

## Ask Jeff 8.8.18

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**Crossroads Ministries**

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All right, we are passing out the cards. Please fill them out. Remember, all questions are anonymous unless you sign your name to the card but nonetheless, we will not reveal who you are when we go through those on Sunday nights.

Please call your attention to the Circle of Concerns, otherwise known as the prayer sheet. We print these about 90 minutes before we get started so anything you know about any situation that takes place with an individual, group, whomever, we want to know about so we can be praying for. You will see that it shows nobody in East Alabama Medical Center. That is a misnomer. We found out about something about, right about an hour ago, these had already been printed. Denver Jones, Alan Jones's son had a wreck this afternoon. They think everything's okay but they took him there for precautionary measures. He was not traveling fast, he got struck by a vehicle. It looks like everything is going to be okay. Alan has not texted back with any negative news, have you heard anything, Chris? So no news is good news at this point, if that makes any sense. But we wanted you to be aware that he was in transport. I don't know if he'll even be admitted but that took place very very very recently as far as timeframe is concerned.

You see those that are at home as well as out of town. At the bottom, unfortunately, we report that there has been a death of a loved one in one of our family of faith. No babies this week that we're aware of. On the back, those that are serving not only on the mission field but also in the military. And just a continual reminder before we pray, next week we'll not be here, we'll be in the courtyard. This is the opportunity to sign up for Bible studies. If you have kids, grandkids, neighbors, that want to be part of our AWANA ministry for children, that's a great opportunity to get signed up for that. Everybody will be there, students, children, senior adults and everybody in between. It will be a wonderful opportunity. So if you have neighbors, friends, coworkers, people, this is one of those great nights just to introduce them to our family of faith. It will be really relaxed, just having fun, enjoying life together. Next Wednesday night beginning at 6 o'clock out in the courtyard, and as I mentioned, we will have food trucks there so you will have the opportunity to eat a variety of styles of food.

So let's pray and we'll get started.

*Lord, as we gather tonight, we do pray for Denver and the many others that we're aware of that are dealing with physical issues and diagnoses and oftentimes in some cases,*

*Lord, just a lifetime of struggles and concerns. Lord, we pray for healing, we pray for comfort, Lord, we pray for peace particularly in the trauma of some of the situations, God. We pray for those that are family members that are on the bedside and out in the hallways and the waiting rooms that oftentimes the wait is the worst part and, God, so we just pray for all of those that are involved. Lord, we pray for comfort for families, not just the ones listed but others that we are aware of that have lost loved ones as well as those that are serving on our behalf on the mission field, military, and in other capacities. Thank you for their selflessness, thank you for their sacrifice, thank you for their willingness to put others' interests above themselves. And Lord, tonight as we gather as a small representation of this incredible body of faith, lead us and guide us and direct us as we walk through your word and may this not be about what we hope or what we think or what we want it to be but, God, may we tonight search out what is your heart, what is your mind and how have you revealed it through your word so that we might be better equipped not only to have faith and believe in you but to live it out. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

All right, I do want to welcome you to Wednesday night here at First Baptist, Opelika. One last shameless plug before we get started. You will see on the back table as well as has been handed out these little three by five note cards that say "Biblical Q and A." Next Sunday night, that's only four days from now at 6 PM right here, we're going to have a marathon Q and A session, probably go about 90 minutes to two hours depending on how the flow is going, but our goal is to answer each and every question that you have that night. It's kind of our end of the summer celebration, end of the summer rally, and so we want to encourage you to be a part of that this Sunday night as well as to submit your questions. Now you can still submit questions at the email address that is listed or you can just write them down, turn them in, we'll be glad facilitate those. Again here on Wednesday night, oftentimes we hit one, two, or if we're very gregarious maybe three or four questions. This Sunday night, we're going to hit them all so if you submit a question to the database and you're one of those folks who say, "You know, I am tired of you not selecting my question," well, this is your chance to ask it again knowing it will get answered on Sunday night. So just a good opportunity there.

If you're a first time guest or visitor with us or maybe you're watching for the first time on the other side of that camera, the way Wednesday nights go is the first half is a Q and A time. You have the opportunity to ask the question, the whole goal is to see what does the Bible say as far as the answer is concerned. The second half is a Bible study that we walk through systematically, we're now walking through the book of Revelation. We are still in chapter 11 which is important because it's the most critical chapter in the book of Revelation and if you've seen the outline, there is not a chance we are getting through it tonight so we'll hold it over but it's an interesting subject matter and topic.

When you submit a question, the very best way to do so is on the website [fbcopelika.com/askjeff](http://fbcopelika.com/askjeff). You have the opportunity to submit the question and you putting your email in there allows me when I push the "answered" button to send you a link to the video of the question just in the event that you were not here. You are absolutely anonymous. We don't know who you are. I don't know who you are and so therefore it's

not like I'm going to call out and say, "Hey, So-and-so doesn't know the answer to this and they need it." Well, we're not going to embarrass you like that so no need to worry. Now if you raise your hand in just a few moments, well, there goes the anonymity, I mean, it's out the door, we know who you are. The good news is that the way the camera is situated, your facial identity is not recognizable so you still remain anonymous to those that are out in "TV world."

So here we go. Come on, question number one. Come on, please, please, please. Okay, here we go. It says I recently heard a pastor say, that always makes me nervous because I'm wondering was that on the History Channel because, oh boy. It says I recently heard a pastor say that the synoptic gospels have a bit more "law basis," for lack of better phrase, than John which is more new covenant or grace focused. Again, pardon my paraphrasing but I think you get what I mean. I haven't picked up on that but I've never really looked from that perspective. Would you say that is accurate, just curious?

