

Ask Jeff

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By Dr. Jeff Meyers

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Crossroads Ministries

301 S. 8th Street

Opelika, Alabama 36801

Website: www.fbcopelika.com

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers

Well, good evening. It is 6:30 Central Standard Time here at the Big O, otherwise known as Opelika, Alabama. It is my privilege to welcome you to our midweek, Wednesday night, large group adult Bible study. Obviously, tonight in real time, we have those of you that are here in person. We have a host of folks on the other side of that camera online. But every Sunday morning at 10 a.m. on 97.7 FM here in town, there is a privilege of listening to it by way of radio. So even though they are a few days late, we want to welcome our radio audience.

Well, tonight, if this is your very first time either in person, online or by way of the radio, I want to welcome you to a Bible study that has just a little different style because everything we talk about, everything we discuss, every question, concern and passage is actually originated and derived from you. That's right. You have the opportunity tonight to control the dialogue as far as the subject matter is concerned. Now, just a point of clarification. We oftentimes deal with several questions every Wednesday night. Sometimes they can produce follow-up questions and subjects last for a while. Some nights we'll answer five, six, seven questions. Some nights only one, two, or three. So that being said, we have an opportunity if there is burning questions on your mind that you would like to go a little bit more expeditiously, we actually have a YouTube channel; every day, Monday through Friday we answer a "question of the day" in brevity, usually two to three minutes in length. You can submit a question there and on Wednesday night, utilize both formats. If you want to utilize our YouTube channel, there are two opportunities. You can go through the church website fbcopolaca.com/askjeff or just the web domain askjeff.net. Either one of those will take you to that daily YouTube question. However, on Wednesday night, the way that we communicate is either by text messaging or putting your hand in the air. So therefore, even if you are seated at home watching online, if you have a phone or an iPad or tablet to where you can text, the number is area code 334-231-2313. That is the number that you can text and you can be a part of our Bible study in real time, not only the origination of a question, but you can submit a follow-up question if we're talking about a subject matter, passage, etc., and when you do so, it will show up on the screen in a "different font."

Now, there are a host of you tonight here in person and if you've been here any time in person, you know that you have the opportunity to "put your hand in the air." When you do so, by putting your hand in the air, you have the opportunity to gear the conversation

in any direction that you would like, whether it be a follow-up question, origination question. Just a reminder that your image will not be seen online, nor will your voice be heard on the radio. So you remain anonymous to the world out there, but not to the world in here, but we're all family, so it doesn't matter.

So, without further ado, let's get to your question. Yes, sir, in the air. That was quick. How may I assist?

[unintelligible]

Ah, the good old Greek Orthodox Church, otherwise known as the Eastern Orthodox Church. So, a little backdrop before we get to apostolic succession, if you don't mind, sir, since this is your question. You're wondering, okay, how do we get this and that and how did this all come to be? Well, in the fourth century, a Roman emperor by the name of Constantine declared that Christianity would be the official religion. Out of that came what we know today as the Roman Catholic Church, okay? Well, about 700 years later, in the 11th century, roughly 1052 to 1054-ish, there was a kind of an epicenter of the church at the time in the Eastern world, and there was an epicenter in Rome and I know this is gonna shock you, but they came at odds with each other, okay? And not only at odds, there were some theological differences, which they were important, but not near as important as what eventually ended up happening, but more it was a polity of how they did things. And so the Eastern church got mad at the Western church, and the Western church got mad at the Eastern church, and both, for lack of better terms, papal figures, decided to excommunicate each other. Now, we use the term excommunication humorously in a context like this, but can I share with you what that really means? It means they send each other to hell. That's what they did, okay? That's how divisive it got, okay? And so, therefore, they split. We call it the Great Schism, is what we call it. And what we know as Roman Catholicism today is based and stationed in what we know as Rome, and then, of course, you've got the Eastern, or what we call Greek Orthodox in the East, okay, and it became known as Greek Orthodox because of the Byzantine era, okay, but the other reason is because, I know it's gonna shock you, their entire scriptures, are in Greek, okay? There was, one time, they took the Hebrew Old Testament, they translated it into Greek, we call it the Septuagint, and so the Eastern Orthodox uses the Greek Old Testament, the Greek New Testament, along with the "Apocrypha."

Now the issue that he brought up, now that's a little history there, is what about what we call apostolic succession? Okay, if you were with us a couple Wednesday nights ago, we dealt with this at some length. Apostolic succession is the belief, obviously of the Roman Catholic Church, that Peter was the first pope, there is a succession of representatives or vicars or heads of church that represent Christ on the earth thus, all the way to today, there's always a, for lack of better terms, papal individual. Well, when you have a great schism and they came from a group that believes in that one entity, what do you do when they divide themselves? One of the differences of the Eastern Orthodox and/or the Greek Orthodox Church is they do not believe in a strict apostolic succession in the sense of there's one representative. What they believe is that all of the "bishops" are succeeding that original succession. So they believe in it.

