

Ask Jeff – The Blood Moons

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Bible Text: Joel 2:30-31; Revelation 6:12-13

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I hope you are ready for a fun one tonight and the reason I say a fun one tonight is, if you've never been a part of the Wednesday night Bible study here in Greenwell Springs, I know we call it "Ask Jeff" but it is a little bit different because it is driven by you. Now, I want to reemphasize "driven by you" as I explain something: one of the things that we do is we have a box up here that has a collection of questions. These questions have been sent in by email through Facebook, sometimes people just take a card and write them down and throw them in there. I literally have no idea what is in there; we just pull it out and we go for it and the follow-up questions tend to be the most entertaining. However, there are those times in life where people have a certain interest or a question that for whatever reason, they seem not to email, they seem not to Facebook, in fact, what happens is and has happened over the last, should I say, two weeks is that people have come up to me privately and said, "Psst, Pastor Jeff. Come here, come here, come here," and they pull me over to the side and they're like, "Can I ask you a question about...?" And it's happened literally dozens of times within the last two weeks and here's what's happened: there has become a fascination, for lack of better terms, with a concept or idea that we've heard of known as "the blood moons." Did you notice how I inflected, how I said "the blood moons" just to make it a little more intriguing? And so I thought tonight on behalf of all of you who have pulled me aside as recently as ten minutes ago and said, "Can we talk about this?" that we're just going to pretend that's the question that came out of the box because everybody wants to know about the question but just for some reason, nobody is willing to write it down but pull me aside.

So, tonight we're going to begin with this question that some of you may or may not be familiar with about what is this idea, what is going on with this thing known as "the blood moons." If you are not familiar with this, what is happening in I guess the world today is that beginning the other evening on April 15th, there was a lunar eclipse that was such of a magnitude that the sun appeared dark and the moon appeared red and it has been labeled a "blood moon." Now, the question we have to ask is: why is this significant? What is important about it? And what is any biblical reference to it because there's all kinds of books and specials and dvds that have been printed about it.

There are two passages of Scripture that we're going to go to in just a minute: the book of Joel 2:30-31 and the book of Revelation 6:12-13. Those are the passages of Scripture that we're going to deal with to address this issue. Let me explain what it is and then we'll

unpack all of it. Beginning the other evening over the course of the next 18 months, there is for the lack of better terms, an astronomical event that will occur. When I say astronomical, I don't mean a big event, I mean dealing with astronomy and the stars. There is going to be a total lunar eclipse of the magnitude as I described earlier where the sun will appear dark around the edges and the moon will appear red. It is not called a "blood moon" by scientists; it's been called a "blood moon" by preachers. Okay? That's where that term comes from. What is actually happening over the course of the next 18 months is there is going to be a series of four of these astronomical events otherwise known as a tetrad, that's the actual term scientifically, t-e-t-r-a-d. There are going to be four of these in a row and what makes this so special is that these four eclipses will all happen in succession without any partial eclipses in between. That's important to note because eclipses happen all the time: partial ones, half ones, full ones.

But these series of four will happen in succession without any partial ones in between and it just so happens that all four of them will occur on a very specific Jewish holy day or festival holiday. The one the other night obviously occurred on what we know as the beginning of Passover. The one that will happen in the fall will happen on the day of Sukkot or the celebration of Sukkot which is what we call the Feast of Tabernacles. Then next spring, Passover again and then next fall, the Feast of Tabernacles. You say, "Well, why is that so critical?" Well, in Jewish tradition and obviously biblically related, there are seven major Jewish festivals and in those seven Jewish festivals, two of them are the most critical: Passover and Feast of Tabernacles. You know the Passover story well. Why? Because it is this week what we know as the Passion Week, the week of Christ, that Jesus Christ, the Passover lamb was sacrificed for us. It is the whole Passover imagery, not only being coming out of Egypt, the Israelites, but obviously in Christian tradition or truth, shall I say, that Jesus Christ is the Passover lamb that was sacrificed on our behalf so the Passover celebration is a big deal no matter what. The Feast of Tabernacles is a big deal and most people may not understand all the meaning behind it but the word "tabernacle" means "to dwell with" or "to be in the presence of" or "to have a relationship with." The Feast of Tabernacles is the only one of the "Jewish holidays, festivals," that the males in the family were never excused to miss. All of the Jewish males had to go to the Feast of Tabernacles, sometimes called the Feast of Tents, where they would go and have that celebration. So, it literally means "the celebration of God with us." By the way, remember, Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us. Then, obviously, the Passover.

That being said, over the series of the next 18 months, there is going to be these eclipses on these special Jewish days and it has caused some to create quite a stir both in the evangelical as well as the secular press about what if anything is the significance of what is happening in front of us and so the biblical verses that we have that describe something of similarity are found in Joel 2 and Revelation 6. I want to read these passages of Scripture and then I want to go back and look at the historical record and the significance of what's happening in our world today. In Joel 2, beginning in verse 30, the Lord says,

"30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and

the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. 32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.”

Hence the passage where we get the term “blood moons.” The idea that before the great and terrible day of the Lord, that the sun will turn dark and the moon will turn red. Now, fast forward to the book of Revelation 6 and then we're going to do a little history and then we're going to come back to the biblical record. Beginning in verse 12, it says,

“12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal,”

Remember the famous seven seals of Revelation,

“and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.”