Actually that is a pretty accurate assessment of looking at the gospels. Now one of the things that I do when we look at the gospels a lot of times is I like to draw them in the form of a grid, and the reason I do so, and I've used this analogy before but just work with me, imagine that you're seeing a situation at the intersection, an intersection of a road or just the intersection of life, and we're going to imagine that the activity takes place in the intersection and that you have somebody at all four corners of the intersection watching what takes place, all four of them not only based on their perspective but who they are, their background and their relationship to the situation, are going to share all information pertinent to but from a variety of angles and/or perspectives.

So if you take all four gospels and you've got Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, just very simply, just their basic background will share with you that you're going to get a different perspective with non-contradictory information. For example, Matthew by trade was an accountant/IRS agent. He was a tax collector, that's what he did. He's really into numbers, okay? He's always interested in how many people were there and exactly how long it took, his dating. In fact, in Matthew 17, the Transfiguration, you know, he says "after six days." I mean, he's very specific exactly how much time took place. Mark, on the other hand, was a young man. The phrase "and immediately" is used 63 times in 16 chapters. It's like listening to one of my teenagers tell a story. I mean, you're going over here, you're going over there, but at the end you get the whole story, it was just in little snippets. Luke by trade was a doctor so obviously he is interested not only in the virgin birth that takes place at the first part but the last half of the gospel is based on the crucifixion, this whole incredible physical experience that Jesus underwent through the Passion Week. Obviously as a doctor, incredibly interested. And whom we know as John was not only called the beloved apostle, the one who was right next to Jesus at all the meals, but through a variety of connections was loosely related to Jesus and his family and would have seen him, shall I say, more from the upbringing perspective. These three guys would have known him later in life and ministry whereas John most likely would have had an elongated perspective of who he was.

Why is that critical? Not only do you get their different professions, their different backgrounds, just their different philosophies of life coming to give you one single picture of Jesus, but per the question, the synoptic gospels, that are these three. We call them the synoptics because they are similar to or synonymous with. They oftentimes tell the same story three different ways and there's a lot of discussion about how much they actually utilized of the same material of each other. Now when you look at all four gospels, does anybody know outside of the crucifixion and resurrection, the only event and/or miracle that is in all four gospels, does anybody know? The feeding of the 5,000, that's right. That's the only one that is in all four and, in fact, the gospel of John only has 7% of what the other gospels have. His stories are so unique. For example, everything from the woman at the well to the woman caught in adultery to Nicodemus, some of the most famous stories in the life and ministry of Jesus only take place in John, don't take place in the other three.

The question was these synoptic gospels which, by the way, that's a common phrase for them, that he heard someone say they are more "law based," meaning more of an emphasis on Jesus as the fulfillment of the law, the teacher and the interpreter thereof. I would say that that is true but primarily when it comes to Matthew. Now don't get me wrong, Mark and Luke, very similar to Matthew as far as chronology is concerned and their content, but Matthew over and over and over again, "It is written," or, "As the prophets said." There's this consistent going back to the Old Testament saying that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of everything that was mentioned, everything that was said. He is the embodiment of everything.

Now the reason that's important is because as you look in the life and the ministry of Jesus Christ, he is exactly that thing, he is the fulfillment of. Have you ever wondered why Matthew is the first gospel? Because you're coming out of the Old Testament. So you've got all these prophecies, you've got all these proclamations of who he would be and guess what? The very first out of the bat, what's the first thing you see in Matthew 1? A genealogy, in other words, we're going to take you all the way back and show you that the bloodline, the prophetic statement of the Lord regarding the Messiah takes you all the way back to the book of Genesis, all the way to whom we have and so, "It is written. It is written. It is written. It is written." So yes, there is a more law basis. Here me clearly, not a proponent of the law but as Jesus being a fulfillment of the law. Does that make sense? So yes, there is more reference to, and the gospel of John hardly ever addresses the Old Testament prophecies and such.

So any other questions on synoptic gospels, John, law, nonlaw, y'all got that, y'all are good? Okay. That was easy. Okay, moving onward. Whoever asked it, thank you very much.

All right here we go. This ought to be fun with the audience tonight. Does a child need to respect their parents even if the mother or father is abusive or controlling to their children?

I would say abusive and controlling are two different words. So a couple of passages here. Let's begin by going to the book of Ephesians. Ephesians 6 then we're going to go back into the book of Acts here in just a moment. But Ephesians 6, it begins with a very clear statement. It says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." Now I want y'all to just keep ahold of that phrase "in the Lord" for just a moment when we go back to Acts. "Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)." You say what do you mean with promise? When you go back to the 10 Commandments it says, "Honor your father and mother," it says, "so that your days may be long." It actually says there is a promise to this. It says, "That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. Fathers." You see it's, it's much like the Ephesians 5 passage on marriage. If we just stopped there, it would all be about the kids, right? But it moves on. It says, "fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men." So this whole passage we have in Ephesians 6 which, by the way, leads right into the spiritual warfare passage beginning in verse 10, deals with relationships to those who are in authority in regards to those who are under their authority, and it begins with the home, that children are to obey their parents as unto the Lord for this is right, honor your mother and father which is the commandment with a promise. But then it says fathers do not provoke your children. So once again we have a mutual relationship here, that the children are to obey and are to honor but that the parents, the fathers in particular here, are not to provoke or to lead or to have authority or to guide or to parent in a way that would cause one to question whether they should "honor."

Now go back to Acts 5 and hopefully we can kind of piece this together. Acts 5, the passage we are about to read has absolutely nothing to do with parenting but everything to do with authority which involves parenting. Acts 5:29. The apostles have been told to silence, they have been told not to talk about Jesus, they've been told just to go sit in the corner, be quiet. Verse 29 it says, "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."