Now understand, you asked about the Bible and the Bible they use, you do understand you don't get this from the Bible. It doesn't matter what version you're using or what language you're using, apostolic succession is an interpretation of what the Bible says, but not laid out in scripture itself. So, they do use the Apocrypha, obviously in Greek, Greek Old Testament, Greek New Testament, and they believe that the bishops are in line with, but not one single representative. But here's another interesting thing. Obviously, we know in Roman Catholicism, the bishops, the cardinals, and the Pope himself are celibate. They do not marry. They do not bear children. They maintain that monastic style lifestyle. In the Eastern church, they get married and have families which is ironic that you would have apostolic succession by people who are having families rather than just a represented name by God. I don't know if that helps a little bit.

Another thing that you'll notice, and I don't mean to be humorous about this, but I find it somewhat interesting, is the way in which they baptize. Now, both of these faiths, because they originated basically from the same camp, they believe in not only the doctrine of original sin, but that the sacrament of baptism washes away sin, thus what we call pedo-baptism or child baptism, okay? If you've ever seen that, In the Roman Catholic tradition, you'll have a priest, you'll have the holy water, and they'll do their little baptism. Have you ever seen it in the Greek Orthodox tradition? See, Greek Orthodox's baptize in the name of the Father, the name of the Son, and the name of the Holy Spirit and they will take that baby and they will dunk it three times in the water. Oh, go YouTube this. It's greatness is what it is. All right? I mean, that little baby's just flailing, you know, whatever. But that that is how they perform their baptism.

So the reason I know I use a little humor there but the reason I went there is the division of Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholicism is actually more ecclesiastical or polity than it is true belief. They do have a little difference on the trinity but again, I want you to hear the question that this young man originally asked. I haven't addressed a scriptural verse yet, a passage or chapter verse because that's not what we're dealing with. We're dealing with tradition and the means by way we express things. It's not like you can go to chapter and verse and go this is the way it's supposed to be done because we're dealing with...

Does that help a little bit? Yep, so there you go. You're not looking at converting, right? No. Okay, just double checking. All right, anybody else curious about Greek Orthodoxy? Yes, sir. Or whatever? Different direction, that's what we do on Wednesday night.

[unintelligible]

They don't. Yes. That is correct. Okay. Everybody turn to Daniel 11 and then while we're turning to Daniel 11, I will repeat the question. So the question is, it was actually prefaced with a series of statements, is in "the original languages" as we call it, Hebrew in the Old Testament, Greek in the New Testament, that, particularly in Hebrew, there are no, "capital letters." Okay? The only place in your Hebrew Bible that you will find a capital letter is in Deuteronomy 6:4 where it says, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one God." Okay? The word "Hear" has a capital letter, as in, hey, pay attention, and the

word "God" is capitalized there. Other than that, in our terminology, it's all lowercase. Now, you will find places in your Bible, even in the Old Testament, where the name for God or the name of things is capitalized, okay? And so when we capitalize something, we're giving it a special designation, just like we would capitalize a name, correct? So understand that anytime we capitalize, hopefully by context, we're identifying a persona here. Okay? Not just an adjective. Okay?

So you brought up in Daniel 11, and if you'll refresh my memory what verse that's in while I'm talking, because I know it's there, I just can't remember what verse off the top of my head, when you're dealing with the word God, someone can be described as a god, correct? Or somebody can be called God. If you describe someone adjectivally as a god, you would lowercase it. They're as a god. If you call him God, you capitalize it because it's a persona, right?

All right, so what verse is it in Daniel? Which verse is it? 6? 36. Okay, I apologize. Thank y'all. So in Daniel 11:36, it says, and by the way, we're talking about a type and an explanation of what we know is the Antichrist, okay? It says, "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done."

So, yes sir? 38. Neither, I'm just going to go in context. By the way, I'm reading verse 37, hoping it'll produce a follow-up question. This is about the Antichrist. "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women," that's your hint, "nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things."

So the question is, why is this Antichrist figure, this character that we studied a couple Sunday mornings ago, this is talking about the Antichrist, there's no question about it, right? Why does it say that he will honor the capital "God of forces"? So we have two choices here. Either A, we have an entity that is not the one true God being referred to with a capital G. Can we agree that causes a problem? A big, big problem, right? The other option that we've got is when it describes here, but in his estate shall he honor the "God of forces," capital, "and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold, silver," etc. which we find in the book of Revelation is all this false worship. The other option we have is defaulting into Colossians 1, which says that everything that has been formed, everything that's fashioned, everything that's created, ultimately gives itself in response to the true God of creation, given the principalities and the powers. I believe, I don't believe it's capitalizing a false God. I don't believe that. What I do believe, it is stating very subtly here that even the Antichrist cannot go beyond the bounds that the one true God has given him. The God of forces, who is it that created all the walls that we know? The one true God. Who is it that established the heavens, the earth, below? In other words, even, and I don't want to go into the book of Job per se, but in the book of Job, remember Satan can only go as far as God gives him. Right? So when it says his estate shall honor, I think what Daniel 11 is telling us is that even the Antichrist, as much

as he desires to destroy and to bring damage, he can't go beyond what God has allowed him to do. He can't do it. He, even he is on a proverbial chain of authority, the God, capital G of forces, that there is, I think Daniel 11 is subtly telling us that no matter how horrendous or how hellish the force is, it cannot go beyond the God of forces, the one true God that limits all endeavors and activities. So it would not be a "false God" because back in verse 36, that false God is referred to as a lowercase g. And by the way, you have that in Psalms 82 and a host of other places where these false gods are used, little g's. If you use a capital, it's a persona. In this case, it would be, I think, the one true God.

