

# **Post-Pentecost Realities III. Important considerations connected to the present and future status of the nation of Israel. (Con't). You will learn several things about the State of Israel that even Israel does not know!**

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[ 0 : 00 ] what we refer to as post-Pentecostal realities. And one of those main issues having to do with that particular venue is when did the church, which is the body of Christ, actually begin?

There are multitudes of Christians who would actually ask the question, well, who cares? What difference does it make? All that matters is that it started and that it is here today and there's no point in quibbling over when it began.

But it is important and it is important for at least two reasons and I'm sure there are other reasons that could be added to it. But there are two principal reasons that come to my mind and the first is in determining when the church, which is the body of Christ, began, we only then get an understanding of what the church is to be and how it functions.

That is, from looking at it as it is revealed in the New Testament. Well, where do we start looking for that information?

That has to do with where the church began. When did it actually start? We know that the principles under which a church is to operate are most logically found in the church epistles.

[ 1 : 32 ] It is the churches on the receiving end of what is referred to as the church letters or the church epistles that tell us more than anything else what a church is supposed to be and how it is supposed to operate.

Now, as someone would say, that really isn't rocket science. When you talk about letters to the churches, ought to have to do with things that churches are about and the things that concern the church.

And for those who might object to that and say, well, I think the whole Bible is important, not just the church epistles, I couldn't agree more. The whole Bible is important.

All of it is profitable. But as has often been said, while all of the Bible is for us, not all of the Bible is to us. All Scripture is inspired of God and is profitable.

But it is profitable for different things. To know what a church is to be like and how it is to function, we ought to read the church epistles. Therein we find information that is directly pointed to the church.

[ 2 : 39 ] I asked someone one time who thought that we were making too much of the church epistles and the ministry committed unto Paul, I said, well, if you were going to start a church, what would you look to?

Well, the whole Bible. I said, all right. Then you would go to Ecclesiastes and 2 Samuel to find out what a church is supposed to be. Well, no, not actually.

You wouldn't do that. No, of course not. Now, 2 Samuel and Ecclesiastes and all those other epistles and all those other writings in the Old Testament, the poetical books, the prophetic books, all of them are important.

None of them is any more or any less the Word of God than anything else. But there are portions of Scripture that are more pointed in what they have to say being addressed to the church.

And that ought to be our principal focus. I would actually go so far as to say, now I realize this is quite bizarre and kind of off the wall, but you've been here for years.

[ 3 : 53 ] You're used to me doing that anyway. Anyway, I've often said I don't know for sure when the church began. I'm only sure of when it didn't begin.

And it didn't begin on Pentecost for reasons we've already given and for some others we'll elaborate on now. But I wouldn't be surprised, and I cannot prove this. I'm not even sure that it's a Wiseman opinion.

Maybe it's just a Wiseman hunch. I'm not sure at all that the church at Corinth actually began until they received their first epistle from Paul, explaining some things about the church and what it is and how it is to function and so on.

That may also be true regarding Philippi and Ephesus. They were a church, the body of Christ, comprised of believers, Jew and Gentile, who had come together in one group to focus on things eternal, but I'm not sure they were aware that they were the church.

It may well be they just considered themselves a group, a body of believers of like precious faith who had this commonality about Jesus Christ, His death, burial, and resurrection, and they're being identified with Him.

[ 5 : 35 ] I'm not sure they would have called themselves a church in the same sense that we would. But they were that. And they were in the mind of God.

But it isn't completely apparent when they became aware of that and actually knew that. Let me give you another case in point. When our Lord was crucified and He uttered those monumental words, it is finished.

What did He mean? I think from the general tenor of Scripture, we can conclude that He was referring to the ultimate transaction had taken place.

It was an accomplished fact. What was accomplished? He had been made sin for humanity and He had suffered for that the judgment and condemnation of a righteous holy God so that all of the penalty that was due humanity for their sin was poured out on Christ and He bore our sin in His own body on the tree.

That had become an accomplished fact. And He was still alive physically. But He had already paid the price for sin which was a spiritual death.

[ 7 : 29 ] Spiritual death is separation from God. He had experienced that for three hours which is why He cried out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

God forsook Him. God abandoned Him. That's what hell is. God isn't there. God is gone. God is gone.