These are the passages of Scripture. In Joel 2, it says that this event where the sun turns dark as night and the moon turns red happens before the great day of the Lord, the second passage in Revelation 6 says that it occurs when the sixth seal is opened. What is happening, at least in the culture today, is that we're hearing a lot of verbiage about these “blood moons” because here we are in 2014 and 2015 and we find ourselves on the cusp of these four “blood moons” occurring in succession without any partial eclipse in between on Jewish holy days, in fact, the two most important ones in the calendar and it has caused many people to take a step back and go, “Whoa, whoa, whoa. Could there be something of incredible significance that is happening?” So, what I want to share with you, though, is kind of the facts: the good and the bad and the ugly about this concept or the idea of the blood moons.

The first dealing or fact that we have to deal with is when else has this occurred in history because this is not the only time that it has happened. In fact, one thing you need to know is that this event, known as a tetrad, has actually happened eight times. Eight times since the time of Christ there has been a succession of four lunar eclipses without any partial lunar eclipses only landing on Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles in history. In the year 162-163, 795-796, 842-843, 860-861, 1493-1494, 1949-1950, 1967-1968, 2014-2015. What is so critical to understand is in much of the literature that's being proposed in regards to the biblical significance of the blood moons is in regards to these last four dates.

Before we deal with these four dates, the thing that we will identify in a moment is, I guess, critical to understanding is that there is a unique historical significance to these dates to what we know as the Jewish people and understand that these “blood moons” are occurring on Jewish celebrations. The thing that I want you to notice before we deal with these four dates is that it occurred four times previously with absolute zero historical significance whatsoever. You can go back in the annals of history, go back to 162-163

AD and you say, "What thing of importance happened then?" Hm, pretty much nothing. Go back to 795-796, there is really nothing you can find around these events. You say, "Jeff, why is that important?" I'm not going to deny, in fact, I will sum up in a moment my opinion. I'm not going to deny the significance of what we are seeing happening in our world today but I do think it's important to notice that this is not the only time it's ever occurred and there were times that it did occur where we can find no importance whatsoever historically speaking but in the last four occurrences, there has been discovered somewhat of an eerie coincidence or shall some say, providence in regards to these events. Remember, once again, four consecutive lunar eclipses where the sun appears black, the moon appears red, just like Joel 2 mentions and Revelation 6, landing on the two most important Jewish holidays, four times in a row, only four times in the last 1,000 years.

Let's back-track and kind of get some significance here. 2014-2015, what is the significance? We have no idea yet but we're going to talk about that in just a moment. Think about Jewish history, the state of Israel, can anybody tell me what is so important about the time period around 1967-1968? The Six Day War. Not to divulge into just the whole history of that, but you pretty much know the story that all of the enemies of Israel that surround Israel decided to attack Israel and six days later, Israel said, "Too bad, so sad, we win." But what's more important about the Six Day War is not just the fact they showed absolute military supremacy, it's the fact that for the first time in 1,900 years the state of Israel and the Jewish people had possession of something they had not had in 1,900 years: the city of Jerusalem. What's interesting is, what we know as the possession of the city of Jerusalem just so happened to occur at a time period that lines up with this succession of events that's happening "amongst the stars and the planets."

We back up one more: 1949-1950. Can anybody think of something important that occurred about that time in Israel's history? In 1948, absolutely, is when Israel for lack of better terms, regained or received its official statehood. Coming out of war too, absolutely amazing story: 6 ½ million Jewish people are slaughtered in the Holocaust, they're literally thrown out on this piece of desert land and said, "If you can take it, it's yours," and they did. If you go back and look at the history of 1948 and the Israelites having their statehood regained, the only way you can explain it is they are God's people. There is no other way to explain it so in 1948, what we would call statehood takes place.

Anybody think of anything significant around say 1493-4? Anything important around there? In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue. And I know what some of you may be thinking, "Well, what does that have to do with absolutely anything?" Well, one of the things that has happened in recent days and when I say recent days, literally the last ten years, in the last ten years as historians and researchers have been going back over the documents and over, they have found some very interesting facts in relationship to this famous event and one of the things that they are discovering and, by the way, when I say "they" you maybe are wondering, "Well, who are the 'they'?" The mainstream media has even picked up on this one. We're not just talking the Baptist papers or the evangelical writings, we're talking CNN and some of the major news networks. Go on their websites and start searching this. It's amazing some of the things that are coming out because the

story that was taught to me in school, at least, was that in 1492, Queen Isabella and Ferdinand decided, "We want to trade with India. Go get us some money. Christopher Columbus, adios, go get them." The Nina, the Pinta, the Santa Maria and they took off. What is now being looked at from somewhat of a different historical perspective is that there is evidence out there that the individuals who funded Christopher Columbus's trip were not necessarily the monarchy of Spain but quite possibly private investors from the Jewish community. Now, what's interesting about that is, the date and, by the way, when I began to read some of this even years ago, I began to think to myself, "Oh surely, how could they miss the history 500 years later," and then something popped out historically that really caught my attention: there was a document that happened in July of 1492 in Spain called the Edict of Expulsion. Has anybody ever heard of the Edict of Expulsion? It's a little document that basically said thirteen days from now if you're Jewish, you either leave the country or we kill you. The Edict of Expulsion, that's exactly what it was. There is debate how many actual Jewish people did that affect, most historians say about 200,000 "pure Jewish people" and if you went to those that had intermarried and such it would be about almost 800,000 people.

