

Ask Jeff

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Crossroads Ministries

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Good evening. It's 6:30 Central Time. I can't even talk today. Central Standard Time. Welcome to First Baptist Church of Opelika, Wednesday night, large group adult Bible study. Before we get to the Bible study though, just a couple public service announcements. Those of you who are scheduling your December because December tends to be a little busy in our community, in our culture, Wednesday night, December 13th, that's two weeks from today, every activity on our campus will be outside and in the sanctuary, otherwise known as our live nativity. Yes, Charlie the camel is back. Yes, we'll have all the animals, we'll have all the food, the hot chocolate, we'll have the live nativity. The actual service is actually going to be in the worship center, okay? But it'll all be on campus. Just want you to know that there are no other adult Bible studies taking place on the 13th. And then Sunday night, December 17th, mark your calendars. At 6 p.m., right here in the 316 Center, we're going to have the Christmas edition of Ask Jeff. You say, what does that mean? That means that all the questions will involve something revolving what we know of the Christmas celebration, the birth of Christ, all the story, etc. But otherwise, that night, we're going to have snacks, drinks, hot chocolate, and we would encourage you to wear the ugliest Christmas sweater you got. All right on December the 17th, six o'clock, that is a Sunday evening. As always if you're unable to attend in person, we will be broadcasting live. Speaking broadcasting live, there are those listening on 97.7 today however, they're listening on Sunday morning a little bit time delayed. They're those online, but those of you in here.

It's time to do some Bible study. Every topic we discuss, every passage, every subject matter, whatever happens tonight is actually originated by you. That's right. If this is your first time either in-house or online, you are the ones who get to architect tonight. What does that mean? That means you either text message or raise your hand if you're in-house to decide what we talk about. Text messaging, area code 334-231-2313. You are absolutely completely anonymous. You can be on the front row, you can be on the back row, you can be on another continent on the other side of the camera, when you send in by text message it goes directly to the computer portal to my left, it eventually ends up on the screen and nobody knows who you are. Chris doesn't know. I don't know. Your number doesn't show up, it's just your question, however if we're talking about a subject matter, a passage, whatever it may be, and you want to do a little bit of a follow-up, maybe dig a little deeper, tangent to, whatever it may be, you can submit a follow-up by way of text messaging. It will show up on a different font, and we will, quote, stay on

subject. Now, for those of you that are in-house, you have a very distinct privilege. You can raise your hand. When you raise your hand, you have the floor. You can take the conversation any direction you want. However, you lose your anonymity inside the house. Now, your image nor will your voice be heard or seen online or by way of the radio. So you're anonymous to the world wide web, but you are not in the room. But that's okay because we're all family. We're all friends. No big deal.

How about we do some Bible study? That sounds good? Here we go. Question number one. It says in 2 Peter chapter 2 verse 20, is Peter speaking of, quote, so-called believer who walks away? It can't be a believer since it says, quote, it would be better if they had not known the way of righteousness. Will you explain? Absolutely. Go to 2 Peter chapter 2, and I know you expect me to say what I'm about to say, but 2 Peter chapter 2 is or has or possesses a very unique place in scripture, and the reason I say unique place is first it is within what we know as the general epistles. That's going to come into play in just a moment. Specifically chapter 1 is addressing those who are walking alongside of expressing the faith. Chapter 3 is challenging those of faith. However, I want you to look at chapter 2 verse 1. Chapter 2 verse 1 says, but, y'all know that's my favorite word in the Bible, right? So everything's been going along just great and then in verse 1 of chapter 2 it says, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privately shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." And for the rest of the chapter, it is warning us not only of the identities of, the influence of, but it is warning us of those who fall prey to these that propagate what the Bible calls damnable heresies.

Now, what's interesting is you walk all the way through the chapter and if you're sitting there, it's just amen after amen after amen, and then you get to verse 19. Verse 19 says, "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption, for whom a man is overcome of the same he is bought in bondage." Verse 20, "for if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning, for it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." Verse 22, "But it has happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again and the sow that was washing or wallowing is in the mire." Now, let's address this passage specifically and then we're going to kind of get a broader context of the passage. You would have to admit that this passage is troubling. I mean it's absolutely troubling. But it reminds us of two other passages in the Bible. Primarily it reminds us of Hebrews chapter 6. Remember Hebrews chapter 6 it says if one had tasted of the Holy Ghost and if they should fall away they would not be able to be renewed? That famous passage that a lot of people go to and say, oh, that's evidence that you can lose your salvation. However, when you look at it in a, quote, broader context, you discover that in Hebrews chapter 6, because it comes after chapter 5, there are believers that are immature in their faith, not real knowledgeable in their faith, that haven't grown in their faith, and they're struggling with those issues such

as departing from the faith that are not even constructionally possible within the faith. Okay, it's not a strawman argument, but it's it's a conclusion therein. Notice you have the same language here, if and but, and it sounds a whole lot like the book of Jude. In fact, if you were to get in the weeds tonight and do a study of 2 Peter chapter 2 and the book of Jude, you will notice an incredible similarity. It talks about clouds that look like they're gonna produce rain, but they produce none. Okay, it talks this imagery of that which appears to be but it is not. And so I think within a strict context, the thing that you see in 2 Peter chapter 2 is what was described in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, and it's called, quote, the falling away and/or apostasy. Apostasy, that word, doesn't mean to possess faith and depart from the faith. It means to appear to be of the faith and never have been genuine of the faith and I think the key to this passage here is just like in Hebrews 6 is if this were to occur, if this were to occur then and but, you kind of see the same argument. It's not advocating for someone who is a quote unquote true believer and then departs from it. It is advocating that they either A, were not a true believer or B, like in Hebrews chapter 6, they were young in their faith and didn't understand the full construct of their faith.