Jesus suffered that incredible distancing from His heavenly Father. A rupturing of the triune Godhead that had never occurred before had occurred at that time.

And when He said, It is finished, I think He meant, The deed is done. The transaction is complete. The price has been paid.

Now my question is this. Who else knew that? Do you think anyone there at the cross understood the implications of that when He cried out, Tetelestai!

[ 8 : 37 ] It is finished. And then, shortly thereafter, He bowed His head. He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.

He bowed His head and breathed out. He exhaled and did not inhale. And He died physically.

Was there anybody there who understood what was happening? I think not. The veil in the temple was rent. Back inside the city of Jerusalem where the temple was located, there was this huge curtain that hung from floor to ceiling that separated the most holy place from the holy place.

And Dr. Luke tells us the veil, the curtain in the temple was ripped in two from the top to the bottom. The point has been made that had the earthquake done that, it would have ripped from the bottom to the top.

But the Scripture is very clear. It went from the top to the bottom. God tore that curtain. And that was God's way of saying, because my son's death has provided the new and living way of approach to me, that He Himself is the veil, that is to say, His flesh.

[ 10 : 02 ] God is saying, in effect, the old mercy seat, the old ark of the covenant, the old most holy place, and the holy place, God is saying, I'm finished with all of that.

That is all passe. That is all passe. Christ has become the new and living way. He earlier announced that the cup He was sharing with His apostles on the night He was betrayed is the new covenant written in my blood.

And that was accomplished as part of the it is finished. But do you think anybody understood that? Do you think anybody understood that no longer was the sacrificial system in vogue?

It's now passe. No, they didn't understand that. And the Jews continue, oh, they repaired the curtain. And they continue to offer their sacrifice, business as usual.

But God was done with that. There was a whole new thing instituted. But how many people knew that? It existed only in the mind of God.

[ 11 : 13 ] There isn't any indication that James, Peter, John, Andrew, they didn't understand what was happening. It wasn't until much later after the fact that all of this began to make sense to them and the pieces started falling together.

So, it is entirely possible, I am saying, that the church, which is the body of Christ, and remember, the most significant thing that makes the church the church is Jew plus Gentile together on a plane of equality with no distinction between Jew, Gentile, bond or free, male or female, there is all commonality in Christ.

That occurred legally, judicially, forensically, in the mind and heart of God. That all took place before anybody ever actually recognized it or acknowledged it or understood it.

But it was operative. It was up and running. And those who were part and parcel of it didn't even understand until they began receiving information from Paul who, the only reason he understood was because God revealed it to him and he wrote it down, put the content in letters and sent the content to the churches.

And then they knew what the program was and could get with the program. So it becomes very, very important. And you know, for those who are convinced that the church began on the day of Pentecost and I have many, many of you know that my background is Baptist.

[ 13 : 04 ] I was saved in a Baptist church, married in a Baptist church, ordained in a Baptist church, deacon in a Baptist church, baptized in a Baptist church. And the standard party line, not only for the Baptist but for virtually every other denomination also is the church began at Pentecost.

I mean, that is as etched in stone as you can get. The church began at Pentecost. But when you ask them, well then, I suppose we should be speaking in tongues and performing miracles.

Oh, no, no, no, we don't do that. Well, why don't we do that? Well, because those are all signed gifts and that's all passe. Why is that passe? Well, it's just not part of this program.

Oh, then you're a dispensationalist. No, no, no, I'm not a dispensationalist. It gets to be a very sticky wicket and you just can't pin this thing down. Now, the Pentecostals come along and these dear brethren are, I do not for a second question their sincerity or their integrity.

I believe they just want to be what God wants them to be like every other serious-minded Christian. But they see the day of Pentecost as being the norm. This is what a church is supposed to be.

[ 14 : 25 ] This is where the church began and this is what a church is supposed to do. And if you as a group of Christians in a congregation, if you exercise faith like you should, which is what they did in Acts chapter 2, you will be able to realize the healings, the miracles, the speaking in tongues and everything else.

That's what you're supposed to be doing. And do you know they've got an argument. They are more consistent in their approach than many are who say, well, the church began on Pentecost, but this is not what the church is supposed to be.