The country of Spain decided that they no longer wanted those of the Jewish race in their country and so they offered this edict that said, "You are no longer welcome. Get out of our country." The date that they were supposed to leave there was August 2, 1492. Interestingly, Christopher Columbus set sail right after midnight of August 3. Now, I don't find it ironic that we now have interesting research saying that this trip might have been funded by private Jewish individuals and here is a man who leaves literally hours after all the Jewish people are told to get out of the country. What's interesting about that to me and I want to take kind of a step back historically and then we'll get into the biblical ideas around this whole event, what I began to think about when I began to hear some of this information was this: is it possible – I understand we often talk about the founding of our country and the Judeo-Christian values and the founding fathers and we get into all that and that's wonderful and great but is it possible that literally almost 300 years before we "elected our first President," is it possible that this wonderful land that you and I have the privilege to live in that was actually "founded for the purpose of the protection of the people of God from those who wanted to kill them?" If that is so, it opens up an interesting string of thought for I want you to think about this key date of 1948. In 1948, Israel receives their statehood. I may not be an historian nor am I a war historian but can any of you think of a war that "American lost" prior to 1948? I can't. I mean, even the wars we weren't supposed to win, we did, right? The ones even where we showed up at the last minute and everybody said, "Oh, that's going to be bad for you," almost supernaturally, America comes out on top. Alright, let me ask the question: after 1948 can you definitively name a war that we've won? Now, that's an interesting thought, isn't it? If what is being promoted with all this teaching is true, then you see an interesting correlation between the "chosen people of God," the Jewish people, and the very land that we live in. Now, this does not deny Christianity, Christian values, the beliefs of the founding fathers. It doesn't deny any of that. In fact, I think if it does anything, it actually enhances the purpose of this land and why God blessed this land and blessed the people of this land so richly throughout time.

That being said, people have said, "Well, because this event in 1948 was so significant to the future of the Jewish people, because 1948 was so incredible for the statehood of Israel and 1967 Jerusalem was now given back to the Jewish people, that now that we have another one of these tetrads happening, something big is going to happen." Let me qualify that and we'll open it to questions. 1. I think the thing that we need to note is this: that the significant events that are being spoken of in the past did not necessarily happen between the moons that were seen. Christopher Columbus set sail before the first one of the lunar eclipses. Statehood to Israel was given before any of the eclipses and Jerusalem was given back to the Israelites during the eclipses. Do you notice there is not a consistent pattern there? In the first two, the event happened before the eclipses, in the third one it happened during the eclipse. That being said, I do not believe if these eclipses happening right now are of grave eschatological or prophetic elements, I don't think we can look back and say, "Well, there is a definite pattern and it's going to fall right into that pattern," because there really is no pattern.

The second thing we have to ask is: then what would happen? You do know the answer to that question, right? I do not know because we don't have a clue. Now, I will state that there are several options. If you wanted to read really into this and say, "What could really happen here?" the real only thing that the Jewish people do not possess as far as the persons of God and the people of God right now, the only thing they don't really have, they've got a state, they've got a city, they don't have a temple yet and so people have speculated, "Is it possible that sometime during this incredible event that's happening that that would become a reality?" It could. I don't know but I think the thing that is most critical to this study is what we read in Joel 2 and Revelation 6. In Joel 2, it said when the sun goes dark and the moon goes red that when this happens, the great day of the Lord is at hand. You do realize it's happened seven times prior to this year? This is not the only time an event like this has ever occurred.

The second thing that I think is the most critical thing, is Revelation 6 when the sixth seal is opened up. Now, that would mean that if this is this great climactic event that so many people are saying that it is, if that's the case, then we've already had the fifth, fourth, third, second and first seal opened up and you can read Revelation and that hasn't happened. So, I think what is happening here is that absolute phenomenal astronomical events where as we oftentimes have happen is that we get excited about what we see in the Bible and sometimes we put a round peg in a square hole and say, "This has got to fit." Now, I'm not dismissing the significance of what's happening in the skies; I'm not dismissing the significance of what we read in Joel and in Revelation, I'm just saying that they may not necessarily make a seamless prophetic statement. The thing that I do want to share with you before we open it up is this: the Bible does say that before the coming of the Lord and when the sixth seal is opened, that the sun will go dark and the moon will go red but who is to say that when that occurs, it will be an identifiable NASA event. It could just be a supernatural occurrence direct from the hand of God and so when that occurs, no matter what the scientists may say, no matter what the books may say, if the Lord wants the sun to go dark and the moon to go red, he can do that anytime he wants.

So, that's kind of the lay of the land there. Let me reiterate some things and we'll go for it. Is there an event taking place right now as we speak that is of incredible historical significance? Absolutely. Is there an event happening that has a very unique correlation to significant events in Jewish history? Absolutely. Is this event necessarily the interpretation of Joel 2 and Revelation 6? I do not absolutely think you can make that correlation. Does that help at all? Okay, maybe not. Confusion? Clarity? Can I help you out? You're going, "That was great sleeping through. Thanks a lot, I appreciate it."

