

## Ask Jeff 1.31.19

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**Crossroads Ministries**

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Good evening and welcome to First Baptist of Opelika. Good to see you here on this cold evening. Good to have you here. By the way, last week we had on campus here on a Wednesday evening 1,041 people, so sometimes when we're in the auditorium here, we don't have a sense of what's going on throughout the rest of the campus but we've got preschool and children and men's Bible studies and women's Bible studies and choir practice, all kinds of things going on but we are glad that you're here.

I enjoy being a part of a church that prays, aren't you? We need to be praying as Christians and we need to be persistent in our prayers. I do know this, evil is persistent, isn't it? Evil is persistent. Have you been reading the news about what's going on in the state of New York with the new abortion law that's been passed? And now they are debating a similar abortion law in the state of Virginia and we are surrounded by ungodliness and surrounded by wickedness, and there are individuals that are in the legislature and in government and they do not believe that a child is a person until that child takes its first breath. But evil is persistent, folks, and one of the beliefs that I have is I believe that Christians give up too easily. We give up. We're not as persistent as evil and God in his word tells us that we need to remain steadfast, we need to be persistent, we need to pray continuously, we need to seek the heart of God, and I'm glad that I'm a part and that you are a part of a Bible-believing, Bible-preaching, praying church and we need to get a hold of the heart of God and the mind of God in prayer.

Let me go over the prayer sheet with us very quickly. Maxine and Ronnie are in East Alabama Medical Center. We need to be praying for those. You'll notice folks are in Arbor Springs. A number of folks are at home and we're praying for them, of course. Some that are out of town. And our hearts go out to Don and Yvonne S. and their family in the death of their daughter-in-law. Also the H.'s in the death of his mother. So let's be praying for those situations. We're praying for Lynn and Ben. And then you'll notice our missionary prayer partners and as always we're praying for those folks that are serving in the United States military. I'm looking forward to Bible study tonight, aren't you?

Let's go ahead and we'll pray and we'll get into the word of God.

*Heavenly Father, you are so good and, Father, we live in a world that's so evil and, Father, we pray that you'd help us to be consistent in our prayers, persistent in prayer.*

*We pray, heavenly Father, that you would give us the consciousness of your presence at all times. We do pray for those that are on this prayer list. We pray, Lord, that you would comfort, that you'd heal, that you'd strengthen those people that are suffering a loss, a bereavement, health issues, disease, sickness. Father, we are surrounded by sorrow and, Lord, we pray that your Spirit might strengthen those that are in need on this list. And Father, we do pray for our pastor. We pray, Lord, that you'd fill him with the Spirit of God. We pray, Lord, that you would protect him, that you would keep him safe and guard his heart. Lord, we know that the wicked one, the evil one would seek to attack him and his family just as he seeks to destroy our lives as well. So Father, we do pray that you would encamp around us, protect us. We pray, Lord, that you would encourage us by your Spirit, give us the ability to understand your word and to strengthen us by your might and, Father, we pray that we might be changed as a result, be more like the Lord Jesus as a result of being here today. We pray that we might be brighter lights for Christ, for it is in his name we pray. Amen.*

Well, good evening and welcome to what I like to call my favorite hour of the week. You may be wondering, those of you that are here for the very first time or maybe those of you who are listening actually on Sunday morning to 97.7 FM, our weekly broadcast, you may be saying, "Why is this your favorite hour of the week?" I love to preach, I love to teach, I love to discuss the word of God but the thing that I love about our Wednesday night adult Bible study here at First Baptist is it gives us the opportunity, or shall I say, it gives you the opportunity to drive the discussion. In fact, as we gather together tonight, the first half of our Bible study will be questions that come directly from you, whether they're submitted to our electronic database or whether you choose the option of raising your hand, you have the opportunity to say this is what I want to discuss, this is what I want to talk about, these are the questions that I have.

Now for those of you who want to retain your anonymity, can I suggest our website? Go to [fbcopelika.com/askjeff](http://fbcopelika.com/askjeff). You have the opportunity and you have the privilege to submit any question that you want and even if you give us your email address, you still remain anonymous. It does not show up on the database when I pull the question. You are completely anonymous, but when I push the "answered" button on the database, it will send you a link to the video and the audio of which your question was answered just in the case that you were not present with us when it occurred. Some of you, you may know that you submit a question, it may be a while before it's answered and it just may be that one Wednesday night you're not here with us. We want to make sure that your question is addressed and you have access to it. But for those of you who have no fear or, shall we say, possibly even no shame, you can raise your hand at any time and you can guide the conversation anywhere you want it to go. You have the privilege of saying I want to go deeper in this subject, I want to change subjects, I don't want to talk about that at all, I want to go here.

At the latter part of our Bible study, we will continue our walking through a specific book of the Bible. We find ourselves currently in what we know as the book of Revelation. We will be in chapter 16 tonight in what we know as the fifth and sixth vial and/or bowl judgment. We'll get to that a little bit later.

