

Ask Jeff 7.12.17

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Crossroads Ministries

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Please do so this evening.

It is good to be back in Alabama. That is all I've got to say. So I've been in Central America and I've been in Tennessee, good old Rocky Top, but it's good to be back in 'Bama country.

So go ahead and get a prayer sheet, get an outline and we'll get started in about a minute and a half and we'll get rolling.

Alright, ladies and gentlemen, it is time to get started. Hopefully you got our circle of concern otherwise known as our prayer sheet that contains the names and situations both of those who are directly a part of First Baptist Church, Opelika and those who are connected to us by way of family, friends, fellow coworkers, etc. Just a reminder, I know I do this every time, if you know of somebody who has a situation we need to be praying for, please let us know as soon as possible and we will make sure that it gets on this sheet. Also, don't throw it away. Make this a part of hopefully you're daily life where you continue to lift up these folks on a regular basis until we gather together next week.

Just a couple of things I always bring up but at the bottom of the front page, you have the line for sympathy for those who have lost loved ones, as far as thank you letters for those who are expressing their gratitude for how the church has ministered to them. On the back we always mention those who are serving in the military and on the mission field. And many of you are aware, it's good to be in Alabama but a couple of weeks ago I found myself in Costa Rica and so those who are serving on the front lines of the mission field, we need to be praying for them as they proceed with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I'm going to give you a piece of good news before we pray. There is a missionary that in particular Alan Jones has been working with for years there in central Costa Rica, and our team that went down there, we dedicated his new church facility. They had never met as a church before. He's been doing the groundwork for years and years and years. This last Sunday they had their very first church service and 28 people showed up. So it's good to know that there is a fruit and a harvest that is taking place and thank you for supporting not only financially but prayerfully the ministry that's taking place not just there but literally all over the world.

Let's pray and we'll get started.

Lord, as we gather tonight we're reminded of those who serve on the mission field, whether it's in Costa Rica or places where technically we're not even supposed to mention, and even as close by as the Atlanta Metro area. God, we know that you've called those men and women and families to a very distinct and special calling to share the good news of Jesus Christ with any and all but particularly those groups of folks. So God, we pray for fortitude, endurance, God, we pray for a harvest. I know it can be discouraging when you work for weeks and months and sometimes years without seeing any tangible fruit, God, we pray just like we saw 28 people come Sunday, God, that you would bring a tangible harvest to those who are serving. For those who are in harm's way on our behalf in the military, God, we do pray for physical protection, but more importantly we pray for an infusion of your Holy Spirit not just in their lives but in those that they serve alongside.

Lord, we know there's a lot of folks that are in and connected to this church body who are hurting physically and emotionally, Lord, oftentimes dealing with the valleys of life that are darker than they've ever been and look longer than they've ever been through and, God, we believe that you're not just the God of the mountaintop, you're the God of the valley. So we pray that you would give comfort where comfort is needed, God, that you'd give healing where healing is needed, Lord, that you'd give peace where it is needed as well.

And tonight as we open your word, God, we pray that with our questions and our what-abouts and our concerns and don't-knows, that you would bring clarity but more than that, give us direction and purpose of where you've called us to go as we depart from this place. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Alright, I want to welcome you to Wednesday night here at First Baptist, Opelika, and there are two parts to our Wednesday night study. There is a Q&A part where you ask questions and hopefully the word of God answers those, or I can direct you to the place in the word of God that answers those, and then we do our Bible study. Well, tonight I want to go a little bit in reverse, if that's okay. Hopefully you've got your outline.

I want to start with our Bible study in the book of Revelation because it's one of the most fascinating portions in all of the Bible. It's in the book of Revelation 4, and for those of you who have not been a part of our Revelation study, as you begin to look at that book of the Bible and segment it and divide it out, chapters 4 and 5 in the book of Revelation are very unique because they're the chapters in the book that take place primarily in what we would call the heavenly realm. Remember that the Apostle John was caught up while on the island of Patmos, hearing a voice as if a trumpet, and there he is in the throne room of God and as we studied, he sees lightnings and thunderings and all kinds of colors, and as we're going to see in chapter 5, he sees he who is as a lamb that was slain, Jesus Christ, seated on a throne. In chapter 5, we're going to be introduced to this scroll that is sealed with seven famous seals.

But today in chapter 4, beginning in verse 6, around the throne room of God there is a description of these entities that we're not only going to read about but we're going to go back to the book of Ezekiel tonight. Now I'm going to give you a little warning about the book of Ezekiel. Some of you may be familiar with this. About 100 years ago, there was one particular denomination in the United States that advised you against reading the book of Ezekiel until you were at least 30 years of age because they thought it might cause mental illness. And so knowing a lot of you and where your mental state is anyway, I think we're going to be fine tonight. So we're going to be in Revelation 4, then we're going to go back to the book of Ezekiel 1, 10 and 28, because we're going to study these four creatures that are around the throne room of God that have been the discussion of much debate and almost dissension. Now I want to share with you the purpose of the study of these creatures is not to absolutely precisely say, "Aha, that's who they are, that's what they do, that's the purpose." The purpose is at the very end of our study tonight because we're going to address a very practical understanding of why we would study them.