Yes, ma'am. ("Okay, I'm going to show my ignorance.") No, ma'am. ("How many Jews are....?") The question is: when America was founded, how many "Jewish people" were a part of it. When I call it the American experiment, I mean, that's what the founding fathers called it, the experiment in democracy. I don't know exactly how many but if you've ever been to the northeast where the original colonies were established, there are significant sizable Jewish communities. In fact, until – I don't want to get my dates wrong, ma'am – I don't think it was last year, maybe it was 2012, somewhere in the recent years for the first time since America was founded, there are now actually more Jewish people in Israel than in America. Up until just a few years ago, the greatest number of Jewish people lived in this country but because of obviously 1948 and 1967 and what we call the Zionist movement which is the Jewish people going back to the homeland, there's been a renewed interest of people going back and living there and now the population of Israel with Jewish individuals is higher than the population of Jewish individuals in America. Does that help at all? But the exact number, I don't know.

("...they were here...founded America?") Well, there is in the history of the United States, yes, there is a significant impact of the Jewish people upon the land. I mentioned and understand, I know we're on television and any time you're dealing with questioning 500+ years of history, there is always this side, that side and the truth. There is evidence that is coming out that it is possible that the heritage of Christopher Columbus, that he was partially Jewish as well which would explain a lot of the uniqueness of what's happening. The fact that there's going to be three more lunar eclipses has really nothing to do with Christopher Columbus or the founding of America but it just parallels some other interesting things. I don't know if that helps at all but I find it unique, nonetheless.

By the way, there are a lot of books being written, a lot of articles and a lot of emails and bunches and bunches of Facebook posts that are happening right now and I just wanted you all to hear the facts and then you can make a decision for yourself.

Any other questions, clarifications, comments, rude remarks? Yes, sir. (???) The definition at hand? Back to Joel 2. What Brother George is referring to is when it says that when this happens the great day of the Lord is at hand, literally means it could happen at any moment, it means it's at hand. So, it's as if it is in the presence of the hand and just the clasping of the hand needs to take place. Is the sun going to turn dark and the moon go red immediately prior to the event of the return of Christ? Absolutely. Does that mean it's going to happen this year? Not necessarily but that's what "at hand" means.

By the way, the scientists are saying that the next time that an event such as this will occur according to their way of studying things, it could be almost 1,000 years from now which is why people are putting so much emphasis upon it because it is so unique.

Any other questions, concerns, thoughts? Everybody has been pulling me aside in the hallway going, "I want to know about this," so I thought we'd go for it. Yes, ma'am. (???) The question is: there is a very well-known pastor who has written several materials and lots of video series about this who happens to pastor a very large church in San Antonio. I'm not naming his name just because I don't want people to name my name on tv so I'm not going to name his, but he likes to get people shouting and hollering all the time. That being said, the question is: what do I think about him? Well, that's a big, broad question.

(???) Yes, right. The observation has been made that he does a lot of good study on the end times which is correct and he's obviously an incredible advocate for Jewish and Israelite studies. My personal struggle with that individual – please understand this: you do realize, nobody's right all the time and nobody is wrong all the time. A broken clock is right twice a day. Is that correct? But at the same time, one of the things that I get nervous about is when some people view others including me, as always right all the time because none of us are right all the time. My struggle that I have with this individual is that he tends to be so overly pro-Jewish that I think sometimes it can cloud objectivity. For example, the Revelation 6 passage is in the sixth seal. I would be hard-pressed – as attuned as he is to prophetic events, it would be hard-pressed to say that we've experienced the first five seals but to make the "blood moons" that event now, you have to say that we're in the sixth seal and so I kind of struggle with it. The problem is and I think we're all guilty of this at times whether we're on tv or not, is it's real easy to read the headlines into the Bible. What's hard is reading the Bible into the headlines because we see things and go, "Oh, I just really want it to be that." Or, "I really hope it is that." Not alluding to this individual but another one, in 1988 there was a guy who wrote a book called "88 Reasons Jesus Is Coming Back in 88." The next year he wrote one called "89 Reasons Jesus Is Coming Back in 89." I can't make that stuff up, that's real.

Do you all remember how many books were written about the years 1997 and 1999 about the year 2000 and all of the things of Revelation that were going to happen? Yeah, what are we doing with those books now? We've burned them, that's right, absolutely. I'm not dismissing the literature that's been written about this. Is it a phenomena? Yes. Does it probably relate to Israel? Probably. I'm just very careful to read Revelation 6 into this because we haven't seen the first five seals. So, do I think something significant could happen in Israel's life? Absolutely. I mean, if you just read the news coming from the Middle East, something's about to happen sometime, guys. It's like a cork about to pop over there. The question is: what's going to happen and who's going to be involved? Now, is it going to correlate with this? It could but if something significant happens in the life of Israel during this time period or around this time period, it does not mean that Revelation 6 is occurring, it just means, once again, God's hand is upon the people of God. Does that help at all?

(???) What she's referring to is kind of the summary of this man and others' positions on this. Here's the thing, in history, do the events of the "blood moons" line up uniquely with the life of Israel? You cannot deny that but I do think reading Joel 2 and Revelation 6 into it is a stretch. That doesn't deny God working at all. It doesn't deny the uniqueness of this and it does not deny the fact that in Genesis 1 it says that the moon and the stars and the sun are for signs and for seasons and that in 1 Corinthians 1 it says that the Jewish people seek a sign. It doesn't deny that fact. The question is: can we really read Revelation 6 and Joel 2 into the events? That's where you kind of have to step back and go, "Hm, I don't know." Could something significant happen? Absolutely. Absolutely. Just the very fact that we're having this event take place in our lifetime is amazing. I mean, it's really happening, you cannot deny it. Do we necessarily know what it will mean? No.