Now, that's within the immediate context. You want to have a little fun tonight? Well, I'm going to have a little fun tonight. You're welcome to join me. I want to look, when we get into the general epistles, I mentioned that earlier, one of the difficulties that we have with the general epistles is there are oftentimes, Hebrews chapter 6, 2 Peter chapter 2, the book of Jude, there are oftentimes these passages that tend to appear to be somewhat contrary to the New Testament faith that we know, love, and believe in. It just, on the surface level, it seems to kind of be somewhat contradictory, okay? And one of the things I want to share with you tonight about the general epistles is kind of from a 30,000 foot level that I think is critical. The first thing is this, the general epistles begin in the book of Hebrews, okay? Hebrews, James, 1st, 2nd, Peter, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, John, Jude, and Revelation. From Hebrews through Jude, one of the things that you will never see is this, the word church. It's not there. You never see the word church. Now think about that contrary to the letters of the Apostle Paul, to the church at Ephesus, to the churches in Galatia, to the church at Thessalonica. It's church here, it's church there, but all of a sudden there's no mention of church. What you do see is to the beloved, to the brethren, ok, to those specific individuals but never a collective whole. I think that's critical to the equation.

Now I'm going to show you something tonight and we're going to go there tonight, one of those could it be's, ok? Y'all know what it means when I say could it be, right? Don't get out your ballpoint pen but you might want to get out a pencil, right? Could it be I want to show you something tonight when it comes to the New Testament that I think helps or could potentially help when it comes to these passages in the general epistles that at times give us a little bit of strain. Now before I do what I'm about to do or show you what I'm about to show you, one thing that we all have to understand is that every single passage in the Bible, every passage can be approached in three very specific ways. I refer to it as the historical, the doctrinal, and the spiritual. You say, well, what does that mean? Historically, that passage was inspired by God through a specific writer, at a specific time, at a specific place, to a specific people. That's the easy part. The doctrinal part is the

message was given to a specific people, at a specific time, for a very specific purpose. And then the spiritual means that no matter who you are or where you are, you can glean wisdom, understanding, and the encouragement of your faith therein. Now, the classic example is what we know as the Ten Commandments. You go to Exodus chapter 20. We know that Moses goes on Mount Sinai, 40 days, 40 nights. He comes down. He has the tablets, right? We know the story. It's the Israelites. We got it historically, right? Doctrinally, at the end of Exodus chapter 20, remember what God says, "If you do these things, you are my people and I am your God." And you say, why is that important? Because right now, for you and I, 2,000 years on this side of the empty tomb, you don't go to heaven by obeying the Ten Commandments. The Bible says believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Right? But you and I don't have the right to look at the Ten Commandments and go, "Oh, that doesn't apply to us anymore. I can do what I want to do. Now I'm saved." You don't have that privilege. So spiritually speaking, you go back into the Ten Commandments and it is a guide, it's a directive of how to live out our faith in Christ. Doctrinally speaking, that was how the Lord was working through the Israelites at that time because Jesus Christ has not come, lived, died, and raised again. Historically speaking, Moses, Sinai, etc.

You say, ok, great. What does that have to do with 2 Peter chapter 2? Allow me to show you a little could it be tonight. So let's take what you and I know as the New Testament. Wow, my pen is small tonight. Here we go. This is the New Testament. It obviously begins with what we know as the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Then we have the book of Acts. Then we have what I'm just going to refer to as Paul's letters primarily. Then we have what we call the general epistles or the general letters which do include the book of Revelation. Now, one of the things you'll notice is what we know as the New Testament is and readily is divided into three sections. By the way, the same thing is done with your Old Testament, okay? First five books are called the Torah, okay? And then we have the historical works, the letters, and then we have the prophets, right? The writings and then the prophets. So, that being said, one of the things that we look at here, when I use the book of Acts separately here, I think one of the things that we have to understand is the book of Acts is a book of transition. It takes us from the early days of the faith of Christianity to about 30 or 40 years later. The book of Acts actually encompasses what we know as Paul's letters. In fact, you go back in 1 Thessalonians, that's the first letter Paul gave us, is actually time wise, chronologically, Acts chapter 17. You can make your way all the way through. So essentially what you have here are three very distinct sections. You have the story of Jesus Christ up to his death and resurrection, then you have the letters of the Apostle Paul to the churches of the New Testament, and then you have these general letters. The word church is not used outside of Revelation chapter 2 and 3 which is a whole other story and it's written to the beloved and it's written to the quote unquote brethren.

Now I want to begin this somewhat could it be by asking a very rhetorical question that many of you have heard many times from my mouth but it's important to understand. When you go to the Gospels right here Matthew, Mark, Luke...

Thank you, Tabor. Yes, the magic. Wow, it's the little things that get me. Alright.

