was given to them and they are now the residents thereof.

Let me throw in a side note that's real interesting. The Lord promised the Israelites that if they were in the land it would flow with milk and honey and be very fertile, correct? What did what we know as Israel look like before 1948? A desert. Now when you go over there, it is thriving with growth and greenery and agriculture. So when the God divine ordained residents are there, it becomes what it's supposed to be. When they're not, it's not.

So what I want to share with you is when it talks about the gospel of the kingdom, that phrase that's used all throughout predominantly the book of Matthew, it's a very earthly phrase. In fact, when I put the "when" here, in Matthew 24, Jesus said, and by the way, this is a verse that has been taken out of, in my opinion, such great context. Matthew 24. Now we just read the questions that were asked: when is this going to happen, what's the sign of your coming and the end of the world? Jesus says in Matthew 24:14, "When the

gospel of the kingdom is preached to all people, then the end will come." Do you know what the next verse is? The abomination of desolation which actually takes place in the midst of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week, in the middle of what we know as this tribulational period.

So that verse which, and I'm not trying to be overly critical but just a little bit critical, has been used by a lot of people to raise a lot of money to do a lot of ministry, that until we tell everybody Jesus can't come back. Jesus said the gospel of the kingdom. Hold onto that thought for just a moment. Who is the who? The all nations, then the end shall come. The how. There is a phrase in the book of Matthew called "the kingdom of heaven." Now you've heard the phrase "the kingdom of God." Can we all just agree that heaven is not God, God is not heaven, okay? We have to rightly divide. The book of Matthew is the only place you find the phrase "kingdom of heaven." Nowhere else. In the other gospels and all throughout the New Testament, you see the phrase "the kingdom of God." God is spirit according to John 4:24, we must worship him in spirit and in truth. Heaven is a physical entity. In fact, according to John 14, there are mansions, they are real, they are legitimate. Jesus said, "If it were not so, I would have told you." They're real.

Now the reason that's important is it's only used in the gospel of Matthew. There are 32 references to this phrase "the kingdom of heaven." I've listed several of them for you. On to the next thing. "The gospel of the grace of God" or as the Apostle Paul says "my gospel." Unlike an earthly land grant kingdom, this is a relationship with forgiveness of sins, relationship with God himself. What is this? According to Acts 20, Romans 2, this is a phrase that is used in scripture to mention or describe a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, okay? The grace of God, or as the Apostle Paul calls it, "my gospel."

When does this take place? According to 1 Corinthians 15, what we know as the gospel of the grace of God became applicable when the tomb was discovered to be empty. Before the tomb was empty, there is no salvation through Jesus Christ because the blood had not been spilled, the offering had not been made. Even though there were people in your Old Testament that had a right relationship with the Lord, not a relationship through the blood of Jesus Christ because it had not yet been shed and offered. And I put through 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15 when it says there's coming a day where the dead in Christ, the alive in Christ will meet together in the air with the Lord. So this phrase "the gospel of the grace of God" is used chronologically after the resurrection and during this time of what we know as the body of Christ until these passages that describe the people of God or the body of Christ being caught up together with the Lord.

Who? Romans 10:13, "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Last time I checked, "whoever" means whoever. So the "whoever," it doesn't matter according to Galatians 3 and Ephesians 5, it doesn't matter if you're Jewish, it doesn't matter if you're Gentile, it doesn't matter if you're male, it doesn't matter if you're female, it doesn't matter if you're an employer or an employee, whoever calls on the name of the Lord has access to the grace of God.

Now how? The phrase "kingdom of God" particularly and when I use the phrase "other gospels," I mean Mark, Luke and John, not the ones talked about on the History Channel. Big, big, big different there. So the other three gospels as well as other New Testament writings which I've listed several here, you see this phrase "the kingdom of God" or "the gospel of the grace of God," never as a reference to earthly rule but as a reference to a relationship with the Lord.

Now let me backtrack. Gospel of the kingdom. You read, hopefully, Matthew 5 today. It's a famous passage of scripture known as the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount. Think about how this sermon starts, "Blessed are the meek, they will inherit the earth." And then later Jesus had said, "Such is the kingdom, the gospel of the kingdom and the kingdom of heaven," over and over and over again. What we know as the Sermon on the Mount is a very earthly proclamation because it talks about people inheriting and experiencing things on the earth. When you go to the kingdom of God and the gospel of the grace of God, it's not the earthly thing that matters, it is the relationship with the Lord that one day we will be with him. Do not lay your treasures here but worry about them up there.