Now, if we find out tomorrow that they're going to build the temple on the Temple Mount, then Hallelujah, praise the Lord, that's great. It could happen. It really could happen. There are groups over there who are trying to make that happen right now as we speak and one thing that I shared with the ladies' group on Tuesday because I was asked to come in and kind of address this with them was for the very first time in who knows how much time, last weekend, last Friday, in Jerusalem, a group of Jewish Rabbis using, I guess for lack of better terms, fake items, actually took hundreds of young men and walked them through the proper rabbinical and biblical way of offering an animal sacrifice. The only reason you would do that is if you had a temple. In Israel right now, there are people being taught how to do the sacrifices when the temple arrives. Folks, I don't know what's about to happen but it probably is going to be big because if that were to occur, all kinds of craziness is going to happen so there's stuff happening. I have a hard time reading Joel 2 into the blood moons but I cannot deny that this tetrad is occurring. Does that make any sense at all? I hope so.

Yes, sir. (???) Yeah, and that's one of the – and when I say the word "criticisms" I don't want to use that word literally but it is, one of the criticisms of this is that the one that was seen last night or actually two nights ago was not even visible in Israel. It was visible in the Western world and a little bit into Europe but not pure Israel. I'll be honest, I don't know exactly where they're going to be visible. Does that make sense? When you go back and study these eight events, these eight events do not say they were necessarily visible to a certain group as much as they occurred in the world. Does that help at all?

By the way, if you've looked online, literally hundreds and hundreds of who knows how many people took pictures the other night and posted them and said, "Here it is. Look. Take a look." Taken with cellphones, posted on Facebook. It happened. Now, it happened at 3:04 a.m. central time and I was sleeping. I don't know about y'all but I was sleeping. It happened at 1 a.m. California time so I guess they had a better excuse.

Yes, sir. (???) He's saying that what he has read, the last one will be visible in Israel. I have no reason to doubt that or question it.

Yes, sir. (???) Let me go back. Go back to Matthew 24 because the question that's been brought up is: in Genesis 1 it said that the Lord put the stars in the sky for signs and for

seasons and Jesus said in Matthew 24, he spoke of seasons occurring. By the way, Matthew 24 is a great passage on the Second Coming, end time events. Beginning in verse 32 of Matthew 24 – by the way, just for the sake of fun, let me back up to verse 27.

“27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.”

Listen to verse 29,

“29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light,”

Isn't that interesting? Even at the end of what we know as the tribulation, there is another event that occurs involving the sun and the moon and the light that they give. So, that being said, verse 32,

“32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: 33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass,” etc. etc. etc.

The illustration that Jesus uses here and in Luke 21 is that when a fig tree begins to produce its leaves you know that it's about time that it will bear the fruit. Now, two elements here: 1. In the Old Testament the fig tree is used to represent Israel almost every single time. Then it says that when this season happens, you will know. Then in just a few more verses he says that nobody knows the day or the time but what Jesus has just alluded to is we know when it is a season. For example, something is about to occur in this world where I now live, those of you who don't know, I've only been here a little less than a year, my wife and I have been anticipating a season for several weeks. Everybody's been telling us about it, they've been warning us about it, they've been giving us hints about it, they've been giving all kinds of advice about it. It's called love bugs. We've never lived through love bug season. Well, that doesn't sound good. That being said, why have people been warning us? The time of year, the temperatures, the...those of you who've lived here your whole life know to get ready, one day you're going to walk out and they're there. Is that how it works? Okay and I drive a white truck and I've heard they're attracted to white, right? Dang, oh well.

The reason that's important is, I think what Jesus was saying is in all of the end time events that he was talking about, when you see the fig tree start to have leaves, be prepared because the fruit's about to be born. Just like we know the temperature rising, the time of year, the love bugs are about to come out. We know that, right? At least y'all know that, I don't know that because it will be my first time. When you see the miraculous events that we've described here, when you see the correlations of what we “know as the blood moons,” when you see all that happening, you would have to raise your head up and say, “Something's happening over there.” The leaves are definitively

beginning to bud from the tree. The tension is there, the talks are there, the events are there and so I think to your point, sir, the signs and the seasons, I don't know how much of that relates to the exactness of the conversation but you cannot deny there is so much happening around the people of God and the place of God that it's getting close. Now, do we know how much time? We don't but they've got statehood, they've got a city. I'm telling you, if they build a temple, you'd better just go ahead and pack your bags, Jesus is about to come back. Now, he may not come back for a while but you can go ahead and pack your bags because at that point, I'm going to be honest with you, I've been studying prophecy for years and I love the book of Revelation, the book of Daniel, once that occurs, I don't see what else is important to them that would need to happen for them to be who they need to be. I mean, it's pretty much all there and the Bible makes it very clear in Revelation 11 during what we know as the great tribulation time, it says that the temple is there, they're worshiping in the temple, there are things happening in the temple and for years and years and years and years people have said, "Ah, that passage must be about the past. There's not the way that's going to happen in the future." Now all of a sudden in the 21st century, people are going, "Uh-oh, that could happen right now." Amazing. The Bible's been true whether we liked it or not. God said it was going to happen and guess what? It's going to happen.

