

Ask Jeff 6.6.18

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

Let's get tonight started. Hopefully you've grabbed one of our Circle of Concerns otherwise known as our prayer sheet. For those of you that are veterans to Wednesday night, just put up with my spiel for a moment. Please don't throw these away. Hopefully you will make this a part of your prayer life for the rest of this week. We try to update these on Wednesday afternoon but every now and then we do make a mistake, we are not inerrant like the Bible, and on the very top left-hand line you'll see Miss Emma Farr, in East Alabama Medical Center. She is actually no longer in East Alabama Medical Center. That is a wonderful problem but we accidentally left her name on and we wanted you to be aware of that wonderful problem. Obviously if you have someone that you know of or a situation we need to be praying for, please let us know and we will put it on this list as soon as possible. You see, those that are in the hospital facilities, at home in such, even out of town, at the bottom, you will see that we have lots of babies that are being born. We are practicing growth by natural causes here at First Baptist, Opelika, and we have babies everywhere, and that is a wonderful wonderful problem. I will call your attention, though, to the very last line. Dan and Kelly Stricklin, that is Dan Stricklin, our student pastor Dan Stricklin, that had a little girl yesterday and all is healthy as well as the Martin and the Melnick families as well. So on the backside, we have at the top not only in letter but a section for sympathy. Obviously, many of you were a part of or attended Frank Moore's service yesterday. Be praying for his family in these days ahead. And then those that are serving both in the missionary capacity and in the military all over the world.

I may have mentioned it in the announcements a while ago, but please pray this week as we prepare for vacation Bible school as we approach next week with students and adults, we are getting very close to that thousand person mark of people who will be on this campus participating in vacation Bible school and I think each and every one of us knows somebody somewhere, somehow that was eternally impacted by vacation Bible school and so it's a wonderful opportunity. And here's what I love about vacation Bible school, you don't have to go to the mission field, it comes to you and it just walks in the door and oftentimes people we've never seen, never known about, may not even have a connection to at all but they've seen a sign or somebody has told them about it and they just walk up and that's a wonderful wonderful opportunity. But that begins next week. We still are in need of a few adult volunteers so if you're willing to take the plunge of leadership and become completely exhausted for the cause of Christ, next week vacation Bible school. Here's the good news, it's over by noon every day so you go home and take a nap once it's over so. But next week it is Monday through Thursday of next week. We will not meet

next Wednesday night in this room. Next Wednesday night we're all going to be out in the grassy area of the courtyard. We're going to have our vacation Bible school family night. We're going to have everybody, all ages, all stages out there. We're going to have a very special gospel presentation next Wednesday night. I want to encourage you to come. It's going to be a lot a lot of fun and we'll have food and beverages and such. But that being said, please pray for the weather next Wednesday night because if you were here last year, we met in this room and we had to break it into two sections. If we have to get everybody in this room because of weather, it's going to be crowded but can you imagine the smell? I'm just not interested in that and so pray next Wednesday night that it is nice wonderful weather.

All right, let's pray.

Lord, as we gather tonight, thank you so much that we have all these issues to be praying for, that even though there is sickness and there is illness and there is diagnoses and even things that we question, Lord, we thank you that we have these loved ones and friends and lives that we can pray for, you've allowed them to intersect our lives, and you've allowed us the privilege to go to your throne room on their behalf. Lord, we pray for healing, we pray for restoration, Lord, we pray in some cases for redemption. Lord, we know it's not always sometimes physical, sometimes it's a spiritual issue. God, we pray for reconciliation to yourself. Lord, we pray for those that have lost love ones, Frank Moore and his family, and the many others that we know of through the last days past and weeks and months that they are experiencing a loss right now and we pray that you would fill that loss with just your presence and your Spirit, your love and your mercy and your grace. Thank you for the babies that have been born. Lord, we know that the parents are excited and that physically they will be exhausted in these days ahead, but even in these first days, Lord, may they have an understanding of the purpose you have for them to raise their children in the fear and the admonition of you. Lord, for those serving on the mission field and those serving in the military oftentimes distance is great, communication is few and far between, Lord, we just pray that you would be with an in and through every activity and endeavor that those folks are partaking in. Lord, tonight as we open your word, guide us and direct us. Lord, may tonight not be about us, may it be about your word, may you guide us to learn what you want us to learn and do what you want us to do and go eventually where you desire us to go. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

All right, for those of you who may be first-timers with us here on Wednesday night whether physically in this room or on the other side of the camera, what we do Wednesday night is we typically divide it into two sections. The first half is a question and answer time. You can ask any question you want related to the word of God. That's the key. It doesn't matter what you ask or where you go, hopefully we're going to point it back to the word of God because I don't know anything, you don't know anything, the Bible knows everything. So that is our goal tonight, okay? We're not here to find out the latest opinions, ideas, philosophies. We may discuss some of those things as they compare to or contrast to Scripture but we are not going to allow them to lead our discussion. Secondly, we'll get into our Bible study where we currently are walking

through the book of Revelation. We're going to find ourselves in chapter 10 and tonight when we get to that place, we're going to talk about this little book that the Lord asked him to digest, that it was sweet as honey to the taste but became bitter once it was digested.

So the way the Q and A goes is we have a database. The easiest way to submit your questions to the database is to go online, fbcopelika.com/askjeff. You place your question in there, if you put your email address, I still don't know who you are. You remain completely anonymous but when I push the little "answered" button, it will send you an email reply to the link of when your question was answered just in the event that you were not here. Now for those of you that are veterans, the most fun part about the Q and A is not what comes out of this database, it's when you raise your hand because when you raise your hand, two things happen. 1. You lose all anonymity. 2. We can't filter you. You can ask whatever you want to. So that being said, that's what makes it a lot of fun.