All right. We're good? Anybody else with those capital letters? We're good. I saw in the back. Hold on. Where? I see somebody pointing to somebody, but I don't know who he's pointing to. That was a false point, sir. Yes, sir. But I appreciate the assistance. Thank you for helping out. Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

I did. Oh, you took the bait. Okay. For those of you who cannot hear back there, the question was asked that because I had great inflection on verse 37 on a certain phrase, does that imply that the Antichrist would identify as being same-sex, right, or homosexual behavior. That is one of the theories, okay? So again, when you read, now remember, all chapter 11 is referring to this Antichrist figure, and it says he does not honor the God of his fathers, i.e., false worship, etc., he also does not desire women, okay, which opens up the possibility that yes, you could have an individual of that expression of sexuality which in today's context wouldn't shock any of us, would it? It wouldn't shock me in the context that we have it today. Now, I'm gonna go ahead and go there. There's another option, okay? We know that whom we know as the Antichrist, right, we know that he is essentially Satan incarnate, much like Jesus Christ is God incarnate, right? In fact, we read in Revelation 13 last Sunday that the dragon, i.e. Satan, is who gives him his life, right? We know, you and I, that Lucifer, now Satan, is a cherubim, correct? He is non-human and so, I'm just going to go there because I just want to see your expressions, there's the possibility that when it says he does not desire women, you're dealing with a supernatural being, we might call it AI today, that is not of the human element but of a supernatural origin and thus his lack of desire women that that's the Bible saying he's not flesh and blood.

Now historically we've looked at it as same-sex attraction and/or expression but just the phrase "doesn't desire women" also opens up that other possibility as well. That got an interesting look on your face, young man. Yeah, you weren't expecting that were you? He took the bait. I love it.

Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Are you asking if the Antichrist can be a woman? Okay, so that is a good question. If it says "does not desire women," is that saying it's a woman that would naturally desire a

man? The reason we would go contrary to that thought is in the book of Revelation 13:16 through 18 which talks about the famous mark of the beast, it says that he is a man and his number is the number of a man. So, again, that kind of kicks out the whole supernatural thought possibility, but it makes it very clear he is a man with the number of a man. So, but there have been many that have postulated, is it possible, based on this phrase, that it could be a, "woman," but I think there's other passages that would give more clarity to.

Yes, ma'am. How about being a eunuch? So, based on Matthew chapter... Okay, she asked the question, could he be a eunuch, okay? Well, based on Matthew 19:12, there are actually three classifications of what you and I would call a eunuch, okay? Now, for those of you that are not familiar with that word, a eunuch is somebody that either A) cannot reproduce by natural means, or B) has no desire to because Jesus qualified that in Matthew 19, he said some men, being eunuchs, you know, made by other men, some men have made themselves eunuchs. Okay? And what that means, made themselves eunuchs, meaning they refrain from that expression in context to be faithful to the kingdom of God, which is what it says in that passage. Okay? To refrain from and to desire are two different things. In other words, you can desire something and refrain from it. Okay? I will confess something to you tonight. Don't get nervous, it's not bad. I really, really really like carbonated beverages. Alright? I desire them. But I have refrained from them for about 90 days now. Hasn't changed my desire. Every time I walk by a Coke machine, I start sweating. I mean, I desire it.

And the reason, and I'm not trying to get in the weeds with y'all, but let me pull back just a little bit. When we start talking about this Antichrist character, we could debate eunuch, not a eunuch, probably most likely a man, do we have some supernatural stuff here, is he same-sex expression? We get in all that stuff but more clearly than that, when this individual brings the whole world under his umbrella of influence and says that if you do not take this mark, I'm going to kill you, I think the world can say, that's the guy. Okay. And only then, and I'm not going to be here to see him, but only then will we probably truly understand what that phrase means because his identity will be revealed and we'll go, "Ah, that's what that meant." Okay. So, but again, I think all these are viable in some capacity, but thankfully not experienced.