When you go to the Gospels, how many born-again Christians are there? Zero. None. Jesus hasn't sacrificed his blood. He hasn't risen from the dead. And so what do you find in the Gospels? You have a whole bunch of people who are trying to be right with God by obeying the law, bringing the sacrifices, and doing everything according to the Old Testament law. What is Jesus doing throughout the entire Gospel record? He's basically telling people, "Hey, no matter how hard you try or how much you do, it's never going to be enough. You need me. Follow me. Come and follow me." He tells everybody, "Come and follow me." Where's he going? He's going to the cross. He's going to the grave and he's coming back up, right?

Now what's interesting there is so the Gospels as a separate entity you have zero born-again Christians, the church as you and I know it is not there. What do we know about the church? At least the Pentecost experience, where does that start? It starts here in the book of Acts, right? And then you have all these letters to the church, to the church, to the church, to the church. And then all of a sudden, you get to the book of Hebrews and there's no mention of any church. In fact, it begins in this really almost Genesis type fashion. It says, "God who in sundry places and diverse times spoken to us in times past by the prophets now speaks unto us by Jesus." And then it starts talking about the Old Testament. Did you know that every illustration in the book of Hebrews is from the Old Testament? Every illustration from the book of James is from the Old Testament. And you see this pattern developing. And so, it has led to this proposal that I find absolutely fascinating. Now, before I go there, remember, every single passage in the Bible for a born-again believer in Jesus Christ is spiritually applicable. There is no passage that I can look at and go, "Eh, you know, Ten Commandments, that was great for them. It's not for me." It is applicable spiritually, but it is not doctrinal. That being said, here is a could it be that I think helps solve what we know as the general epistle problem, that what we know as the Gospels, for a lack of better terms, is doctrinally the Old Testament. They're Jewish people, going to Jewish feasts, giving Jewish sacrifices, doctrinally speaking, correct? Then we have what we call the church right here. That's easy. We've got it in the book of Acts all the way through the Apostle Paul. But what's going to happen to the church one day? I don't know about y'all, but I'm taking off. I'm going, right? What's the Bible say? There's coming a day where the dead in Christ and alive in Christ are going to be caught up to be with the Lord. And so one of the thoughts is that there is what we call that rapturous event and that this doctrinally is applicable to what you and I know as that tribulation experience.

Now think about that trip. We talk about it all the time on Wednesday night because we're in Revelation all the time. What do you see in the tribulation? You see the Lord moving in a very distinct and different way than he does to the churches at Galatia. You see people running from the Antichrist. You see them not taking the mark of the beast. You see them losing their lives for their faith. And guess what you discover? There's a whole lot of people during that tribulation that talk a whole lot about the Lord until the sword goes to their throat and then all of a sudden, "Well, I don't know." Now do you see a pattern? 2 Peter 2, Hebrews chapter 6, the book of Jude. There's this appearance of, but not an authentic faith of and so one of the approaches to the general epistles that I find

handy is that if you look at it kind of from a 30,000 foot view, doctrinally speaking it lines up more with that quote tribulation period than it does what we call the church but doesn't mean it's not applicable for my life. I will confess to you some of my favorite passages in all the Bible are in the general epistles because it challenges us to be authentic and real in and with our faith.

So full circle and we'll open it up. Back to 2 Peter chapter 2. What does that say for you and I? I do believe there is evidence within just the context of chapter 2 that we're dealing with an apostasy situation here. These are not genuine believers who have departed from their faith, it's apostasy, there's an appearance of, an outwardness of but not a genuineness of, but even when you go to it broadly, I think there's evidence in the general epistles that we're operating much differently than even if we would in the gospel times compared to the Apostle Paul. That's a whole lot of stuff in a quick amount of time. Questions, concerns, follow ups, thoughts? I'll even take rude remarks tonight. I'm in a good mood. Nobody? Somebody? Wow, okay. Maybe we ought to feed your ham more often. It just kind of felt, there you go. You know tonight was a celebration of our Gentileness. Question, I'm just having fun.

Question number two since obviously we have no follow-ups. It says why did the Bible use the specific miracles Jesus performed rather than others that he did that were not included in the Bible? This is a really good question because you look at the miracles of Jesus and we know he performed many but they're not all recorded. Look at the parables of Jesus. We have 32 that are recorded, but we know that he spoke more. The answer to this question, go to the Gospel of John. The question is, we don't have all the miracles of Jesus recorded. You're absolutely correct and so the question really is, so why do we have the ones that we do? I think that John chapter 21 sums it up, I'm sorry, chapter 20, I apologize. I apologize. John chapter 20. John chapter 20. I'm gonna read verse 30 and 31 and I want you to pay close attention to the wording of verse 31. It says, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book." So push pause. That means there are certain miracles that we don't have recorded. There are certain sermons that are not recorded. There are certain parables that are not listed. But verse 31, I think, gives us the reason. It says, "But these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through his name." Now, the reason that that is important to me, and it goes back to this little chart that's on the screen, is this, that means that every single sermon that we have recorded, every miracle that's recorded, every sign that's recorded, everything that we have in the Gospel, has one very critical purpose behind it, and that is to show us our sinful condition and that Jesus is the Savior. That's it. And so, every construct, everything that we have regarding faith is there.