All right, here we go. The question asked: what are these "other books" mentioned in the Bible? Do they still exist? Example, 2 Samuel 1:18, 1 Kings 1:41, 1 Kings 15:31.

All right, I haven't, like, digested the book of 1 Kings regularly, you know, but I'm presuming this is talking about the books of the kings and such. So real quickly, here we go. 2 Samuel 1:18. Let's see what we've got here. 2 Samuel 1:18, I'm getting there. Ah, that's the book of Jasher, okay. 1 Kings 1:41, let's see, 1 Kings 1:41. I don't see another book mentioned. Is that just me? I don't see that. Excuse me? They were feasting, yes, they were. It must mean they were Baptists. 1 Kings 15:31. I can take care of Jasher here in a minute. 15:31 ah, okay, written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

So we have two of these. In 2 Samuel 1:18 and in 1 Kings 15:31. The 2 Samuel 1:18 passage mentions the book of Jasher, and over here in 1 Kings 15:31 it mentions the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. This question somewhat came up a couple of weeks ago when someone asked about the book of Enoch that is referred to in the book of Jude alongside what we know as the Assumption of Moses, and the best way that I can describe this as we kind of begin this conversation is that a broken clock is right twice a day but it doesn't mean it's right all day long. Now the reason I use that illustration is this, that if something is true, if something is valid, if something is verifiable, it is true. There's nothing we can argue about that, however, just because something contains a bit or a piece or a nugget of truth does not mean it was inspired by God and the Lord himself has the ability to refer to something as an illustration to say, "Do you not know that this is true," to support obviously what is taking place. The book of Jasher is one of what we call an extra-canonical book. It's referred to in Scripture and in history. It was not a book that was verified as being inspired or being preserved as Scripture but is referred to in 2 Samuel. The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings, the same thing over in 1 Kings 15 alongside the Assumption of Moses, alongside that book of Enoch etc. All of these works, it's as if the Lord is referring to them within Scripture as verification to what is being communicated in Scripture.

Now one of my favorite examples of this actually has nothing to do with extra-canonical books as much as it is the strategy that oftentimes the Lord uses. Over in 1 Corinthians 15, there is this phrase in regards to baptism for the dead and I know that's one that's practiced by some faith groups and such, but in that passage all of 1 Corinthians 15 is referencing to the resurrection from the dead, that as Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, one day because we believe in him, we will be raised from the dead as well. And there in 1 Corinthians 15 it says, "Do not people baptize for the dead, so therefore how can we even question the resurrection?" What it's referring to is even false belief systems that baptize for the dead, saying even those who don't believe in Jesus believe that there is an afterlife, we would be foolish not to believe so. The Lord is using other materials and other information and sometimes even other groups as straw men support for what is being communicated by way of Scripture. So when you go to 2 Samuel, it says as it is written in the book of Jasher, what it's saying is if you're even questioning the validity of this information, even these secular sources, even these non-inspired sources, even these other sources are in agreement with, why would you call this to question?

So just because something is referenced to does not mean it's being labeled equal with Scripture, however sometimes Scripture refers to these documents as extra verification of or support for what's being taught in Scripture. And there is a list of these, whether it's the book of Jasher, the Book of the Kings that's mentioned in 1 Kings 15, Assumption of Moses, Enoch, others and such.

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

1 Kings 11:41, okay, which says, I'm getting there. My Bible drill is coming in handy. "And the rest of the acts of Solomon and all that he did in his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?" Again, a historical book, an anthology of information that would have been readily available in those days where the Lord is using this to say, hey, if you're questioning this account, just go look at the library shelf and you'll see this really did happen the way that the Lord said that it happened. Again, extra support does not mean agreement with the totality of the material that is being utilized. The prophets do this a lot, by the way. The prophets not only foretell about events in the future but they'll use stories of the past to illustrate situations in the present that sometimes don't even have the book of Jasher to support but they are stories that are known of.

So any other issues on extra-canonical? I know it's an issue that comes up in the academic world a lot. We're good? All right, moving on. Oh, yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Right.

[unintelligible]

Correct. Okay, so the question is sometimes there are people who say, well, only the Bible records the plagues that occurred to Egypt, they're not in any extra-canonical historical works, why do we not have those, why the issue there? One thing I've learned about history is people write it the way they want it to be recorded. If you were Egyptian, would you have recorded the plagues? Would you have admitted that you got to beat 10 times in a row? In other words, the secular version, that is that history is always written by he who holds the spoils, all right, that being said so therefore the Egyptians who, can we just admit, culturally, academically, even economically, they were the champions of the day, right, and the Israelites were their slaves for 400 years, and the God of the Israelites, the one true God, beat them 10 straight times and they didn't record it. That being said, I know it's recorded biblically. Every day that we wake up there's a new discovery that is verifying the Scriptures.

Now we don't have to have history tell us that it's true for it to be true. Did you know that up until about 30 years ago, we had no extra-biblical evidence for King David, none at all, but yet the Bible talks about King David extensively and for years people said how can you believe in the Psalms, how can you believe in those stories, there's nothing out there? Guess what? Now there's so much out there nobody questions that King David was true and was real. The struggle that I have with what you're bringing up is there are some people who say, "Well, until I see extra-biblical evidence, I won't believe." How much of that do you need? You know, I heard somebody say, "Too bad."

