

## Ask Jeff

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**Crossroads Ministries**

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Good evening. It is 6:30 Central Standard Time Wednesday night in Opelika, Alabama. For those of you that are physically in house with us tonight, we appreciate you and our work in progress. Thank you for accommodating. We should be at full steam next week as far as the facility is concerned. It's a little bit different this week, but we're going to all work out. For those that are watching online or listening on 97.7 FM, welcome to our mid-week large group adult Bible study. Tonight, if you've never been a part of this, whether you're in-house watching online, if this is your very first time, you have come to a Bible study where everything we discuss, every topic, every passage, every concern, every question derives from your curiosity. That's right, tonight is driven completely by you. You have the opportunity to participate not only in advance, but in real time.

Now before we talk about tonight, just a little differentiation. We actually do an Ask Jeff question of the day each and every day, Monday through Friday on YouTube. If you want your question taken care of in that way, there are two ways you can do so. Both are web-based [askjeff.com](http://askjeff.com) or [fbcopelika.com/askjeff](http://fbcopelika.com/askjeff). If you submit a question through those two mechanisms, it goes to our YouTube, where typically we answer a question anywhere from two to five minutes each day of the business week.

Now, you can submit a question there and on Wednesday night as well. Now, Wednesday night, we tend to go a little more in depth on the questions. In fact, you're able to ask what we know as follow-up questions. The best way to do so, if you want to remain anonymous, is use that phone that you know you have in your hand, area code 334-231-2313. You can be on the front row, you can be on another continent, it doesn't matter. It goes in real time to the computer to my left and your right and eventually ends up on this screen. If we're talking about a topic, a subject, a concern, whatever it is, and you want to go a little bit deeper into that topic or maybe tangent to, you can actually submit a question via text message and it will show up in a different font and I know we are staying on topic.

Now for those of you that are in house, you have this blessing in life called raising of your hand. When you raise your hand, you get to take the conversation any direction you want. However, you lose your anonymity in house because we know who you are, but we're all family and that's okay. However, let me remind you that your image or your voice will not be heard or seen online or on the radio. So you're anonymous out there, just

not in here. So we have the opportunity now to do some Bible study, not prescribed, but whatever you so desire.

So, let's begin with question one, which says, here we go. It says, "What translation of the Bible do you prefer and why?" Oh, I get to answer a question based on me. Thank y'all. I appreciate that. Usually it's like, what does this passage mean? What does that mean? For those of you who do not know me, I'm an old soul in a used to be young body. Now what I mean by an old soul, I read, study, and preach from what I like to call Old King Jimmy. Alright, the Old King James. Now, allow me to share with you the why, and hopefully I can make this quick. The number one reason, and really the origination of this reason for me personally, is Psalms 119 verse 11 that says, "Hide my word in thy heart so that you will not sin against me." I will tell you from personal testimony that what we know as the King James Version of the Bible is easier to memorize than any other version. Okay? It is easier to memorize. By the way, if you go back to the year 1611 when we got the first edition in English, nobody talked like the King James Bible. Everybody thinks, oh, it's archaic and it's out of date. You do realize that when people got together back then and they were having a family barbecue, they didn't say, "I beseech you, bring me thou mustard." I mean, that's not how they did it, right? In fact, if you read the long preamble or the long introduction of what we know as the King James Version, it was created purposefully with a language so that it would be easy to memorize, and listen to this, when it was quoted publicly, people would know that it is the Bible.

Now, another thing to understand is the famous ye's and thee's that we get also caught up on, one of the things that you'll recognize is in English today, when you use the word you, It can mean singular or plural, correct? Or as we like to say here, y'all, right? We got that. However, you go back and you look at the word ye, all right, y-e, that actually is plural. So if it says ye go into all the world, that means all of you, not just one of you and it's able to differentiate some things in English that we don't do in our "modern language of today." But the number one reason, easier to memorize.

Number two is this, that if you go back and you do, and this is what I like to call if you geek out, okay, if you go in and you geek out and you start getting in the weeds, what you'll discover is that all the Bibles that are in English that you and I have access to, there are four families of manuscripts by which they derive, alright? There is what we call the Alexandrian manuscript, there's the Vaticanus, there's the Sinaiticus, and what we call the Codex Receptus, okay? Those four. You say, "Well, what does that have to do with anything?" What we know as the King James Version comes from the Codex Receptus or the one that's the Textus Receptus, okay? The reason that's important is it originated in Antioch. You say, "Well, why is that critical to the question?" Because Antioch, according to the book of Acts, is where we were first called Christians. Alexandrian came from Alexandria which is, by the way, where every heresy of the first three centuries came from. Vaticanus came from the Vatican and the last time somebody was born again there was never. Sinaiticus... [laughter] When's the last time you heard of somebody getting saved at the Vatican? Never. Next one, I'm just being serious. The next one is Sinaiticus which came from a monastery in the middle of a desert that nobody ever read. So, when you look at your options, it's like, I think I'll go with the Textus Receptus,

which came from Antioch, which is where we started, which is where the King James derived from.

Speaking of those texts, one of the things that I absolutely love about what we know as the King James Version is that when you open up to passage and you're reading, you'll notice there are words in italics. You know why those words are in italics? Because they're not a part of the original manuscripts. Anytime you go from one language to the next, you have to use what we call filler words. You can't exactly make it work and so anytime we added a word to make it flow but wasn't in the original, they put in the italics to tell you that was not a part of the original. That's a pretty neat attribute that it possesses.