So in Revelation 4 beginning in verse 6, it says,

6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. 7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. 8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. 9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

Beginning in the next verse it talks about the 24 elders. We'll pick that one up next time. But I want to address these four beasts and to begin with, what we know as this crystal sea or this sea of glass that is before the throne of God, and what you look at this is what we see is a very unique picture for us because it's very clear that there is a place that we'll just call collectively heaven and there is the rest of creation.

We see that the throne room of God is in a geographical place very distinct and different from where we are tonight or any other place as far as humanity is concerned. It is transparent. It's called the crystal sea or the sea of glass. That means that it can be seen through, but what's unique about it and as we'll see in just a moment, is how one can see through it, which side is it visible through, and which side is it not. One thing that's not explicitly mentioned in the text but I wanted to address from 1 Corinthians 13, the Apostle Paul makes this interesting statement, he says, "Though now we see through a glass dark, one day we will see through a glass clear." And one of the things that he's communicating to us and I think we all understand this, is when we begin to look at the things of God and how God is working in our lives, at times we don't know all that God is doing and we question why would he do this, and why would he do that, and there's a

lot of things we have to just hold up our arms and say, "I don't understand everything and I won't have all the answers." I think we all understand that, but that passage of scripture even goes a little bit further than that because the idea that we get is that from your and I perspective, we can't see on the other side of this crystal sea. We don't have the ability to see into the throne room of God. Even with the most powerful of telescopes, even with all of the abilities that NASA and these organizations have, the word of God is making it very clear that our ability to see into unless brought directly by God himself is not going to happen. The only individuals that we have in scripture that arrived in this location and then came back to communicate to us are the Apostle Paul, 2 Corinthians 12, remember he mentions being in the third heaven, he saw and heard things that were very difficult for him to communicate, then we have the Apostle John, the book of Revelation, who is caught up when he hears the voice as if a trumpet.

So it's a very dark and it's a divider. In other words, there is the dwelling place of the Lord himself and there is the rest of creation. There is the throne room of God and then there's the rest. In fact, Isaiah 66 says that the heavens are God's throne and earth is his footstool, and so there is a division there. Now we understand this spiritually because there are none of us who can just walk in through the pearly gates of heaven into the throne room of God except by the blood of Jesus Christ. Humanity, we just can't. We don't have the ability to. No matter how advanced, this is important for our culture, no matter how much knowledge and how much advancement we receive in technology, there is no space program whether it be government or privately funded that's ever going to create an entity that's going to go directly through the crystal sea into the throne room of God. It's not going to happen. The only means of entrance is by the blood of Jesus Christ.

So there is a division there but there's also an interesting thought that I want to share with you from more than just a spiritual perspective but from a physical perspective. Some of you who are a little more scientifically attuned than I am, have heard of a phrase called absolute zero. Absolute zero is a phrase in the scientific world where the molecular structures of our universe reach such a low temperature that they cease to vibrate and to move. It's where motion and energy ceases. When you look at this passage of scripture and others that describe the crystal sea, there is this interesting thought that some have come up with that what we know as the end of our creation and the beginning of the throne room of God is that place where scientists often call deep dark space where they believe absolute zero exists. Why is that important? Not only does it take the blood of Jesus Christ to enter into the heavenly realm or the throne room that we physically could not enter even if we desired to by the basic laws of which God initiated and started it to begin with.

And finally prophetically. Genesis 1. You say, "The book of Genesis?" You do know that Genesis and Revelation have a lot to do with each other, right? In the book of Genesis 1, remember when the Lord is going through what we know as the six days of creation. On the first day, he says, "Let there be light." And it divided the darkness from the light. On day two, the Bible says that there was a firmament that was put, a division or an expanse to separate the waters above from the waters below. This is not the division of the waters

on the earth. This is that which is above us. Interesting that in that passage, verses 6 through 8 of Genesis 1, it's the only thing in the created narrative of Genesis 1 that's not called good. I don't know if you've ever thought about that but he says, "Let there be light," and at the end of day one it was good. At the end of day two when this firmament or expanse is put into place, it's not called good, almost as if the Lord is sharing with us that this division, that on the other side is the throne room of God and we as creation on this side, that that's not a good problem because we've studied in the past that because of Genesis 3 and what we know as the garden of Eden, that sin had to have entered the world by this point. And so there is sin in the universe and the need for the Lord to create a firmament, an expanse, or a division between his dwelling place and the rest of creation.

The four beasts. Here's where it gets fun. I'm going to state kind of a disclaimer. If you are hoping in the next few moments that we will have an absolute definitive identity and understanding of these four beasts, I'm sorry, this Bible study is not for you because there's no way. There have been people who have racked their brains and gone crazy in the brain trying to figure out everything because as we're going to see in just a moment, there is a distinct parallel, there's a distinct understanding that we're talking about the same creatures but they're described just a little bit differently and this and that. And so please understand that this is one of those portions in scripture that you're not going to find and have all the answers but I think it gives us enough understanding to at least grasp what we need to know tonight.