That's all changed. Well, I'm not sure that that's a valid maneuver. And my point is, the church did not begin the Pentecost and the Pentecostal pattern is not supposed to be a pattern for us.

We are not supposed to duplicate that. What happened on the day of Pentecost was the fulfillment of a prophecy that God gave to the prophet Joel hundreds of years before Christ was ever born.

And now, on the day of Pentecost, in Acts chapter 2, God is making good on it. It all has to do with the nation of Israel. And this brings us to the second reason why it is important that we know when the church began.

[ 15 : 54 ] Because I am persuaded that even though the church is operating and working through history and culture and everything else, the church is up and running, even among those who might not have realized it or understood it, at that same time, this concept of the kingdom that had been promised to the nation of Israel as far back as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that too was in vogue and it was accompanied with miraculous signs and visions and miracles and the speaking in tongues and all the rest of it.

That was part of the kingdom program. Now we've got it, the kingdom program, and the church program, simultaneous, operating side by side.

This is why the book of Acts is confusing and so controversial. You've got two separate programs going on at the same time.

Now let me make this point. Even though these were operational and functioning, and some were preaching one thing and others were preaching another thing, there was a time in the mind of God when one program stopped and the other began.

When was that? There was a time when this kingdom thing was completely withdrawn, and the option was no longer available to Israel.

[ 17 : 41 ] They were set aside. They had provided their final answer. We pointed out to you earlier, most are of the opinion that Israel's final answer given to Jesus as being the Messiah was the crucifixion.

That seemed pretty final. They said, we'll not have this man to reign over us, crucify him. That seems like a pretty final answer, and I would agree.

But then we do have that thorny problem of our Lord Jesus praying for their forgiveness. And when he prayed, Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.

What do you do with that? Are you going to say, well, the father just ignored the son's prayer, and he said, nothing doing, son, I'm not going to forgive them.

That's difficult for me to imagine. Jesus uttered every request to his father with the proviso that this is what I want.

[ 18 : 52 ] But more than that, I want what you want. This is why he prayed, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

If there is some way that we can care for this business that needs to be cared for, apart from my being separated from you, that's what I want. but if it isn't possible, then your will, not my will, will be done.

That's what I want. And when Jesus prayed, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do, I think, and this again, this is a Wiseman opinion.

I want to be honest with you. I cannot give you chapter and verse that says, and God forgave them. there is no chapter and verse that says that.

Am I just assuming that God forgave them? Well, I think I have a stronger case than a mere assumption. And I'll tell you what I base that on. That is, as you read Acts chapter 2, it becomes very, very clear, I think, that Peter is telling the Jewish nation, if you repent, if you change your mind about Jesus Christ, who He is, why He came, what He did, and why it matters, if you change your mind about that, you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, and if you are baptized in the name of Jesus, this is John's baptism, the only baptism they knew, and be identified with Jesus, God will take you unto Himself.

[ 20 : 34 ] This kingdom was still available after the crucifixion, after the rejection of the Messiah, and then again in chapter 3, an even clearer case is presented.

God has done His part in realizing the fulfillment of what needs to take place before the kingdom can be established. Jesus Christ has to die to reverse the curse of Adam and pay the ultimate sin debt.

He did that. God provided that. That's taken care of. Now, your part is to respond to that. You do that by repenting, changing your mind about Jesus Christ, about your sin.

And let me tell you something. Peter says in Acts chapter 3, if you will do that as a nation, not just as an individual here and there, if you will do that nationally, God will send him back.

I know he just left two months ago, but God will send him back. And the kingdom promised to you through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob can be realized.

[ 21 : 51 ] The opportunity is still available. And as you read on in Acts chapter 3, what is their response? Chapter 4 opens, they came upon them, they laid hands on them, they physically took them into custody, they put them in jail, they beat them.

That was another answer of the nation Israel. Another rejection. Now the tendency is to think, well surely that will do it.

God is going to close the door. The hammer is coming down. No more opportunity for Israel and the kingdom. That is all passe. Surely the church is in full bloom now, up and running, and the kingdom thing is set aside.

I don't think so. And if you'll go with me to Acts chapter 7, where we've already been, I need to touch on something there to clarify this. Acts chapter 7.