So that's just a real quick sampling of why I like to use it. I could go on all night but that would bore all of y'all because the question's about me and not about y'all. Any follow-up, any concerns, any thoughts, any issues? I went really fast because it was about me. Yes sir. Yes sir.

[unintelligible]

What about rightly divide? Yes, well that that would be the Bible in totality not necessarily a specific version of the Bible. The Bible speaks about in 2 Timothy chapter 2 verse 15, it says that we're to study the word of God rightly dividing, and the fact is, and I will be honest, this isn't any "English translation of scripture," the first five books of your Bible are known as the law or the Torah and then we have what are called the writings, then we have the prophets which, by the way, in a Hebrew Jewish Old Testament the prophets and the writings are actually reversed. That's a whole other question for a whole other day. And then, of course, you get to the New Testament you get the gospels, the letters of Paul and what we know as the general epistles. What's important the question he just asked is this: anytime you read a passage, a verse, a chapter, an entire book of scripture, the thing you need to realize is who was this written to, why was it written to them, and how does that relate to us differently than them? My favorite example is what we know as the 10 Commandments. When God gave the Israelites the 10 Commandments when Moses came down off the mountain and he gave it to them, he said, "If you do these things, you're my people and I am your God." Well, you and I don't go to heaven on the 10 Commandments because they had never heard of Yeshua or Jesus. They never saw a Messiah walk on water, much less go to the cross and raise from the dead. And so therefore, you see this information coming through, rightly divided, means you don't make the rules of today the rules of then, and you don't make the rules of then the rules of today. If I can make the rules all the same, then I could convince you that you could go to heaven by building a boat. You say, "What do you mean by building a boat?" Because that's how Noah got to heaven. Read the book of Hebrews chapter 11. It said, by faith Noah built a boat. What did Noah do? He responded appropriately to what God asked him to do at the time that God asked him to do it. He asked Noah to build a boat. He asked Abraham to go to a land he knew not of. He asked Moses and the following folks to obey the law. And he asked us to believe on his Son that was crucified and raised from the dead. That's how we "rightly divide."

So when somebody says, "Well, you know, somebody back in the book of Exodus, they got saved just the way that you and I do." Not technically. Now, according to Hebrews 11, by faith, the question is faith in what? Well, the faith in what God revealed to them that they were to respond appropriately. There are people today that believe, unfortunately, that if they do the 10 Commandments, they're going to go to heaven one day. I've got bad news for them. That's not the case. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. People back in the book Exodus did not get saved by calling on the name of the Lord because they didn't even know who Yeshua or Jesus Christ was. So again, that's that rightly dividing which is more Bible in total, not necessarily version in particular.

Does that help just a little bit? You want to allow him to ask a question?

[unintelligible]

The question is, how old is God? Now the joke is, really old, but that's actually an improper answer, young man. Do you know why? Because if I said that God was really old, that would express some type of linear or finiteness to him. The beautiful way to answer this question whether you're your age my age or somewhere in between is that God is the author of time, he has no age. Oh, if you could see his face, this young man. Because God is the author of time and because God is outside of time and he is above time, there is actually no way to claim the age of God because he is ageless, he is timeless, and therefore to ask how old he is, though it's a really good question, cannot be answered with a quantifiable number. That's really good, though. I like that question. I've always said the best questions come from the kids or from the adults that haven't grown up.

Did I see another hand? I thought I did. Anybody else? Nope, nope, nope, we're good. And we're going back. It says, "Will you explain what Jesus meant in John chapter 14 verse 12?" Okay, John chapter 14. We find our way, contextually, this is what we call the farewell discourse. You say, "The farewell discourse?" What's interesting about the gospel of John is even though it chronicles three and a half years of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, from chapters 13 toward the end, so really a little over a third of the gospel of John, all takes place within just a couple of days. John chapter 13 begins the farewell discourse, which begins in the Upper Room with what we famously call the Last Supper. Then chapters 13 through 19 take us all the way up to the cross. Then we have the resurrection and events thereafter. So it's a lot of material for a very specific amount of time. Now, incidentally, the gospel of Luke has 24 chapters. The last 12 chapters, half the gospel of Luke, comprises just the last week or the final week or the Passion Week of Jesus Christ.

In John chapter 14, we'll make our way to verse 12 but it begins by Jesus having a conversation with the disciples and in particular with Thomas, where he says, "If you believe in God believe also in me," and he makes that famous statement about mansions in heaven, "If it were not so, I would tell you. I'll come again. I'll take you where I'm

going." Thomas says, "How can we know the way?" Verse 6, "I'm the way, the truth, the life; no one comes to the Father but by me." Remember, he's just washed their feet. They're fixing to make their way to what we know as Gethsemane and then beginning in verse 7 it says, "If you had known me, you should have known my Father also: and from henceforth you know him and you've seen him. Philip said unto him, Lord, show us the Father,, it sufficeth us. Jesus said unto him, Have I been so long with you, and yet thou not known me Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I and the Father, and the Father is in me, I am in the Father and the Father is in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me: or else believe me for the very work's sake. Verily, verily," and this is the question, verse 12, "I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do,;because I go to my Father."