So you see two different messages here much like what we talked about to Israel, there is an earthly and there is the spiritual relationship side, which leads us to "the everlasting gospel." This is what started all this mess tonight in Revelation 14. It is the good news that judgment is coming. Now let me unpack that for just a moment. In Revelation 14, we find ourselves in the midst of a time period that Jesus called the great tribulation. We find ourselves in the midst of a time period where the antichrist, an angel tells them the everlasting gospel. Now this is interesting to me. For those of you that were here on Sunday night, we kind of talked about this a little bit in a different context. When the Lord is going to bring Jesus, the incarnation, what we know as the Christmas story, he confirms it to Mary by an angel. He confirms it to Joseph by an angel. He confirms it to John the Baptist's dad by an angel. He confirms it to the wisemen by an angel. It's a very strategic time with strategic individuals for a strategic purpose. Can we all agree that the 144,000 are strategic people, at a strategic time, for a very strategic purpose? So who shows up? An angel. An angel shows up and gives this declaration or this proclamation.

Now what I find intriguing that's going to lead us into this last part, the Apostle Paul whose gospel was we are all sinners in need of a Savior, whoever calls out will be saved, said if anybody, even an angel, preaches something different, let them be accursed. What I want to share with you is what's happening in Revelation 14, this is a different time period. Now all of a sudden, remember that thing we talked about in Romans 11 where the Jews go to the Gentiles and the Gentiles back to the Jews? The age of the Gentiles is over. The church has been caught up. The body of Christ that wants you to be a part of their kingdom hall. It's the wrong message for today but there's coming a day where it will be the right message.

I'm going to give you the best definition I've ever heard of a heresy. By the way, when we hear the word "heresy" we usually think, "Ah!" All heresy means is wrong teaching. Do you know what heresy is? It's the right teaching at the wrong time. It's the right teaching

at the wrong time. Those folks that come and knock on your doors and want to give you literature, that's the right teaching, if you meet the qualifications you're in the midst of the tribulation. You don't take the mark of the beast and the antichrist declares himself God. But is that today? No. Today is Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, we have the opportunity as sinners to be saved and forgiven, to have this relationship with him where one day he will take us up to be together with him. It is a different day.

Now there is a Bible word that I want to use for you tonight that causes a lot of people to shudder. The book of Ephesians, the Apostle Paul uses it, it's this word "dispensation." All it means it how do you order your house, and when you look at the big picture from the call of Abraham to the famous 144,000, can we all agree that the Lord has ordered his house different ways? The temple. The temple was a different ordering than today, correct? We don't have to go to the temple. Our body is now the temple of God. Today the order is much different than, you know, it will be some years from now during this time period.

Now I want you to think about how this works. We talked about ordering your house. My home, obviously my wife and I, we have three boys. When they were little, they had very specific bedtimes like 8 o'clock when they were little boys. Can you imagine if last Friday night I had told my oldest son who is almost 17 years old and a junior in high school, "I'm sorry, you can't go to Mobile to play a playoff football game. Your bedtime is 8 o'clock." It's a different day. Almost 17 is very different than being 5, can we agree? On a lot of different levels, okay?

Now imagine in the days ahead because, I mean, it's just the natural course of life, that all of my children are going to be interested in young ladies. It happens and those young ladies at times will probably come over to the house. And we have certain rules. They're not going to be in their bedroom together, much less with the door closed. It's not going to happen. We've ordered our house. But can you imagine 15 years from now, my sons are married with kids, and they all come to visit and we say, "Now y'all can't go in that room together. Don't close the door now." Y'all laugh at that but that is what ordering your house is. I have a relationship with my children that through time is changing how it's manifest but it doesn't change my desire to relate with them. It's different stages, different ages.

So when we look at what we're looking at here, the gospel of the kingdom this fact that the Lord will one day physically reign, the gospel of the grace of God, we have a personal relationship, the gospel of the everlasting gospel of this last time message, it's not that the Lord has changed his mind, it's not that there is somehow conflicting messages, I want you to think of it in terms of 5 year old, 16 year old, and 32 year old. Same relationship manifested different ways.