So how do we put all that together? The question was should children obey their parents even if they are controlling and/or abusive? All right, so let's talk about that to put abuse for, to treat someone improperly physically, mentally, emotionally, or other types of ways, okay? Is there any way that that behavior is of God by the parent? Is there? No, absolutely not. Would that be provoking your children? Yes. Okay, so what you see there is you see parents in violation thereof, correct? All right, on the other hand, are what they doing the things of God if they are doing those type of abusive behaviors? Absolutely not. What does Acts 5 say? It says that we ought to obey God rather than man. What it simply says is that parents have been given authority within our home of children to represent – here's the important part – to represent the authority and the laws of the Lord in the home, and so we as parents, because I speak as one, we are not to give a bad, a false or a misrepresentation of the Lord and his law in our homes. At the same time, the children are to respond with the respect of the authority as long as it is from a godly

perspective whether they like it or not because, guess what? We as the children of God are to respect the "laws of God" whether we like them or not, correct? And we know that the Lord doesn't act improperly toward us so as parents we are commissioned to act godly toward them and that they are asked to be in honor of and respectful thereof. It is a mutual relationship.

I will say this, that if anybody finds themselves in any type of relationship where there is any type of "abuse" taking place, tell somebody. Tell somebody because those who are in authority from a godly perspective can assist you and help you and be removed from a situation that is not healthy spiritually, physically, mentally, emotionally, etc., all right? So please hear me clearly because I think sometimes people teach, "Well, they're the kids, they've got to obey me no matter what I say." No, that's not the case. If you go and tell your kid, "I want you to go and rob a convenience store and bring me the money back," I don't think so. No, I know, uh-uh. There is nothing about that that is of God and that is provoking your children. When you tell your kid you need to go to bed by a certain time, "Ah, you're just being abusive to me. I don't have to listen to you." There ain't nothing about bedtime that's abusive, all right? So again it's not an either/or, it is a both/and and that's the criticalness.

Now here's the thing, every single one of us whether we know it or not are under the authority of somebody else. Let me give you some advice. We tell our kids this all the time and I guess sometimes we have to remind ourselves. When you walk into a room, whenever you walk into a room, wherever you walk into a room, you do understand the first question you need to ask is who is in authority here? By the way, when you walk into a restaurant, you know you're not in authority, right? You don't run that restaurant. You don't rule that restaurant. There are laws, there are regulations, there are things happening there that you are under the authority of and vice versa, and expected behavior is considered. When you walk into a place where there is law enforcement, guess what? You're not in charge, they are. And so you can use that rarely rarely rarely do you ever walk into a room and say, "I'm in charge." You say, "Yeah, I do, when I walk into my living room." No, you're not. God's in charge, you're his representative. Did you catch that? You say, "Well, I'm the dad. I'm in charge here. By golly, it's my law." No, it's not. You're a representative of God's law in the home. You, dad, I can say that because I am one, we fall under the authority of his law so even in my own home, I'm not in charge. He is. Y'all see how that works?

So it's all about submitting to and respecting the authority of the one whom the Lord has bestowed upon and over us and responding appropriately. I find it interesting Jesus tells a parable, I think it's in Matthew 21 about the ungrateful steward, about the man who goes to his debtor and says, "Oh, I'm indebted to you and I can't pay it, will you please forgive me?" And the guy says, "I'd love to forgive you and I will. Go and do likewise." What does he do? He goes and finds people who owe him a little bit of money and he basically puts them in slavery to pay him back and the Lord says, "How dare you treat somebody with a different level of respect than you would treat me?"

So when somebody's in authority, particularly when it comes to being a parent, and they demand and ask of their kids that which they do not give to authority that they are under, they are being a hypocrite. Does that communicate? And so we always talk about the children obeying the parents which is absolutely what the Bible says, but it is the parents that find themselves in this sandwiched position representing the word of God and yet holding them accountable to children that are in their own home. The children, it says to obey their parents as unto the Lord honoring, and also in Acts 5 where it makes it very clear we ought to obey God rather than man.

So all that being said, if you are a child and you're watching because I have a funny feeling it may be a child that submitted this question, they're curious, I don't know, that if you believe that your parents are rough on you, tough on you, and too stringent on you, too bad. But if you believe that they are acting in an ungodly abusive manner, tell somebody who has the ability to do something about it. Plain and simple, because there are other things in authority that the Lord has set up to come alongside and to assist in a situation where the "channel of authority" is not done properly, if that communicates.

Does that help out, maybe, sorta, kinda, not really, we got it all? Everybody is here going, "Okay, my kids are out of the house. I'm good. I don't have to worry about it." But I'm going to tell you something, I don't know what it is about y'all grandparents, man, y'all have a gene in you as grandparents, you let grandkids do things you never let your kids do. Y'all know that, right? It's amazing. So I'm just saying that's all whole other story. I'm not going to go there.

All right, here we go. It says, we're going to have fun with this one. Are Adam and Eve in heaven or hell?

I don't know. I'm serious. I don't know and here's why. I want you to go to the book of Hebrews 11. In Hebrews 11, we have what is called the Hall of Fame of Faith and, by the way, whoever asked this question, it's a great question because we know it started in the garden of Eden with Adam and Eve, we know they received the word of God to eat of all the trees except for the one forbidden, we know that mankind fell into sin, we know they were tempted, they were removed from the garden of Eden and we pick up the story from there. In the book of Hebrews 11, what we call the Hall of Fame of Faith, it does not – hear me clearly – it does not list every single person who is in heaven. All right, you all get that, right? But it does list representatives of those who lived by faith and therefore we would easily say are in heaven.