I think one of the most significant features, maybe even the most significant feature, has to do with the principles who were involved in this.

[ 23 : 06 ] And by the way, while you're turning there, let me say that this second reason about why it is important when the church began and when the opportunity was withdrawn for Israel, is that we get an understanding of the past, present, and future of the nation of Israel, and you need to understand that the basis for anti-Semitism that even exists today, Jew haters such as Adolf Hitler and his ilk, and the Arab population today, much of that is based on a misunderstanding of when Israel was set aside.

And if you believe that the church has displaced Israel, as many do with covenant theology, then that goes a long way toward explaining anti-Semitism as well.

And in addition, the basis of Israel's future blessing is all tied in with this because of the faithfulness of God. Now, in Acts chapter 7, one of the most significant things about the stoning of Stephen is who did it?

Who did it? It is the Sanhedrin, sometimes referred to as the council. These were the individual who were in the driver's seat so far as Israel was concerned religiously.

Now, granted, the Roman government, the Roman government was occupying Israel and they were calling the shots. Politically, militarily, the Jews could have only the privileges that the Romans were willing to extend them.

[ 24 : 43 ] But at the same time, they had a great deal of latitude in their worship and in how they conducted themselves as Jews as long as they didn't do anything in opposition to the Roman government.

The Romans gave them quite a bit of latitude. They allowed this council to remain in place. And these 70 men who comprised the council were the shakers and movers of religious Israel.

They were the hoi polloi. They were the top guns. They were the ones who made all of the major decisions that impacted Israel religiously. and they are the very ones who physically cast the stones that took Stephen's life.

And that is related in Acts chapter 7 and it is very, very important. I personally regard this as a likely possibility of it being Israel's final answer.

But there are other considerations as well. And one of the things I base this on is a fascinating but seemingly insignificant little parable that's tucked away in Luke's gospel chapter 13.

[ 25 : 52 ] I want you to go there for a moment. It is just remarkable. Just remarkable. Luke chapter 13 and the whole key here is all about repentance.

I'm going to address this subject more fully later on because it's a fascinating subject and terribly misunderstood. Just let me say this to what's your appetite a little bit.

Someone asked, is repentance necessary for salvation? The answer is yes, absolutely, of course.

Repentance is necessary for salvation. But let me complicate the issue by saying you cannot be saved by repenting. But you cannot be saved without repenting.

Now just put that on your back burner a little bit and we'll clarify it perhaps in an upcoming session. In chapter 13, here's what we have. On the same occasion there were some present who reported to him, that is to Jesus, about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

[ 27 : 14 ] Just a word of explanation here. This is a terribly tragic situation. There were some Jews who were feeling a little rambunctious around one of their particular holidays and they got out of line and the story was that they presented a very real threat to the present constituency of Roman soldiers who were overseeing the whole land at the time and Pilate had ordered his Roman soldiers to deal with this very harshly.

This was Rome's way of putting down any semblance of rebellion or revolt. Their motto was nip it in the bud and this is exactly what they did. So when these Jews were feeling kind of frisky around one of their patriotic holidays and were making some moves that they ought not to have been making, Pilate moved into the temple area and just had a massacre there.

And the end result was the blood of these zealots was mixed, mingled with the animal blood that were being sacrificed there as part of their religious ritual.

So you've got human blood mixed with animal blood. It was a blood bath right there in the temple courtyard. And this is exactly what he is referring to about whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

And he answered and said to them, do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? I tell you, no. But unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

[ 28 : 57 ] Now what's he getting at here? What's the theme that is developing here? It is this. It is repent. Repent. Repent. That is the principal subject of this passage.

The necessity for repentance. That means the necessity for changing your mind. There's only one reason to ever change your mind. Only one reason to ever repent about anything. And that is this.

You're convinced you're wrong. And when you change your mind from the position that you wrongly held to a position you believe to be right, you've repented. And let me tell you something.

It doesn't necessarily have anything to do with anything religious. The word repent metanoia, which means through the mind, is the word that existed in classical Greek language long before the New Testament Greek was ever written.

It is just that we associate the word repent with religious things because that's the context in which it is usually used. But it doesn't mean necessarily anything religious at all, as does the word disciple.