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Yes, sir. Ah, great question. You went Star Wars on me tonight. All right, here we go. In Revelation 13, which we studied a couple Sundays ago, it talks about in these end days with the Antichrist, it says they will worship the image of the beast. All right, he brought up, could that be a hologram? Could that be some type of artificial intelligence? And when I joked about you went all Star Wars on me, you remember the little holograms that they have that talk? That's where I was going with that. But, that being said, again, even the Antichrist, Satan himself, is not omnipresent. He cannot be everywhere at all places at all times, right? He can only be in one location. There was another person in the book of

Daniel who's what we call a type of the Antichrist. His name was Nebuchadnezzar. Now, when you say a type of the Antichrist, what do you mean by that? His behaviors and mannerisms are prophetic of the Antichrist, even though he wasn't the one. You say, "Well, what does that mean?" Well, he was the ultimate narcissist, all attention must be paid to him, a complete absolute total authority and power junkie, and he wanted to kill the Jews. That is the common denominators of the Antichrist, right? Well, that being said, what did Nebuchadnezzar do? He built an image of himself and said, when the music starts playing, bow down, and they worshiped the image. They didn't worship Nebuchadnezzar. They were vicariously. And so, when it says he caused them to worship the image of the beast, thanks to technology, that opens up a whole lot of opportunities because we can have images that aren't just physical images in one single physical location. I was joking, but I'm being serious, there could be some type of technological means that could have his presentation in such that people would do whatever that worship would call for. So, all I know is this, if there is something that is not God himself that somebody tells you, fall down and worship or die, you're headed that direction. And it happened in Daniel, and it's gonna happen again in Revelation.

Boy, the food was spicy tonight, man. Y'all getting, y'all are good. Here we go, this is gonna be fun, y'all ready? "Please explain Hebrews 6:4-6." Y'all ready? Let's go for it. Now, I know some of y'all are thinking, "Why did you say are we ready?" And here's why because several years ago, there was a bunch of people smarter than I am, who wrote a book called "Hard Sayings of the Bible." In other words, what are the passages in the Bible that are just hard to reconcile, they're difficult to comprehend, at times they cause us to kind of bounce back and forth with interpretations and such? And guess what? This passage that we just alluded to makes the top five. Okay, congratulations. So tonight, whoever submitted this question, you're giving us the opportunity to dig into and to chew upon one of the, what has been traditionally seen as one of the hardest passages in the Bible to reconcile.

Now, over the course of the next few moments, I hope to push back and show you counterwise that I do not believe in context that this is a hard passage. In proof text, it is. You say, "Well, what's the difference?" Well, proof text is when you take a passage and you remove it from the passages before and after it, and you put it in isolation. I'm about to read these verses in isolation, and it is going to cause great theological strain upon most of your lives. Okay? Then we're going to take it and put it back in its context and go, "Huh, that's not so difficult." Okay?

So, Hebrews 6, beginning in verse 4. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Yep, that's a hard pill to swallow, isn't it? Can I tell you just those three verses in complete isolation? Let me tell you what it says. It says that if you have tasted of the Holy Ghost, and i.e. you are a believer, and you either cease believing, fall away from believing, backslide, whatever Bible word you want to use, there's not a chance and you can't even come back to God.

You do realize it says they are incapable of coming back. Can we all agree that causes our stomach to churn, right? Because as a believer in Jesus Christ, I'm not asking for a show of hands, you've messed up, haven't you? You've gone down paths you shouldn't have. You've fallen into temptation. You've tasted the Holy Ghost, and then you've messed up. And you read that passage and go, "Uh-oh, that's not good," right? That is why this passage is so difficult, because it tends to present an argument that is so contrary to so many other arguments in scripture. I mean, think about it, Jesus himself said that we're in his hand and no man or no thing can pull us out, all right? There's passages in scripture like 1 John 5:13, it says, "I write these things so that you might know you have eternal life." I mean, there's so many passages about our security in Christ, and all of a sudden there's a passage that's very not secure.

Now, let's go back and look at it in context. To go in context, you gotta go back to chapter 5. Now, we're gonna go back to chapter 5, verse 11, okay, and I'm gonna begin reading. It says, "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing." Push pause. What is the writer telling the reader? "You are a blockhead." Now I may have Southernized that, but that's what he's saying, right, that there are things you need to understand that you have not gotten yet. You are hard of hearing, okay? "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Now just in those verses of chapter 5 he makes it very clear these are believers that should be mature in their faith, but they're not. They're very immature in their faith. In fact, so much so, that when they ought to be dispensing wisdom and knowledge and instruction, they're having to re-learn the basics. Correct?

Now, let's start chapter 6, verse 1. "Therefore..." Now, I realize I tease all the time I was not an English major, nor am I an English professor, so allow me to speak somewhat non-professionally. "Therefore" is there for a reason. Did y'all get that, please? Therefore, in other words hear me clearly, you cannot separate what we just read in chapter 5 from what we're about to read in chapter 6. You cannot take verses 4 through 6 of chapter 6 and isolate them because they're a part of a passage that starts with "therefore." So therefore we've just read we've got people who are immature in their faith that should be mature in their faith that need to go back to the elementary things of faith so that they can grow up in their faith. "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible..."