Again and I know you expect me to say this and I know you're not challenging, how many more litmus tests are we going to give the Bible to its veracity? How many times? 25,000 fragments of information, event after event. My favorite illustration, some of you have probably heard it before, are the Hittites. Bathsheba was a Hittite, you know, the one whom David, King David was with. In 1952, there was a court case brought in the state of New York against the Bible. There is a book out there you can buy called "The Case Against the Bible," where this man brought 52 different accusations against Scripture that they were not true. One of his accusations was the Bible speaks all throughout about the Hittites. Bathsheba is in the lineage of Jesus, pretty important, right? And he used that as a reference and said there is no evidence at all of the Hittites anywhere therefore the Bible must be false. This was in 1952, okay? Today you can go to the University of Chicago and get a PhD in Hittite studies. Again, but yet the same folks who say, well, there's no evidence of this, 60 years ago we didn't think the Hittites existed, now we can do a doctoral study on them. How much more does it take, if that makes sense?

Now I know that's not your position. I get that. But again, you keep, you know, you keep knocking off, you keep putting a notch, so to speak, and those who are skeptical and say, well, give me one more, give me one more, give me one more. Just this week if we want to go down this road, there was some archaeological evidence that was discovered over in the Middle East that verifies, now this is a secular work, verifies that the description of the crucifixion of Jesus actually took place the way the Romans did it. Shocking. I mean, we've been hearing about this for 2,000 years, right? We have eyewitness accounts but

yet today there like, oh, it might be true. Does that help in that situation? I mean, it just keeps coming.

[unintelligible]

All right, so, the question was the article or whatever it was about the 30 people who supposedly never existed. I've said this before and I'm going to say it again: do not get your theology from the History Channel or the internet because you know if it's on the internet, it must be true. Understand and please, I'm about to be critical and if I'm doing so unfairly, forgive me. When you watch, if you're ever watching the History Channel, the Learning Channel, the Discovery Channel, and they're doing anything that's biblically, you know, in that area, if you're watching, send me an email while you're watching it, feel free. Now I can't promise you I'm watching at the same time, saying, "Who is this guy?" Because most of the time when they utilize somebody from a biblical scholarship perspective, that person does not believe in the infallibility and the inerrancy of Scripture. They may be a theological scholar but they do not see the Bible as God inspired so their lenses by which they look through things, they automatically doubt the plagues, they automatically doubt these stories, and so they look at what evidence is there and go, "Well, of course it can't be true." Unfortunately their perception of things clouds the truth of things. And I know you expect me to say this but one day all these people are going to stand face-to-face with God and go, "Oops. It was right. I messed up." But thousands and thousands and thousands of evidence.

Now I'm going to go ahead and go here just for fun. I know you didn't ask it but one of the largest faith systems that we have in the United States of America is known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints known as the Book of Mormon that gets passed around our communities and such. Did you know that the Book of Mormon has its setting, all right, in North America? That's its setting. That's where it takes place, the story takes place. Did you know that piece after piece after piece of supposed archaeological evidence has been submitted to the Smithsonian for validation and the Smithsonian has verified zero, that none of it is what they claim that it is.

Now the reason I bring that up is because there are reputable, secular, non-Christian institutions that verify archaeological evidence that verifies Scripture all over the world, so I think that is significant that truth is truth whether you like it or not, and we found tablets that verify King David and Solomon, and academic institutions that have no Christian flavor whatsoever will put them out and say, "Well, it verifies this historical figure. We don't believe he is who the Christians say he is but he did really exist." Other faith systems have nothing to verify their supposed events. We've got thousands of pieces and we've still got people saying, "Well, is it really true?" Yes, it's true. The problem isn't the evidence, the problem is the faith of the one looking at the evidence. How many times, and I'm going to go real trite on you, how many times have you watched a ballgame where your team lost and you said, "There's no way we lost. We didn't lose. There's no way we lost." Well, you lost, you just don't want to admit that you lost. You don't want to admit that the evidence of Scripture is true but it is true.

Any other archaeology fun stuff? Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Is there archaeological evidence to support Islam? Ha, that's a fun question. Yes and no. Allow me to give my favorite example of that. The prophet Mohammad, kind of the key tenant or vision that he had was that he in a dream was taken by an angelic being and that he was taken to Jerusalem where what we know as the Dome of the Rock sits now, that Muslim mosque where, you know, the historical site of the Jewish temple was, and that it was there that the angel showed him that it was Ishmael that was sacrificed by Abraham and not Isaac, okay? That's why it's called the Dome of the Rock because, remember the rock that Isaac was placed upon, bound to, the whole fire, sacrifice, okay? So that's the storyline. You can go to Jerusalem today and if they would allow you access inside that mosque, guess what you have? A rock just like the story is told, right? Here's the problem with that story because it looks like a yes, correct? Let me go to the no side. If you go to the same Temple Mount today and you look, they are doing excavation underneath the Temple Mount where they are discovering the evidence, the remnants, the archaeological evidence of generations gone by, all right? The reason that is important is Mohammad supposedly saw that rock in the sixth century A.D. right as it stands today. Abraham lived 2,000 years earlier. The rock would have been 200 feet lower. There is no way that rock was the rock that Abraham used. So okay, is there evidence for Islam? There's evidence that there's a rock there. He claims to have a vision and believes it to be true, but archaeologically it can't be the right rock. So, yes, there is evidence but, no, it's not accurate.

So for example, if you've ever been to the Middle East, one of the fun things about going over to particularly Jerusalem is they'll say and I know many of y'all have been there, there's a site there and they'll say, "Do you see this church?" Yes. "That was built on the site where we believe that such and such happened, however later we discovered it actually happened over there." Those of you that have been, is that not true? I mean, that's the way it is. So we perceive that to be true but really that was true, and we as humanity, we're really bad about perceiving things that are not real but we want them to be, if that makes sense.