So let's go to the database and I have mentioned in recent weeks that rather than just a random order, that we have put a new filter on so that those questions that have been submitted in recent days would rise to the forefront. The reason for doing that was so that those of you walking through the Bible reading plan that hopefully you are a part of as our family of faith, if you have a question about what we've read the last couple days, the last weeks and such, that it's something that we can address in a corporate manner in a very timely fashion. You say, "But I don't have any questions about Romans," which is where we are right now, "I've got a question about Nahum." You've got questions about Nahum, right, one of the minor prophets? You can put that question in and it will rise to the top as well. We are not just answering questions from the Bible reading plan so feel free. You say, "I submitted a question a long time ago, it hasn't come up." Resubmit it, it'll rise to the top of this new filter.

So without further ado, it says is there a correlation between Hebrews 10:26 and 1 John 3:9. All right, so, here we go. Hebrews 10:26 and 1 John 3:9. So as we go toward the backside of our New Testament, the book of Hebrews 10. I am flipping quickly as I can. All right, Hebrews 10:26. This is going to ultimately lead us to one of the great questions of faith, kind of this umbrella question in regards to the security of our faith, the security of our relationship with Jesus Christ. Is there an opportunity, is there a means, is there a way by which our relationship with Jesus Christ, our standing or our status as being saved, regenerated, reconciled, redeemed, can that ever be voided and/or dismissed along the way? Because in Hebrews 10 which, by the way, Hebrews 10 and Hebrews 6 are two of the passages that oftentimes we have great difficulty in in regards to this subject matter.

So verse 26 of Hebrews 10, it says, "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." When you read that verse in its simple context as that, it appears that if we've ever said, "You know what, I don't really care what God thinks. I'm just going to do it anyway," that we are in a world or, shall I say, we are in an eternity of hurt. However, much like in Hebrews 6 where it says if we've tasted of the Holy Ghost and if we shall fall away, we should never be restored again, allow me to remind us that this verse comes in the context of 25 verses that precede it that are all dealing with the fact that Jesus Christ is the sacrifice for our sins. In fact, if you back it up, if you go back to verse 12 it says, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Then it goes to speak about the Holy Ghost and it goes on and on.

The thing I want you to understand is that there are three books of the Bible that I can absolutely positively guarantee are going to give you more fits than any others. Are you ready? Those are the book of Matthew, Acts and Hebrews. Those are the three books of the Bible that cause so much struggle and so much difficulty. We're in the book of Hebrews tonight so allow me to explain that, then we'll go into 1 John 3 per the question.

Turn to Hebrews 1 and I want you to read the title of the book of the Bible. Are you ready? Now I'm trying to be overly simplistic here. The epistle of Paul the apostle to who? Hebrews. Are you a Hebrew? Some of you might be but I would daresay in this context you and I are not Hebrews, are we?

Look at verse 1, "God." It sounds just like Genesis 1:1, doesn't it, "In the beginning God"? "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels." Okay I'm going to stop there for just a moment because when you continue down, then you're going to discover he's much better than Abram, he's much better than Moses, he's much better than this, he's much better than that. When you get to the book of Hebrews, it is addressed to those of a Jewish background, those with an Israelite background showing and displaying and convincing that Jesus Christ's sacrifice is of greater value than any other item or thing of which they've been exposed to or been a part of in their life.

So when you get to chapter 6, and I promise whoever asked the question I will get to 1 John 3, when you get to chapter 6 and I know this wasn't a part of the question but I want to allude to it, verse 4, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." That scripture along with Hebrews 10:26 which says if we sin willingly again after we have knowledge thereof, has oftentimes been promoted or propagated by individuals to say, "Well, if you've tasted of the Holy Ghost or if you've willingly sinned, then you're just you're out of luck." The reason I took you back to chapter 6 is notice what it says, if you should fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, basically what Hebrews 6 says is if you lose your salvation it is impossible to ever get it back. Impossible. You can't do it.

What I want you to notice is go back to chapter 5. You go back to chapter 5 because, by the way, chapter 5 comes before 6, does it not? And it says there beginning in verse 12, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on." The context that you have here is not just that Jesus is better than but you have individuals who should be more mature than they are spiritually, individuals who should be more doctrinally sound than they are, and he's saying you should be eating meat, unfortunately you're relegated to milk, you need to go on to greater things, and then he uses this statement that if you should fall away, you shall never be restored again.

I'm going to take a time out and return. For those who struggle with and/or advocate what we know as losing one's salvation, every person that I have heard, you may be different, you may know somebody different, who's advocated that you can lose your salvation, they always advocate that if it is lost, it can be regained; that if it is somehow defiled or removed from, that it can be brought back again. Not according to Hebrews 6. There's an old thing, you know, people love to pick on Baptists. I've heard this a lot, "You Baptists believe in that once saved, always saved." Do you know what I also believe? Twice lost, always lost. In other words, if you're going to advocate that Hebrews 6 says you can lose your salvation, then you can't get re-saved because it says it would be impossible again for Jesus Christ to do what he's already done on Calvary.