So that being said, beginning in verse 4, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." So let's go back to the book of Genesis 3 and actually 4. By name, the first humans that we are aware of is Adam, obviously, Eve, Cain and Abel. Seth does not show up until chapter 5, okay, when Abel has already been killed by Cain. So we've got four individuals by name that we're aware of, all right? Notice it says that Abel brought a sacrifice and God received it. So basically according to Hebrews 11, Abel is good, right? What about Adam and Eve? I mean, we're

going to person number four here, okay? And so they're not mentioned. Now does that mean they're not there? No, but I would say this and this is where I think it gets important: God gave Adam in Genesis 2:16, he told Adam, "You must eat or you can eat of every tree freely except for one," correct? He gave the instructions to Adam, then Eve is formed and he is to give the instructions to Eve and the rest of his family, correct? There's the instructions. How did Abel know what to do? Have y'all thought about that? Cain knew what not to do because doesn't that come pretty naturally? Do we have to teach people to misbehave? Do we have to teach people how to sin? Do we teach people how to be rebels? No, it comes naturally, doesn't it? But Abel makes a conscious decision to make a proper sacrifice to his Creator. That doesn't come naturally, particularly when we're in a world that is laden with sin, okay? So at some point, somewhere, somehow, he knew what to do. I'm just conjecturing here and I know I'm reading a little bit too much into it maybe, it was Adam that was to instruct the rest of the family on what to do in the garden of Eden. It just makes sense that he and potentially even Eve knew what to do on the other side of the garden of Eden, and Abel actually paid attention.

So people ask, Adam and Eve, are they in heaven or hell? I side on the heaven side because we're not warned anywhere in Scripture about not doing what they did outside of the initial fall, and number two, Abel knew what to do and somebody had to tell him. Now you can come back and say, well, maybe God just spoke out of the heavens and said, "All right, Abel, Cain, there's no hope for your parents. Here we go, we're starting over." There's no evidence of that anywhere in Scripture. So again, there is no conclusive evidence but if you asked me to, when I get to heaven one day I've got a funny feeling that Adam and Eve are going to be there and I'm going to go up Adam and go, "What is wrong with you, boy?" No, sorry, because you know it's all kind of started that way, right? You realize the mess you're in, the pain you're in, and the struggle you deal with, it all started with them back there, but there's an old phrase: if it hadn't been Adam and Eve, it would've been you and me. So it would have been one of us.

Any questions on Adam and Eve and that? Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

By faith. Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

They did. Okay, so the question is everybody here it says "by faith, by faith, by faith, by faith," but Adam and Eve had a "personal relationship with the Lord." The Bible even says they walked with the Lord in the cool of the day. Absolutely correct. Here's the problem is the Lord told Adam in Genesis 2:16, "You're free to eat of every tree of the garden except this one," right, "for in the day that you eat, you will surely die." It literally says "you will die" twice. That's why in the book of Revelation it says that they experienced the second death, that there will be a spiritual death and there will be a physical death. We know that Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 experienced what we would call the spiritual death because they realized they were naked, they realized they were



exposed, and they hid themselves from God and they knew something was awry, correct? They later would suffer a physical death because when you get to chapter 5 it says there came a point where they actually breathed their last breath and they died. At the question is everybody else was by faith, by faith, by faith, by faith, Adam and Eve walked with the Lord but they also, they fell from that relationship, were removed from the garden of Eden and found themselves in the same situation as Abel and Cain.

Now the interesting thing is look at verse 1, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. So whether it's Adam and Eve trusting the Lord, Cain and Abel and a sacrifice, Abraham going to a land he knows not of, or Rahab believing the spies, all of them are believing in that which they cannot necessarily tangibly see but are trusting in their relationship with the Lord. So Adam and Eve had to trust him.

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

You had to go there, didn't you?

[unintelligible]

Yes, so in Genesis 3, not only do we have the fall but we have the punishments, the serpent is punished, Eve and Adam find out about the difficulty that life is about to bring them, and in verse 21 it says, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them." The first, if you'll allow me to say it, the first sacrifice of blood was the Lord giving these skins to Adam and Eve. So again when you get to the book of Genesis, we've got everything we need to know but we're not told everything. They are given as soon as their sin takes place, the Lord tells them their consequences to their sin. You can't escape the consequences. I mean, they are what they are, right? You're going to be on the wrong side of the gate now. Number two, the first thing the Lord does on the positive end, he gives them a picture of Hebrews 9:22 which says without the shedding of blood there is no remission or removal of sin. You've got to have the shedding of blood, all right? When you go to the story of Cain and Abel, guess what happens? There is a blood offering given that the Lord receives, the firstfruits, the first things, okay? That being said, there is a picture of, there is a demonstration of by the Lord to Adam and Eve of his grace, his mercy and his willingness to forgive and eventually restore. Somehow, somehow, Cain and Abel, particularly Abel, had to learn a right relationship with God and how to maintain that because when Abel comes, he does good. In fact, the Lord says "a better sacrifice." Who is the Lord has given in our homes to give instruction? The parents. In fact, you get to the book of Deuteronomy and it says that the parents role, back to the previous question, is to instruct in the laws of the Lord, to guide, direct, fear, admonition, etc. etc.

So therefore unless Adam and Eve became the first absentee latchkey parents and just checked out and the Lord spoke directly from heaven, at some point they communicated to their children what they had, what they lost, how the Lord provided, and how to

respond appropriately to it, which is exactly what we as parents do today to our own children. Humanity had this wonderful relationship with God, we all messed it up be it through Adam and Eve but we did. We have the opportunity to believe in his sacrifice, Jesus Christ, and when we believe, then we are eventually restored and redeemed unto him. So their story is our story even though we're not specifically told if they're in heaven or hell.