Now the reason that I read all those passages is because if you go back to verses 1 and 2, if you understand the doctrine of Christ, who Christ is, who he was, what his work and his ministry was, if you understand what it means to repent from dead works, what it means to say I cannot save myself, what it means to believe that only Christ Jesus and his

shed blood is sufficient for me, if you understand the doctrine of baptism that it is an outward display of an inward belief, if you understand that the laying on of hands is not to impart some special supernatural ability and/or gift, it is to ordain, if you understand that the resurrection of the dead is based on a relationship with Christ Jesus and that eternal judgment is either in heaven or hell, if you understand those things, then you don't have to worry about verse 4 through 6 because the concern that verses 4 through 6 bring up is actually answered in the first three verses. In other words, you've got a bunch of young immature Christians who should be mature spending all their time worried if they've lost their salvation, and basically the writer's saying, "Why don't y'all quit worrying? That's what those on milk worry about. You need to go on. You need to go further because," and this is the key, "if you can fall away you can never be renewed." You know one of the interesting things about people who believe they can lose their salvation is they believe they can get it back. Not according to that verse. That verse says that if you can lose your salvation, the only way to get it back is Jesus would have to come back again and do everything that we just read about in verses 1 through 3. Basically what he's saying is, that you are so immature in your faith, you are so not where you need to be, you don't even understand what it means to be a relationship in Jesus, because if you understood that, then you would not be struggling with this. It's about him, it's not about you, your works, endeavors, etc.

Why do I go to all that laborious trouble? This passage has been torturous to people for years, making them think they can lose their salvation, when I actually think it teaches the opposite. It actually teaches in context that people who aren't where they should be aren't as bad off as they're fearful they are and they just need to grow up spiritually speaking, if that makes any sense. Hopefully that helps in Hebrews 6. It's a torturous passage because rarely if ever will you hear this passage quoted having begun in chapter 5 verse 11. They always begin in verse 4 and it's torturous because it's taken out of context. Now, y'all do realize, if I start taking the Bible out of context, I can start making it say whatever I want to and I'm going to tell you what, I know enough Bible, I could get creative if I wanted to. Oh yes, I really could.

Any other Hebrew 6 questions? Surely there are. Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Yes. So the question, if you could not hear him soft-spoken, is we've seen people "fall away," okay, the question he asked is, is it possible they were never real in the first place? Correct? That's the question. Go to 1 John 2. 1 John 2. Again, and I like to repeat myself because I think it helps all of us. Let me remind everybody tonight in-house, online, listening to the radio, this is not a Baptist study. This is not a Protestant study. This is a Bible study. So in other words, no matter what we think, how we've been taught, how we've been led to believe, the ultimate question is what does the Bible say, right? And according to 1 John 2:18, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come," we've talked about him tonight, "even now are there many antichrists," that's a plural word, "whereby we know that it is the last time." Listen to verse 19, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they

would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

And so, again, I've got a little statement I like to use, okay? It's one of those statements that you can say it slowly, it's hard to say it fast. You ready? A faith that falters before the finish was false from the first. Try saying that one fast. I just like having all Fs in there, okay? But a faith that falters before the finish was false from the first. To your point, sir, we just read in this passage that if somebody "adheres" to the faith then denies the faith, according to what we just read they were never of the faith because that's why they went out from us, which goes back to the Hebrews 6 passage that if you are of the faith you are in the faith and you're not going to fall from the faith because it's genuine and it's real, because if it wasn't then Christ would have to come back again. It doesn't work in context.

Does that help a little bit? I thought I saw... yes ma'am. It's okay. This is number two. You get three. I'm just messing with you. What's your question, ma'am?

[unintelligible]

Question, could Judas be the Antichrist? A antichrist or the Antichrist? A. Well, let's have fun with both of those, okay? Most definitely an antichrist, possibly the Antichrist. Now, for some of y'all, y'all just went, "Huh? What do you mean by that?" So what is an antichrist, per what we just read? Did he falter before the finish? Yeah, he really did, didn't he, right? So therefore, he by definition would fall into that trap. The thing about Judas that is so interesting to me, and I think that most of us unwillingly empathize with Judas, now because of his faults, and we all acknowledge our faults, if you're going to empathize with someone who falters, empathize with Peter. Okay? Because Peter denied the Lord. Okay? He didn't sell the Lord. There's a big difference. Okay? There's a big difference by saying, "I don't really know that guy," and, "Here, go kill him." Okay? That being said, Judas betrayed him. Okay?

Now, that being said, when you look at the person of Judas, we tend to empathize because we all feel at some level that we have betrayed but really we haven't betrayed, we've just denied Okay? Now, let's begin with him. Let's go to John 6 for just a moment. John 6. Good old John 6. Jesus is at the first part of his ministry and I want you to hear what he says about our good friend Judas. I did say that sarcastically, I promise. John 6. We're at the very beginning of the ministry. People are kind of "falling away." Verse 67 of John 6, "Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Verse 70, "Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is going to make a really bad mistake one day." Is that what it says? It says, "one of you is a devil," not one of you is ill-intended, not one of you is a blockhead, not one of you... No, it says he's a devil, right?