So, are there other signs Jesus did? According to what we read, yes. Are there other miracles he did? Absolutely. It alludes to the fact that not everything's there. In fact, it says if everything were recorded, this is what it says later on, that all the libraries of the world could not contain it. So we have what we have for a very specific reason, to let us know about our sinful condition and that Jesus is our Savior. Now, here's what's beautiful about that. Once you get past the empty tomb and you get to the book of Acts, Pentecost,

and Paul's letters, then we get the teachings on how do we live this out because I got something to tell you, you know, it doesn't matter to tell you how to live it out if you don't know what you're living yet. Remember what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 4? He said, "I will come and make you fishers of men." Did you know you never clean up a fish before you catch it? You never do. And so if you think about it, the Gospels show us our need for salvation and Jesus is our Savior and what we know as Paul's letters really tell us how do we live that out in light of the empty tomb. And so we don't have them all recorded, we don't have them all listed but I think John 20:31 gives us an explanation. The why is so that we would believe. It's got a single solitary purpose and that's our understanding of Jesus as Savior.

In spite of the technical issue we had, any thoughts, concerns, issues? You know, last time I said rude remark, we had technical issues. So maybe I'll just leave that off the slate. Everybody's good? Chris, they're quiet tonight. Are we going to run out of questions? Oh, ok. Question number three. Psalm chapter 8 verse 5 says, man is a little lower than the angels. How can something of a lower status judge a higher status? Now, what this question is alluding to, and it absolutely does say that in Psalms 8:5, that we, humanity, are a little lower than the angels, okay? In fact, you look in Hebrews chapter 1 verse 14, it says angels are ministering spirits. You and I, flesh and blood, and last time I checked, we're pretty carnal and nasty creatures thanks to our sin condition. We're a little lower than. But the Bible also says in 2 Corinthians 6 that one day you and I shall, quote, judge the angels. So how can something that is lower judge that which is higher? And the simple answer to this is the moment that you get saved, the Bible makes it very clear that you are in Christ. You are part of the body of Christ. And the thing I want to make clear tonight is, when that day comes, and by the way, I believe that day is in Revelation 20, where it talks about that final great judgment, that you, I'm just going to use me, Jeff Myers is not judging the angels, okay? But I'm a part of the body of Christ, I'm in Christ, and that judgment that is upon them, the only reason I'm a part of it is because I'm in Christ. It's not because I, for some reason, have the ability or the authority to go and judge the angels. I'm only doing so because I'm in Christ. And so really the answer to this question is the position that we hold versus the person that we are because once we're in Christ, that position of authority in him allows us to be a part of that judgment and not actually the individual who makes the judging, if that makes sense. So yes, we are a little lower in the creative order, but in Christ, we have the authority to judge those that have rebelled against the Lord. Hopefully that helps out a little bit with that question.

All right, third time's the charm. Thoughts, concerns, questions? I'm just moving on, here we go. It says, are Old Testament saints judged at the judgment seat of Christ? If so, are they considered a part of the bride of Christ? All right, whoever asked this one, you opened up the can. Here we go. All right, so let me get rid of this little image real quick. The question is, what about those Old Testament saints? Go to Matthew chapter 27. Matthew chapter 27, and then we're going to make our way to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 and 1 Corinthians chapter 3. Did I mention this is a Bible study? Okay, Matthew chapter 27. This is a verse that I allude to quite often because it's one of those passages in the Bible that I think the first time you really study it's kind of somewhat head spinning, but the more you study it, the more relevant it becomes to our understanding of scripture.

Matthew chapter 27, beginning in verse 51, Jesus Christ is obviously upon the cross. It says, "And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent." Push pause. I like to call this to your attention. The veil did not tear because of the earthquake. The veil tore and then the earthquake. That's an important distinction there. All right, so verse 52, "And the graves were opened and many bodies of the saints which slept arose. They came out of the graves after his resurrection. They went into the holy city. They appeared unto many." Basically, the Bible says in Matthew chapter 27 that those Old Testament saints, okay, we have a list of 32 of them the book of Hebrews chapter 11 and there's a host of others, that their quote being raised actually took place at what you and I know as the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That's what it said, right? Jesus rose, they rose.

Okay, now fast forward to 1 Corinthians chapter 3 Hopefully we're gonna bring a little bit of clarity to this. 1 Corinthians chapter 3 This is written, per the previous question, 1 Corinthians written to the church at Corinth, right? These are believers. And by the way, the church at Corinth was a struggling church. They had difficulties understanding what it meant to be sanctified by faith, how to live it out, how to be distinct and different from the world. But in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, it begins at the very beginning, if you'll notice the beginning of the chapter, it's talking about those that are immature in their faith versus those that are mature. Basically, some are, shall we say, eating cereal, some are eating meat, right? There's a difference. And it's not a literal eating. It means the content and the depth of scripture and the faith that they're exhibiting, living, and practicing. Then you fast forward over to verse 11. It says, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if any man build upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay stubble, every man's work," look at that next word, "shall be made manifest for the day shall declare it because it shall be revealed by fire and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he had built there upon he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned he shall suffer loss but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." Did you notice the word that I inflected? Shall. That means something that has not yet occurred, that is something that is in the future, that is something that lays ahead of us.