So when it comes to Islam, I find it awfully convenient that the documents that were utilized to give what we know as the Koran don't exist. I find it awfully convenient that the eyewitnesses to all that did not record things. So there are claims to authenticity but nothing even close to authenticate much like Christianity does. Nothing can authenticate like biblical Christianity. Nothing in the world. They will claim they do but they can't. So there's your, yes, and your, no.

Does that help? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Ah, the question is, if somebody needs more and more and more evidence to believe the Bible, would it ever be enough? And the simple answer is no, because for by grace we are saved through faith. You go over to 2 Corinthians 5, that we live by faith, not by sight. What did Jesus tell Thomas that night? Remember eight days after the resurrection he said, "Blessed are you but blessed are those who believe without seeing." Eventually you have to exercise faith.

Now I would say this, that the Muslim community, the Christian community, all faith based communities, they're exercising faith by putting their eternity in the hands of whatever they claim to be true. They're exercising faith, oftentimes, though, faith in something that is erroneous. When it comes to what you're bringing up, the issue is that they're not willing to exercise faith unless they have their suspicions, whatever it may be answered and oftentimes it's just never enough. They always want one more piece and eventually you've just got to believe whatever that is that you're believing.

Any other of that fun archaeologically go digging sites? By the way, shameless plug. Next April, myself and Dr. King will be leading a trip to the Middle East, over to the holy land and into Jerusalem particularly and if you're wanting to go and see where we used to think it was but now it's actually over here, come and join us. It'll be a good time. It's a lot of fun.

Okay, next one. I can't make this stuff up. This is proof the Lord is in control. Are you ready? It says, Dr. Meyers, how can we know that the Bible is the only authority in the Christian life? If it is, why does it not explicitly state so?

It actually does and, by the way, whoever asked the question, I'm not saying you are wrong by making that statement. The reason that the Bible does state so is 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is inspired of by God." What does the word "all" mean? All of it. Okay, so the Bible states that its contents are inspired by God, okay? Psalm 12:6 and 7, it says, "The words of the Lord are tried in the fire seven times," it says, "and are preserved from this generation forever." How long is forever? Forever. So the Bible states in those two Scriptures that it all came from God and it will always be from God, and in the middle in Matthew 5, Jesus made this statement, "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my word shall never pass away." So the Bible does actually verify internally that it is from God, preserved by God, and forever of God, okay? So it internally does so.

The other part of that question is how do we know? How can we know? We've kind of been talking about this. At the end of the day, it is an exercise of faith, but at the beginning of the day, how much more evidence do you or anybody require to know such things? Most people, not all, but most people who claim the Bible is full of errors have not read the Bible. By the way, somebody came to me this week and shared with me, they said, "I have a friend of mine that I work with, they are struggling with issues in the Bible, that it's true or not, and I took your advice, Jeff." And I said, "Oh, that's interesting. What happened?" And this person said, "I asked them, fine, the Bible is full of errors, name one." Silence. Exactly. They're advocating a position, what they're doing is they're advocating a position of perceived weakness. They perceive that the Bible is weak and

you are weak so therefore I'm just going to say it's full of errors. You need to take a position of strength and go, "Fine, show me. Where are they? Give me chapter, give me verse."

Again, it goes back, sir, you asked the question about the plagues, the court case that was done in 1952, I believe it was in Rochester, New York, the judge who was not a Christian threw the case out because he said there was no evidence contrary to Scripture, okay? There are folks out there even in the secular world who will claim it's the most historically verifiable piece of literature in the world. Again, it goes back to, here's the deal, it's not a head issue, it's a heart issue. People don't want the Bible to be true because if the Bible is true, then we're the problem. If the Bible is true, Jesus is the answer. If the Bible is true, then world peace will only come through Jesus Christ and not through political positioning. If the Bible is true, then you can't just live life anyway you want to and expect the results that you desire. There will be consequences to your rebellion against a holy God. If the Bible is true, then a lot of what the world propagates as truth is not truth, and if the Bible is true, one day we're all going to stand before a holy God and give an account of our life and our eternity will be based on Jesus Christ alone. Do you think people want that to be true? What do people want? People want what they want to be true, the problem is the Bible is verifiable internally and externally.

Any other? I know we've kind of been talking about that, any other Bible verification issue questions, thoughts, matters? Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Okay, so the question is, this is kind of a parenting question of which you know my oldest is 16 which means I have no idea what I'm doing. The question, though, is how do you coach them through science classes, history classes, whatever classes that oftentimes, not always but oftentimes propagates claims that are contrary to Scripture?

Now I'm just going to tell you the Meyers' family motto for whatever that's worth because my boys have been exposed to those materials, they've been exposed to those books, they've been exposed to all types of information historically, scientifically, etc., is there has to be an open dialogue between you and your children. You've got to talk about it, okay? Secondly, when they say, "Hey, mom, hey, dad, this book says..." and it's completely contrary to Scripture, I am a big fan of, and I may be using poor parenting skills, I don't ask yes or no questions. I don't ask, "Well, is it true?" Well, they're going to say, "Well, no," because they know that's what I want to hear, okay? What do you think about that? Do they make good claims? Do you believe it? In other words, asking them questions, make them dialogue with it to show them how it is wrong biblically speaking.