Alright, fast forward to John 17. John 17, Garden of Gethsemane. By the way, if you want to talk about "security," what we're about to read happens within 12 hours of Jesus Christ being put on the cross, it happens within probably an hour or two of Judas coming in with the 500 men at the garden and all that melee beginning, right? Okay? So, John 17:11. I'm actually gonna begin in verse 10, "all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." Verse 12, "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost." Now just think about that for a moment. Don't you know that Jesus knows what's about to happen? He knows what's about to happen and he says none of them are lost. But then look at that next statement, "but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."

Now there is one of those disciples that we can classify in this category and Jesus calls him the son of perdition, right? Go to 2 Thessalonians 2, to the right. 2 Thessalonians 2. 2 Thessalonians 2, next to Revelation 13, is probably the most saturated scripture that we have regarding this Antichrist figure. Verse 3 of 2 Thessalonians 2 says, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." Jesus calls Judas by the same title that the Bible calls the Antichrist and those are the only two places in the Bible that term is given. He's called a devil. He's called the son of perdition.

Last but not least, go to Revelation 17. Revelation 17.

[unintelligible]

Oh, I forgot about that. Yes, hey! It only took 39 minutes and 2 seconds to get there. We had visual, just not audio tonight, but that's okay. It's all good. Revelation 17:8. Now, those of you that were with us last Sunday when we talked about the Antichrist, remember chapter 13, he's called the beast, right? He's the beast. Verse 8, "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition." Now, I'm not telling you that that says it's Judas, but I will tell you that verse 8 is saying that whoever the Antichrist is, he existed, he went to hell, and he came back. That's what it says. He comes out of the bottomless pit, right?

So therefore, you have...

[unintelligible]

You can type it on the screen.

["You also have John 13:27."]

John 13 27. Okay John 13. Oh, I know where you're going with this. Yes. So Judas also has another distinction. John 13:27. Now my memory is being jogged. Remember his betrayal. It says, "And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him,

That thou doest, do quickly." The only person in your Bible that the Bible says Satan entered was Judas. So he's called a devil, Satan enters him, and he's called the same name as the Antichrist, and whoever the Antichrist is will live, die, and come out of hell again.

Now, I'm not saying that it's him, okay? But you would have to admit there's a lot of interesting evidence that at least will be a "Judas-like" figure, if that makes sense. Now, here's where it gets interesting. In South America right now, there is a cultish expression of Christianity. Y'all know what I mean by that? It's not biblical Christianity, but it's got the trappings thereof and they have what, you know what a crucifix is, right? It's a cross with an image of Jesus on it. Obviously, Roman Catholic tradition and others as well. In that South American cultish tradition, they have actually put Judas on the cross because they claim the Bible got the story backwards, that Jesus was the villain and Judas was the hero that was done wrong.

["Oh, dear."]

Oh, dear, is right. Now, I'm just gonna throw a possibility, a hypothetical out there, just for the sake of illustration, because I don't know who the Antichrist is gonna be, and neither do y'all, okay? But, I don't wanna say the whole world, because we do live in a world where a lot of people never heard of Jesus, they never heard of the Bible, we get that, right? Okay? But I think that we would have to agree there's a large portion of humanity that knows enough about the Bible to have a familiarity with Judas, okay? It's a term that we utilize, okay? I have been in a meeting, this did not take place in the great state of Alabama, I've actually been in a meeting where somebody pointed around the room and said, "One of you is a Judas." We know what that means, right? Someone who betrays. Can you imagine? I'm just going to be hypothetical and I could be possibly, just think, I want you to imagine that based on what we just read in Revelation 17:8, if Judas came back from the dead and walked into the United Nations, they'd all bow down. Why? Because he came back from the dead. And he could stand up and say, "You know all that Christian stuff? It's all wrong. I was the hero. Jesus was the villain. Take all the churches down, take all the crosses down and build a building to me." They'd do it in a heartbeat because he's living and breathing right in front of them. Now, I'm not saying he's the guy but you'd have to admit there's a lot of evidence for it.

Yes, ma'am?

[unintelligible]

If it were to be. A lot of "ifs" tonight. How would it line up? Ah, not having the desire for women, those kind of things? What we know about Judas. So here's the interesting thing about what we know about Judas. Do you know how much we know about Judas? Not much. No, I'm being serious. His name is Judas Iscariot. Now, you say, okay, that's fine, that's no big deal, but here's why it's different. Do y'all remember what Simon Peter's name was? Simon bar-Jonah. That means Simon, son of Jonah. So in other words, if we went back 2,000 years ago, my name would not be Jeff Myers, all right? My name would be Jeff, son of Ron. That's how I would be identified, right? My children, Marshall, son

of Jeff, George, son of Jeff, Jonathan, son of Jeff. You identified, remember, Jesus, no earthly father, right, so what was his official name? Jesus of Nazareth, remember? Judas Iscariot, you know what that word Iscariot means? Zealot, that's all it means. No identity of lineage. Uh-oh. I got a trivia question. Now, you can go Google anything and get a lot of crazy answers, right? You go try to find the lineage of Judas Iscariot and you can't do it. We don't know who his mother was. We don't know who his daddy was. We don't know anything about him, except he shows up on the scene, his name means Zealot, and Jesus calls him a devil. Oh yeah. It's crazy. So you ask, who are these other guys? You go research all the other disciples, you can find their families. James and John of Zebedee. Remember, they've got family, history, lineage. Judas. Iscariot. That's all we got. Here's the other thing about that. Iscariot. You know all the other guys? Hebrew, Jews, right? Iscariot is not a Jewish name. It's actually a Gentile name which brings up a whole other issue.