Now, it's an interesting question because Jesus basically tells these 12 guys, of which two of them have opened their mouths and said, "We don't know what's happening here, right? Thomas said, "How do we know the way?" Philip's like, "Can you please show us the Father?" Jesus says, "Thomas, how can you not know the way? I've been telling you the way. How do you not know the Father? I've shown you the Father." Can we just be really fleshly and honest tonight these guys are clueless, alright? They don't have a clue what they're doing. You say, "Well then, how can they do greater works?" I want to call your attention back to John chapter 2 for just a moment. We're going to go back to John chapter 14, I promise you. John chapter 2, Jesus performs his first miracle. He turns water into wine. Then he goes into the temple mount, and he overturns the table. Now, I want to call your attention to verse 17. It says, "And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." And it goes on, it talks about the temple being torn down. It was born for 46 years, etc., etc. The passage alludes to and talks about that basically they were not able to comprehend what was happening before them and I'm going to share with you why: because not one single one of those disciples, Peter, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, and particularly Judas, none of them had the Holy Spirit within them. Not one of them. In fact, John chapter 14, right after the passage we just read, makes the statement that it's actually "expedient that I go away for when I go away, the Comforter, another Comforter, the Holy Spirit will come. He will show you truth. He will show you righteousness. He will show you judgment. He is the Spirit of truth." And so basically what Jesus is telling them, that when the Holy Spirit comes within them, according to verse 12, they will do greater works than he did.

And I know what you're thinking, "How on earth could those guys do greater works than he did?" I want you to compare the works of Jesus in the gospels just to the book of Acts. Let me make it a little bit more particular here. Did you know that all of Jesus' ministry, all the people he healed, all the sermons he preached, when they put him on a cross, you know how many people were there? Five. That's it. Five. He raises from the dead. How many people are in the Upper Room? 120. Now don't get me wrong, it's a strategic group, but can we all agree quantifiably it was a small group? Acts chapter 2, the same man who put his foot in his mouth on more than one occasion, known as Peter, he gets up, filled

with the Holy Spirit, opens his mouth, and 3,000 people get saved. Do you realize more people came to know the Lord through Peter in Acts 2 than you see the entirety of the gospel record? When he said, greater works will you do, he was stating that when the Holy Spirit fills you, all of you, and then by the way, all those who would believe, then we become, for a lack of better terms, we become the agents of grace and mercy and the proclaimers of truth, and that we will see people come to faith and knowledge in Jesus Christ. The same ones, by the way, who rejected him in the gospels, would then believe on him. later on. And so it doesn't mean that we're greater than Jesus, what it means is Jesus' entire ministry, listen, is preparing people and telling them, "I'm going to the cross. I'm going to die. I'm going to raise up and then your life can be changed forever," okay? A lot of people thought it was a good idea. A lot of people thought it wasn't a good idea. And then guess what? He died and he rose from the grave and it changed their life forever.

And so it is the resurrection and the giving of the Holy Spirit that is the power behind it. Jesus wasn't saying that you will be greater than him. He was saying that the works you do. Well, you realize the only works you can do that glorify him are because of the Holy Spirit. That's it. Okay? So it's not that you are greater, it's the work he does via you through the Holy Spirit that is greater and all you have to do is read the book of Acts to see the incredible amount of lives, difference, and change that was made. But a really insightful question, because on the surface it's almost like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, time out. I'm not greater than Jesus." No, you're not but the Holy Spirit is the Lord, Jesus is the Lord, and so working through us, we see greater fruit therein. But that's a really good and insightful question and a really interesting passage known as the farewell discourse.

Any follow-up on this guy? Yes sir, ma'am, I apologize. I saw him and then I saw you.

[unintelligible]

Is this the same, like the doubting Thomas? Same guy. The same guy who said, "Unless I put my hands into his side and into the wounds, I will not believe." That's right. Same Thomas. He had not received the Holy Spirit. But by the way, as an aside, we like to give Thomas a bad rap, right? We call him Doubting Thomas, right? However, if we go back a couple of chapters into John chapter 11, remember the famous story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead? Jesus is there, they hear that Lazarus is sick, they come back and he says, "Okay, let's go and see him. Let's go take care of business." And the disciples are like, "Why would that do any good?" And Thomas says, "Tell us where to go and we'll go because we're following you." It's interesting that Thomas has some pretty good moments. Then he has an okay moment. Then he has a really bad moment. It's kind of like you, isn't it? And kind of like me.

I mean, I'm serious. You know, and by the way, this isn't a side, but it's relevant to your question. I think oftentimes we see the disciples and we put them on this pedestal that, oh, there's just this greatness. You do realize that they were as messed up as you are, alright, they were. They had the same Holy Spirit in them that you have in you. They had the same flesh on them that you have in you. They doubted, they questioned, they failed,

they messed up just like you do, alright? The real thing I want to share that I think we see with the Thomases of the world is they got back up. You do realize, as much as Thomas doubted, he showed up. Eight days later, he said he wouldn't believe unless, but he showed up. And when Jesus appeared, he didn't say, "Let me touch that." What did he do? He fell on his face. So Thomas started out good. So-so. Not so good. Really not good. Great. That's kind of the pattern of our life. Is it not?

I thought I saw a hand back here. Did I not? Yep. Maybe. Yes. Back row.