These four beasts, their name. These are, in my opinion, what we know as the cherubim. That's a very specific class of angelic host in the Bible. Now the Bible speaks about angels in general. Angels according to Hebrews 1:14 are called ministering spirits. Then there are in addition to that we have what are called seraphim and we have cherubim. Now the seraphim show up in the book of Isaiah. Remember when he sees the Lord high and lifted up? He says, "I'm a man of unclean lips among people of unclean lips." And the seraph goes and takes the coal off the throne of God and places it to his lips. That's the seraphim. The cherubim are the ones that are placed at the east of the garden of Eden. It is the cherubim that we find in the book of Ezekiel as we're about to read, and I'm going to postulate that what we see in Revelation 4 are the cherubim as well.

Now in Revelation 4, I want you to notice, I put this on your outline, they have four different faces. There is the face of a lion, the face of a calf, the face of a man, and the face of a flying eagle. They have six wings each. By the way, this is where we get the idea that every time a bell rings, an angel gets its wings, for those of you who have seen that very famous movie. The only angelic creatures in the Bible that are pictured as having somewhat of a wing type environment are these cherubim creatures. Angels, in general, are not shown as having wings. The interesting thing is in chapter 4 of Revelation they have six wings, in the book of Ezekiel they have four wings. I did tell you this wasn't going to be definitive, did I not? And so you see that issue there. And they're stationary in regards to their movement. As we're going to see in the book of Ezekiel, they're very much non-stationary and they're moving all over the place.

That being said, without further ado, let's go to the book of Ezekiel, that book which a long time ago was claimed to bring mental illness. Beginning in verse 5 of chapter 1, one of the most famous portions of apocalyptic literature in scripture, meaning that which is in regards to end times and events that are beyond the earthly. It says,

5 Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. 6 And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. 7 And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass. 8 And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. 9 Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. 10 As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle. 11 Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies. 12 And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went. 13 As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. 14 And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

Now later in this chapter it has the famous description of the wheel within the wheel with the eyes all around it. We're not going to talk about that in specific tonight because it doesn't necessarily deal with the creatures around the throne as much as it does the throne itself.

So fast forward to chapter 10 of the book of Ezekiel. The book of Ezekiel 10 beginning in verse 8, we have another description of these creatures. Now what I want you to notice is in Ezekiel 1 they are called living creatures, okay? In Revelation 4 they are called beasts, and when you hear the word beast, don't think cruel and awful, just think a description thereof. Here in chapter 10 of the book of Ezekiel we have a very interesting description of these same creatures. Verse 8, it says,

8 And there appeared in the cherubims the form of a man's hand under their wings. 9 And when I looked, behold the four wheels by the cherubims, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub: and the appearance of the wheels was as the colour of a beryl stone. 10 And as for their appearances, they four had one likeness, as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel. 11 When they went, they went upon their four sides; they turned not as they went, but to the place whither the head looked they followed it; they turned not as they went. 12 And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings,

and the wheels, were full of eyes round about, even the wheels that they four had. 13 As for the wheels, it was cried unto them in my hearing, O wheel. 14 And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. 15 And the cherubims were lifted up. This is the living creature that I saw by the river of Chebar. [In other words, it's the same entity.] 16 And when the cherubims went, the wheels went by them: and when the cherubims lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the same wheels also turned not from beside them. 17 When they stood, these stood; and when they were lifted up, these lifted up themselves also: for the spirit of the living creature was in them. 18 Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims. 19 And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight:

In those simple verses, that word "cherub" or "cherubim" is actually used 10 times.

Now notice we have these creatures, these beasts, these entities that are around the throne of God. Now remember when we were in Revelation 4, they had a purpose, they said, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God almighty who was, who is, who is to come." We get the idea that when the throne of God is moving or somehow transporting, they move like the flash of lightning and everywhere they go they're able to go any direction at any time in the flash of lightning, at least from our perspective. They're called living creatures in chapter 1, they're called cherubim in chapter 10. Why is that significant? Go to chapter 28 of the book of Ezekiel. I promise this has a purpose other than just postulating what we probably won't figure out anyway. But Ezekiel 28, there is a description, one of the two places in the Bible that describes the fall of Satan. One is in Isaiah 14:12-14 and the other one here is Ezekiel 28:11-19. I'm just going to read a couple of verses because I want you to see what the word of God says in regards of whom we know as Lucifer before he became Satan.

Verse 14,

14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

Go down to verse 16,

16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

The picture that we get is in this throne aspect of the Lord, that these beasts, these living creatures, these cherubim creatures, that even though they're described with four wings

and six in Revelation, even though they're a little bit different, do you notice the similarities between their faces and their description? One thing that we can discern that I think is very important is there are four on what we would call the base of the throne, and there is one that covereth the throne. As of this moment right now, there is a vacancy in the covering cherubim for we know that Lucifer, the lighted one, by the way, lighted means anointed, he's called the anointed cherub, that he decided as we read in Ezekiel 28, that to allow corruption to enter into himself and fall from his position. So what we see in Revelation 4 are these beasts around the throne of God, very similar to and I would say a continuation of those described in the book of Ezekiel minus one very important creature, the one who was over the throne.