Yes ma'am? What about?

[unintelligible]

John 13, what? 26? Excuse me? Yes, Jesus answered, he said, yes. He calls him Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. Again, who's that? We have no idea who that is. There's no history of that and just like Jesus called him a devil, Simon who? There's no reference. Jesus calls him the son of Simon. That means nothing, is what that means. Simon Iscariot, but why would he be Iscariot? Does that make sense? The point in this is we know just enough about the Antichrist to not know anything about him. And we know just enough about Judas to not know a whole lot about him. Which means that when this individual does show up one day in the future, he's going to do such a snow job on humanity that they're not even going to check out who he really is. And what did we just read in Revelation 13? Signs, wonders, miracles. He woos them with this.

But again, we have, and I'm gonna go back to your previous question, we have types in the Bible like Nebuchadnezzar and Sennacherib and all these guys that give us a foreshadowing of. If, and I'm going back to your question, ma'am, if Judas is not the, he is an antichrist because he's a type of. He's a devil. He's the son of perdition. And according to Acts 1, he went to hell. There's a good picture.

So again, yes sir.

[unintelligible]

He did. Ah, I love this question. So this is a great question. If Jesus knew he's the devil, can we just go with the hypothetical, if Jesus knew that this is one day the "Antichrist" possibly, why would he pick him? I mean, it's a good question, right? That's, you know, if you're playing, you know, if you're playing pickup basketball, this is probably not the guy you're gonna put on your team, all right? So why? Go to Hebrews 4, Hebrews 4. So when we talk about Jesus' understanding of the sin condition, humanity's plight, and the redemption that he is to offer, we naturally gravitate to Matthew 4 and Luke 4, the great

temptations. Remember, turn the rock into bread, come down from the pinnacle of the temple, take the things of the nations, all the power of the earth. And then you typically go into 1 John 2, which says, the lust of the flesh, the eyes, the pride of life. We kind of match those up. But listen to Hebrews 4. I'm going to begin in verse 14. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

So, let's go back to the great temptation in Matthew 4, 40 days, 40 nights, he hungers, Satan shows up, turn the rock into bread, jump from the pinnacle, let the angels catch you, take the kingdoms of the world if you'll bow down to me. Great, okay? Now, I don't know about you, and maybe I'm just an anomaly, I've never been tempted with those three things. I've never been tempted to eat a rock. I never have. I've never been tempted to jump off a high building and say, "Hmm, I wonder if God's gonna catch me before I go splat?" I've never been tempted because I've never been offered the kingdoms of the world. Okay, I've never been tempted. But you know, I've been tempted by a lot of things and most of the things I was tempted by, hmm, weren't big. They were little. In fact, in the book of Song of Solomon, it talks about the little foxes are the things that get us. So let me put this in perspective. Judas announces to the crew, "Alright, today we're going all the way to Jericho. Here we go." They're two miles short. Sun's setting. Judas pipes up. "Come on, Jesus, we're tired. Can we just stop here for the night?" Okay. Temptation. Sin is doing what you're not supposed to do. Correct? Do you know how tempting that would be because then all of a sudden Peter's like, "Yeah, Judas is right. We're tired. Can we just, there's a nice place to eat here. We want a burger. Can we just stop here?" Every temptation known to man. How many little things, three years, day and night, if he's a devil, the Bible says he is, right, what does that mean? He's chirping in his ear the whole time. Chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp. So the next time you're tempted to think Jesus doesn't understand what I'm walking through, he does because it just said he had every temptation known to man. Everything you could have experienced because, according to what we read in John 6, he had a devil chirping in his ear for three years.

So, just, again, so why? So that it could be fulfilled that he did resist all temptation. It wasn't just the big three once, it was three solid years. And by the way, he held the money bag, which meant he was probably pretty convincing to the others to do what he wanted to do, if that makes any sense. Now, curiosity-wise, did you know that Judas is never recorded as doing anything supernatural, miraculous, or ministerial in the Bible? Never. It never talks about him going to preach. It never talks about him healing, none of that. And he never calls Jesus Lord. You know what he calls him? Master. Never calls him Lord. Just some interesting things about him.

Yes, sir, back row.

[unintelligible]

Depart from us. So the question is, in 1 John 2:18 and following, it said those who departed from us were never a part of us. The question is, could that also involve

somebody who chooses or goes down the path of sin without repentance, without retribution, very celebratory, for lack of better terms. In other words, a pure, just adamant justification of this is what I'm supposed to be and do and too bad. Is that what we're describing there? I would claim, based on that passage, if they're doing that, then they truly never understood nor were a part of the faith because if you understand what it means to be a believer in Jesus Christ, that means to repent of and/or at least be remorseful of one's sinful state, condition, behavior, and mannerisms, not to celebrate it.