[ 30 : 01 ] We always make the word disciple some religious connotation. But there were disciples long before Christ ever came along. Plato and Aristotle had disciples.

All it means is a learner or a follower, one who adopts the positions of a guru and follows him. That's a disciple. But we attach a religious significance to it.

It doesn't have that at all. And neither does the word repent. It means change your mind about anything. Boy meets girl, they dated for six months, they were engaged to get married, but the longer they went together, the more they decided that they were not meant for each other, and they both repented.

What's that mean? It just means they changed their mind. I'm not going to marry you. I've reversed myself. That is the meaning of repentance.

It doesn't have anything to do with anything religious. It just means you change your mind. That's all. So, what's the basis for changing your mind? Information.

[ 31 : 03 ] The more she saw of him, and the more he saw of her, constituted information that both of them received. And they came to the conclusion, I don't want to be with this person for the rest of my life.

So they break it off. That's repentance. It doesn't have anything to do with sin. It doesn't have anything to do with penance. It doesn't have anything to do with punishment.

It doesn't have anything to do with remorse. It just means change your mind. That's all it means. That's all it means. But it is so important. And here in the context. Or do you suppose that those 18 on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, this was a construction accident, happened.

There was a huge scaffolding that had been built for this construction project, and the thing collapsed. And there were a lot of people killed. Do you suppose they were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem?

No, I tell you no. But unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. What's the theme? Repent. Change your mind. And he began telling this parable.

[ 32 : 08 ] Well, now, would you look here. One of the keys to interpreting a parable that Jesus gave is learn from the context.

Christ. Why is he giving this parable in this place? Our Lord never went about spouting off parables just to entertain the crowd.

He never told stories just to be telling stories. It always had a connection. There was a reason why he was giving this parable at this time.

And guess what the theme of this parable is? Ah. Repent. Let's read it. Certain man had a fig tree. I want you to understand this is a made-up story.

There's no reason to believe this was an actual case. A parable is generally referred to as a made-up story. Certain man had a fig tree.

[ 33 : 08 ] Everybody could identify with that. They all were familiar with fig trees. And this fig tree had been planted in his vineyard. Common place to plant fig trees. And he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any.

Now one would guess that he was not out of line in expecting to find fruit on it. It was a rather probable thing that there would be.

It was reasonable to expect that there would be fruit on it. And he came to it and looked. No fruit. And he said to the vineyard keeper, Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any.

Cut it down. Why does it even use up the ground? This miserable tree that isn't producing anything is taking valuable nutrients from the soil that other plants would benefit from.

And it isn't doing anything with it. So let's just cut it down. And he, the vineyard keeper, answered and said, Let it alone, sir, for this year too.

[ 34 : 24 ] In other words, he's saying, Let's give it one more growing season. Give it one more chance. What's he saying? He's saying, Let's give the tree a reprieve.

Let's give it a stay of execution for a year. And I will dig around it. What good will that do?

Well, you loosen the soil around it. That's called aeration. You allow more oxygen to make its way down to the roots of the plant.

So you loosen the soil around it and aerate it and fertilize it. In other words, he's saying, We want to give this tree every possible advantage and opportunity to do what it's supposed to do, to bear fruit.

fruit. And if it bears fruit next year, fine. But if not, after the year's reprieve, then we'll cut it down.

[ 35 : 45 ] What's the meaning of the parable? We aren't told. The text does not go on to say, Now, the meaning of this parable, or what this is all about, we aren't told.

But if what I said is true, that Jesus just never gave parables just to be giving parables, it is set in a context of what? The need for repentance.

Now, look, if you will, at Matthew chapter, well, I don't know where it is because I hadn't planned on going there.

But let's look at chapter 3. Now, I like Luke's version better.

Go back to Luke. You were in Luke anyway. Let's go to Luke chapter 3. Luke 3.



[ 37 : 05 ] And the ministry of John the Baptist. And verse 7. John therefore began saying to the multitudes who were going out to be baptized by him, You brood of vipers, that's translated means sons of snakes, not very complimentary, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come.

Now, we're not told this here in Luke, and it looks kind of like he's addressing the whole multitude this way. But Matthew gives us the version that Jesus was actually pointing out the scribes and Pharisees, the Sadducees.