Now on your outline, I showed you in the description Revelation 4, they had six wings, four different faces. In Ezekiel 1, they have the likeness of a man and they have four different faces. Here's the difference, there is a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle, and so where there was the description of a calf in Revelation 4, there's the description of an ox in Ezekiel 1. Have any of you see any old cartoons describing or picturing whom we know as Satan as having the face of an ox and the feet of a calf's foot? This is where you get that imagery directly from the book of Ezekiel.

Now why the differences? Here's what's important. The picture above the sea of glass is different than the picture below the sea of glass. You see, in the book of Ezekiel when the throne of God is moving, it is not on the other side of the crystal sea, it is on this side of the crystal sea and I think the differences that we have are what appear to be differences, is because we see the purpose and the function of the throne of God and these creatures of God within the midst of creation moving very different than we see stationary the "throne room of God" or the crystal sea in what we call the heavens. So I think that's the importance of this passage. Why does it look different? Why is there a little bit of a change in description? Because the throne room of God is stationary in the heavenlies versus moving among creation.

Now what about this fifth cherub? He's called the anointed. By the way, that's where we get the phrase or the term Christ. I had someone ask me once, "Well, why is Jesus' last name Christ?" That's not his last name. Christ is a description. It means the anointed. And Jesus means redeemer. As so I tell people all the time, I get a little nervous and please don't get legalistic on me, to use the term Jesus in our culture and even our world, can we say there's a lot of people who are named, at least the spelling of Jesus are pronounced Hesus? The term Christ just means anointed one. He, being Lucifer, was the anointed cherub. And so I'm very particular to use the name Jesus Christ, the Redeemer who was anointed. I don't like separating those terms and there's nothing wrong with doing it but I just like keeping them together for this very reason, that Satan himself before he fell was called anointed or the Christ, obviously not the Christ who redeems.

Now he covereth over the throne of God. In Ezekiel 10:14, what we see is it only had one face, the face of a cherub. 2 Corinthians 11:14 it says, "Marvel not that whom we know as Satan disguises himself, transforms himself into an angel of light." Now I want you to think about these statements that I put at the end of your outline, that when Satan

deceives, when he tempts whether it be Jesus in the wilderness or you and I tomorrow morning when we wake up, he always does so as the appearance of a man, he always comes bearing one face. Boy, can he move quickly and he sees all around, does he not? And so what we see throughout scripture as the movement and the activity of Satan himself is because of those natural aspects that he was created with before he fell. He had these attributes of him, now using them for the purpose of darkness and destruction before using them for the purpose of honoring and glorifying God particularly whom we know as Jesus Christ. But what I find fascinating is that there is, according to what we read tonight, there is a, what I call, cosmic vacancy and that is this place, this anointed cherub that Lucifer used to possess who which has become void with his fall but there's still the beast around the four.

The picture we had in Revelation 4 is the throne of God stationary in the heavenlies. The one in Ezekiel is the movement of the throne of God among creation. I think that gives us an understanding why there are differences and such but a famous passage of scripture. And one last thing before we go to the questions. I want you to notice in Revelation 4, what do these creatures say? "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was, who is, and is to come." Here's an interesting little nugget that you can file away in your book of Revelation studies. When humanity sings before the Lord in the book of Revelation, particularly when we get to chapter 5, humanity, humans who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who is, who was, and is to come." Now that may appear like a very small grammatical piece but I think it's critical to understanding the perspective of the angelic beings versus the perspective of human beings. The angelic beings says he was, he is, he is to come. Humanity says he is, he was, he is to come. Why is that significant? What did God tell Moses in Exodus 3? He said, "I am who I am." Our perspective of the Lord is he is. We recognize he was and he will be but the angelic beings switch those first two terms.

Now I know that anytime you study these four creatures, it's going to be so clear that there are no follow-up questions needed, so we're just going to move on. No, I'm kidding. Yes, sir. What can I do to help you?

[unintelligible]

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

He did.

[unintelligible]

Great question. For those of you who could not hear the question, what he's saying is and where he's desiring clarity is he believed that or believes that or has heard that Lucifer was one of three archangels and now we are seeing this description of him as one of these five cherubim. So hopefully I can give this somewhat of an understanding.

I want to imagine, I'm not a very good artist particularly when I'm in front of a live audience and particularly when I'm live on the internet. So if you'll imagine this is going to be our throne of God from a bird's eye perspective. We're looking down here. We saw the four creatures and we'll just number them 1, 2, 3, 4. The picture to what we read tonight is that on the top there was a fifth that covers, alright, the anointed one who I think we can see clearly in Ezekiel as the entity known as Lucifer who we now know as Satan. This place has now been made void so no longer in possession thereof. The question was that Lucifer is one of the three archangels. There are three angelic beings in the Bible of which God gives us their names. There are what we know as Lucifer, which literally means the lighted one. We have Gabriel, and then we have Michael. Interesting and please correct me if I'm wrong and I could be because I'm willing to say it, Michael is the only one referenced as an archangel. So he is the arch. In other words, there are three that are named but to my understanding these two are not described as archangels, meaning over or overseer, the arch, and we see in Michael particularly in the book of Daniel 10, that he is the one that is representative of and intercedes for the people of Israel. Remember when Daniel cries out and he says, "I've been fighting the Prince of Persia for 21 days and here I come." He is referred to as the archangel whereas Lucifer is referred to as the cherub over the throne of God.