You say, "Well, why is it worded this way?" Because do you know what I've learned throughout the years? I've learned those – listen – who should be eating meat that are still relegated to milk oftentimes struggle with their salvation because they know where they should be versus where they are and the temptation is to say, "Well, maybe I'm not who I thought I was. Maybe I just need to get saved again." Hebrews 6 isn't saying you can lose it, it's saying because you can't gird yourself up and get on with this thing, because if you could it would be over, there would be no hope, and you'd just give up. Hebrews 6 has been advocated so many times as kind of this passage against the security of the believer, I think it actually argues for the security of the believer for it's saying that you need to grow in your faith. If you could lose it, you could never get it back. It's not that you're lost again, it's that you're saved, you're not where you need to be, you need to be trusting the Lord more, you need to be going on, get past, notice what it says in verse 2, the doctrine of baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, eternal judgment. Get past those things and go forward.

Now the reason I took you back not only to the title page but to chapter 6 is because there's this case with the Jewish individuals, there's this case with the Hebrews that Jesus is better than, they need to grow in their faith. By the time you get to chapter 10, it is disclosing very clearly and emphatically that Jesus Christ alone is the sacrifice for our sins, and when it says in verse 26 that if we sin willingly there is no more sacrifice, go back to the title page, who is this written to? Hebrews. What did they do on a regular annual basis for their sins prior to Jesus? They made a sacrifice, did they not? The sacrifice mentioned in verse 26 of chapter 10 of Hebrews isn't about, it's not saying if you sin willingly after you've gotten saved, then what Jesus did for you is of no use anymore, it's saying that if you sin willingly, then anything you try to do to absolve yourself of your sin is of absolutely no value. Only Jesus Christ can solve our sin problem and forgive us of our sins. The book of Hebrews does not, in my opinion, teach the loss of one's salvation, I believe it teaches the security of one's salvation as long as it is in the person of Jesus Christ and his sacrifice and not in our efforts and our best endeavors.

Now before we get to commentary, go to 1 John 3. This was alluded, how do we reconcile this? 1John 3:9, there is a passage describing a seed. It says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed," and by the way, if you look back another passage that's the seed of Jesus Christ, "remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he

is born of God." Now whoever asked this question, I want to thank you in advance because the question is how do we reconcile. Hebrews 10:26 says if we willingly do it, we're in a mess. This verse says we can't even do it. So therefore as some have taught that if you're really saved you'll never sin again, now I don't know about you but I've been saved a while and I've still got a sin problem. Anybody else want to join the confession crew tonight? Anybody want to say you don't? You're a liar. No, I'm kidding. Well, yes you are.

So the predicament we've got here is every single one of us, every one of us since we got saved has sinned, right? I'll daresay every one of us since we got saved willingly sinned at one point, did we not? Funny that the front row all shook their heads and said, "We've done that a few times." Yes. We all understand that. If taken out of, just those verses, I would say if you look at these verses and say that if you've ever sinned after you've been saved or you've ever purposely sinned after you've been saved, then you don't get to "go to heaven," you have lost your salvation, not only does Hebrews 6 say you can never get it back but I'll daresay that heaven is empty today. It would be empty.

Now I'm going to unpack these verses but I want you to think about somebody by the name of the Apostle Paul. Does anybody here want to say that the Apostle Paul, that you are of greater Christian value than him? Does anybody want to say, "Oh, I think I'm a finer Christian than Paul"? No. Do you know that in Romans 7 which hopefully you're going to read in a couple of days in our reading plan, do you know what the Apostle Paul says? "The things I want to do, I don't do them. And the things I don't want to do, I do." The Apostle Paul admitted after he got saved he sinned. He even admitted after he got saved he willingly sinned. So if we want to say these scriptures say that any amount of sin after salvation voids our salvation, then not even the Apostle Paul would be saved.

So back to 1 John 3:9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." This is where we're going to have some fun tonight and I promise I'm going to allow you time for feedback. Go to 1 Thessalonians 5. We're fixing to do something completely revolutionary tonight, we're going to find out what you are. You say, "What do you mean find out what I am?" You know, one of the things that I find intriguing about our world today is everybody wants to give us advice, everybody wants to give us their take or their philosophy on life, and most people giving you advice don't even know what you are. Let me unpack that.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 it says, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." That means that you and I as human beings, that we are made up of a spirit, a soul, and a body. Now hold onto that, go to the book of Colossians 2, a few pages to the left. By the way, as you're turning to Colossians 2, if you're a first time with us whether here in person, on the internet, by way of radio, our Bible study isn't what a particular church, denomination, or person believes, it's what does the Bible actually say. Colossians 2:10 and 11, it says, "And ye are complete in him," that's Jesus Christ, "which is the head of all principality and power," listen to verse 11, "In whom also ye are

circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ."

Let me unpack that for just a moment. What that means is that for any individual, but I'll use myself as an example, at that moment, at that time that I realized, I understood that I was a sinner and needed saving by Jesus Christ, when I called out to him, when I cried out to him and said, "I'm a sinner. Please save me." What happened is that a supernatural surgical procedure took place in my life. Not only did the Holy Spirit come and dwell inside of me according to 1 Corinthians 6 but according to what we just read, my flesh was circumcised, cut off, separated, cut apart. That's what circumcision is, it is removing from and separating from.