They were the ones he was calling the brood of vipers, sons of snakes. Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? And look at verse 8. Therefore, bring forth fruits, produce, in keeping with repentance.

And do not begin to say to yourselves, We have Abraham for our father. Now, what this is saying is really significant.

What was John's principal message? It was repent. For the kingdom, repent. And the reason you should is because the kingdom of heaven is nigh.

[ 38 : 26 ] It is at hand. And you need to get your act together and get ready for it. You need a major attitude adjustment. Now, let me tell you something. Actions are produced by attitudes.

There's never an action that wasn't preceded by an attitude. Israel was in dire need of an attitude change. An attitude change regarding their sin.

You know what they were counting on? Abraham is our father. We are of the lineage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And Jesus is saying, John the Baptist is saying, you've got to stop relying on that.

It isn't adequate just because you are a biological Jew. What you need is to bring forth the evidence, the fruits that accompany repentance.

And if you repent, if you change your mind, it will be reflected in your behavior. Because actions are determined by attitudes.

[ 39 : 32 ] If your attitude is right, your actions will be right. If your attitude isn't, your actions will be wrong. You need a major attitude adjustment.

The whole nation of Israel did. They were priding themselves on being the seed of Abraham in the very same way that many Americans pride themselves, I belong to such and such a church.

Well, big deal. That's saying the same thing as we're the seed of Abraham. Do you know what that counts for in the eternal perspective? Nothing.

Unless the church you are a member of is the body of Christ. But there are people who take all kinds of false comfort in being a member of this or being a member of that or I was baptized in this church or that church or whatever.

That's the same thing that John is criticizing them for. Say not within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father. The whole theme here is about repentance.

[ 40 : 35 ] The only reason to repent of anything is because you're wrong and you recognize it. And you want to embrace the right. That is repentance. repentance. About anything.

In the context here, it is about who Jesus Christ is, whether God really sent him, whether he is God's son.

Most of those had a negative attitude. John says you need to reverse that. Jesus said the same thing. Now, it is striking to me.

That if, as a result of Christ's prayer from the cross, if the father did forgive Israel, then that meant the door was not shut.

That meant the opportunity is still available for Israel as a nation to embrace Jesus as their Messiah. that was the opportunity Peter gave them on the day of Pentecost.

[ 41 : 42 ] It was repeated in Acts chapter 3. I am of the opinion that it was also repeated in Acts chapter 7. that's where Stephen was stoned.

Stephen laid out the whole history of Israel and he implored them with one last ditch effort to reverse themselves and embrace this one whom they crucified as their Messiah.

Their answer was they stoned him. They're still in a negative mood. Now, as best as we can determine, when Jesus came to Israel and presented himself as their Messiah, he engaged an earthly ministry that comprised about three years, maybe plus a few months, about three years.

years. Is it merely coincidental that he said to the fig tree, for three years I have come to this tree looking for fruit and found none?

Cut it down. Is it just coincidental that Jesus ministered to Israel, whom I believe to be a type of the fig tree, for three years?

[ 43 : 15 ] And then they were given a year's reprieve, which meant it would go into the fourth year when the option was still available for the nation of Israel.

How much time transpired from the death of Jesus Christ to the stoning of Stephen in Acts chapter 7?

about a year. Once again, I ask the question, is that just a coincidence?

I really don't think so. I think this in Acts 7 was Israel's final answer that was administered or given.

I'll tell you who the Sanhedrin represented in a comparative way to the United States.

[ 44 : 21 ] If you can think in terms of the president representing the executive branch, the Supreme Court consisting of nine individuals representing the judicial branch, and all of Congress including 100 senators and 435 representatives, add them up.

All of those together making one unified corporate decision. that's the equivalent of the Israeli Sanhedrin.

That was all of their governmental powers and religious powers because they didn't have separation of church and state. It was all one. That was the elite governing body of Israel that physically rained those stones down on the body of Stephen and took his life.

I think that was Israel's final answer and I think that's when God set them aside. But do you know it isn't as clear as we would like and I'm not insisting on this dogmatically I'm just saying in my mind this fits.

It fits too well to be a coincidence. And Stephen could have been Israel's last hope.