But all three of these are, in generic terms, they're all angelic beings with what I would call very differing functions. Gabriel is not called an archangel. Gabriel is not called a cherub. He's not given any special adjectival description, however, when the Lord needs to send a very special message, he always sends Gabriel. You know, he's the one that goes to Mary and he's the one that goes to Joseph. He is the one that also goes to Daniel as well, though Michael is the one who comes to defend and to intercede, Gabriel is the one who communicates and says, "Don't worry about it. We got this." But Gabriel's always named. Gabriel is actually named more than the other two but not given a specific title. But all of them fit under the umbrella generically as angelic beings. The only one that according to what we read though that would have any type of winged appearance would have been Lucifer.

Does that help at all? Maybe not? A little bit?

[unintelligible]

It's better. Hey, I'll take better. Better is better than worse. That sounded weird, didn't it? Anybody else on the Ezekiel Revelation stuff or we can go straight to the database? It's up to you. It's your call. Go anywhere you want to go. Now remember, I did Ask Jeff for hours with teenagers in Tennessee so y'all gonna be easy tonight. No, they were a lot of fun up there. And by the way, just in case you didn't know, teenagers always ask the best questions. No offense, adults.

So we'll pull up the database here. You've got to be kidding me. Book of Revelation. Thank y'all. Let me remind you that when you put your questions in the database, they're completely random. There is no special chronology by which we pull them out. The best

way to submit them is on fbcopelika.com/askjeff or go to the Ask Jeff app and you can submit them there.

It says how did the second beast in Revelation 13 receive his wound? Is it only a picture of healing or an actual wound from a battle?

Alright, let's go to Revelation 13 and when we get here in a few weeks, we will not have to study it. Just kidding. Revelation 13 is one of the preeminent chapters in scripture in addition to 2 Thessalonians 2 of a character known collectively as the Antichrist. I've shared this before, let me share it again, the term Antichrist is not actually even used in the book of Revelation but the term "the beast" is differentiated from the term "the beast" around the throne of God that we just studied from Revelation 4.

But when you get to Revelation 13, it talks about in verse 1,

1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon [whom we know as Satan] gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. [Here's the key to this passage,] 3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. 4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. 9 If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. 11 And I beheld [here's the key] another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

Now what we see in the book of Revelation 13 is what oftentimes is referred to as the satanic trinity. Now you remember that all truth is of God himself and all that Satan can do is imitate and/or twist what God has created and/or formed, and we see here in the book of Revelation 13, we have what we know as the dragon who we know that is Satan

proper. You have the first beast, you have the second beast, and you have what's going to come up a little bit later what is known as the false prophet.

So we have these three entities working in conjunction with each other and it says that the first beast, this Antichrist figure, receives a deadly wound and here's where it gets a little bit muddy and I hate to say it that way but I'm just going to be honest. In verse 3 it says, "I saw one of his heads." Now what were his heads? His heads were back in verse 2, those were these 10 representative, these 10 crowns that he wears. "One of his heads as were wounded to death." Now the word "as" is a simile, like a comparison, but then it says, "and his deadly wound was healed and all the world wondered after the beast." The picture that we get is that this Antichrist figure will receive some type of deadly wound in probably the head type area, and that he will be resuscitated from death.

Now why is that important? Because everything the devil does is an imitation and Jesus Christ physically died and physically rose from the grave, correct? And so what does the devil do? He does nothing but imitate. And so it is believed by many that the Antichrist figure, who he is, that he will actually die, be resuscitated from the dead, and all the world will be confirmed and believe at that point, this is the one whom we shall follow. Later on, we didn't read all the passage, it says he comes with signs and with wonders and all kinds of healings and dramatic events. What he does, this Antichrist figure comes as humanity wants a messiah to come, doing all this grandiose, unlike Jesus who came as a lamb slain from the foundation of the earth. Jesus came first for a cross, later he's coming for a crown. This guy comes simply for a crown. He comes with destruction and death and famine behind him and a deadly wound which is healed. So there are many who believe that he will at one point physically die, physically be resuscitated from the dead so that all the world will believe upon him. So this is that famous deadly wound.

Any questions about the Antichrist and his deadly wound? No, we're good? We should have fed y'all dinner, maybe that would have livened you up just a little bit. But we'll get later to that, to chapter 13.

Next, come on, here we go. Ah, Dr. Meyers, well, hello. It says, I just read it as it's written. My question is about Romans 13. In verse 1, Paul says that the authorities that exist have been established by God. Does this mean that God established authority to bad people like Hitler, Stalin, Saddam Hussein, and many others? And if he did, will you explain why?