Why is that significant? Because according to the Bible in Jesus Christ I have received the Holy Spirit, it has sealed me unto the day. In other words, I'm seated in the heavenlies, I am guaranteed his Spirit is within me. My soul now is destined for an eternity, the place the Bible calls heaven, not a place the Bible calls hell. But guess what? One day I'm going to breathe my last breath barring the return of Jesus Christ and hopefully y'all will come to my funeral, but that's a whole other story. When I breathe my last breath, you're going to take my body and you're going to put it in a casket or do something with it. I really don't have control at that point, whatever y'all decide to do with it. You're going to take my body, put it in a casket, you're going to bury it in the ground and that body of mine is going to rot over time. It's going to disintegrate, it's going to decompose over time, and sometime in the future, the Lord is going to cry out with the shout of a trumpet and the dead in Christ and the alive in Christ shall meet the Lord together in the air, and according to 1 Corinthians 15, I'm going to get a new, what? I'm going to get a new body. Why am I not going to get a new soul? I've got one. Why am I not going to get a new spirit? I've got one, I've got the Holy Spirit.

You see, right now as a believer in Jesus Christ, this is why the Apostle Paul says there's the new man and the old man, is right now there is a battle taking place in your life and mine between your flesh and your soul and your spirit, and your flesh is rotting and decomposing. We are dying. Did you know that the spirit within me, the Holy Spirit is not dying? My soul is not dying. My body is dying and the reason that is significant is because my body has been separated, it has been circumcised, 1 John 3 says that Jesus Christ is the seed of salvation within me, and it says whoever has that seed does not commit sin.

All right, this is where I'm going to ask a very important question. Hopefully you all are following the train of thought here. I know this sounds very philosophical and ethereal and I don't mean that, okay, and I'm standing in front of you, all right? The question I'm going to ask you about me is this, is who am I? And let me tell you what I mean by that. Do you know that none of you have ever seen me before? You say, "Yeah, we have." No, you haven't. You haven't seen me. Have any of you ever seen my soul? That's who I am, right? My soul is my eternal existence. My soul is who I am. I am flesh-covered soul. I'm not a soul-filled body. If I were a soul-filled body, then you would have seen me. You've never seen the real me. Do you know why? One day I'm going to get a new body, I'm

going to get a new name, that's the real me in Christ Jesus. You've never actually seen me. You've never seen my soul, you've never seen the Holy Spirit inside of me. You've seen evidence and fruit thereof, all you've seen is this dilapidated, nasty covering called flesh that has been circumcised.

Now let me illustrate what that means. I'm going to use a very hypothetical example that's going to be visual, for those listening it may be hard to imagine so just work with me. I want you to imagine that this music stand right here that I'm using, that this is sin, okay? That this is what it is. When I grab this stand, have I grabbed sin? Has my soul touched this? Is it? No. Has sin been committed? Yes, but has my soul touched it? 1 John 3:9 says the seed of Jesus Christ, you don't commit sin. Who I am in Christ, I'm not committing the sin. That's why Romans 7, the Apostle Paul says there is nothing good within me, it is my flesh that commits.

Now I want you to go to Romans 6 and I promise I'll wrap all this up. Romans 6, because there was a Russian monk years ago who took what I just taught and completely perverted it. He was of the theory that because of what I just showed you, that the more we sin, the more grace we can have. Romans 6:1, we're going to read this, this week, too. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" In other words, just because my flesh has been circumcised, just because my soul has been severed doesn't say, well, I can play in the playground of flesh all day long. Absolutely not. I'm still accountable for my mannerisms, I'm still accountable for my actions and my thoughts and my ideas and such. But back to 1 John 3 and because of Colossians 2:11, my soul isn't touching, my soul is not grasping, my soul is not the one, it the flesh that is corroding that according to the Apostle Paul is where sin dwells.

Why is this so critical to our understanding? Because when it comes to 1 John 3:9, you can say doctrinally that a believer in Jesus Christ never sins because his soul and his spirit, or her soul and her spirit, because the flesh has been circumcised, is not actually touching, grasping or participating, it's the flesh that is doing it, okay? When you get to the Hebrews passages that we just read, all of those passages are dealing with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ versus the sacrifice of humanity, and according to chapter 6, if we could lose our salvation, then we could never get it back.

In conclusion, the whole reason that we ever have this discussion is because people who at one point have come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ and then at another point in their life have either done, advocated or lived a life that is contrary to the things of God, they struggle with how could I do that? How could I go there? How could I participate in that? And we have a natural inclination to say if I experience or I if I experimented or if I did this after my salvation, then I must not have been saved. If you can lose your salvation, then you'd better get saved every moment of every day for the rest of your life because you're going to have a sin problem until you get a new body. You're going to struggle with it every day of your life.