Now, let me describe to you this event known as the judgment seat of Christ. It's described here in 1 Corinthians 3, Romans 14:10, 2 Corinthians chapter 5, a host of different places. Basically what it says is that as a believer in Jesus Christ, there is coming a day where each and every one of us will stand before the Lord and according to what we just read, we will give an account of our life as we lived it for the Lord. This is not a judgment that determines heaven or hell. That's already been taken care of. The day you believed, judgment was rendered, right? So this is a, for lack of better terms, an opportunity for reward and an opportunity to demonstrate one's faithfulness to the Lord. It's not whether one spends eternity in heaven or hell. It says in verse 11, the foundation has already been laid in Jesus Christ. The reason I kept inflecting the word shall is because this event's being described in 1 Corinthians as something that is in the future and what did we just read in Matthew 27, something that happened in the past? Those Old Testament saints had already been risen. Those Old Testament saints had already walked in the holy city. Those Old Testament saints are already quote unquote with the

Lord and per the question, they are not a part of the bride of Christ because their life of faith, by the way Hebrews chapter 11, Old Testament hall of fame, it says by faith Abel, by faith Moses, by faith, it's faith, the question is faith in what? In the Old Testament, it's faith in the promise and the provision of God. In the New Testament, it's faith in an empty tomb. Okay?

Follow-up question says, so were the people in the Old Testament saved by faith or by obeying the Ten Commandments? Genesis chapter 15 verse 6. Very good point. Go back to Genesis chapter 15. We have what we know is the call of Abraham. Well, he was actually Abram at the time, he would become Abraham. What it says there, and it's quoted again in Romans chapter 4, It says he believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness. Now, I promise you I'm not trying to be sarcastic. I also promise you I'm not trying to be cynical. Okay? But I want to read this verse the way most people read it. Okay? Verse 6. "And he believed that Jesus Christ raised from the dead and his blood saved him and it was counted to him for righteousness." It's not what it says. I got news for us, Abram didn't even know who Jesus was. He didn't have a clue. The promises that were written about the son of Jesse, the tribe of Judah, didn't have a clue. What does it say? He believed God. It was attributed to him as righteousness.

Now, that's in chapter 15. Let's go back to chapter 6. Do you remember a guy named Noah? Did he believe in God? He did. What did he believe? In building a boat. What did God tell Noah? He said, "Noah, there's a big one coming and if you're not on the boat, you're in trouble." What did Noah say? "That's right, I believe Jesus died for my sins." Now, I'm not trying to be funny, I promise. What I'm trying to show you is faith is the element, the question is faith in what? Noah had faith that if he built the boat as God told him to, he'd be saved. What did Abraham believe? Abraham believed that if he went to a land, he knew not of. By the way, when you go to Hebrews chapter 11, it expounds on this and it says, "and going to a land he knew not of." You go to Moses, the law, etc., etc., etc. Now, fast forward to the book of Acts. What happens when the Philippian jailer comes to Paul? He says, "What must I do to be saved?" He says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

And so, when you look all throughout the scripture, faith is the element, God is the implement, the question is, what are they having faith in? Again, Noah was a boat. Abraham was a land. You and I is a risen Savior. But all are saved by faith. That's why Hebrews 11 uses that phrase, by faith, by faith, by faith. But it's in faith of what God has revealed and what God has shown. So, you go back to the Old Testament. None of those Old Testament saints were in the bride of Christ. Not one of them. Couldn't have been. But they had faith and they exercised that faith in what God had revealed to them. In the New Testament, now today for you and I, it is faith in a Savior that has come, lived, died, and raised from the grave. So again, someone says, "Well, I have faith in just doing the Ten Commandments." Well, you've got faith in the wrong thing, is what you've got, okay? Because I think I talked about this last Sunday. You can do the right thing for the wrong reason, and you can do the wrong thing for the right reason.

Any follow-up on that one? That's a great question, yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Matthew 27. Yes. Matthew chapter 27. You, my friend, have paid attention to the specific words that are used. Verse 52, "And the graves were opened and many bodies of the saints which slept arose." Now again, I wasn't an English major. Were you an English major? Neither was I. But I know enough English to know that many is not all and all is not many and many is not most. Correct? It says many saints arose. Now, again, let's go back to the context. These are Old Testament saints. These are those who exercised faith in the Lord prior to the incarnation and the fulfillment of the Messiah's life, death, and resurrection, right? The key word that he picked up on was many. What that means is that there are some, correct, because if you get many and some, that were not raised.

Can I give you a could it be? Go to Ezekiel 37. You know it's going to be good if you go to Ezekiel. Go to Ezekiel 37. Go to Ezekiel 37. Now, Ezekiel 37. is one of the best well-known passages in all the Bible, because some of you, at least I did, did you grow up singing the song about the knee bones connected to the shin bones, shin bones connected to the...? Yeah, okay. That comes from Ezekiel chapter 37, because in Ezekiel chapter 37, the prophet Ezekiel is asked by God to breathe on the valley of bones, and those valley of bones, they come to life, right? So, it's a very famous passage, and we're pretty familiar with it at some level, however I want to read it in its entirety. I want to read it in context. And I want us to see, this is important, the when this takes place. Now, let me remind you before we read this. Ezekiel was one of the exilic prophets. You say, what does that mean? Remember the 70 years that Israel was in Babylon? Those 70 years, Ezekiel lived during that time, okay? So he's prophesied during the Babylonian captivity, all right? Now, Ezekiel chapter 37, I'm gonna begin in verse 1. It says, "The hand of the Lord was upon me. He carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and he set me down in the midst of the valley, which was full of bones. He caused me to pass by them round about. And behold, there were very many in the open valley, and lo, they were very dry. He said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. He said unto me, prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, behold I will cause breath to enter into you and you shall live. I will lay sinews upon you and bring up flesh upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you and you shall live and you shall know that I am the Lord." Verse 7, "So I prophesied as I was commanded and as I prophesied there was a noise and behold a shaking and the bones came together bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo the sinews and the flesh came upon them all and the skin covered them above but there was no breath in them. Then he said unto me, prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus said the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, breathe upon these, slain that they may live." Push pause. That means whoever these bones are, are people who lived at one point but are dead. Correct? They were slain. Now they're going to live again. Verse 10. "So I prophesied as he commanded, breath came into them, they lived, and stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army." That's an interesting choice of words. Not a large crowd or a congregation, but an army. Last time I checked, the term army is used for a group of individuals who have a fighting or some type of event such as ahead of them, right?

