

**Sermon Text Questions from 2/9/2020** not answered yet

① Unclear what you're saying about paying the "cost" of the Real Deal... surely not that we must somehow demonstrate a "Real Deal" salvation thru our "taking up our cross daily"

*In Matt 7:21, Jesus says, "Not everyone who says to Me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven...." It is possible to profess to be a believer but not be an actual possessor. The scene that Jesus portrays is of people who are self-deceived about their salvation and face this horrible, eternal verdict from God. That is a sobering thought! In verse 23, Jesus reveals that such persons were actually practicing lawlessness.*

*This particular point was in the "Stuff to Ponder" section because it is a question each of us needs to ponder! The Bible is clear when it says we are saved by grace through faith and not of works (Eph. 2:8-9) and it is also clear that we are created for good works and should walk in them (Eph. 2:10). There is a tension between these two truths: saved by grace and not works – saved to do good works. Put another way: the cost of salvation was fully paid by Jesus on the cross and not by us – the cost of discipleship is to take up our cross every day. God doesn't resolve the tension for us because He knows the tension is good for us. It's healthy to ponder the weight of these truths. It's unhealthy to appeal to the one truth in order to rationalize lawlessness; it's also unhealthy to emphasize the other truth in order to justify legalism.*

*Pondering where we stand (ie., self-examination) is painful, but is often the point at which the Lord can challenge, convict, and conform us. Painful, yes, but much less painful than hearing Jesus say "depart from Me, I never knew you...."*

② Could you murder people, be a rapist, and do horrible things to others but then accept God and still go to heaven?

*Yes. That is what the Bible teaches. That is what makes the Gospel really good news. While I may not have murdered or raped or done some other terrible crime, I have to acknowledge that my own sinfulness and rebellion against God is horrible, too. That will cause me to truly repent and seek God's forgiveness based on Jesus' atonement. I've underlined the word truly because only God knows a person's heart and can determine what is true repentance and faith. It is possible that the horrible person you described "accepts" salvation without true repentance and faith, but that is also possible for a relatively good person, too. In fact, it may be harder for a person who thinks they are good to truly grasp their sinfulness and rebellion just as it may be harder for that horrible person to grasp that salvation is even possible for them.*

③ Is the anti christ born and then possessed or sent down for tribulation

*I believe he will be born and then possessed. See the next question (which is related).*

④ Do you think the anti christ will be a regular human being who will be born and live a "normal" life and somehow be possessed? Or is this a supernatural being?

*The Bible indicates that he will come from the "sea," from the mass of humanity and from the non-Jewish world specifically. This person will be naturally gifted in many ways, but when the dragon gives him authority and power, his natural abilities will be magnified under the influence of satan's possession and control.*

⑤ In scripture, does it indicate that the Antichrist has to come from the Middle East and/or "rule" in a country over there? Or could he come from anywhere?

*I started to answer this in the previous question, but this question drills down a bit further. The antichrist will apparently come from a Gentile lineage and exercises some form of minor rulership prior to having a rapid expansion of power and control. One way to understand this is that before satan possesses and controls him, the antichrist will have risen to rulership on his own human merits. That initial rulership is part of a consortium of other rulers, so it's likely that such a consortium could exist in the Middle East or Europe more easily than in the current super-power nations (like the US, China, and Russia). [Note: this answer is based on my personal understanding, so take it with a grain of salt : ) ]*

⑥ Do you think we might already be in the end times?

*IN Matthew 24:6, when Jesus is answering the disciples' question about the end times, He says that there will be signs happening that are "not yet the end." He explains even more signs in verse 7 and then says in v.8 "all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs." So, I believe we are in that not-yet, beginning of birth pangs, time. The end-times (also referred to as the Day of the Lord) will begin, I believe, with the Rapture of the Church, which, though we don't know the day or the hour, could happen at any time. In that sense, then, we are close.*

⑦ When the end times are over, and we are returned to a "garden of Eden" like relationship with God, will we take back up the command in gen 1:28 to "be fruitful and multiply"?

*There are several parts to dissect in answering this one. Revelation 21-22 describe the new heavens and new earth. Peter also refers to this in 2 Peter 3:10-13 where he explains the current heavens and earth are melted down to destroy all remnants of sin so that righteousness can dwell in the new heavens and earth. That is when there is a true return to Eden – actually, much better than Eden. Because of my computer background, I call this creation v.2.0! Theologians refer to this as the eternal state.*

*The second part of the question to dissect is prior to the eternal state. Jesus' second coming is described in Revelation 19:11ff and then a 1,000 period is described in Revelation 20 during which Jesus reigns on earth. We call this the Millennial Kingdom, and it occurs on the present earth (v.1.0!). Jesus has come back, conquered evil, cast satan and the demons into the bottomless pit, and eliminated all of His enemies. The earth is purified to some extent through this, and because Jesus physically inhabits the earth and reigns over it during these 1,000 years, there will be some aspects of the garden of Eden that will be realized. Animals will no longer be aggressive or dangerous, evil will be controlled by His rule, and there will be great peace and worship. Some inhabitants of the millennial kingdom will be able to procreate and multiply (those that survive to the end of the Tribulation). But it appears that any of us who are part of the Rapture (1 Thes 4:13-17) and come back with Christ at His second coming will already have changed bodies. Those bodies (also called resurrected bodies) are like Jesus' risen body, since He is the firstfruit of the resurrection. They have great capabilities, but apparently procreation is not part of God's plan (Mark 12:25).*

*At the end of the millennium, satan is released for a time of final testing, then judged and sent to the lake of fire along with all who have rejected Jesus. That is the point at which the old heavens and*

*earth are melted down and restored into new heavens and earth. I mentioned above that I believe it will be much better than Eden. We'll have work to do, we'll grow and learn in many ways, we'll be creative, and all we do will be a form of worship. So, in one sense we will be fruitful and multiplying, but apparently not in the sense of population expansion. Whatever that eternal state looks like, it will supremely fulfilling for all of eternity – we won't have even a remote sense of missing out on anything.*