So, we're beginning to see that fig tree really blossom. Does that make sense? And so the other thing that's going to occur in the tribulation according to the book of Daniel 9 is that the antichrist figure will create a peace accord with Israel and they will think they are safe and obviously we know the abomination of desolation and some of those major events that occur. I guess what I'm saying is: it's kind of like watching a pot of water boil. You're beginning to see kind of the air pockets and you know at any moment it's going to start bubbling. We just don't know when it will. Brother, I tell you what, I wouldn't be shocked at anything that occurs. I think the blood moons are interesting and I think it's significant but, man, the things that are happening around Israel now, if you would have gone back, let's just pick a year, how about 1941? Would anybody have guessed that seven years later Israel who was being literally slaughtered and massacred by the Germans and others by the millions would have their own country? I mean, go back to 1967 when literally the whole Middle East attacks Israel in one day. Did anybody think, "Oh, give it a week and they'll have Jerusalem back"? Think about those events. Right now on the Temple Mount, there is a mosque sitting right there and people are like, "You know, there is just no way they could ever build a temple there." Guess what? There was no way they'd get Jerusalem and there was no way they'd be a country which tells me there is a way they're going to get a temple. I just don't know how, when, where, what but it's going to occur sometime. I don't know if that helps you.

Yes, ma'am. (???) Okay. You know, I do have a box of questions here. We will get to it eventually. The question is: will the temple be built before the rapture? I do not know. Is the temple there during the tribulation? Yes. The big question people say about that is and, by the way, the question that she's asked is a wonderful question dealing with prophetic events because there's all kinds of different opinions on the timing of the rapture, the tribulation, all that kind of stuff and we tend to go back in history which is not necessarily a bad problem. Does anybody remember when Jesus – it's in Matthew 24

– when Jesus is telling – some of you are saying, “I’m gonna cheat on this one. I’m going to look it up,” when Jesus is referring to them that one day the temple will be destroyed and built back in three days, does anybody remember how long they said it took to build it? Forty years. It took forty years when they came back out of exile to rebuild that temple and so people have looked at that illustration and said, “Man, it took forty years to build it, if the tribulation is seven years in length, even if they started building it on day one, there is no way they could complete it.” Well, the interesting thing is we have this marvel now known as technology and access. There are groups of people over in the Middle East right now, various institutes and groups, that have accumulated all the materials that would be necessary and “they claim” that they can have it built in less than a week. When I say less than a week, I’m talking like literal 24 hour days. You know, the temple is really not that big, in fact, not much bigger than this room we’re in right now. Can you imagine, there are millions and millions and millions of Jewish people not just in Israel but in Jerusalem, can you imagine if they got the “permission” to build the temple that they’ve wanted for 2,000 years, I think everybody would show up and volunteer and people would be begging just to hit one hammer or to put one nail or whatever it’s going to be constructed of. They’d be begging to do it so I have a funny feeling it’s going to go up real quick. Whether it comes on this side or that side, I don’t know but I’m telling you what, if you and I are living and breathing and that thing goes up, just get a suitcase. Well, you won’t need a suitcase because you won’t need one for the rapture but get ready, you’re about to go flying.

Yes, sir. (???) Permission. Right now, when you said the permission to build it, I guess technically when it comes to warfare, you don’t need permission but what we know as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem where the famous Dome of the Rock is, that is an Islamic Muslim area. The Jewish people are not allowed in there, nothing to it. They’re not even allowed to walk on it, much less build a temple on it. I understand we could have “WWIII,” a bomb go off and they say, “Too bad, so sad, we’re going to build something,” but that would create world chaos. What I think is going to happen, this is just me, Jeff, talking here: there is so much archaeological digging that’s happening right now, particularly under the Temple Mount...if you’ve ever been to the Temple Mount, the thing that’s amazing is you know that famous Western Wall or the Wailing Wall? You’ve all seen pictures, right? That wall, if you look and see how far it goes down through the earth, that’s about the top 1/3 to 1/2 of the original wall. If you go to the Wailing Wall and you go to pray, ladies, don’t get upset, it’s not my idea, they separate you into genders: women, you have to stay outside in the cold and the rain; men, we get to go inside where it’s warm and sheltered. I’m just telling you the truth. That’s right and so when you go there in the men’s section, there is actually a large plexiglass, I guess window, for lack of better terms, on the ground where you can actually look down and see the bottom of the wall. It’s a long ways down there. You say, “Well, why is that so significant?” Do you know how many groups of people and civilizations have built, destroyed, built, destroyed, built, destroyed on that mount? The cornerstone for the temple was laid many groups and civilizations ago. If they ever find where the original cornerstone is and can project up where it’s supposed to be, here we go, and if they can prove that the cornerstone through history and archeology existed prior to the Dome of the Rock, then we’ve got a whole other issue going on so when I say “permission” I don’t necessarily

mean the UN says you can build it and I don't want to get into the "is it before or after the rapture event" but I'm going to tell you what: if there's ever a political figure who can negotiate with the Jewish people and the Muslims about building a temple within those walls, his nickname would be Antichrist because they've never gotten along, they've broken every peace accord, everybody is mad at each other all the time and it says he's able to work miracles and wonders and signs. I think that would classify as all of those and so there is big debate on "is the location of the Dome of the Rock actually where the temple originally was, would it be beside it"? That's a whole other discussion but I'm tell you: the fig tree is blooming. It's there. Do you want to know what's going to happen in the future? I'm going to be honest with you: don't look to Washington, look to Jerusalem because that's where all the activity is going to take place.