Does that make sense? Because here's the problem and I'm speaking from parenting my own which means I know about three kids and that's it, okay? My kids know what I believe. They know where I stand and they are smart enough to give me the answers they know I want to hear, so that I'll shut up and they go down the road. So I don't want to do any of that. I want to challenge them, 1 Peter 3:15 says, be able to defend the faith that

we so have our hope in. I want them to be able to defend that it's true or not true based on their own brain capacity and based on Scriptures etc. So in other words, when it comes to scientific things that they may make statements of, say, "Well, where in the Bible does it say that that's not true?" What have I just done then? I've made them go do a Bible study that they don't want to do because all they really want me to say is, "Well, of course, that's stupid. Shut that book up." You know? But I didn't give them that pleasure.

So I force them to dialogue with, I force them to interact with it, force them to struggle with it because here's the thing, I believe that the Bible is true from beginning to end, I'm not scared of the history books, I'm not scared of the science books. I'm not scared at all. I'm not even scared of the archaeological books. Why? Because I know in the end the Bible will stand and they will crumble. So if I'm not scared of the Bible and its stance, why would I be scared of a textbook going up against it? Let my children digest, let them research, let them study, and let the truth stand. I'm not scared because at the end of the day and I'm just going to go kind of the scientific route that you were going, a lot of what is being propagated is in the form of hypothesis and theory. Well, you could ask good questions like how has that theory been tested? How has that hypothesis been tested? Has it been verified? In other words, where are the facts behind it? "Well, they just claim." I say, well, they just claim, where's the evidence behind the claim, getting them to think how to process this rather than just to take, "Well, mom says it's not true. Dad says it's not true." That propagates ignorance, you know?

There's been several books that have been written out lately in the last few years. One of my favorite I think has just been revised. It's called "How to be a Christian without checking your brains out at the door." And what it basically says is interact with these texts. The Apostle Paul gave us an example. Acts 17, he dialogues with the philosophers about the unknown god. Remember that story? And what he does is he goes out there and he starts talking to them about the Sophists and the philosophers. He's actually dialoguing with these guys saying, "Oh, I know what you know. I've studied those books. I've read those books. Let's talk about those books." And guess what happens? At the end of the conversation their mouths are open wide because they're like, "Oh my, he just took us to task." What do we typically, now when I say typically, we typically say, "That's wrong, just don't even hear it." Well, the Apostle Paul took their information, twisted and turned it on them and said, "Hey, you know, you've got an idol to the unknown god. What's his name?"

Does that make sense? In other words, he was versed in philosophy, he was versed in it, in fact, at the end of his life in 2 Timothy 4, here's what he tells Timothy, he says, "Bring me my coat," he was cold, "bring me books but especially the parchments," meaning the Scriptures. In other with, even the Apostle Paul was still learning. What I want my children to have an I want all of us to have, is a filter by which to pass books through. Does that make sense? In other words, if you have a filter, you have a sieve or whatever it may be and you're placing items in there, you want something to stay and you want something to come out. I want truth to stay and I want error to fall out. Well, guess what? A broken clock is right twice a day and those history books and those science books, even though they are secular in nature, they do contain truths like the book of Jasher

does, and I want my boys to maintain that truth but I want them to filter out the error and know that the truth that is there will never conflict with the truth that is in here.

Does that make sense? What we need and I'm being serious, we need intelligent articulate Christians, not, "The Bible says it, that's it." Well, that argument does not go well with a lot of folks even though it may be true. Does that make sense? The Apostle Paul debated, discussed, filtered. I don't know if that helps at all. Maybe. Kind of. Maybe when my kids are grown I can answer that question better because right now I'm just in the throes of it.

[unintelligible]

Engage. Engage in the process. Be a part of the process. Ask questions. One of the questions one of my sons brought up, this has been, I don't know if it was within the last year or the last two years but it's been in recent days. Here was the question, "Hey, dad, why does my history book have a pages on Islam and only one page on Christianity?" Now the dialogue ended up going, here's how I took that. Okay, historically speaking, major religions, we've got that but it's an 8 to 1 ratio. Do you think that possibly the publishers of your book have an agenda they want to push? "Hm, I never thought of it that way." In other words, we began to dialogue and he, because I only have boys obviously and I didn't name which one it was but he has two younger brothers, he decided to begin to read these historical accounts through the lens of which it's being propagated because here's the deal, there are volumes of books on Islam, there are volumes of books on Christianity, they chose to do eight pages and one page. Why is that? And please understand, why would they want to do that? And taking that information and dialoguing with it. I never just came out and said those eight pages were wrong, that one page is right. I said let's work through this process. By the way, that's for all of us adults when we read news story, periodicals, books. This isn't just about being an eight-year-old, this is about being all of us because we are all subject to a lot of information and just because it's on the internet doesn't mean it's true. Thank you, we got an amen on that one.

All right, anything else on that one? We're good? All right, one more and then we'll go to Revelation. Here we go. It says when Jesus walked on the water to his disciples, the disciples were afraid and thought he was a ghost. My question is do ghosts exist?

Well, if you watch the Learning Channel. No, I'm kidding. So those of you that were here Sunday morning, you get to sleep for the next two minutes. Allow me to recap something. In the New Testament, the person of the Trinity known as the Holy Spirit is called the Holy Ghost 71 times, okay? The term "ghost" or the idea of a ghost by definition is the appearance of one who has passed on, okay? In other words, it would be a spiritual base to a formally physically present entity.