With just a few minutes left, at the very last it says what is "another gospel"? In Galatians 1:8 that I referenced, it's not good news because it is another. Now forget the everlasting gospel of Revelation 14, forget the gospel of the kingdom, that one day the Lord is earthly physically going to return and reign and sit on the throne of David, that's what

Psalm 110:1 says. What is this? 2 Peter 2:1 talks about damnable heresies. Now I mentioned the word "heresy," it just means "erroneous teaching, erroneous thought." It just means you're wrong. Can I confess on behalf of all of us tonight, we've all be heretics at some level, at some point. All of us. All of us at some point in your life have been reading through scripture and said, "Oh, I guess I've had it wrong all along. I thought it was this way, now I find out it's that way." Well, that's a heresy, that's technically an untruth or false but that's not damnable. Just because you may not have seen scripture in the right order or maybe you didn't see it in the right way, it doesn't mean you're damned to hell, it just means you were wrong about that issue.

Well, 2 Peter 2:1 talks about damnable heresies, beliefs that you can possess that will cause you to die in your sins and spend forever in a place the Bible calls hell. The reason this is important is because based on what we just studied, if you believe that the gospel is reigning on the earth apart from a relationship with Jesus Christ, it's all about being in control, it's all about who is ruling, you know what the golden rule is, right? He who has the gold rules. It's about the golden rule, that it's all about authority, it's all about power, it's about control. I would say that if you think it's all about how I can control things in the name of God apart from a relationship with Jesus Christ, that is a damnable heresy because it's not the gospel, it's just about earthly reign and superiority.

Now there's a lot, I put the "when" here, any gospel at the wrong time, to the wrong people. I mentioned folks that oftentimes visit our homes, they hand out paraphernalia, literature, and are very active in many communities. You understand that when you're propagating a message that Jesus Christ is not God, that he is a created second tier god, which they believe, when you are propagating a message that it is about the 144,000 and the everlasting gospel, you do realize when you don't have Jesus right, that that is a damnable heresy. It is not just that, "Oh, they see things a little wrong." No, it's really wrong because Jesus claimed over and over and over again he was God. Well, if you don't believe Jesus is God, you have a damnable heresy.

There's other folks that usually won't drive to your house but they'll bicycle to your house and when you believe that God used to be man and man can become God, that is a damnable heresy. They're not just a different denomination. No, no, no, no, it is completely different in all areas and all aspects because it's a different Jesus even though they may use similar words. It's another gospel. And by the way, what did the Apostle Paul say? Even if an angel comes. Interesting that if you study the history of what we know as the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints or the Mormons, it was an angel who came and spoke to Joseph Smith and what did he communicate? Basically a completely different Jesus than the Bible portrays and a salvation that is based on what you do, not on your sins being forgiven by Jesus Christ. That is a damnable heresy, not just a different denomination.

And then how 1 John 4:1 says discern or test the spirits to see whether they are of God. Matthew 7 which I've listed there, I'll close with this, I think this is the scariest passage in all the Bible. You're going to read it in two days if you're going through the Bible reading program. Jesus makes this statement. He talks about the road being straight, broad is the

road to destruction and he says, "And on that day," on that day, a reference to the end times, "many people will say unto me, Why did you not let me in? We did many miracles in your name. We performed great works in your name." And what does he say? "I never knew you." There are going to be a lot of folks one day who show up on that day and say, "But God, I went on a two year missionary journey for you to Europe. But God, I never missed the worship service. But God, I didn't eat certain types of food. But God, I never got a blood transfusion. But God...." I'm serious. This is the beliefs of some and he's going to say, "But I never knew you. I never had a relationship with you because it was a false gospel."

All of that, the book of Revelation 14, the message that's being spoken to this specific group at this specific time is, "Hang in there. Jesus is physically coming back with his army behind him and all of the sin that you've had to live through is finally going to be judged." I know I spent a lot of time on it but I want you to know that the word "heaven" doesn't necessarily mean God, the word "God" doesn't necessarily mean heaven. We are called to rightly divide the word. Don't only just read what it says, read the context, what's being addressed in all aspects. Tomorrow you're going to roll into Matthew 6, then you're going to roll into Matthew 7 where Jesus is going to conclude you can build your house on two places, you need to put it on the rock or you could put it on shifting sand. A storm is going to come, the choice is up to you.

Let's pray.

*Lord, as we depart from this place, I do pray 1 John 4:1 over us, that you would allow us the discernment to test the spirits to see whether they be of you or not. Lord, thank you for the unsearchable richness and wealth of your word to help us, God, not just to read your word and say I read it, not just to check off a box and say I did the Bible reading plan, but help us to dig deep and to know that you use specific words for specific reasons and specific phrases at specific times for specific reasons. Lord, help us to rightly divide so that we can live and impact the world for the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ wherever we are. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

God bless. See you Sunday, God willing.