[unintelligible]

Yes. Really good question. Thank you. The question was if Jesus had to go to heaven for the Holy Spirit to come, what will happen when "Jesus comes back"? Did I repeat the question properly? Go to 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 That's a really really good question. So 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. This is a chapter, just a little heads up for this Sunday, is known for its explanation and understanding of a character known as the Antichrist by the way, but what's really interesting it talks about this man of sin, the son of perdition, this Antichrist. I want to call your attention to verse 6 and 7. Now remember it's all about the Antichrist showing up, right? It says, "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time." In other words, the Bible is saying there is something that is holding the Antichrist back from being revealed. Verse 7, "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." Now, what the Bible is saying is there is somebody that is keeping the Antichrist at bay, but when whomever that is, is removed, then the Antichrist will have his way. I would say in the context of 2 Thessalonians 2 as well as other scriptures, that "he" in that passage is the Holy Spirit because the only thing that could hold him back is God himself. And you say, with the Holy Spirit being taken away, what do you think that passage in 1 Thessalonians 4 means when it says those that are dead in Christ and alive in Christ are caught up together with the Lord? The only way we're caught up to be with him is because the Holy Spirit that is within us. And so by the way, you hear that pulling out of, so your question, ma'am, if he had to go to heaven for the Holy Spirit to come, when he calls his bride up the Holy Spirit is with him, so all comes back in chapter 19 of Revelation. Which by the way, don't panic, all that means is during that horrible time period we talked about last Sunday known as the Great Tribulation, the activity of the Holy Spirit is like it was in the Old Testament. You do know God is omnipresent. He's everywhere. But not within, not dwelling, as you and I have the privilege of today as believers.

Does that help out a little bit on that question? All the way from the back row. Now the second to the back row.

[unintelligible]

Ah, great question. Luke chapter 11, verse 13. Let me make my way over there real quick. So Luke 11, I'm going to begin in verse 11 for the sake of context, if that's okay. Jesus has a very sharp word for us. How's that? Is that a good description? It says, "If a

son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" So essentially it's saying if we desire the Holy Spirit, which by the way only comes through salvation, if we ask, we shall receive. The question that this young man, please tell me you like the fact I said that, this young man asked was during that time we just alluded to after the body of Christ has been caught up, how do they, for lack of better terms, receive of? What's interesting there is I alluded this last Sunday to Matthew chapter 24 and 25. Remember Jesus on the Mount of Olives? It's the famous eschatological Second Coming passage. What's interesting about that is the two questions that the disciples asked. The first question is when shall these things be, i.e. the tearing down of the temple. The second question is what's going to be the sign of your coming. His coming isn't him calling us up. His coming is when he touches down in Revelation chapter 19. What's fascinating about that as you read those two chapters, particularly in chapter 25 of the book of Matthew, there's a famous parable of the virgins. Remember that? The parable of the virgins and go and trimming the oil. And it talks about that, you know, they all went out but only five were ready and five were this. The reason that is important is I believe, sir, there's evidence, not only from the Old Testament but particularly the book of Revelation, that those individuals who are seeking the Lord during that horrific time, they are never described as "being born again, reconciled, redeemed," but they are described as seeking the Lord's return, waiting for him and being ready when he arrives. Per the question that came from behind you, when he arrives, guess it's the Holy Spirit as well. It's not immediate like you and I, but it is promised to be received. So he said, if you ask, you shall receive. I don't know if that helps a little bit.

Again, please understand, we're getting a little bit in the weeds here about stuff that's not going to impact you or me and so there's a little bit of speculation here. I say this a lot, but I'm going to say it again. 1 Corinthians 6:2 says, "Today is the day of salvation." I wouldn't say, "Well, I think I'd like to do it that way." Why don't you just do it today, all right? Now, I've got a good friend of mine who, by the way, does not believe, as I, he does not believe he's ever going to have to set foot into the tribulation. He's a believer in Jesus Christ. He knows there's coming a day he's going to be caught up. The problem is, my friend's a prepper. Y'all know what a prepper is? My wife knows exactly who I'm talking about and you know what his joke is? He goes, "I just want 30 minutes to see how I do." But I can joke with him, "No, you don't want those 30 minutes to see how you can do, because it's a different day, it's a different stage, and it is a different age."

Anything else on that one? I know that's like a flood water of information, but it's really good. Good questions. Appreciate the back row. Yes, sir?

[unintelligible]

Ah, point of clarification rather than a question. Philip was asking, "Show us the Father," yet Jesus said, "When you've seen me, you've seen the Father." Can I "clarify." Go back to John chapter 1. John chapter 1, this is the famous preamble as we call it. John chapter



1, verse 18 is where we're going to be headed. It's really interesting and then we might fast forward to chapter 3 for a moment. It says, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." So basically Jesus said, "If you desire to see the Lord, when you see me, you've seen him." And then in chapter 3, he tells Nicodemus, "What is he that ascends at first descended," and basically clarifies that his presence, that he is God in the flesh. In fact, 2 John verse 9 says, "If you deny Jesus comes in the flesh you're an antichrist," which is interesting for this coming Sunday. But all that being said, Jesus was God incarnate, he was God in flesh, so even though John 4:24 says God is a spirit, we must worship him in spirit and truth, Jesus is God in flesh, so we have beheld the Father by beholding him. Now, back it up four verses to verse 14. Notice what it says, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

So basically, Philip's problem, as well as others were, "Okay Jesus, it's great you're here, but we really want to see God," and Jesus is like, "I am him." And by the way, the same Jesus in John chapter 8, we're in the gospel of John a lot tonight, aren't we? The same Jesus in John chapter 8 was talking to the Pharisees that were getting upset about all this stuff, and remember what he said, "Before Abraham was, I am." You do realize that's the same phrase that was used in Exodus 3 when Moses asked, "What is your name?" And the Lord said, "I AM." He basically claimed he is God and that's why they got so upset with him. And he said that Abraham was excited to see his day. In other words, even though Abraham's been dead for years, he was stating that he was here prior to and long after Abraham. So the clarification is to look upon Jesus is to look upon the Lord and to see him personified in front of us. Does that help a little bit? We're good