Alright, Romans 13. Interesting passage in scripture for multiple reasons but primarily because of what was just shared by this question. In Romans 13, it talks about the authority of rulers and those who were in power among us and how they attained that authority, and how that authority is to be respected. Chapter 13, verse 1, it says,

1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. 2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 3 For rulers are not a terror to

good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Now a couple more passages I want us to read. Go into the book of 1 Timothy to the right. I think these are important to understand Romans 13, and then we will wrap it all up together. 1 Timothy 2, it talks about how we as believers are to pray for and encourage and admonish those that are in leadership. 1 Timothy 2, beginning in verse 1 says,

1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

So here we have in Romans 13 that all the powers that exist are because of God. Here in 1 Timothy 2 it says that we should pray for those who are in leadership that we might live a quiet and peaceable life. But the question came up is, "Well, what about those leaders like Hitler and Stalin and Mussolini and Genghis Khan, and all these horrific names that we know of from history, what do you do then? And are those from God and how does that work out?" Let me remind you of Acts 5:29 where the apostles were confronted between the Roman rulers telling them to be quiet and the Lord who had told them to share the gospel. They said, "It is better to serve God than man." I want you to notice, though, in Romans 13 that we just read, it said that they are to be ministers of good, and the picture that we get in Romans 13 is that those that are in authority are to be subject to, we are to be obedient to whether we voted for them or not, as long as – did y'all catch that – as long as they are not asking us, telling us, encouraging us, or forcing us to violate the higher principles and precepts of God.

Let me give you an illustration. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the book of Daniel. They were subject to Nebuchadnezzar, they were subject to Babylonian law. Remember, they grew up in the king's palace and, yes, they had a different diet but they studied under the school of the Babylonians, they studied the language, they studied the culture, but when Nebuchadnezzar said bow down to the golden image, that was a violation of the second commandment and they said, "We're not going to do it." And so I think what's critical to understand is that we, as believers in Jesus Christ, are subject to the authorities and powers as they be until the line is crossed where they're asking us, telling us, forcing us to violate a principle or precept of God.

Now the question, so why do people like Stalin, Hitler, etc., why does God, simply ask why does he allow this to occur? You know, earlier tonight we studied a character known as Lucifer who became Satan and nobody, even Hitler, could rival Satan himself and we

know that according to various passages in scripture, that the Lord has him on a leash and allows him a distance, allows him a territory, shall we say, and the purpose is not for the honoring of Satan or the honoring of Hitler or the honoring for Stalin, but as you see particularly in the book of Revelation, that these things are allowed by God, listen, to get our attention so that we will repent. Read the Old Testament. These kings show up that do horrible horrible things. They put up the groves. They implement idolatry. And the Lord allows it to get the people's attention so they will repent of their sins. In fact, allow me to go here. I believe that the Lord allows various rulers and various authorities whether they be in this country, other countries, globally or locally, I think gives us a picture of our spiritual condition so that we will repent of our sins and honor the Lord and not man whom has been allowed to be in a position by the Lord.

So when we look at the Hitlers and we look at the Stalins and we look at the Mussolinis that were brought up, study the church of Jesus Christ in those countries when those men came to power. They were nothing but a community center, the gospel was not propagated, and it was just simply about gathering in power and authority. So what happened? The Lord allowed people to rise to power that had nothing to do with the Lord, it was all about power and authority, and the people of God did not repent. They didn't turn from their wicked ways. They didn't turn from their sin. One of the things that I think Hebrews 12 is so important in our lives, the Lord chastises or he disciplines whom he loves. God allows these individuals, and God allows these circumstances to get our attention, but how many times do we not allow it to get our attention? You study the lives of some of these horrific individuals in time and the people of Jesus Christ, the church of Jesus Christ had opportunity to repent of their sin, had the opportunity to call unto the Lord and what did they do? They just began to be filtered into the same system and oftentimes propagating the same sins and the same issues. So according to Romans 13, we are to be subjects to the powers and the authorities but according to Acts 5, unless they ask us or tell us to cross a line of which is a precept and a principle of God.

Any follow-up on that question? Concerns? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Is that the fire in which we're tried? Yes, because Nebuchadnezzar, they were thrown in the fire and, you know, you think about that for just a moment, that you've got Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, they say, "We will not bow down. We'll not do it." So they get thrown into the fire and can we just be honest that does not sound very appealing, does it? I mean, I don't like the thought of that at all. But notice, they didn't get burned, in fact, it says that the clothing and I love this, I love how the old King James says their hosen. Isn't that a great word, their hosen? Anytime men wear hosen, it makes me a little nervous. But nonetheless, it says they were wearing hosen, that even their hosen – I just like, isn't that a good word – did not even have the smell of smoke but the men who threw them in were killed instantly at the door. And you remember what Nebuchadnezzar said? He said, "Did we not throw three in, but I see a fourth, one like unto the Son of God." And so we see that even though they were thrown into the fire, the Lord was with them in the fire and they were not actually burned by the fire.

Go into the book of Acts in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul gets thrown into prison by the Roman leaders for doing what the Lord told him to do, speak about Jesus. They said, "You can't talk about Jesus. We're going to throw you in jail." He said, "Fine, throw me in jail." What did the Lord do? He sends an angel in the middle of the night and opens the gates wide open. And we see in chapter 16 that that Roman guard and his entire house came to know Jesus because they stayed and said, "We got this. It's gonna be okay." The Lord knows what he's doing.