Now, let's go to verse 11. "Then he said to me, son of man, these bones," this is critical, "these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, our bones are dried, our hope is lost, and we're cut off for our parts. Therefore, prophesy and say, and thus said the Lord God, behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and I will cause you to come out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. You shall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves and shall put my Spirit in you. You shall live. I shall place you in your own land. Then shall you know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it, saith the Lord." Guess what you've got? A bunch of dead people who get breathed on, they come out of their graves, and they're an army, and the whole house of Israel has been consummated. I would argue that hadn't happened yet. Y'all remember the movie "The Mummy"? Some of y'all going, "I don't watch secular movies." Okay, I'm the carnal one here, all right? In the movie "The Mummy," there is a scene where all these dead military personnel all of a sudden come up out of the sand of the desert. It is the most accurate demonstration of this passage I've ever seen. There's coming a day where, according to what we just read...now, this hadn't happened yet. This hasn't occurred yet. There's not a place past Ezekiel in the Old Testament, New Testament, there's not a time in life that you can say this happened. You say, "Well, but Matthew 27, they came out of the graves." They didn't do this. Was there an army that came out? Was it the whole house of Israel? It couldn't have been the whole house because it said many. So I would argue that there is coming a day where those that were not raised in Matthew 27 are going to be raised with the Lord and it has a language about it that sounds somewhat like the consummation or the end times, if that makes sense.

Now, going back to the original question, that means that none of these folks are part of the bride of Christ. What did it call them? Israel. But they had faith, just not faith in a risen Savior, but still a part of the plan of God and one day forever dwelling with us. Does that help a little bit with that one? Hopefully that wasn't too confusing, but I think it's a fascinating passage because this hasn't happened yet. It's a passage we sing, and it's a passage we know, but if you read verses 11 on, it has a very second coming-ish consummation, militarily army type of perspective. So, you're right, many rose, but not all. I'm glad you brought up that word.

Anybody question, thought, concern? We're not serving ham anymore. We're done. No more. Okay. Is it possible that the events of October 7th, the attack in Israel, were a fulfillment of Ezekiel 38 verse 11? I hope not. All right, now, I couldn't have planned this out any better. Are y'all in Ezekiel 37? Turn over one page to chapter 38. Chapter 38 and chapter 39 of what we know as the book of Ezekiel contains the chronology or the chronicles of a military struggle that is commonly referred to as Gog and Magog. Now, the reason we call it Gog and Magog is because that is the name or the geographical name of the location in which it takes place. Now, in modern language, Gog is Turkey and Magog is Russia. Okay, that's just modern language. Now, I do want to show you something that is fascinating about this. When we talk about biblical prophecy, hopefully I can draw with... Okay, sorry, I'm having all kinds of tech issues tonight. All right, I'm going to have a little fun with this tonight.

So when we talk about the battle of Gog and Magog, I want you to imagine that this little dot right in the middle, this is Jerusalem. You know, that's kind of where the world revolves around, right? Okay, there's Jerusalem in Israel, okay? So I know I haven't drawn anything else, but I'm just going to draw a simple map for you. Obviously to our left here is what we call the Mediterranean Sea. Here's Jerusalem. This is the Jordan River right there. Just kind of give you a picture, modern day Jordan over here. What you and I know as Turkey is right up here, right above to the north, okay? Now, I'm gonna use vague lines, but Russia is basically from there all the way to the east. I mean, it's a big old place, right? Here's the thing that is amazing, that Gog, Magog, Magog is modern day Russia and if you'll notice in chapter 38, it talks about not only Gog and Magog, but it talks about a place called Meshech. Meshech is modern day Moscow. You know where Moscow is, geographically? It's right there. You know it talks about the armies coming from the north? It's being literal. It's a straight shot. Go Google map it, it'll blow your mind because when I think about Russia, I think about way northeast, right? That's just what I think about. But the city that's described in the Bible that is modern day Moscow is actually exactly due north. I mean, it is a straight shot to go from Magog to Gog straight down to Jerusalem, okay?