Now let me start biblically, then we'll work to the question that was at hand. Jesus Christ physically was among the apostles, in fact, 1 John 1:1 says that which we touch, that which we handle, that which we listen to, the Word of God, okay? It was tangible, he was real. He ate with them. He walked with them. And he physically rose from the dead. He

said, "Thomas, touch me." Real, right? He said in John 14 and John 16, "When I depart, I will send the Holy Ghost unto you." I discussed this Sunday morning. It sounds old-fashioned language but it's not. What Jesus was saying is when the Holy Spirit comes and dwells within you and with you, it will be as if though I'm not physically present with you, I am still present with you. The question is what about ghosts from a secular perspective? People claim they see ghosts, experience ghosts, talk to ghosts, whatever it means, and I'm not talking Casper the friendly ghost here, guys, I'm talking the real deal here. A series of questions that I want to ask you. Question 1: in the Bible, not your opinion, in the Bible do demonic entities exist? Okay, question 2: do those demonic entities in Scripture oftentimes interact with humanity? Yes. In Scripture, do those demonic entities that interact with humanity do so after the resurrection of Jesus as well? Yes. Guess what, folks? What the world may call a ghost, the Bible calls a demon. What the world may call an apparition, the Bible calls a devil. It is real and it's not to be played with. It's not friendly like Casper. It's the real deal. Anytime that you hear of or see of an appearance, an apparition or a presence of something that used to be, claim to be, or now is, or versus isn't, I can almost 100% guarantee you biblically speaking you are dealing with something of a demonic nature. Period.

2 Corinthians 11, it makes the statement, "Marvel not that the devil himself transforms himself into an angel of light." By the way, those of you that were here a couple of Wednesday nights ago, the definition for angel, we often think a messenger of God. The actual word "angel" means "appearance" more than it does messenger. So what that verse is saying is the devil himself transforms himself to appear as one of the good guys. It's a false appearance. It's an apparition. So the idea of a ghost and I know we've got all kinds of TV stations that chase them everywhere, that's a scary road to go down because the demonic is real, it interacts with humanity. Here's the good news: did you know that every passage in your New Testament dealing with this subject matter is addressed towards Christians? We have been given the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, our feet are shod with the gospel of peace. It tells us later in Scripture that we are able to cast down strongholds and every evil thoughts contrary to the things of God. In other words, the demonic have no power over he who is greater in you than he who is in the world. So it's nothing to be scared of, okay?

I'm going to tell you my favorite "story" in this area for we go to Revelation. Some years ago I found myself in the country of India and in India, the average evangelical church is very small, typically it's someone's bedroom or their house because if you don't know the percentages, the percentages of Christians in India, remember India has over a billion people, Christianity is less than 1%, okay? And so not only that but the other faiths that are in that country are very contrary and antithetical to Christianity, so a lot of secret meetings, a lot of private meetings, a lot of small meetings. We would gather for a church service in a living room that you and I would put about 15 people in and they would put 50. One of the rules of thumb over there is there's always room for me. All right, they just squeeze people in, okay?

That being said, there was one place where we served that they had what I would call an old warehouse, it was massive, it was bigger than this room, that they slept over 600 men every night who had lost their jobs and families due to their newfound faith in Jesus Christ, okay? Huge building. Massive building, different than anything else we ever saw. So one day I asked the pastor, I said, how did you get this building? He said, "Oh, we got it cheap." I said, how did you get it cheap? And he said, "Well, this factory, this warehouse used to be run by a company that was primarily Hindu based, we're in a Hindu area, and they said that they kept having all these deaths and they kept having all these accidents, and the workers in the factory claimed that they were seeing ghosts and they wouldn't come to work. So they had to shut down the place and they sold it to us for pennies on the dollar." I said, well, what did you do? He said, "We bought it. We prayed through it. The ghosts are gone. We're good to go."

It's that simple because the Bible says give no ground to the devil, Ephesians 4:26. The Holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost, when he shows up the devil has no place. So when we talk about ghosts, when we talk about the demonic, don't get scared, don't get panicky, don't fret because they have no right in your life, if that makes sense. It is real. Pay attention. Steer clear. Push through.

Revelation 10. Here we go. Revelation 10. The little book. Those of you who were not with us last week, we got a little bit through this outline that hopefully you received. I'm going to begin in verse 5 of Revelation 10. Just a little quick catch up here, this is a parenthetical chapter in the book of Revelation. What parenthetical means, fancy word, we are out of the chronology of Revelation. We have gone through the seven seals. We've gone through most of what we know as the trumpet judgments. There is still one left and the vials are waiting for us. But the parenthetical chapters, typically you're dealing with information that deals with time past, time future all wrapped up to give you the color commentary behind Revelation.

Beginning in verse 5, it says,

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, 6 And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: 7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

All right, a little catch up time here and then we'll get to these passages. In chapter 10, there is an angel that shows up that has this incredible resemblance to Jesus Christ. He is clothed with a rainbow and his feet are like a fire. I mean, everything about him just looks like Jesus. We talked about what a Christophany is, and that is a manifestation of Jesus Christ apart from his 33 1/2 year physical ministry on earth as we know him, or as we've known him and had it verified in Scripture. That being said, there are seven thunders that are uttered. We have no idea what these seven thunders are. There is no

concept except that the Scriptures make it clear in Psalm 29 that the Lord when he speaks is like a thunder, okay?

That being said, in this passage, this entity, this angel, this appearance who stands on the sea and on the land and who has all the semblance of Jesus Christ, he is standing. Now this is the part about the posture on the act of standing. You may question why is this so important? Allow me to go through these Scriptures very quickly and then we'll get to the meat of this message. In Acts 2, Peter, the apostle, is preaching at what we know as Pentecost. He made it very clear that when Jesus Christ rose from the dead, he took a seat on the right hand of the Father, okay? Colossians 1:3 says that Jesus is seated on the throne. Romans 8:34 says the same thing. Hebrews 10:12 says that Jesus Christ once he rose from the dead sat down at the right hand of the Father. The only time that you see Jesus Christ standing of which this entity in chapter 10 has an eerie resemblance to, is when he is coming back. That's it. The verses that I gave you, in Acts 7:56, that's when Stephen is martyred. Remember that famous story? They come upon Stephen, they're upset with him, they throw rocks at him and he makes this statement, "Father, forgive them," and it says that he saw Jesus standing.