So again, even when you've got a Nebuchadnezzar, even when you've got a Roman Caesar, we see the people of God prosper for the purpose of God in the midst of it. You see, when it comes to persecution, the church of Jesus Christ, we're pretty good at persecution. You know where we struggle? Prosperity. That's where we struggle, when we have an abundance of stuff, when we have power. In fact, I'm going to show you something. You went there and didn't know you went there. Go back to the book of Daniel. I'm going to share with you one of my most favorite studies of a biblical character that causes some people to jump off a theological cliff. So some of y'all, get ready. Here we go.

The book of Daniel 3, actually we're going to go back to chapter 2. You remember the story that Nebuchadnezzar has a dream and he can't figure out what the dream is, he can't even remember the dream. He brings all these soothsayers and Chaldeans and all these supposedly wise people in and say, "I need the interpretation of the dream." They say, "Well, tell us what the dream is." He says, "I don't know what it is. You're going to have to come up with it." They say, "Well, nobody can do that, only the gods can do that." Remember Nebuchadnezzar basically says, "Aha, you guys have been lying to me this whole time. I'm gonna take all your heads off." And the guy, the executioner goes out to eliminate these guys and Daniel raises his hand and goes, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, give me one night because I know a God who has the answer." One night Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, they pray, the answer is given. Daniel comes in, shares the dream, and he shares the interpretation thereof. Do you remember what Nebuchadnezzar did? He prospered him. He gave him a high position. He became a governor over many.

Well, why is that important? Because look in verse 46 of chapter 2 of the book of Daniel.

46 Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. [Notice Daniel didn't argue. Something to think about there.] 47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret. 48 Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. [Look at verse 49,] 49 Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

But, now y'all remember I want to write a book one day called "All the Butts of the Bible," this is one of them right here." "But Daniel sat in the gate of the king."

Chapter 3 is the famous story of the image and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. How many men went into that furnace? Three. Where was Daniel? Where was he? Now lots of wonderfully just love Jesus Christians go, "Well, he must have been doing an errand for the king." Well, what does it say at the end of chapter 2? He sat in the gate of the king. I think one of the great lessons for us from the life and the person of Daniel is that Daniel got compromised. It says he worshiped Daniel, he made oblation to Daniel, he bowed down to Daniel, and where did you see that we read that Daniel argued about it? He didn't. He sits in the gate of the king. His three buddies go to the fiery furnace and where is he? He's seated in the gate. You're telling me he didn't know that was going on? He should have been there with them. You say, "Why is that a great story?" Because there's a chapter 4 of the book of Daniel. God didn't get rid of Daniel but Daniel had to go to the lions' den. In other words, we see in Daniel's life there was a time later where he would have to stand up for his faith, he would have to be one in the face of persecution stand strong.

But in chapter 2 and chapter 3, that's a great question: where was Daniel? Now I know and you hear this all the time, particularly from kids, "When I get to heaven, I've got some questions for God." One of my top 10 questions is where was Daniel? Now I know it says he was seated in the gate but I really want to know was he right there when the image was there? Was he right there when the trumpets and the cornets and everything? We don't know. But do you find it odd that here is this man who is so honored by the king and such a part of the government of the kingdom, why is he not there with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and why is he not refusing to bow down as well? Kind of an interesting little thought there.

Anything on that one before we move on? And again, y'all are quiet. Hey, it's okay if I've gone out of town, you can still be active when I get back. It's alright.

Alright, here we go, so we've got Romans 13 taken care of. Moving onward. You've got to be kidding me. Daniel 12, that's what the question says. I can't make this stuff up. This is real. Daniel 12:4, "But you, Daniel, close up the seal of the words of the scroll until the time of the end." Revelation 5:1-6:1 talks about a scroll that no one has been found worthy to open, the only one found worthy is the Lamb that was slain, Jesus Christ. As the scroll seals are opened and the tribulation period begins, do you think that the scroll mentioned in Daniel is the same scroll being opened in Revelation? God has put this discernment in my head for some reason. Oh, okay, great.

Alright, so, I just read it as it's written. As is mentioned, in the book of Daniel 12, so if you want to fast forward over there, the very end of the book of Daniel, chapter 12, verse 4, the Lord makes a very interesting statement. He says, "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." Boy, if we're not living that out, I don't know what is. So

but he says there is this book that is to be sealed. The question is, is this the same book from Revelation 5? So go all the way to the book of Revelation 5 and we will look at that very briefly this evening because in a few years we'll get to it in our Revelation study. Revelation 5, beginning in verse 1, it says, "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals."

Now there is great speculation here. Is the book that the Lord had Daniel seal up in chapter 12 of Daniel, is it the same book that's sealed with the seven seals? I don't know because in Daniel it's just sealed, in Revelation it's described as having seven seals. Now people have said, "Well, what is the book in Revelation 5?" Well, some people believe that it's the book of Revelation, this last book of the Bible that reveals the wrath of God being poured out on the sin of humanity. The book of Revelation, by the way, has 22 chapters and if you were to place a seal at the beginning and the end and every three chapters, you would have seven seals that would divide the book of Revelation. Other people have said, no, no, it is a picture of the entirety of scripture.