So I know I went all around the New Testament map. How can I help you, how can I clarify, how can I make it hopefully more simple than the complicated mess that I've got us in tonight? Raise your hand, anybody, somebody, help me out here? Anybody, anybody? I'm fixing to start doing an auction. Nobody? Go for it.

[unintelligible]

1 John 1:9, very simple. Let me see if I can do it without looking, all right? I can do it. Here we go. It says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us for all unrighteousness." Now what's interesting is the verse in front of that, "If we say that we have no sin, we do not have the truth in us." So it's interesting that even 1 John 1:8 says that we all have sin. If we confess our sin, he's faithful and just to forgive us. Then you go to chapter 2 of 1 John and it says and when we sin we have an advocate, Christ Jesus, who is the propitiation, I love that word, for our sins which means he is the one that takes the punishment of and for our sins.

So yes, sir. Back row or second to the back row. You're almost a Baptist back there.

[unintelligible]

Right. Okay, so great question is the thoughts, the memories, the past experiences of sin, rebellion and the destructive life, how do we go on past that, get past that, go from the milk to the meat, so to speak, how do we do that? I want you to go to 1 Corinthians 2. I'm going to begin in verse 13, actually I'm going to begin, well, yeah, verse 13 because verse 14 starts with the word "but." It says, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." Verse 14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

All right, back up a few pages to the book of Romans 12 and then we're going to go to Philippians 4, for those of you who are, you know, are turning pages. Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Philippians 4 and then I will hopefully get a second opinion from you, sir, if we went the direction you wanted to go. Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

So what you've got from 1 Corinthians 2 is that you and I through Jesus Christ actually have access to the mind of Christ, that we can think like he thinks and we can process

like he processes. Romans 12 says there has to be a transformation, a renewing of our mind. Philippians 4 says whatever things are true and pure and lovely, think on these things. The reason I went to those three passages, sir, is that if you want to replace the old, if you want to go beyond the old to what the Bible calls the new man, you've got to change the way you think, you've got to change the way that your mind operates, you've got to be in conformity with what he said and not the past.

Now this isn't in the Bible but it's a good statement. I've heard this said before, that when the devil reminds you of your past, you need to remind him of his future. The devil loves to bring up our past, he loves to bring up our failures, let me tell you why, because when he brings up your past and your failures, if you're desiring to chew meat, you will immediately gravitate toward milk every time. You will always slip back. You will always go back. You won't go forward because you need to trust in what does the Bible say that I am now? Who does the Lord say that I am now? Romans 8, neither is there anything that can separate me from the love of Christ Jesus, no height, no depth, no principality, no power. Nothing can separate me.

When those seeds of doubt begin to get in our mind, we need to be able to claim the word of God and not just, "Oh, what can I do now?" That is why what we know as Psalm 119:105 says that we hide the word of God in our hearts so we do not sin against him. The best way to change your mind, the best way to change your thoughts, the best way to change your thinking is to be put as much of his word in you you possibly can because on your own, friend, and you and I, we're friends, do you know what? On our own, I'm going to put us in a collective basket, on our own endeavors, you and I are messed up. There is no way that in our own cognitive ability we're going to transform ourselves, fix ourselves or get on the right path because all of our works are like filthy, what? Rags. It is the word of God only that can address and fix this problem. And I want to encourage you when those doubts and those struggles and those memories, don't claim what you want to be, claim what the scripture says you are in Christ. And I'm going to tell you, read it and read it and by the way, I'm going to be very transparent. Have you ever read portions of scripture and you say, "I've read it and I just don't get it"? Keep reading it. Keep reading it. Keep reading it. Keep reading it. Read it out loud. Read it louder. Scream it if you have to, you know, because when you start reading through, you begin to discover this is who I am. This is who the Lord sees that I am and this is how I am to be and operate.

So I cannot advocate enough, I know it sounds so elementary, the exposure to, the knowledge and the internalization of the word of God is the only thing that's going to change and transform your mind. That's it. According to Ephesians 6, we wrestle against principalities, powers, rulers of darkness. We are to put on the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation. We're supposed to have what we know as the shield of faith. Our feet are to be shod with the preparation of the gospel peace. The only offensive weapon you've got, sir, is the sword of the Spirit and according to Ephesians 6 which is the word of God. The only weapon you have against the enemy's ways and wiles and means is the Bible. That's it. That's all you've got. It's the only thing you've got. Not your own ingenuity. Not your own creativity. Not your education. The sword of the Spirit is the word of God. It's the only thing you've got.

So therefore if the devil is beating you down, my brother, go to the word of God and give him a good slashing with the sword. I'm not joking when I say that. I'm being serious. The only thing that defeats him is the word of God and I can prove it. When he's in the desert for 40 days, Jesus Christ is tempted of the devil, what does Jesus Christ say all three times? "It is written." And the devil flees from him, the Bible says the angels come and minister unto him. If Jesus Christ alone used scripture to defeat the devil, why would we use anything else? And when he used scripture, it worked. So when those thoughts, when those ideas, when those memories, so to speak, begin to surface up in your life, go to the word of God, get the sword of the Spirit, the ammunition, to use modern-day terminology, and utilize it for the purpose of defeating the enemy.