So the reason that's important to this question is the Battle of Magog involves a host of people that are not yet a part of what we know as the October 7th issue because notice it says in verse 1, "The word of the Lord came unto me saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech," that's Moscow, "and Tubal," that's in Turkey, "and prophesy unto them." Fast forward to verse 5, "Persia, Ethiopia and Libya." Now, in chapter 38 and 39, you have a host of countries. In fact, I would argue that you pretty much have every country in the world against Israel, okay? And it is a massive, massive battle. But verse 11, as alluded to in the question, it says, "And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages. I will go to them that are at rest. I will dwell safely, all them dwelling without walls, having neither bars nor gates to take spoil, to take prey," etc. etc. One of the things that I will say to this is when you see events like October 7th, when you see the Yom Kippur War of 1973, when you see these things that rise up, particularly in the Middle East and in Israel, they all have a resemblance to these events. They're a picture or a foreshadowing of, but I would argue that literally it is not a fulfillment of. For multiple reasons, number one, as soon as you get through the battle of Gog and Magog here, if you fast forward in your Bible, the next thing you know is you have an earthly temple with Jesus sitting on the throne. Well, last time I checked in the book of Revelation, there's a whole lot of stuff that's got to happen between now and then, right? And so one of the big discussions is, okay, if this all is foreshadowing Gog and Magog, when does Gog and Magog actually take place, okay? Many people, not most, many people believe it happens at the end of that famous tribulation time period because it says the battle is so bad that they have to bury the dead for years. It's a tragic, massive worldwide calamity of events. It is the World War of World Wars, if that makes sense, okay? And so again, I wouldn't say October 7th is this famous battle.

Now, I don't know kind of the inflection of the question, but I do want to give you a little bit of warning. One of the things that has somewhat given myself and many of you an advantage is I've now lived enough life where I'm starting to see things come back for the second and the third time. You say, "What do you mean by that?" Because we had these same conversations in October of 2001. In other words, y'all remember 9-11? When events like that occur on such a massive worldwide scale, we tend to go to these passages and go, "That sounds a lot like." Well, sounding a lot like is not the same as. And I would say they're birth pains, I would say they're foreshadowings, but I've lived enough, I remember in days after 9-11, I remember listening to what we would now call a podcast, back then we would call the radio, I remember people saying, "Aha, this is the passage in Ezekiel, this is the passage in Revelation." The problem is, if that was the passage in Ezekiel, we wouldn't be here right now. And so again, foreshadowing, picturesque of, even elements of, but not an exact fulfillment of. But listen to me, the closer we get to the end, the events are gonna start looking more like the events that are described, if that makes sense. It's a great question, but again, picturesque of, prophetic of, but not a representation of. Gog and Magog is something the world's never seen before and nobody, when it happens, we're not going to sit there and go, "I wonder if this is that." Oh, it's that because it's big. It's real big.

Any Gog and Magog questions? Man. There you go. Attaboy.

[unintelligible]

Will the church be here at the battle of Gog and Magog? Not the way I read the Bible. So, now, to quote a good friend of mine who doesn't believe the way I do, this person tells me, "I hope you're right." Again, it goes back to these passages that we have in scripture that describe, we just talked about earlier, the church being taken up. You and I are called the bride of Christ. You and I, Jesus told us at the end, he'll never leave us and he'll never forsake us. Okay. These events that we just described, they are under a time period where the Antichrist, for lack of better terms, reigns supreme. Okay. A time period where death is the norm and life is hard to find. I don't find any, by the way, we could use a lot of Bible passages to go back. I don't find any justification whatsoever that Jesus Christ would unleash the Antichrist on his own body because in Ephesians chapter 5, y'all say, "Oh, that's a passage about a wedding." No, it's a passage about the bride of Christ. It says, "no man hateth his own body, but he loves it, cherishes it, and desires for it to be spotless and without blame." So if we're his body and no man hates his own body, why would Jesus unload the Antichrist on his own body? Now that's just reasonable speak. I think there's a lot of passages that defend that. But when you go back to Revelation chapter 6, the famous seals, it's Jesus that opens the seals. So Jesus Christ initiates his judgment and yet the same Jesus said, "I'll never leave you or forsake you." And when he opens the first seal, it's the Antichrist. Now I don't know what your definition of forsake is, but that sounds difficult to me. "I love you, I'll never forsake you, I'll always be with you. Enjoy the Antichrist." I am being sarcastic.

Does that help a little bit? That's my perspective there.

[unintelligible]

Right. No, I don't believe the church is gonna be there, but I'm gonna say my phrase. Some of y'all can quote me. Y'all ready? Nothing has to happen before Jesus comes back for us, a lot of things have to happen before Jesus comes back with us. Some of the things that have to happen before Jesus comes back with us may in fact happen before he comes back for us. That'll preach. Everybody else good?

All right. Here we go. It says does your King James Version have Ecclesiastes 7:30. No, it does not and neither does yours. Go to Ecclesiastes chapter 7. Ecclesiastes chapter 7. By the way, I'm going to give a shameless plug here. Beginning in January, we are actually going to be preaching through Psalms 119. Now, I know some of you are thinking we're going to take an entire spring to talk about one chapter. Well, it has 22 chapters within the chapter, because one of the things we're gonna be doing in early 2024 is, and some of you are familiar with this, as a church, we're gonna challenge each other as a church to memorize the entirety of the scripture, the entirety of the Bible. We'll talk more about that later. But next summer, we're gonna walk through the book of Ecclesiastes, okay? A book of wisdom, this book, the vanity of vanity, all is vanity. There's kind of this going back and forth between the desires of the world, the futility of the world. When you get to chapter 7, I don't know about your Bible, in fact, I do know about your Bible, it ends with verse 29. Now, y'all know I like to have fun and play old Carnac the magician up here so here I go. Does anybody here have a Bible with Ecclesiastes chapter 7 verse 30 in it? Nobody? Nope. You know why? Because the only one you can find it is in the Geneva Bible. The Geneva Bible of 1599 is the only Bible that has what we know as verse 30 in it, okay?