And by the way, this has kind of ceased in our culture today but it took place a couple hundred years ago that when we printed the Bible in English, you may know that it actually had seven seals on it. You say, "What do you mean it had seven seals?" You do know I used to be a Bible salesman, right? So here's a little bit of an intriguing interest. Now I'm going to use the Bible that I have before me. It's printed in the same way. This Bible is printed by Oxford Press. Oxford Press continues this tradition today. On the spine, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 seals. On the front cover, well, they don't do and this is not the nice expensive one, there is the seal around this edge, and the seal around that edge. Sealed with seven seals. That's actually the way that the printers in England did it for hundreds of years to communicate that in Revelation 5, this is the book that is sealed with seven seals. Kind of an interesting little thing there. So if you go home and look at a Bible and you see five marks on the spine, what they're communicating to you whether they mean it or not is this is the book that is sealed with seven seals.

Why is that important to the question about Daniel 12? Daniel 12 says this book is sealed to the end. I'm of the opinion and I have the absolute freedom and right to be completely wrong, I do not believe the reference in Daniel 12 is to the book in Revelation 5. Allow me to share with you what I think it is in reference to, Revelation 10. Revelation 10 is one of those parenthetical chapters. Remember, parenthetical means it's not in the chronology of the story, it is being pulled out of the timeline and giving us a bigger color commentary of things. In Revelation 10, there is a book that the Lord gives to whom we know as John the apostle and it says,

1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: 2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, 3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. 4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from

heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. 5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, 6 And sware 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.

Then beginning in verse 8, the Lord actually tells him to eat this book. It will be sweet at first and it will be bitter in the end. The reason I distinguish the difference is in Revelation 5 this book that is sealed with seven seals, beginning in chapter 6, you actually begin to see these seals opened and see them revealed and begin to see the Lord begin to move based on the information that is contained therein, whether it be the book of Revelation or the book of the Bible in totality. In Daniel 12, there is a book that is sealed that is reserved to the end. In Revelation 10, there is a book given to John that he is to digest, that is not to be propagated as of yet but one at some point in the future.

So I'm of the opinion and, again, I reserve the right to be completely wrong, that the book in Daniel 12 is some type of information that the Lord has given not only to him but potentially even to the Apostle John that is not a part of the seven seals of Revelation but something that honestly the Lord has said, "I'm not going to tell you what it is." And guess what? God has the right to say, "I'm not going to tell you. It's not for you to know. It is reserved unto the end." Which means that nobody has a clue what's written there. Nobody has a clue.

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

The question is: is that the hidden manna that's described in the book of Revelation? I don't know. That's one of the things I love about these passages of scripture, we don't know. Don't have to know. You're exactly right. We don't have to know, but what I think is interesting or at least to me, is the Lord has told us a whole lot about how the things are going to end up but he hasn't told us everything, and even the Apostle John who was told to write that which was, and is, and is to come, didn't give us everything the Lord showed him. There were things he showed him in his vision that were not for us. There were things he gave Daniel that were not for us.

So how will these play out? I don't know. Nobody really knows but I think what's important there is for those who say, "I know everything that God is and everything he's going to do. I've got God figured out." No, you don't because he's got stuff written you don't know about and we don't know how long is that book. We don't have a clue. And so there are just some of those parts of the scriptures, particularly in the prophecies, that the Lord has not shared with us all the details.

Yes, sir. Before we wrap up, go for it. One more and then we'll wrap up. Go.

[unintelligible]

Yes.

[unintelligible]

Yes.

[unintelligible]

Ah, the question is the Lord describes the righteousness of a man, Daniel, Job and Noah. Noah, Daniel and Job, and the question is why is Daniel before Job? I don't know. I really don't because chronologically it should have been Noah, Job, Daniel, but the Lord says Noah, Daniel, Job. The only thing I can come up with if you forced me to answer, Noah's life and his ministry and his teachings there's an eschatological or end times aspect to them. We know that Daniel's are. If you've ever done an intensive study of the book of Job, there's a lot of end times events in there as well, and it is a horrific picture of humanity in suffering. And so if you forced me to answer it and said you've got to give us, I don't know won't suffice, I would say that Noah is a picture of the initial stages of these eschatological events, Daniel gives us a greater picture, but Job might give us a picture of the end of these events. So though they're as human beings not in chronological order, their prophetic elements, lives and teachings could be in that order.

[unintelligible]

You can deal with that. Hey, if he can deal with that, I'm going to close on that one, alright?

Before I pray and we're dismissed, just to let you know, many of you have seen advertisements and such, if you have a desire to go and study the Bible and ask questions about the Bible next March on the sea, we need to know that you want to be a part of that. So on your way out, please stop by the table. We need to let those who are in charge of all this know that we know who's coming. So if you have any kind of inkling of going on the waters with Ask Jeff, please let us know so that we can take care of that.

Let's pray.

Lord, as we close this session, God, we know that all of our questions aren't answered and yet we also saw real clearly tonight that all the information has not been given. And Lord, you are higher than our thoughts, you are greater than our imagination, and Lord, we honor that tonight. Your thoughts are not our thoughts. Your ways are not our ways and so, Lord, as we close tonight, we surrender and we submit to you, the Almighty, all-knowing, all-loving God. And God, we thank you and we praise you that even in your

authority you were willing to stoop down and save a sinner like us. Thank you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Alright, folks, see you on Sunday.