One last passage. Go to 2 Corinthians 10 because you're dealing with thoughts and ideas. 2 Corinthians 10. I'm going to begin in verse 3, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh," here we go, verse 4, "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty," but mighty, "through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." So what I gather from that passage, friend, is that when we are struggling and the flesh is struggling, that it is the knowledge of the word of God, it's the knowledge of the sword of the Spirit that not only allows the strongholds, that which is holding us back to be pulled away from us, but every thought is taken into captivity to the things of Christ.

Help, hurt, of no use, feedback?

[unintelligible]

I appreciate you, brother. Anybody else? Anything else? Any constructs? We're good? Everybody's fine? Nobody, y'all good? All right, food settled a little heavy tonight.

Real quick we'll go real quick one more and then we'll get to our Revelation study here. Next question up says, here we go. Now I just refreshed it so I don't know, here we go. It says does Satan know he is fighting a losing battle? Is he aware of what awaits him? Oh, yes he is and I can prove it.

Go to the gospel of Mark 1. Oh, yes. Mark 1 and then I'm going to make a very somewhat antiquated pop culture reference for y'all. Mark 1. Do any of y'all find it strange that the first demon mentioned in Jesus' ministry was in church? I guess y'all don't think that's strange. I do. In Mark 1, beginning in verse 21, it says, "And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." When these demons who are about to be cast out, and by the way, later in Mark 5 we see a bunch of demons cast out into the pigs and run down into the Sea of Galilee. They ask

Jesus, "Have you come to destroy us?" In other words, have you come to sentence us, have you come to send us to our eternal damnable location and place? The demonic entities, these unclean spirits realize where they are destined. They realize where they are going. They realize what ultimately is going to befall them.

So the question is, is he aware of, does he know he's fighting a losing battle? You bet you he does, in fact, let me go ahead, I'm going to work from the back end forward. When you get to the book of Revelation 20, not only does it say that Satan is bound for a thousand years, and we'll get there eventually, but it says after that thousand years, he is loosed for a little season. After a thousand years in what we know as the bottomless pit, what's the first thing Satan does? He creates another rebellion. There is no sign of repentance. There is no sign of shame. There is no sign of anything. He not only knows he's losing or fighting a losing battle, he absolutely knows what is awaiting him, and I think John Milton, the great novelist, said it best in his book "Paradise Lost" when he said that Satan's perspective is he would rather reign in hell than serve in heaven. I know that's not from scripture but that really does resonate, does it not?

So I know that Satan's battling, fighting a losing battle. He knows exactly what is ahead of him which is why he is so determined to take you out. So determined to take you out. Allow me to use a pop cultural illustration from many years ago. Do you remember a little movie that, I guess, was made on a low budget but gained great success and popularity? I'm sure many of you have seen it called "The Karate Kid." Remember "The Karate Kid"? A story of the young man who moves across the country, he's bullied by a bunch of guys and Mister Miyagi brings him in, "Wax on, wax off." Remember all that? Yes. And he goes through all that and he finds himself in a tournament. He finds himself up against these elite martial arts artists. The problem is that the other martial arts individuals know that he's better. They know that he's got an advantage and there's a very famous line where the coach of the opposition makes this statement, "Sweep the leg. Take him out. Inflict as much pain as possible," because he knew he could not win.

Satan knows he can't win. He knows he's already been defeated. He knows what awaits him and so what's he going to do? He's going to take anybody out he can on the way. He's going to inflict as much damage as he can on the way. He's going to destroy your life, destroy your health, destroy your testimony, destroy your joy. Even as a believer in Jesus Christ, he wants to make your life absolutely miserable. He knows it.

Now another book that I would reference that is not scripture but kind of somewhat related to. C. S. Lewis years ago wrote a book called "The Screwtape Letters." It was a book describing the conversation between what we might call a master demon and his apprentice, and in that context of this book there's this dialog, letter writing going back and forth and the individual who they're discussing gets saved, he becomes a believer in Jesus Christ. And what's interesting for the rest of the book the demonic entity basically says, "There's nothing we can do to ruin his relationship with the Lord but we can destroy him. We can destroy his marriage. We can destroy his kids. We can destroy his testimony. We can destroy his life. We can make his life miserable."

Satan knows exactly what awaits him. In fact, the demons said, "Have you come to send us to the pit for all of eternity?" He knows he's lost the battle and he's going to do everything he can to take whomever out he can on his way out.

Thoughts, concerns, issues, questions, what about? Hurry up and get to the book of Revelation?