Now Hebrews 11, unless I'm mistaken and I could be, I think there are 32 names mentioned. I think there's 32. I can promise you more than 32 people in the Old Testament went to heaven. We are not given all of them, okay, we're just given some strategic ones and I believe the Lord was purposeful in who he gave us because he gave us a lot of folks who on the outside or the surface are somewhat questionable. I mean, if you look at their lives even though he was an incredible man of God, you see guys like David and Samuel who didn't necessarily finish real good in their lives. You see a lot of mistakes. Didn't Abraham have a big one, I mean, this whole thing called Ishmael? I mean, that was a big mistake, right? So you see somebody who had what we would call a major blip on the radar but still by faith believed in the Lord, which is great because it gives us all hope because we've all got blips on the radar, we've all got mistakes, we're all David, we're all Samson, we're all these guys and so we see that he is willing by faith to redeem, restore any and all who hear, listen and respond to his "plan."

Did that help at all with Adam and Eve, ma'am? Are we okay there? So I do believe there was instruction given. I wish I could tell you exactly what Adam and Eve said but we just don't have it. Abel responded appropriately.

All right, let's shift gears to the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation. There is no way we're going to get through this tonight but we're going to have some fun anyway because verse 19 of chapter 11 is one of the most intriguing verses not just in the book of Revelation but in the entire Bible. Just as a reminder of where we are, the book of Revelation may have 22 chapters in it but chapter 11, I believe, is the most critical of all the chapters. It begins with dealing with this temple that is there in what we know as Jerusalem on that Temple Mount. It deals with the famous two witnesses is. It deals with not only their ministry, their proclamation, but also with their death and eventual raising unto the Lord. When we get to verse 15 of Revelation 11, we pick up the chronology again. In other words, beginning in chapter 10 with this famous book that's asked to be eaten that will be sweet to the taste but will be bitter later on, through what we've been reading in chapter 11, this is all what we call parenthetical. We're pulling out of the chronology. There have been seven seals, okay? There have been six trumpets. When you get to Revelation 11:15, we have the seventh trumpet. We discussed this last week, at the seventh trumpet it says that the kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of our Lord. As we begin reading in verse 16, we find ourselves in the seventh trumpet.

Now here's what's about to take place. When we go to chapter 12, we have another parenthetical, folks, sorry, but we're going to pick up in a little bit with what we know as the seven vials, okay? So we've got seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials. We're discussing here the seventh trumpet. Why is this important? Because this section is not

one that we can take a step back and go, well, we don't really know the timeframe here. No, we are in the midst not only of the book of Revelation but we are right smack dab in a time period Jesus called the great tribulation. You can't get around that. So in other words, when we get to chapter 12 in just a moment, it's going to have a story of a woman giving birth, it's going to have a story of a great fight in heaven, and we're going to be able to take a step back and go, okay, that might not have all taken place in the seven years, okay, this might even be going back to the book of Genesis and going forward chapter 21 and 22 because it's parenthetical. But here in chapter 11, verses 15 through 19, not parenthetical, in the midst of the chronology, seventh trumpet, very critical to when we get to verse 19.

Beginning with verse 16,

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. 18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. 19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Now I know and it's at the bottom of the front side of the sheet, we all want to get down to verse 19, we all want to find out about this famous "ark of the testament," the Indiana Jones ark of the covenant. Where is this thing? Where did it go? Is it still around? We'll get to all that, I promise, but before so we have to deal with a listing of individuals that are mentioned. We have the elders, the nations, and the others. Who are these people and they are very critical to our study.

It begins with the elders. Now you remember these guys showed up earlier in chapters 4 and 5, right? These are the famous 24 elders that are around the throne of God. And so it says here these elders, their response, it says they worshiped and they fell on their faces. Why is that important? Because that is the picture all throughout the book of Revelation of the proper response to a holy God. In fact, the Apostle John on the island of Patmos when he sees the Lord lifted up, he sees Jesus as he's never seen him before, when he sees his feet of brass, when he sees the sword out of his mouth, when he sees his eyes as fire, what does he do? The Bible says he fell down as if he was dead, okay? When you go later on into the book of chapter 19, you see the same situation take place.

Why is that important? Because I cannot tell you how many times I've had this conversation with people, "When I finally get to meet God, I'm gonna tell him exactly what I think." No, you're not. When you finally meet God, guess what you're gonna do? What they did. Now the Bible says in Philippians 2 that one day every knee will bow and

every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, the question is did you do it on the side or on that side because the destination is hugely drastically different based on when it took place. But what I want to show you is these are the same elders that we see around the throne room, they worshiped, and when they did so they did it in such a manner of not only submission and surrender but absolutely being prostrate, the absolute proper response to a holy God, okay?

Now the next thing is their perspective. Interesting, now y'all may think this is a weird rabbit to chase but I'm going to go there anyway. It says that you are the God that art, was, and is to come, or is, was, and is to come. Remember when you go back to Revelation 4 there's that famous statement of, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty who is, who was, who is to come"? Notice that when they use it, they began with the present tense, they go to the past tense, and then they go to the future tense. I know what you're thinking, "Well, why is that a big deal?" Well, in Revelation 5 that's the same order that the Apostle John used when he was on the island of Patmos, however, in chapter 4, verse 8, and I put this on your outline, remember the beasts that are around the throne, remember the famous beasts that had the different faces and the different images? You have the one, you know, the lion, the calf, all the different images? When they recognize the Lord, they say was, who is, and who is to come. Now those beasts as we study from the book of Ezekiel are of a cherubim class, meaning an angelic being, okay? Notice that the angels, if you allow me to classify them altogether, when they refer to the Lord it's he who was, who is, who is to come. When the Apostle John and the elders refer to him, it's he who is, who was, and who is to come.