All right. Here we go. "How does Acts chapter 2, verse 17, relate to modern-day Muslims and others who claim they have dreams about Jesus?" Oh, this is good. Now this question isn't as clear-cut as it may appear. Acts chapter 2, we are at what we know as the famous Pentecost sermon and I want to begin in verse 15. Let me set the stage because I want to address Acts 2:17 as a verse and then I want to address the concept of the question about Muslims and others who claim they see visions and dreams of Jesus even in the modern context. So again, Jesus ascends in Acts chapter 1 for seven days. It says that the 120 plus the women gathered in the Upper Room. They prayed. They fasted. Acts chapter 2, those who already were indwelt with the Holy Spirit says they were filled with the Holy Spirit. They opened their mouth. It says there were Jews from every nation. They all heard in their own tongue. He preached Jesus. 3,000 gets saved. It's an amazing story, right? In the middle of that "sermon" in Pentecost, verse 15, I want you to hear what Peter says in response to the pagans, for lack of better terms, who thought there was a bunch of drunk guys at 9 in the morning. "For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The

sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Pretty powerful passage, is it not? Now here's what I want to ask. It's a rhetorical question but it's an actual question. What you see in verses 19 and 20, is there any evidence of that in the book of Acts? Any? No. There is no time where the sun goes dark, the moon changes colors, and all this crazy stuff happens, right? Do we see that stuff in the book of Revelation? Yes, absolutely. Now, the reason that that is an important designation is I want to take your attention back to verse 16. Now, I make this joke a lot, particularly on Wednesday nights. I don't mean to be crass. I'm just trying to be honest. I believe that one of the problems when it comes to our Bible study is that we're too smart for our own good. Sometimes you just need to read the Bible as if you're a third grader. Okay? So let me encourage us tonight just to go back and read verse 16 as a third grader. Okay? Here we go, "But this is that." It does not say, but that is this. You say, "What do you mean?" If he had said, but that is this, it would be referring to the tongues event. The fact that he said, but this is that, this is the present, the tongue event is the past. In other words, when he says, "But this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel," what he was actually saying has nothing to do with the tongue event. What he's basically saying is everything now has been fulfilled leading up to what we know as the Second Coming. It's ready. And he gives one of the most famous statements in the Bible in Joel 2 about what's going to happen in the end times.

The reason that is important is that a lot of times we go to this passage and we interpret that what happened at Pentecost is actually a fulfillment of Joel chapter 2. It's not. Joel chapter 2 is fulfilled in the book of Revelation. And Peter says, "But this is that." What he basically did is what I do every Sunday morning. You say, "What do you mean? What do you do every Sunday morning?" What's the first thing I say when I get up to preach? I want to invite you to open your Bibles. Basically what Peter did was, "We're going to open up to Joel 2, and I'm going to preach to y'all a sermon about Jesus is coming back." And that's exactly what he did. That's an important designation because the "dreams and visions" and all the sun turning colors in the moon, that's not what you see in the book of Acts. You don't see this in the book of Galatians, Ephesians, 1st and 2nd Timothy. It's nowhere. Where does it show up? It shows up in the book of Revelation.

Now, push pause. So what do you do with the fact that there are people that live in the 1040 window, there are people that have never heard the name of Jesus, they've never seen a copy of God's word, who claim as a part of their testimony that they see Jesus in their dorm room, that Jesus shows up in their house, they have visions and they have dreams? I think the answer to that question isn't necessarily Acts chapter 2. I think the answer to that question is Acts chapter 10. You say, "What do you mean, Acts chapter 10?" Remember there's a guy named Cornelius? Cornelius is a Roman centurion. He gives alms. He's religious. He's crying out to God and he says, "O God, I want to know you." So what does God do? God goes and taps Peter, who's on top of a roof in a trance, and says, "Hey, I need you to go down to Simon the tanner's house. I need you to talk to a

guy named Cornelius and tell him about Jesus." In other words, when we cry out to God, God sends folks our way to share the "gospel" with us.

You say, "Well, how does that relate to this question?" I do believe as we get closer and closer to the "last days and end times," I do think that what we see quoted here in Acts 2, you may see the birth pains of dreams and visions, etc., but I know this for a fact, I know that when people cry out to know the one true living God, he never puts them on hold. I know that he never gives them a dial tone. I just showed my age, did I not? I know. I know that. He always responds. And I want you to know that there are people in this world who have never seen a copy of God's word. There are people in this world that have never heard the name of Jesus, that are crying out, saying, "What I'm doing isn't fulfilling, it's not working. I know you're out there, God, but I want to know who you are." I know a young man who grew up in the Middle East, he's actually Jewish by blood heritage, that was a college student, he was Muslim by faith, Jewish by birth, just trust me it's all mixed up over there, okay? He tells the story, this is his testimony, I've heard it face to face; my wife was with me, so she'll verify this. His story is that he was in his college dorm room in the Middle East, he got on his knees and he said, "I've heard there's a guy named Jesus who can forgive me my sins. Jesus, if you're real, I want to know you and see you." And he claims Jesus showed up in a dream in his room.

You say, "Well, can that happen?" Yeah, it can happen. Absolutely, it can happen. Because guess what? They don't have the word of God. They don't have a church like this. You know what the problem is? And by the way, it's a great question. The problem is there are people in the Middle East so desperate to get saved, Jesus shows up in a dream. We got people today with a Bible in their hands that won't even bother reading it. Think about that for just a moment. How many of us have said, "God, man, I just want to know you." He's going, "Man, I gave you a book. I gave you everything you need to know." And yet there are people across the world going, "I don't have a book. Nobody's ever shared with me." And Jesus said, "Don't worry, I got that." He showed up in Cornelius' life. How about the Apostle Paul, Saul of Tarsus? What happened with him? Bright light, deserted road, boom. Showed up, didn't it? In other words, there is ample evidence of people who do dream dreams, visions, and experience Jesus. Absolutely. I wouldn't say it's necessarily a fulfillment of this prophecy, even though it's partially so, but the famous prophecy of Joel in Acts 2 really is more about Revelation than it is today.