Now oftentimes we look at that passage and say, ah, the Lord was going, "Yeah, way to go, Stephen. I commend you and I welcome you." If that is actually the case, that means that Jesus is no longer seated, he's always standing because people who have faith are always dying. I think oftentimes we take that passage and go, oh, look, the Lord was commending Stephen. No, I think the Lord was about to come back. You do realize that all of the qualifications have already been met. All of them. And what did he say? "Do not lay this to their charge." This is another sermon for another day. That could be the most powerful prayer ever prayed in the New Testament when he prayed, "Don't charge this to them." Okay? The only other time you see him standing is Revelation 5 and 19. Revelation 5, he stands up to take the book that was in the midst of the throne, and in chapter 19, he descends out of the clouds.

Now the reason I bring that up is here in chapter 10 of the book of Revelation, even though it is parenthetical, this mighty angel who has all the appearance of the Lord himself, when he is standing one foot on the sea and one foot on the land, we have at minimum an illustration and a picture of the Second Coming. Why? Because it says "and time shall be no longer." All right? In other words, we were talking earlier about biblical evidence and archaeology and such, the world doesn't end the way that CNN says it's going to end, or the way that people are fearful it's going to end. Let me tell you how it ends: when Jesus Christ shows back up. End of story. He's the one that wraps it up, not the latest theory, idea, concept or fear tactic that they use on us, okay? Every time you turn on the news, oh, humanity, we're going to kill ourselves off. No, we're not. We're not going to. I promise you, we're not that smart. They say, oh, we have enough fire power to kill ourselves. Yeah, but we don't know how to push the buttons right. We're not going to do it. The world doesn't end when humanity pushes the wrong button. The world ends when Jesus shows back up.

And it says "and time shall be no longer," and it says "the mysteries of God should be finished." Now right in the midst of your outline here, I've listed for you in your New Testament, for the sake of time, just trust me that it's talked about in these verses, feel free to go back and research them later, okay? There are entities spoken of that are called mysteries. Now a mystery by definition is something that has been what has been previously unknown. In other words, all of these concepts that I'm going to talk to you about tonight, they were mentioned in the Old Testament not explicitly but finally when the Holy Spirit descended and came within us, we went, ah, now we get it, okay? Now remember, mysteries of God should be finished. Hold onto that phrase "be finished."

The first mystery. 1 Timothy 3:16, "Behold, this is a mystery, God manifested in the flesh." That's Jesus Christ. Okay, it's the virgin birth as we know it. Can we agree that that's a mystery? I mean, how does that happen? How can God dwell in not just flesh but the flesh of a baby? Ma'am, you mentioned the Islamic faith earlier, that's what Muslims struggle with, how can God be a man, okay? But we have evidence that he was, you know, in abundance but that's one of the mysteries. So the virgin birth.

Colossians 2:2 through 3 is the mystery of the Trinity, that the Holy Spirit and Christ are the same as the Father, okay? I'll be honest with you, I don't grasp it, I just believe it. I mentioned this before, Augustine, a famous theologian 1,500 years ago wrote a book called "On the Trinity," 225 pages later he said, "I don't understand it but I believe it." Okay, it's a mystery. How can he be one but yet manifest in three? That's a mystery, is it not? But yet we see evidence of the Trinity even in the first chapter of Scripture.

So we have the virgin birth, the Trinity. Colossians 1:26 and 27, the mystery of Christ in you. How can God, the Creator of the universe, dwell inside of you? That's a mystery, is it not?

The next one, Ephesians 5:32 is the mystery of the church. This is the great mystery. It talks about the Gentile and Jews shall worship together in that illustration, that picture of a marriage, okay? That this is a great mystery, what we know as the church, the bride of Christ.

The next one is in 1 Corinthians 15:51 through 55. It says this is a great mystery, we shall not all fall asleep, we shall not all die but the dead shall raise and their lives shall come together to meet the Lord in the air. I show you this great mystery.

Here's what's important to this list. Beginning with the 1 Corinthians 15 passage, they've not occurred yet. These first four have happened. The virgin birth took place. The Trinity obviously is real. Christ can be in you upon faith. And the church exists. Notice what it says earlier in Revelation 10, that the mysteries of God should be finished. They're not finished yet.

The next one is found in Romans 11:25 and 26. Here's a mystery, that blindness in part has come unto Israel until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled. The time of the Gentiles has not finished yet. We're still, when it comes to faith not only in Jesus Christ but when

it comes to the world at large, we still, I hate to use the phrase, but are supreme in that capacity. But when you read the book of Revelation, guess who is the primary audience again? The 12 tribes. Israel, blindness now in part, one day will be revisited. That's why Jesus gave the illustration in Matthew 24 about the fig tree. The fig tree is always Israel in the Old Testament. He says when the fig tree starts to bloom again, in other words, Israel will gain prominence in the world again. It hasn't happened yet. It will happen.

2 Thessalonians 2. It says this is a mystery, the man of sin, the son of perdition shall rise to power. This is the antichrist. It hasn't happened yet but it's going to. That even, listen to this, even Satan himself will manifest himself as a human entity and powerbroker.

And last but not least, Revelation 17, mystery Babylon. Out of the seven hills of Rome, it's described there in the Middle East, basically the power base, the structure, the platform for the reign of the Antichrist.