Now for those of you who think, "Well, Jeff, aren't you splitting hairs?" No, here's what I want you to see: these elders were at one point human beings just like us. These are not angels, okay? These are not some type of supernatural creature or being. These are those individuals, we talked about this in 4 and 5, there are 24 of them listed, we don't know exactly who they are, there's a lot of great ideas and suggestions out there, but what I want you to see is they not only respond appropriately to a holy God but even their language in reference to him is emulative of a human being who has by faith been redeemed and reconciled to a holy God because your angelic host, the beasts, have never experienced a fall. They've never experienced. These angels, now we know there was a group that fell. They don't understand what it's like to be redeemed because they've never been lost, and so these elders whether they be representatives from the Old Testament, the New Testament, or random folks, we don't know. They at least were redeemed humanity.

Now their declaration, "Thou hast power." That's interesting there when it says, "Thou hast power and he shall reign forever and ever." When Jesus in Matthew 24, and I know this could cause great discussion and it may go that way and that's fine, Jesus in Matthew 24, he makes this statement, he says, "I don't even know when I'm coming back, only the Father does." And that disturbs us and we say, "Wow, how did he not know? Is he clueless?" And I've even joked, you know, if Jesus doesn't know, neither do you kind of stuff. But when you get to Matthew 28, Jesus makes this statement, "All power has been given unto me." When Jesus raises from the dead, he says, "All power has been given

unto me." When these elders, when they fall down on their face, they say, "You have power, you have the power to reign, you have the power to rule." This is what's important: before the cross, Jesus was a lamb to be slain, after the cross, he is a lion that will reign. Do y'all see the differences there? So when Jesus says now even though right before his crucifixion he says, "Hey, I can call down, you know, legions of angels and take care of this." On the other side of the resurrection he says, "All power is given unto me." So they're recognizing not only who he is from a perspective of someone being redeemed, but they're declaring that he possesses all power at this point because per verse 15, he is now the King of kings and the possessor of all the kingdoms of the world.

So that's the perspective of the elders. The opposite equation, the nations. Notice what it says, "and the nations were angry." By the way, nations, ethnos, it literally means people groups. Don't think, well, is this the Germans, the English, the French. Who are these folks? When it speaks of nations, yes, it might be the Germans, the French, the Americans, whoever it may be, but think a little bit bigger than that. Think about people groups because in many countries we have more people groups than we have of a single solitary sovereign state. But it says their response is they were angry.

Now I want you to fast-forward to chapter 20 real quick and I want you to see something. Again, I told you, we're not going to get through all of it so don't panic. It says the nations, the peoples were angry, all right? I'm going to actually begin in verse 7, it says, "And when the thousand years are expired," remember there's this famous thousand year time period that takes place in Revelation 20, "Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations." That's interesting. He deceives the nations "which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." One more chapter over, chapter 21, verse 28. I'm sorry, that's the wrong verse. It can't be verse 28, it's got to be verse 24. I apologize. Let me back up to verse 23, "And the city," by the way, this is new Jerusalem, "had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Look at verse 24, "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it."

Now why is that important? Because that word "nations" that represents the groups and people and humanity, it says they were angry, they were mad, they were upset, they were hostile to the person and the things of God, and then even when Satan is loosed, it says he gathers up the nations. When you get to chapter 21, though, when it says the nations come and worship him, you do know that a very significant event has taken place between those two things, it's called the final great white throne judgment. All of those who have rebelled and all those who have resisted the Lord in their life have been placed in judgment to where the Bible calls the lake of fire. That's all taken place, and so in chapter 21 when it speaks of the nations, these are the people groups of the redeemed, these are those that are in eternity. There is no lostness here. There are no rebels here. There is no resistance to the things of God. The word "nations" just means groups of people. The reason that is important is because there are some people who will take the verses I just gave you and claim what is called Universalism. Universalism is the idea

that no matter who you are, where you are, what you do, everybody goes to heaven because these nations were angry, these nations were deceived, and now they're all walking around the throne. No, no, no, no. Big difference because in between we've had a judgment, so to speak. So I just want to make that clear that these angry nations, it doesn't mean that one day everybody goes to heaven because you see nations on the other side, it is representative of people. These folks are angry.

Now, what's their perspective? Judgment. That's what they're headed toward. In fact, it says there specifically in chapter 11, it says that they shall be judged. Now I want you to turn back to Revelation 25, I'm sorry, Matthew 25, and I want to show you a passage of Scripture that we preachers, notice I use the personal pronoun, we preachers preach with good intent but often with bad doctrine. The book of Matthew 25.

Now let me give you a little context here. Matthew 24, the disciples, in particular Peter, James and John, pull Jesus aside and say, "Okay, tell us how all this stuff is going to wrap up. Tell us how the world is going to end. What's the sign of your coming." Jesus sits them down and he talks about the temple being destroyed, he talks about, you know, wars and rumors of wars and children rising up against their parents and little children leading, then he talks about the abomination of desolation, he talks about the parable of the fig tree, and one will be taken and one will be left, very eschatological or end times. That's chapter 24.