Thoughts, concerns, questions, issues? One more and then we'll go to the box.

(???) It might put me on the spot. That's a code word for "get ready." (???) What would be my guesstimation of what? Who's going to win the Super Bowl next year? Who's going to win the World Series this year? Go ahead, say it. When do I think the end will occur?

(???) We're closer today than we were yesterday. I know no man knows the hour and the question you're asking is really, I know you say you're putting me on the spot, you're really not putting me on the spot because we see so much going on. I think we'd be foolish to say there's another 1,000 years. I think we'd be ignorant to say there's another 500. Does that make sense? I don't think we'd be pushing the envelope to say we won't see another 100. Does that make sense? But I'm going to tell you, I'm still going to set my alarm clock to get up tomorrow morning. Does that make sense? But I wouldn't be surprised if at any moment the trumpet sounded and we were gone. Praise the Lord. It couldn't happen soon enough as far as I'm concerned. That would be great.

Yes, ma'am. That's okay, the box is lonely but that's okay. (???) The question she's saying is: there is a major movement going on with people of the Jewish heritage that are converting to Christianity. There is sizable, how do I say this? There is a good sizable portion of evangelism happening among the Jewish people toward Jesus Christ being what they would call Yeshua or Messiah. That is happening. Absolutely. Now, it's not happening like the first Great Awakening by the tens of thousands and the millions but it is happening. My wife and I, we're proponents, I guess shall we say, we are...I don't know what I'd call it but we're supporters of various Messianic Jewish organizations and we get their newsletters and you're beginning to see success stories. Now, when they say "success," they've been in a city for four years and they finally see somebody convert. Well, that's one person in four years; that's more than they saw the previous eight. So, there is, yes, we are seeing that happening but it's not like you have a revival happening in Jerusalem to Christianity right now. I wish I could say it was but there is, and I think a lot of that is...you know what momentum is, you get one, then you get two, then you get four, then you get eight. As Jewish people become believers in Jesus Christ, nobody can reach a Jew like a Jew can and as they begin to share with family and friends and just like Christianity, we started with about 12 of us and those 12 went out and it began to

increase. You're seeing it happen kind of at the same level but not in mass spiritual awakening. Does that make sense? But it is occurring and it's a wonderful thing. Absolutely wonderful thing.

Anything else? Okay, just for the sake of posterity...did you raise your hand?

Go ahead. (???) That's a great question. Go back to Matthew 24 and the question is about that generation which goes back to the question about how long and how soon. Once again, we just read this, verse 32 of Matthew 24, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see," listen, "all these things." Now, what does the word "all" mean? All. "Know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." So, in my Bible at least, I turn a page back and I want to begin in verse 15, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet." For that to occur, you have to have a temple and you have to have an individual who walks into the temple according to Daniel 9 and claim that he is God. We have not seen "all these things." Just that one phrase of that one verse automatically says, Jesus said, "When you see all these things, this generation shall not pass." We have not seen "all these things." Have we seen some of them? Yes. Are we seeing more of them? Yes. We have not seen all of them. Jesus twice says, "When you see all these things, this generation shall not pass."

A lot of people said, "Well, that generation began in 1948." Some people said it began in 1967 and people say, "A generation in some cases was 40 years, some cases 70 years, some cases 100 years." Well, I think the best way to interpret the Bible is just the way it says it, Jesus said, "All these things." We've not seen "all these things" yet. We've seen some of them and in some cases we could even say "a lot of them" but we haven't seen "all of them." So, to your question: is this the last generation? I don't know because just for the sake of argument, what if everything we haven't seen takes place next week? Then I would say yes, but we're not there yet. Does that make sense?

The question that he asked for to be rephrased: do you think we're the last generation? I would say the jury is still out. We could be but we don't definitively know we are. Does that make sense? So, what I'm trying to say is when it comes to prophecy, whether it's the blood moons, Matthew 24 or anything else in between, read what the Bible says as the Bible says it and go with it. Don't get caught up into making something fit the Bible just because it's convenient for what you want to occur. I mean, I've heard people say the last generation started in 1948. The problem you run into there is, eventually you run out of time of being that last generation and then you become a false prophet and there's a group of people that said Jesus was coming back in 1844 and, well, he didn't and that caused an issue, right? Because what they did was they read a prophecy from the book of Daniel into what we know as the Gregorian calendar and said it's going to be so many days which represents so many years, which means Jesus is coming back in 1844. Well, can we say it's been 170 years later and they were wrong because they read into the Bible what they wanted and didn't get out of the Bible what they really needed. Does that make sense?