Now I know I went through that real quick, real fast, but what I want you to see is half of them have not yet occurred today. Half of them will occur at some point. In chapter 10 when you have this picture that looks a whole lot like Jesus standing on the earth, they've all occurred by that point. In other words, the rise and fall of the Antichrist will take place before then, the rise and fall of Babylon will take place. When Jesus Christ shows back up, all of that has been completed. Why is that critical? Because the little book that he is asked to consume, it is spoken of after this event. So we don't know, is this little book about this last event or something after the last event? Here's one of my favorite phrases to use: we just don't know. We don't know. All we know is it's sweet to the taste and it's bitter to digest, okay? So but I wanted you to see the timeframe here even though we're in a parenthetical chapter, that this event is being pictured in the future, past, all these things taking place, all right?

So what about this little book? Verse 8, it says,

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said,
Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which
standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

Okay, here are the possibilities. What are the possibilities of this book? Revelation 5, remember the book that is sealed with seven seals, that the one of the tribe of Judah, one who was slain as a lamb, Jesus Christ comes and he takes this book. The only issue with that possibility is that book was sealed with seven seals and beginning in chapter 6, we have the first of seven seals.

Let me encourage you to turn to the book of Daniel 12. Daniel 12, and by the way, if you've never studied the book of Daniel, it pretty much goes hand in hand with the book of Revelation. But Daniel 12 beginning in verse 4, I want you to see a passage that not only was given to the prophet Daniel but parallels the passage given to John in Revelation 10. Notice what the Lord says in verse 4 of Daniel 12, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and

fro, and knowledge shall be increased." By the way, that is the verse that many people used to say we're getting closer and closer to the return of the Lord because people are moving faster, knowledge is increasing.

All right, verse 5, "Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." This book that's mentioned in Daniel 12 deals with the end of days, the sacrifice, the antichrist, kind of what we saw in Relation 10, the end of these mysteries. What did the Lord tell Daniel? Shut up the book and don't discuss it. The same thing that we find in Revelation 10.

So the question we have to ask ourselves: is this the same book? We don't know but we've got pretty strong evidence that it is which means, and this is going to be news to some of you, sometimes the Lord has information he's not going to share with you. And he doesn't. He doesn't tell Daniel. He doesn't tell John to tell us and so we don't know. We are not given all of the information but we're given enough, are we not? We are.

So that's this little book. There's the possibility. The parallel, Ezekiel 2 and in Psalm 119, there are passages, you can look them up sometime in the future, those passages there talk about the Lord's words being shot up, it talks about the Lord's words being sweet and bitter to the taste. It just kind of parallels there. But here's the picture that I wanted to give you and this is the Bible in totality, not just a book that is shut up for the last days. The question was asked earlier about the evidence of Scripture and knowing its veracity or its truth. I want you to see how the Bible describes itself in these various passages. In 1 Corinthians 3, the Bible is called milk, okay? In Hebrews 5, it's called meat. Luke 4 it's called bread. Psalm 119 it's called honey. And in Proverbs it's called apples. Last time I checked, you could live on that diet. What did Jesus tell the devil when he was tempted? That man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God. Hm, isn't that interesting.

Now I'm not a dietitian nor am I a medical doctor but I think if that was your diet composed, I think you'd be a pretty healthy person, so to speak, because the last time I checked, an apple a day keeps the doctor away, right, and the Bible is called apples. Also,

though, in Isaiah 55 and Revelation 1, it says that we will receive a blessing when we read, heed and do the words of God. So not only are we nourished supernaturally, we receive a blessing supernaturally when the words of God become a part of our life. The reason I wanted to bring this section in, is I think we spend so much time wondering what God said that we can't find out, maybe we ought to go and read what he's already given us to find out and enjoy the apples and enjoy the honey and such.

Last but not least, here's the problem: if you and I take heed to the word of God, we believe that it says what it says and we desire to live it out, here are the problems, you will suffer persecution. You will because everybody in the Bible that does what God says suffers some form of persecution. It happens, okay? It's going to take place in your life. Secondly, you will be peculiar in your actions and your behavior. And finally, you will be abnormal compared to the majority. Here's your litmus test as we close tonight: if your life looks like the rest of the world, you're probably not living biblically. If you look differently, there's a good chance you are. You will be hated. You will be despised. You will be mocked. You will be made fun of. And you will be different than the rest of the world if you do things according to the Bible. Plain and simple. It's a wonderful litmus test. If you look like the rest of the world, you're not looking like the Bible.

A phrase that one of my mentors years ago gave me, we'll close with this, he made this statement: sin will keep you from this book but this book will keep you from sin. I'll tell you another adage that I heard a couple of days ago. This didn't come from a mentor of mine but I read it, that the Bible is supernatural in this sense: the more you read it, the more you want to read it. The less you read it, the less you feel you need it. Does that make sense? In other words, the more time you spend in it, the more time you want to spend in it. The more time you spend away from it, the more excuses you'll make not to be a part of it. What you have in your hands in spite of archaeological and evidential evidence that is out there, it is God-breathed, God-preserved, inspired by God, it is supernatural and when you don't have a physical thing in your pantry, you can gain weight somehow by reading his word and I don't understand it. There have been people who have survived on the word of God and I cannot explain it except for the fact that it's called milk, bread, honey, apples, etc. So that being said, sin will keep you from it but this book will keep you from sin.

Let me pray and we'll roll out of here.

Lord, tonight as we depart from this place, may what we have taught at the end may be the mantra of our life. May your word, may we believe it, may we read it, may we study it, may we allow it to challenge us, may it be our guide for every decision we've got whether it looks little, whether it looks big. And God, I pray, give us wisdom, give us discernment whether we're raising children or whether we live alone to always filter what the world gives us through your word. Empower us to live it. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.