You move into chapter 25, we're still dealing with end times, we're still dealing with what we call the Olivet Discourse, however, it becomes a little more of rather than just thoughts and concepts and ideas about what's going to happen, there's more of a storyline. When you get to verse 31, he is speaking of himself physically returning to the earth. Now in the book of Revelation that takes place in chapter 19, right? Notice what it says, "When the Son of man," that's Jesus, "shall come in his glory," that's his second coming, "and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory," that's what happens in chapter 20 of Revelation. "And before him," in other words, when he comes back, battle of Armageddon, "shall be gathered," how many nations? All of them. Everybody. All nations, "and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Then he begins to share how that was a reality. Then you go to verse 41, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Now notice I said earlier that there was a judgment that takes place in this whole nations thing? The perspective of the nations, those that are angry, those who have rebelled against God, whereas the elders responded in prostration and in a proper response out of reverence and faith and trust and belief, the nations, the rest of everybody, what are they looking forward to? Judgment. That's what's coming. That's what's headed toward them which gives them a declaration, silence. When you get to Revelation 20 and it says, "I saw the small and great standing before God and the books were opened," you have zero

evidence of anybody arguing or fussing with God. Nobody gets up in God's face and says, "I just don't think you're being fair. I just don't think that's right. I don't think you're doing this the right way." So even though they are angry and even though they are headed toward judgment, when they finally face that faithful act, there is silence. There is no argument. There is no debate. There is none of this, "Well, when I finally see God, I'm gonna tell him exactly what I think." No, you're not. There is silence. There is no indication at all, anytime the Lord judges, there is no indication that those being judged have a response.

So let's play this into the, I guess, the temporal earthly setting. Let's imagine that we are in a court setting and there is a person who is on trial for whatever, it doesn't matter what it is, okay? When that judge addresses that individual, who speaks? The attorney. The attorney does, does he not, or she? Is that not correct? The attorney stands up and communicates with the judge. It is the attorney whom the judge will.... Whomever is on trial, 99% of the time they're just sitting there in silence. It is the attorney who is representing, communicating. They are the ones, they are the mediator between the one on trial and the judge. "There is one mediator between man and God, the man Christ Jesus," 1 Timothy 2:5. And when you get to 1 John 2, it says that if we have sinned, it says that we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ.

Guess what happens in Revelation 22 to these nations that are angry, to these folks who are rebelling? They don't have anybody to speak on their behalf. Guess what? You and I, who speaks on our behalf? Jesus. He is our advocate. He is our go-between. He is our mediator. One day and this is just the best way I can describe it, there is going to come a day whether he returns or I die, that I face God face to face. I'm going to. You're going to, I'm going to, the Bible says we must all die and face the judgment. When I do that and I stand before a holy God and he says, "Why should I let you into heaven?" You do realize I don't have anything to say, right, because I don't have any reason but I've got an advocate, I've got an attorney, I've got a mediator who's going to say, "Dad, this one is mine." And he speaks on my behalf because of my faith in his shed blood for my sins. Now if I get the chance to open my mouth, I'm going to say, "It's because of him, not me." But he is my attorney. He is my advocate. He is my mediator.

Why is that important? Because the silence in Revelation 20 is because they don't have the advocate, they don't have the mediator. Think about how we do this even in our culture. When somebody is arrested, what do we say to them? If you do not have an attorney, one will be appointed to you. So what happens? In Revelation 20, the angry nations, they represent themselves and they've got nothing to say. They're in silence before a holy God.

So you've got these elders, you've got these nations. Here's something really interesting back to the book of Revelation 11. There is this group that I call the others. You say, "Well, why do you call them the others?" Because I don't know what to call them. It just says "and there were others there," and it says here in verse 18, "the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear

thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." There's really no collective title given to these folks because you've got these elders, you've got the nations, but it calls them servants, prophets and saints. That's an interesting utilization of description here because you see places in the Bible where servant is used, prophet is used, saint is used, but you don't see any of those terms from beginning to end, and so it's almost as if these individuals are from collective ages and stages, so to speak, that are meeting before the Lord.

But what is their reward? I put on here the timing of what we know as, and by the way, these acronyms, JSOC, that stands for judgment seat of Christ which the Bible speaks of in several passages in the New Testament as a judgment of believers, not for their eternity but for their rewards, and the great white throne judgment, that is what Revelation 20 is, that's an eternity judgment, that's where those that we just have spoken of are condemned to the lake of fire.

It says here in verse 18 that they are given a reward to the servants, to the prophets. When it comes to timing, there are two theories here. When a person who is a servant, a prophet, a saint, a believer in Jesus, whatever phrase you want to use, the question is, is their experience of what is known as the judgment seat of Christ which 1 Corinthians 3 and other passages allude to, does that happen immediately upon one's death or is there an event that takes place at some point in the future where all of us as believers experience this event all at one time? Here's the good/bad news: I've got evidence for both sides of that, okay? And so I think the best thing for us to say is simply this, we will experience a time where even as believers we stand before the Lord and it says we give an account of that which we have done in the flesh whether it be good or evil. Now that's found in 2 Corinthians 5:10. It's written to believers, in fact, it says the saints which are at Corinth.

And I put on here the issue of the timing. We know when the great white throne judgment is going to take place, we know that final judgment is in Revelation 20. There's no question about it. We don't know conclusively when this other one will take place. It may be upon one's individual death. It may be collective later. Lots of good arguments for all types of chronology there. Can we just for the sake of tonight say it's going to happen and we need to be prepared for it when it does. There's just no conclusiveness versus the great white throne of which there is.

Now that's all those folks. Verse 19, here's the verse, "And the temple of God was opened in heaven." Outside of chapter 4 and outside of chapter 19, this is the only place you have in the book of Revelation where residents of earth look in and see heaven. It says the temple of God was opened in heaven. Now again, I'm going to use these same analogies here. What is the response? They are able to be seen from earth because heaven is opened. There is no veil. According to verse 19, "there was seen in the temple the ark of his testament," you get the idea that those who are on the earth are able to see into the heavens, into the temple of God, and they're able to even see the ark of his testament. So a very interesting response.