Did that help or just confuse matters? Maybe not. Now, by the way, my friend Joel that I just told you about in the Middle East, his testimony is not my testimony. I didn't need Jesus to show up in my bedroom. I had parents that were believers and the Bible on the shelf. I didn't need. That's not what was needed in my life. And by the way, that's not what's needed in most of our lives. But there are places in this world where they have never seen the Bible and they've never heard the name of Jesus, and those people, when they cry out, God shows up. And I know what some of you are thinking. "Man, I wish he'd show up like that here." You know what? For him to show up like that here, that means we've got to get rid of all the Bibles. We've got to get rid of all the churches. And we've got to get rid of all the missionaries. I don't think I want to trade. Our problem is that we want the dream when we have the word. You know what's funny? Is the people

over there that are having dreams and visions, you know what the first thing they ask for once they meet Jesus? A Bible. The first thing they want is the one thing we don't use. Sorry to get preachy on y'all, but I did.

Any other questions on dreams and visions? Acts 2, Joel 2? By the way, it's just an aside, but you remember the last couple years there was this phenomena with the blood moons? That all came from this passage, just to let you know.

All right, next. "Hey, Jeff." Hey. That's what it says. "I heard something big happened at the Southern Baptist Convention. Will you explain?" Okay. Well, every year at the Southern Baptist Convention something big happens. However, this year, like most years, it had a lot of fireworks. Let me share. Here's the big thing everybody's talking about. By the way, let me talk about real quick, and I don't mean to give a little Baptist history here, and I don't mean to get in the weeds, but when we speak about the Southern Baptist Convention, just hear my brief elevator speech for just a moment. There are almost 50,000 "Southern Baptist churches" all across America that are independent, autonomous churches that willingly partner together for the sake of the gospel and missions. That's who we are, okay? We are a reverse pyramid. So when we talk about the Southern Baptist Convention, please understand that as a part of it, technically nobody outside of this local church can tell this local church what to do. Okay? We are independent. We are autonomous. We partner with others but if you partner with others, you have to have certain rules, regulations, and parameters, correct? Let me make it real practical. If you are an athlete or if you're a musician, you know, oftentimes coaches are going to say, "If you're going to be a part of this team, then fill in the blank. If you're going to be in this orchestra, then you must show up." In other words, there's rules, right? If you're going to be a part of the team, part of the orchestra, this is how we operate. You can't just go out there and go, "I'm going to do whatever I want and I'm in on that team." You can't do that, right? There's certain jerseys you have to wear, practices you have to attend, etc. etc. So when we think about the Southern Baptist Convention, think about a 50,000 person orchestra that everybody plays a different instrument and all tries to play the same song at the same time, okay? That's kind of who we are, all right?

Now, there are times, per the question, there are times where there are entities, churches, that decide that they want to do things so different than the accepted parameters that matters must be called into question. Now, here's the big deal. There were three churches that were "part of the Southern Baptist Convention" that are no longer. Okay? Now, let me answer the question that's not asked because it's a part of it. I've had people ask me, "Why did we excommunicate three churches?" We didn't excommunicate. To excommunicate means send to hell. We didn't send anybody to hell, okay? And by the way, we didn't say that anybody wasn't going to be in heaven because of this, alright? This is a fellowship of believers. These are people we partner with. These are people we play the same song with or we play the same sport with, to use my analogy.

Now, the issue was really two of the three churches, one of them, we can get there if we want to, but it had to do with the sexual abuse case of days and years gone by. Two of the churches were what we might call outside the parameters when it came to the leadership

of their churches, okay? They had individuals that were leading the congregation and/or satellite campuses that according to 1 Timothy 2 as well as what we call the Baptist faith and message, were not a part of the parameters that everybody agreed to. And so therefore, unfortunately, there was a vote to say, "Hey, we're going to just part ways amicably."

Now, let me talk about the process and then talk about the results. This didn't just happen in New Orleans last week just because. This stuff, if you don't know anything about Baptists, let me tell you a little history here. We move slow. Oh, my. It takes us forever to do anything, right? These issues have been there a long time. What I want you to hear is this, this didn't happen because 30 days ago somebody put up a social media post and we just reacted. That didn't happen. These entities, these churches, these parameters, we've been talking about this for a long time.

And so here's what happened. Two years ago, or technically 13 months ago, at the Southern Baptist Convention, it was recommended, there was a motion that was made that these churches are not within the parameters and that would the executive committee please investigate. Now, you say, "What is the executive committee?" The executive committee is a group of people that represents what we know as the Southern Baptist Convention that does the work of the convention when we're not in New Orleans for two days a year. By the way, we're in Indianapolis next year. We don't go to the same city every year. So in other words, can I just give you just a smattering of what the convention looks like? Somebody makes a motion, "Hey, could y'all check into this?" "Yes, we'll send that to committee. We'll come back to you next year." Okay? That's usually how every motion goes because we cannot solve these issues in 48 hours. There's no way, right? So this executive committee, just like a committee at a church such as this, goes and spends their hard-earned time getting together, seeking out what's going on, investigating, interviewing, chronicling, whatever and this group came back this year and reported what they found, and what they found was these churches, as the motion was made, were operating outside the parameters. And then we, the people, voted on it. Do you know what we could have told the executive committee? Pound sand. Keep them. But we didn't. We said we agree with the recommendation.