Now, you say, well, what's going on here, okay? Now remember, that's just a few years before what we know as the King James Version, okay? If we were to get in the weeds tonight, you would discover they come from the same text, same sources, etc. Alright, I want you to go beginning in verse 20, really 25. Verse 25 through 29, I'm not going to read all of that for the sake of time tonight and the sake of context, but if you read verse 25 through 29, one of the things you'll discover that if you go to the Geneva Bible, which you can read it because it's in English, if you go to the Geneva Bible and you read, one of the things that you'll discover is that there is not any information there that is not contained in your Bible. What they've done is they've divided the verses up into smaller sections and added more verses. So the Geneva, if memory serves me correctly, it has verse 30. I think it also has verse 31, too. Does it have verse 31, too? You got it on your phone? There you go. So if you read verse 31, it looks just like verse 29 in every other Bible and what they've done is they've taken these longer verses and they've segmented it up into smaller, and basically where yours has 29, theirs has 31, but the text is the same. Okay. So, that's kind of the answer to that question. So, it's not just about a specific English version. It's basically any version in the English Bible since the King James Version. None of them have verse 30 and/or verse 31. That would be the Bishop Bible, which by the way came right after the Great Bible. No, the Geneva Bible, which came after the Great Bible, which came after the Bishop's Bible. That's a lot to keep up with, if that makes any sense. But essentially, you're all in that time period right before what we

know as the King James. Same text, same content, for some reason, and I don't have the explanation to this, for some reason, they took 29 verses and made 31 out of them. But it's the same text. You're reading it right now. It reads the same. It's just divided up differently among the verses. But that is a good question. That's one of those Bible trivia questions. That's like asking someone to find Jude chapter 2. That's one of Chris's favorite questions. Jude chapter 2.

It says, I know you've answered this before, uh-oh, but I cannot remember. That's good. Some of my daughter's friends are telling her that anyone who commits suicide will go to hell. Is this true? All right, so let me tell you what qualifies somebody for hell? Somebody who does not believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. That's what qualifies somebody for hell. We unfortunately live in a culture and in a society, and typically when it comes to media, books, movies, stories, etc., that for some reason has propagated the concept that if somebody ends their own life, it negates any possibility of heaven and guarantees hell. Let me tell you where the idea comes from. The idea comes from a theology that we describe as sacramental. You say, "What is a sacramental theology?" A sacramental theology is one that states that I must do certain things in order to check off certain boxes so that I am ready and qualified one day to exit this earth and go to heaven. Okay, I have to do certain things. Now, the result of a sacramental theology is, if you die with unconfessed sin, then you do not have the ability to go to heaven. You know what the problem with that theology is? That means nobody's going because you have committed some type of sin, sometimes somewhere in your life, that you don't remember, don't know about, and never called it out or confessed it. This is why we need Jesus, okay, because the Bible speaks up, you know what it says at the end of the book of James chapter 4? It says if you know to do good and do not do it, it is counted as sin. That's a problem. How many times during the day do you have an opportunity but you don't, but how many times do you throw yourself and confess to the guy, you just, I don't have time or whatever it may be, right? In other words, every single one of us dies in sin. Every single one of us has sin. That's why Jesus is so important because his blood covers all of our sin.

Now let me go back a few moments. Remember the whole judgment seat of Christ thing that we just talked about in 1 Corinthians 3? The wood, the hay, the stubble, is that good stuff? No. So once you get saved, since you've been saved, there are going to be times in life where you mess up, fall into temptation, fall short, whatever you want to call it and guess what? At the judgment seat of Christ, you're held accountable for it, but it doesn't determine your eternity. So let's go back to suicide. What is suicide? Suicide is a sin, right? It's taking one's life. It's a sin. But so are a host of a lot of other things. And so if you have to have every sin you've ever committed confessed before God in order to go to heaven, you have not only a works-based salvation, but you have basically nobody qualified to ever go to heaven. So that's why Jesus is so critical and so important. Now, again, on this issue, it is a tragic issue. It is a sorrowful issue. It is a painful issue. It is an issue that nobody ever wants to walk through, much less anybody else to walk through. Let me beg of you, if you know somebody whose family, whose friends are walking through this subject matter, do not add fuel to the fire and fall for this dumb theology because those family members have already had hope ripped out from them. Okay? And

so go to the scripture. What does the Bible say? Not what does tradition say, what does religion say, or what some movie says. What does the Bible say?

Now, I'm gonna end in 1 John 5, verse 12 and 13. We got one minute left. Here we go. I love verse 12. It's the gospel in simple form. Why? It's all one syllable words. "He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son hath not life. I write these things so that you might know you have eternal life in Jesus Christ." In other words, our eternity is not based on the means by which we exit this earth. Our eternity is based on the way, the means of whom we believed on while on the earth. So again, tragic, terminal, horrible, absolutely but biblically speaking, Jesus Christ as one's Savior is all one needs to believe in to be saved no matter how they exit this life.

We're out of time. Let's pray, we'll roll.

Lord Jesus, thank you that you've made it so simple. In fact, you made it very clear in the Gospel of Matthew, so simple that a child could believe. So simple, the Apostle Paul said he marveled that we removed ourselves from it. And God, I know tonight we dealt with some complex issues, we dealt with some deep issues, we even dealt with some things maybe we never even thought about before but God, tonight at the end of the night, you've made it real simple, if we believe on you, we have life, if we don't, we don't. May we major on the majors and minor on the minors. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.