Now what's the perspective? Here's where it gets interesting. Back in chapter 11, verse 1 and 3, there is a temple on the earth, is there not? And here we have a temple in the heavens, and so what that allows us to do is open up some very interesting discussion and dialogue. Allow me just to go forth with. One of the ideas is, well, the temple of God in heaven had to be opened up because the temple on earth has been desolated by the antichrist, that it was no longer valid. One of the other arguments is this, that you and I as believers in Jesus Christ in 1 Corinthians 6, we are called the temple of the Holy Spirit and so therefore this is evidence, pretty interesting here, that the body of Christ is in heaven during this great tribulation time period because the temple of God is actually in the heavens and this temple that we have in chapter 11 on the earth is one that's going to be decimated by the antichrist. The other idea we've got is that in the book of Leviticus when the instructions are given to build the temple, which the tabernacle and temple which is later fulfilled in Solomon, it is a representation on the earth of that which is in the heavens.

So allow me to formulate what all that means. In verse 19 when it says that this takes place, either A the temple that was on earth is voided out by the antichrist and the temple of God in heaven is opened up as the true temple, B you've got the picture of what is in heaven is represented on earth and when it was decimated, then it was revealed, or C that what we know as the temple of God in heaven in verse 19 is not actually a literal temple but it is the body of Christ. If you go with that one, even though that sounds really good, that means that the body of Christ has inside of us the ark of the testament. It's pretty much saying that it is physical and visible and seen and structural.

Now here's where I tend to lean as we kind of get to wrap up here. In your Old Testament whether it was the entrance into the temple, the construction of the temple, the construction of the veil, everything, even the brass laver, everything that was made and fabricated on earth to assist in worship was a representation of the heavenlies. In other words, that's why Jesus made it very clear when we pray what we know as the Lord's Prayer, "on earth as it is in heaven," okay? And so I am inclined to say that even the temple in chapter 11, verses 1 through 3, was an earthly representation of a heavenly temple, but that by the time the seventh trumpet opens, what we know as the earthly temple in Jerusalem, the abomination of desolation has taken place, the antichrist has walked in and claimed that he was God, and I believe when you get to the seventh trumpet just like you've seen all kinds of supernatural things, I believe the Lord rolls back the scrolls of heaven and he says, "Okay, that's the third temple y'all have had on earth and the third one y'all have messed up. I'm about to show you the real one. Here it is."

And what's inside of it? The ark of the testament. Now there's an entire sheet here of chronology of the ark of the covenant. This is the first time that the ark of the covenant shows up since long before Jesus was around. It hasn't been around for a very very very long time. This is the first mention of the ark of the covenant since at least 500 BC. Do y'all find that interesting? Nobody has been talking about this, you go through the New Testament, none of the apostles. You know, they're talking to Jesus and there's dialogue, who's going to sit on the right, who's going to sit on the left, you know, what about this, what about that? Did you know that none of the apostles, none of them say, "When's the

ark going to show back up? When we going to have the ark?" I mean, it's so important that Steven Spielberg made a movie about it, right? I mean, this is important stuff. The apostles never asked about it. The early church never referenced it. It was never a concern yet all of a sudden in the book of Revelation it shows up and it is seen from earth and it's so significant that there are lightnings, there are thunderings, there's an earthquake and there's a great hail.

The last thing I want to share about this experience before we get into the ark is what I put on here "the declaration, a sign to the Jews." Remember in your Bible, particularly your Old Testament but also in the New, a sign is a supernatural demonstration by God that cannot be duplicated or replicated by man. By the way, a sign and a miracle are two different things. You remember that when the miracle, when the plague, when the water turned into blood, you remember that Pharaoh's magicians did the same thing, right? They were able to duplicate it, okay, until they got to the lice and that just messed everybody up, but nonetheless they were able to duplicate. A sign cannot be duplicated by man. Rainbow, virgin giving birth, you know, dew on the fleece, dry on the ground, raising from the dead, Matthew 12, those are all signs. In 1 Corinthians 1:22 it says the Jews require a sign. All throughout the book of Revelation, particularly during the tribulation time period, we see an emphasis again according to Romans 11 on the Jewish people. You have a Jewish temple in the Jewish city of Jerusalem, you've got two Jewish prophets as witnesses, and all of a sudden the Jewish ark shows up in the Jewish temple again which leads me to this conclusion before we get to the ark of the covenant. Verse 19 of Revelation 11 at the seventh trumpet could be very emblematic that there is coming a time that even though the antichrist does what he does to the temple, that in spite of that, as he did with the rainbow, as he did with the virgin Mary, as he did with an empty tomb, that once again God shows up to his people supernaturally, peels away the heavens and says, "Guess what? It's here. You've been looking for this thing for thousands of years and I had it all along."

So that being said, next time we gather we're going to talk a little bit about the ark of the covenant. I want you to see the back of this and I promise we'll end. I have gone to great lengths and trouble on your behalf. What you have on the back is the chronology of the ark of the covenant from its inception to its absence. This is all the passages that refer to it, who had it and what happened to it. So between the next time that we gather for Bible study, if you'd like to do a little research on the ark of the covenant, I've given you everything you need to know. That being said, when we gather back, we're going to talk about the role that took place and, yes, we will get to that famous question: where is it now?

So I'm going to pray. After I pray, let me remind you, grab one of these, put a question on the back, come back Sunday night and we're going to answer every single question and we're going to have a lot of fun. Sound good? Let's pray and we'll roll.

*Lord, as we leave this place tonight, thank you for your word. Thank you for the truth that it gives and, Lord, we also thank you for the places where it doesn't give us every single answer whether it's Adam and Eve or another issue. God, thank you that we still*

*have to live by and trust in you by faith. Lord, you said it was the substance, you said it was the evidence of things not seen and that which is hoped for and so, God, I pray that we would be people of faith, men of faith, women of faith, that we don't live saying I have to have every answer to every question and every problem in order to go forward but, God, may we be people of faith like Abel, like Abraham, like David, and may we walk in faith in you. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

Grab a card, put a question on it and come back Sunday. We'll have a lot of fun, I promise.