Now, here's what I want you to hear: the Southern Baptist Convention is going to meet in Indianapolis, Indiana next June. Those two particular churches that were found outside the parameters, okay, did you know that if they show up, they will not be arrested? Okay? They're not going to receive a letter saying, "Please don't come." If they show up, they will be allowed to mingle around, to be able to go to the different, the life way. They'll be able to do all that kind of stuff. Here's the thing: they will not be able to register as a messenger, and they won't be allowed to vote in a business meeting. That's it. Now, here's the thing: if they want to keep calling themselves a Southern Baptist Church, that's their problem because if they want to do that, eh, they can. However, they don't have a say in the direction of our orchestra, if that makes any sense.

So, let me tell you something: we didn't excommunicate anybody, okay? And technically, we didn't "kick somebody out." What we said was, "Because you're outside the

parameters, you're no longer able to be a part of the process of the decisions that we make." Now, I can guarantee they're not gonna show up next year, okay? By the way, this isn't the first time it's happened. I've been to so many conventions. I've seen it happen almost every year. It's just a part of it, okay? Because there are those who want to be outside the parameters.

Now, can I be honest with you? These parameters are kind of loosely specific, if that makes any sense. The parameters are all hopefully based on scripture. In fact, if you go read the Baptist faith and message, there will be about four or five sentences about what we believe and then about 50 scriptures to defend it. Okay? And so therefore, it's not like we just came up with something because, we believe there is biblical precedence for this, and then there is cooperative agreement on it. And by the way, let me remind you, the vote was like 90% to 10%. So it's not like it was 51-49. It was overwhelming saying, "Yeah, they're outside the parameters." So, again, it didn't happen in the last 30 days. This has been years in the making and to quote one of the pastors whose church was "voted against," when asked, "Did the vote go the way you thought it would?" He said, "Nah, we got 700 more votes than I thought." In other words, he knew the direction it was going. He knew what the parameters were. He knew they were "coloring outside the lines." Therefore, it is what it is.

So, any more fun SBC stuff here? I'm just up here bare-nekkid in the winter snow. I'll go for it. It is what it is. Nobody? Everybody's good with it? Oh, yes ma'am.

[unintelligible]

The autonomy of the local church. Yes ma'am. Oh, absolutely. So the question, if you could not hear this young lady's soft voice, got you covered there, she asked, because it's a willing cooperation, can a church willingly disassociate with? Absolutely. All the authority, all the power is within the local congregation. Now, here's what's interesting, I'm going to ask a rhetorical question, because then I'm going to answer it: what makes a church Southern Baptist? Okay? Well, technically, there are what we call the Articles of Faith. Okay? What we believe about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, salvation, the church, etc. Those are those entities by which the parameters are set. Okay? There's no parameters on worship style. There's no parameter on dress code. It is all based on what we believe. There's no parameters on what your building's got to look like. It's all what we believe. However, here's what's interesting, that when we as a willing group get together, meet, and make decisions like we just did, every one of those churches who willingly cooperates, okay, the pastor and the designated representative could be a spouse, a staff member, a friend, every church gets two votes. Sounds kind of like the Senate, doesn't it? And then, listen to this, every church gets a vote, up to 10 votes, for every \$2,500 given to the Southern Baptist Convention which means that most churches get all 12 votes. Alright, particularly in today's economy. By the way, that number of \$2,500 per vote was decided in 1925. 1925! There was actually a motion made a couple years ago to adjust that number for inflation and we voted it down. You know why? Because we said, "No, everybody's showing up."

So basically, unless you are a really tiny, tiny church with very, very limited funds, every willing church has 12 votes. Now, the reason I say that is, what if you wanted to "pull out"? Well, if you don't give anything, you just gave up 10 votes, okay? But what a church can do is send a communication to their local association, which here is the Tuskegee Baptist Association, saying that, "We willing withdraw our cooperation from the Convention," and at that point, we are just removed from the rolls. It's all up to us, if that makes sense. So the power is in the local church, not in the larger entity. In other words, Nashville can't call up and say, "But y'all are Southern Baptists." And you know what we can say? "It doesn't matter. We're us." We are the Wild West of denomination of life is what we are. Ain't nobody going to tell us what to do. Do I lie? That's who we are.

And so here's the point. Why is this important? Let's just say for the sake of illustration that the "Southern Baptist Convention" just goes, I mean it goes off the theological rails. If it does, all we have to do as a local body is go through our constitutional process, which is not hard, and we just make the decision saying we're not Southern Baptist anymore. Done. Over. And they can't do a thing. And guess what? Unlike other denominations, we don't get an invoice. There are churches in this community right now that are having to pay to no longer be affiliated. We don't get an invoice. And by the way, we willingly give a sizable percentage of our budget to them. They don't invoice us for that. They can't tell us what to give. We give what we've decided to give. Now, they're always telling us they'd like more, but we've made our decision.

So, hopefully that helps out. Does that help out a little bit there? So, we currently are willingly cooperating but today's today and tomorrow's tomorrow. You never know what the future holds. Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Yes. Oh, great question. So the two churches that are no longer in cooperation, that's the term we use, if they decide to "come back," they have the absolute right to. You see, one of the beautiful things about being a Baptist is we believe the Bible's the guide. In 1 Corinthians chapter 5, there's a man who's found in sin who is removed from the church body, but remember, I'm gonna put it in southern terms, "Leave the door open, if he repents bring him back," okay? If those two churches change the way that they are led, and they give evidence thereof and they petition properly, they can be "voted back in" absolutely. No problem. We will willingly receive those who want to partner within the parameters. Yes ma'am.