All right, let's go. Revelation 16, here we go. Revelation 16. You see, at this rate we'll never, I mean, yes, we will finish, I promise. Revelation 16. For those of you who are new to our study, the book of Revelation beginning in chapter 6, we have a time period that goes all the way to chapter 19 that is probably one of the most well-known time periods in all of the Bible. Jesus in Matthew 24 called it the great tribulation. It is a time period, it is a moment in history where the wrath of God is being poured out on those who have rejected and those who have denied the truth of not only the Lord's provision but Jesus Christ in their life. This time period is also called Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. It's called Jacob's trouble. It is literally chronologically described as a seven year time period and beginning in chapter 6, there are a series of judgments of God. There are seven famous seals that are opened up and judgment takes place. There are seven trumpets that are sounded and judgment takes place. We find ourselves in chapter 16 with these seven vials or bowls that are poured out on those that remain. You say, "Why are those that remain?" Because if you look back at the seals and the trumpets, there are times where a third of the population dies, there's a time period where the waters go bad and a great number of the population of earth dies. So population of planet earth has dwindled.

In the first vial, we have what we know as the famous mark of the beast that's been released. We've talked about that in significance last week, but I want to pick it up in verse 10 with the fifth and the sixth bowl because these two vials, these two judgments are different than anything we've seen as of yet. Every time a seal was opened, something took place. Every time that a trumpet sounded, something took place. But in the fifth vial or the fifth bowl when it is poured out, it actually is the result of that which has taken place prior to, and the sixth vial is actually a preparation for that which is to come. So even though activity happens, even though action occurs, it is not a direct thing such as the waters turning to blood, it is not the sores that are gathered on the people's bodies, it's not what we might see in other places where there's great judgment and hail and fire coming down from heaven.

So that being said, verse 10,

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,  
11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. 12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For

they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. 17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial

I'll stop there. The reason I did so is because I wanted you to see that verses 13 through 16 and some of your study Bibles may actually help you here, are actually parenthetical. Now that's a word that we've used a whole lot in our Revelation study. Chapter 7 was parenthetical, and chapter 10 was parenthetical, and chapter 14 was parenthetical. Some of you that are here for the first time are saying why is that important? A parenthetical passage is commentary or information that is given that is removed from the chronology of the events. Sometimes like in chapter 12, what we know as the parenthetical information goes all the way back to the formation of the people whom we know as the Israelites, and then goes forward to that great and final judgment as a commentary to what was happening between the seals and the trumpets. Here what we discover is when the sixth vial is poured out, that vial prepares the way of the kings of the east which is eventually what leads to what we know as the battle of Armageddon which is described in this parenthetical passage.

So the reason for and I know maybe some of you were kind of like, "Hm, that's interesting," that I titled tonight the product of and the preparation for with the parenthetical on the side. The fifth vial is the product of what has happened leading up to it. The sixth vial is telling us the preparation for what's coming and these verses 13 through 16 are a commentary in brief of what we'll discuss at length at what we know as the battle of Armageddon at a later date. So the reason, I know that was kind of a weird title to give you but what I wanted you to see is we don't see waters turning to blood and we don't see hail coming out of the sky. There's none of these type of judgments that we're used to. One is almost wrapping up what's occurred and one is preparing for what is ahead.

So let's begin in vial 5. It is the product of previous judgments. Who are the benefactors, and I know that's not a really good word, who are the recipients of this judgment? It's the kingdom of the residence of the beast. Now for the sake of time, I won't elaborate too much but I think something that we need to realize is that 2 Corinthians 4:4 calls Satan the god of this world, and when you look in Matthew 4:8 and 9 when Satan tempts Jesus out in the wilderness, he offers him the kingdoms of the world, and in Revelation 11:15 it says the kingdoms of this world have now become the kingdoms of our Christ. And the reason that's important is it is the kingdom of the beast, it is the residence of those who are in rebellion, what you basically have at this point is an overwhelming majority of humanity on planet earth, that his kingdom initiated by whom we know as the antichrist or the beast, has a global system, complete authority, complete power, complete infusion into the nations and the world systems. Almost all of humanity and we'll discuss a little bit later there's always remnant but the overwhelming majority of humanity are experiencing the result thereof.

What happens? Darkness. Does this remind you of something in the book of Exodus? Remember that night, the plague, that darkness went over the land? It was so dark that for three days they couldn't even see their hands in front of their face. What I find intriguing is in this passage that the kingdom was full of darkness, verse 10, they gnawed their tongues for pain. What does that sound like to you? It sounds like the descriptions we have of hell, does it not? And so in this fifth vial, this judgment of God, this total darkness, you have those in total darkness. It says that they're gnawing their tongues for pain.

Leading up to this point, you've had the sore or the sores take place because of the mark of the beast that has been spoiled. You've had the rivers become as blood. You've had the sea become blood. You've had all kinds of horrific things that have been leading up to, and you get the picture that for this time period you have those in rebellion sitting in absolute darkness, writhing in absolute pain and yet all throughout the book of Revelation it says humanity still would not repent of their sins.

Where did this take place? The seat of the beast. Revelation 2:11 talks about, "I know where Satan's seat is, the synagogue of Satan," and we're going to talk more about this when we get to chapter 17 and 18, but the actual residence of or, shall we say, the headquarters of the antichrist is actually described in chapters 17 and 18 that where that is and where he begins to send his communication out and where his headquarters are, but it is from his seat that you see kind of this epicenter of the darkness being poured out. Why is it? Well, according to this passage they blasphemed God and they would not repent.