Now, there are times we get into traps. There's times we get into temptations. Just because somebody goes through a season, I wouldn't automatically say, "Oh they must never really been a believer." You know, the Bible calls it fruit. Fruit takes time to develop. Trees and such go through seasons of dormancy as well as fruit bearingness, and so I would not allow a brief period of time of what might appear that to dictate... at the end of the day, it's the final picture, it's all that we see and experience, but at the end of the day, and I know this and you know this, we're all going to stand before God, it's just us individually and him, and we have to give an account and it won't matter what was popular and it won't matter what people encouraged us to do, it will be what did we really believe about Jesus Christ in spite of what others did or did not think of us, if that makes any sense. But I do think there is a case for if you see someone who claims to be a believer and then you see an elongated period of time and effort that is completely contrary to the faith, though we're not called to be necessarily fruit inspectors, I think there's a cause to say that might be a case of, but thankfully John 5:20 says only God knows man's heart. You know, only God knows man's heart.

Yes, ma'am?

[unintelligible]

Yes. The question, she said, yes, we've already addressed it tonight, but she wanted to ask it again. It is, is it, I apologize, possible to lose one's salvation? I would argue, based on the text that we've talked about tonight, that if one is a true believer in Jesus Christ, that it is not possible to lose one. I'm not trying to confuse you, but I do think it is possible for someone who thinks they're a believer to never have experienced salvation and maybe possibly believe they have lost it because they never actually had it. And the reason I want to identify is if I go back to John 1, Jesus Christ made this statement, he said that when we believe on him, we are called his sons, in your case, a daughter, right? We're his children. Romans 8 calls us his adopted children, okay? Your child is next to you today, correct? That is your child from the very beginning up until now, right? I'm going to presume, and I don't want to put her on the hot spot, I'm going to presume that there has been a time in her life that she's not always obeyed you. Is that correct? You didn't even question that, did you? It is what it is, right? Wait till they're teenagers, that's all I've got to say. At any point in her defiance, rebellion, anger, did she ever cease being your child? Never. But there was a strain in the fellowship, but not a break in the relationship. And I think per this gentleman's question in the back, when there is a lifestyle of sin, there is a break in fellowship, but over time, it may actually show there was never a relationship to begin with, if that makes sense.

That's why Jesus told Nicodemus, you must be born again, born of, you know, he said, born of water and of spirit, that we enter into that relationship just like a child. I won't even pick on my kids tonight, okay? I'll pick on me, okay? I was born, okay, and I was raised up in my home, and I know it's going to shock you, I did not always obey my parents. Nope. In fact, there were times, those of you who knew my dad, my dad was a quiet man. My dad, in our home, he didn't get a chance to talk with my mom and I. But, if you ever openly, willingly, in your face, defied him, or lied to him, oh, it was on. As the kids say, it was on like Donkey Kong, is what it was. And it was ugly, and I was the subject of that. See, I didn't have a brother or sister to blame. It was just me. And the dog was outside. It wasn't even on the inside. It was just me. And the reason I bring that up is, even in my own life, there were times of strained fellowship. There were times, to your point, sir, I openly, willingly, I know this is gonna shock you, I lied to him. I'm just being honest. Have none of y'all been teenagers? I mean, seriously. I lied, I manipulated, I misrepresented, I did all those things and he caught me but never at any point did I get a document from the United States government that said, "Well, guess you're not Ron's son anymore." No.

What had to happen to fix it? 1 John 1,:9. It says that if we confess our sins he is willing and just to forgive us. So I had to go and say, "Hey, I messed up, forgive me." Okay, never in my life ever did my dad say, "Oh man, so glad you're my son again." No, he didn't. He just said, "I'm so glad this has been repaired." And I think we need to take that image to our heavenly Father. When we are saved, we are his child, we mess up, we go down the wrong paths, we break fellowship, we don't break relationship because according to what we read earlier in Hebrews 6, if a relationship's broken, it can't be restored and if you desire to "repent of your sins," I got news for you, the Holy Spirit is drawing you, and that means you have not been severed, if that makes sense. So hopefully that gives us comfort as we depart.

All right, time has run out. We could go another hour. So why don't we do it next week? Another hour next week? That sound good? All right, let's pray, and we'll be dismissed.

Lord Jesus, thank you. that not according to our emotions, our feelings, our denominational affiliation, or even our own personal theology, God, thank you that your word says that when we believe upon you, we become your sons, we become your daughters, and you make it clear that nobody or no thing can take us out of your hand. God, I pray that if tonight we, like King David in the Psalms, if we are out of fellowship with you, if we are struggling with this old world, if we have fallen into temptation, God, I pray that we would come in repentance, that we would restore that fellowship, and God, that we would walk in the security and in the gratitude of knowing that you are our heavenly Father, that we are your children, and that we have the privilege of being a part of your eternal family. May we walk in the power thereof. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.