I'm not telling you to ignore it, I'm just trying to be cautious because, guess what? It's going to happen...here's the thing I don't want to say "end on" but I guess we're getting close is: when the Bible prophesied in Micah 5:2 where the Messiah, Jesus, was going to be born, where did it say he would be born? Where? Bethlehem, right? You know, Jerusalem is right around the corner, that's close enough, right? No. Where was he born? Bethlehem. It said that when he was a child, he would come out of what country? Egypt. Libya is close enough, isn't it? Do you see what I'm getting at? The first time that Jesus came, even though it didn't make a lick of sense for the Incarnation to happen in Bethlehem, even though it didn't make a lick of sense to come out of Egypt, it happened exactly as the Bible said it happened and it was so marvelous that people said, "Surely not." What did Nathanael say to Jesus when he finally met him for the first time? He said, "Can any good thing come out of Galilee?" But what was the prophecy? He would be called a Nazarene which is in Galilee so even though it said he would come from there, he said, "Aw, surely it can't happen that way. It's got to happen this way." We are really bad creatures of making it be what we would want it to be rather than allowing it to happen as the Bible says it's going to happen.

Let me tell you how it's going to occur: just like God said. The sixth seal one day is going to open up. There's going to be a sun that looks dark and a moon that looks red and the stars are going to fall out of the sky and all of a sudden people are going to go, "Oh, so that's what he was talking about." Does that make sense? I just want you to approach it...am I denying the immediacy of things? Absolutely not, but the problem is for too many years and by too many well-meaning people, there have been too many false claims by making it say what we wanted it to say rather than saying that's just what it says. Hey, I'm going to be honest with you: there are people out there who are saying sometime between now and August of 2015 the rapture's going to happen. I wish but I can't say that it will. I wish it would but I don't think there's anything scripturally that you can defend that even though I'd love for it to happen. I don't know if that helps but that's just kind of my perspective on things. Guess what, folks? It's going to happen the way he said it's going to happen irregardless of what anybody says in a book or on a tv program. It's going to occur and I think what's going to happen to a lot of preachers, I guess myself included, is that one day we're going to show up to the Judgment Seat of Christ and Jesus is going to look at us and go, "What were you thinking? I told you the way it was going to happen and you messed it all up." Just my personal opinion, so possible.

Yes, ma'am. My friend says he's lonely. Go ahead. (???) That's a great question. When summer is nigh, you know the fig tree. Okay, let me give you a good, I think, forgive me if I'm wrong, I think this is a good Louisiana example: if you walk out of your house tomorrow and go, "Golly, where do these love bugs come from?" Your neighbor is going to go, "Hey Goober, didn't you know this was love bug season?" Maybe they don't call you Goober, I don't know, but my point is the real fig tree, an actual fig tree, it blossoms, it blooms in the summer and he's saying when the summertime comes, you don't go to the fig tree and go, "Oh, that's strange. I wonder why that thing's blooming?" Because you know that's what happens in the summer. At the same time, I think the Lord is saying, "Hello? Statehood. Jerusalem. Temple. Why would you be surprised this is happening?"

In other words, he's giving us imagery. It begins in verse 32 and it says "this parable," in other words, "I'm going to give you this story of a real tree and then I want you to fly it to a figurative tree and learn the same lesson from it." You know because of what I've said tonight, the Lord is going to bless me with an abundance of love bugs, right? You do know that? I'm going to get hit pretty hard in my first season. Does that help you at all?

(???) Yeah, it's figurative. And by the way, on that note and then we'll pray, let me give you a little bit of theological history. You know what we know as Israel didn't exist for about 1,900 years, right? Back in the 1700s, in the 1800s, all the preachers and all the theologians read these passages of Scripture and they said, "Well, pfft, that stuff must be referring back to something that happened in the first century. Israel doesn't exist anymore, it hasn't existed for 1,600 years. It's crazy for people to think that's actually real." Now what do you say. Oops, they were wrong. You know, in fact, what you're seeing now in the prophetic writings or the people who are into the book of Revelation and such, is that you actually have people going back and I don't want to say correcting the dead but those who wrote 200 years ago and saying, "If they could see what we see, they would have changed what they wrote." Isn't hindsight 20/20? Every single time. For example, and I know we need to pray, there is a passage in Revelation 9 where it says that in the end times there will be an army led by the kings of the East that will march west into Israel and wreak havoc on Israel. The number of that army is 200 million men. You do realize that in the year 1900, there were only a billion people on the planet and the idea of 200 million men which would have been half of the male population of the earth gathered in Asia marching west to Israel, people looked at that passage and said that's crazy, there's no way that that can happen, it's just figurative. You realize, there are two countries that alone by themselves could field an army of 200 million men that happen to be east of Israel right now: one is India and one is China. Now, I'm not saying they're going to be the ones that do it, I'm just saying if I asked you today could there be an army of 200 million men on planet earth, everyone would say, "Well, of course there could be." 150 years ago they said, "There is no way it can happen that way."

So it goes back to my point, sir, we're closer today than we were yesterday because what we're seeing is things that for hundreds of years people said there is no way it could happen that way, guess what? Israel is here. Jerusalem is there. The temple will be coming one day and wow. I mean, there are writings out there...you know in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 it says, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you," and then you read Revelation 11 where it says that the temple is measured foursquare this and that, there were people hundreds of years ago that looked at those passages and said, "Oh, what that's talking about is that really you're the temple of God and God is measuring who you are." Oh, no, no, no, no. We're described as the temple of God but an angel hasn't come and measured. I'm going to tell you what: I wish, I wish that that passage in 1 Corinthians 6 and Revelation 11 could be true because if you see the measurements of the temple in Revelation 11, I would finally be the height I actually want to be because it's a big place. I guess what I'm getting at in conclusion is two things: don't make it figurative if it can be literal and don't read something into it, read out of it.