Now just as an aside and I may be the only person here tonight in person or listening by way of internet, tv or radio, I know that I'm stubborn. I get it. I realize that I have a perpetual issue and struggle with sin and rebellion, as you do too. But does it not marvel you, pitch black, gnawing their tongues for pain, sores over their body, the rivers have become blood, and they still won't repent? They still won't repent and what does it say? They blaspheme God. Phew, what a commentary on the human condition. What a commentary on the sinfulness of humanity, an absolute refusal to bend the knee. But yet the Bible says very clearly in the book of Philippians, later to be, you know, revealed in the book of Revelation, that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. These individuals who refuse to repent in Revelation 16 will bend their knee one day. They will do so and they will instead of blaspheming God, they will actually confess that he is God. So an incredible picture of the obstinance, the stubbornness of humanity.

Moving on to the sixth vial because this is where it gets interesting. Verse 12, not that it hasn't been, "the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared." Let me give you a hint: we are starting to wrap some things up here. It's getting very close to what we know as the end of all things. Who are these people, the kings of the east? The Bible makes it very clear and I put on your outline not only Daniel 11, Isaiah 11, but also later in the book of Revelation, that there is coming a day where all of humanity will

gather together at a place that the Bible calls Armageddon or Megiddo. We're going to talk about it and it's the great final battle against the Almighty. That battle place, that field, for lack of better terms, is on the northern side of what we know as modern-day Israel. That is where all of humanity will gather up and we'll discuss this a little bit later in chapter 19, that by the time you do the math of all those that have been killed and eliminated throughout all the judgments of God, that that valley can actually hold the world's populous in a pretty manageable way. That being said, if everybody is going to get there, they've got to travel there and it says that the great river Euphrates, that it is dried up and that the kings of the east, the picture you've got here is that there is a mass global invasion of what you and I know as the Promised Land headed toward the valley of Armageddon or Megiddo. The world turns itself not only on Israel but turns itself toward this place where they will purposefully fight against Jesus Christ himself.

Now it says the water is dried up. Interesting, this is not new for God. Now remember it's God that does this, right? God dried up the Red Sea. God dried up the Jordan River and Elijah with God's provision, he divided up or parted the waters of the river Jordan. And so what we see happening here is not unusual. This is something that the Lord has done numerous times and by doing this, it is leading to the fulfillment and the end of all things in that great final battle. And so even though this vial doesn't bring "judgment," it doesn't bring "wrath" to them, what it does is it prepares the way for the final time of wrath and judgment in this place known as Armageddon.

Where does this take place? The great river Euphrates. Boy, I'll tell you what, that's one of those rivers in the Bible that just keeps coming around time after time, so significant that it says this is the northeastern border of the Promised Land, it's the eastern border, it's called the great river in the book of Genesis 2. This river today in its context is enormously wide, enormously deep, and it would take a massive effort to have a large army of footmen and footwomen to cross it in today's context. And what happens? The Lord just simply dries it up.

So that being said, that's where it happens. Why does this happen? That the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. Now as we begin to wrap up tonight, we're going to use kind of the information at the bottom of the outline to segue into next week. But what you have described in verses 13 through 16 is a preview of, a prelude to this famous battle of Armageddon. Again, we call it the battle of Armageddon because of where it takes place. The details are coming forth in what we know as chapter 19. But I want you to see just in brief that the one who orchestrates this battle is the devil himself and what you see these spirits coming out of the frog, basically, you know, the devil doesn't do anything but imitate the Lord and the Lord is a Trinity and you see a trinity even in the demonic as visualized in chapter 13. And so it is the beast himself, the false prophet, who gather the peoples of the world to not only invade what we know as the Promised Land but to go into the battle of Armageddon and to try to fight Jesus Christ hand-to-hand combat. When we get to chapter 19, a very famous verse, it says that the blood will rise to the bridle of the horse. Everyone who comes, everyone who fights, everyone who says, "I'd rather blaspheme you than bow to you," faces a very untimely ill death.



So this word, this prophesying or it's predicting, promoting what we know as the battle of Armageddon so we'll kind of get into that prelude next week and then we're going to go into what we know as the seventh vial. When we finish the seventh vial, all of the judgments have taken place and chapter 17 and 18 are going to give us some commentary on mystery Babylon, going to give us some commentary on the activity and arrangements of what we know as the antichrist in preparation for chapter 19 which is this famous battle that we know as Armageddon.

Let's pray and we'll be dismissed.

*Heavenly Father, as we depart from this place, Lord, I know we know that we have been all over the word of God tonight seeking direction, seeking truth, seeking insight, and Lord, I do pray that your word would be hidden in our heart so that we would not sin against you. May we depart from this place, may we arm ourselves not with our thoughts, our ideas, our opinions or our perception, but with your word in our heart, in our lives. May it be that sharper than a two-edged sword, may it divide truth from error as we go into the world. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*