[unintelligible]

If it takes place, it's not going to. Trust me.

[unintelligible]

A trial time? Oh wow. Baptist penance. So what would happen, so the question is like how much time can they just like send an email saying, "Okay, we got the point. We

want to be back"? Again, did I mention how it takes so long for anything to happen? Okay? So what would happen is, let's just say hypothetically that both of those congregations, both of those congregations, completely change what they're doing, get within the parameters, and say, "Forgive us, O God, we have sinned." Okay? Then next year in Indianapolis, there would be a motion made based on the evidence we've seen we would like to re-fellowship these two congregations. Guess what would happen? We'll send that to committee. Then the executive committee would go and research it, and the next year they would come back and they would have the second to the motion and they would vote them in. It takes a while, but there would be ample evidence.

Now, in my experience, and by the way, I could be absolutely wrong, in my personal experience, and I think I've been to 24 Southern Baptist Conventions personally in person, I don't know of any church that's willingly or been removed that's ever sought to come back. You do know once you hit that slope of non-biblicalness, you just keep sliding. Rarely do you ever come back to Scripture.

So, all right, here we go before time runs out. "What was all kept in the ark besides the animals?" Eight people and a whole lot of excrement. So, it's a really good question. It goes back to Genesis chapter 6 through 9. So you have the famous ark event, obviously, for 120 years, Noah builds ark. What we know of, according to scripture, is that eight individuals, Noah, his three sons, and all the respective wives, and the Bible says that there were two of every species, but there were seven of the clean animals, okay? That those were the residents. Now, the natural question is, what else was on the ark? Now, I was not there when it happened, obviously. The Bible doesn't give all the details. But for 120 years, Noah and his boys built that boat knowing what was about to happen.

So, let me ask you a question. Let's just say that your family decides to bring a puppy home. It's happened to all of us, right? Okay? Now, you know the first question. Who's going to take care of it? But nonetheless, you bring a puppy home. Do you bring a puppy into your house with...

[laughter] Somebody's getting a puppy. Congratulations.

Do you bring that puppy in without food, without shelter? You always have preparations, right? You know, one of the things I think we forget about the ark is you had to feed those things and that's a lot of animals. And so I do think that though it is not clearly stated in scripture, I do think there is evidence that it wasn't just a bunch of animals for 14 months starving and on the hardwood, if that makes sense. There would have had to have been preparations made. Obviously the Lord gave Noah specific instructions therein. But just to give you a picture, again, I'm taking loose parameters with this, but a lot of people question, "Man, how could we have pulled that off, or how did Noah pull that off?" Now, obviously it was enclosed, but you do realize that the ark was about the size of Jordan-Hare Stadium. It's a huge entity. It's massive. It's not quite as wide. It's pretty much as long and as tall. Not necessarily as wide. But that's a massive, massive place where a whole lot of food could have been stored. And by the way, the Bible doesn't say this, but don't you think, I doubt Noah because he's a guy, Mrs. Noah, don't you think that Mrs.



Noah stacked the pantry? I mean seriously, I mean she knew, "We getting on the boat and it's going to be a long trip," right? So I think supplies, even though it's not, the Bible doesn't specifically say, oh they spent 30 years getting supplies, I think because when they got off the boat everybody was still alive, obviously there were supplies and of course so were the animals.

Okay, we've got, oh we're down to two minutes, yes sir, and then we're done, go for it.

[unintelligible]

Oh, that's right. Yes. Oh, I forgot. If you want to see the ark, just go to Northern Kentucky because the Bible says that's where it landed. That's right. No, in all truth, the Bible actually tells us it landed on Ararat. The Bible gives us the exact location. Here's the problem. Mount Ararat today is under about 80 feet of ice. Of course there's all kinds of investigations and if by chance, and I don't necessarily recommend this, if by chance you stay up late at night and watch cable television, you can hear all kinds of theories about where that ark is. But here's the thing that amazes me, a man who did not have a building science degree and who did not have power tools built a boat that held eight people and a bunch of animals for 14 months on the water and it didn't sink, and White Star, I guess boatlines, couldn't get across the Atlantic. I mean, just something to think about. And you say, "Well, why are you making a big deal about that?" I'm going to tell you why: those guys that built the Titanic were brilliant, right, but Noah built it the way God told him to. He used the materials God told him, and he put it together the way God did, and even without an education, without experience, because he never built one before, if you do it the way God tells you to, it will work. And it did work for 14 months.

I just want to end with this. Can you imagine the smell? Wow. I wonder if they had Febreze in Genesis 6?

Alright, let me pray, we'll get out of here.

*Lord Jesus, tonight, how grateful, how grateful, how grateful we are, that is, we talked about dreams and visions and a host of other items, that, Lord, we don't have to go home tonight to our living rooms and pray that the one we've heard of would show up majestically in our living room. God, you have come, you have lived, you have died, you have raised, you have ascended and in your providence, you have given us your words that show us who you are. And God, we're reminded as we close that you told Thomas that night eight days after the resurrection, that blessed are those who believe without seeing. And so, God, today may we live a life that is blessed by you because we believe in you whom we have not seen, whom we have not touched, who we've not audibly heard, but we believe who gave his life, shed his blood, and raised from the dead for our sins. It's in his name we pray. Amen.*