[ 45 : 51 ] And as you read on in Acts chapter 13 Paul makes it very clear that God is turning to the Gentiles because of the rejection of Israel.

And in the very last chapter of the book of Acts it becomes abundantly clear also when Paul was dealing with these Jews who were in Rome and they're coming to him in his hired villa in Rome in Acts chapter 28 he again makes it very clear that we are going to the Gentiles since you reject this message and you continue to reject Jesus as the Messiah God is setting you aside and the best commentary on that is Romans 9 10 and 11 and it makes it very very clear that Israel is set aside by God and is in a rejection mode from God because of their unbelief and that is where they remain to this day blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles become in so that's why it's important that we understand when the church began or when it did not begin and again I do not have the ability to put as firm a handle on it as

I would like but to me these things make sense and they fit and if we take the position that all scripture is inspired of God it is essential that scripture fit things do not have just loose ends dangling but there is a cohesion there is a coherence to scripture and I believe this adds to it you may have other ideas I'd be happy to hear them we've got three or four minutes before we dismiss is there a question or comment I apologize for the heat in here it's really really warm isn't it elders I want to put you on alert that when we have situations like this in the future please excuse yourself and get up and go open some windows and everybody will appreciate that and I would appreciate you doing it without me having to remind you to do it so just do it in the future Lynette okay

I'm sorry I'm sorry just a second okay now say again if we would believe in signs today that God has given me a sign to do this or that wouldn't that all be part of the previous dispensation of Israel dispensation sure that's that's that's that's why we're not doing that's why they are not in vogue for today is because this is not the dispensation of Israel this is the dispensation of the church and the thing that is to characterize us is that we walk by faith not by sight and walking by sight is walking by signs well here's a illustration to kind of show how important what you're talking about is for us today and why it makes a difference I was talking with an acquaintance just a couple weeks ago and she believes in signs and she said that she had written this article a long time ago she had written several articles but her very first one was about clouds in the sky and she said

I really been thinking lately about whether or not I should get a divorce because your husband hasn't been getting a mom for years and she said I was really thinking about this and something told me to look up in the sky and there was an F and then there was a 3 beside it and she said look and told her friend and her friend said well that F must be Fred and the 3 is for you three you and your two children and she said yeah I think so I think God wants me to go ahead and divorce them because those are not together and she just thought this was such a this is what God has been telling me because I been praying for him to give me a sign and it was just out of the blue that I just looked up in the your point is very well taken

[ 51 : 01 ] Lynette and and this this is very very sad very sad because these people usually mean well they usually want to do the right thing they're at a loss to know what to do so they look for some kind of a confirming sign like that and this is nothing more than pure mysticism it is just hunches people looking for signs symbols and everything we are not the traffic in that stuff folks God does not deal that way and we are to simply take God at his word and don't go off looking for signs and like we said even even if there is whatever clouds in the sky the possible interpretations of that are endless how in the world could anybody know that that's what it means you know that I I remember hearing about this fellow went to his pastor and he had an infatuation with this girl in the congregation unfortunately she was not reciprocated and he was head over heels in love with her and she wasn't interested and he went to this pastor and he said

I really want you to pray and ask God to turn her heart around so that she'll want to marry me and the pastor said well here's what you do he said next time you see her you talk to her you just ask her to stand still for a minute and what I want you to do is you walk around her just make a circle around her you just walk around her seven times and that is like Joshua and the children of Israel walking around the walls of Jericho seven times and that will cause her heart just like the walls of Jericho to fall did you ever hear a bigger bunch of BS in all your life and you blame that on

God I could see God in heaven going oh me oh he gets blamed for so much garbage that he's got nothing to do with God doesn't traffic in this kind of nonsense he's given us a sure word of prophecy we just need to get in the book and get it out and our time is gone would you stand please father how thankful we are for the sure word of prophecy and that we are not left to groping and searching for signs and wonders and all the rest of it you provided us with everything we need to know within the confines of this book we need to simply understand it and be obedient to it we bless you and thank you the God of heaven for this marvelous revelation and for your son who came to provide it in the flesh and in his name we pray enjoy this wonderful day pat all that after of the ■■■imat the honey last why the

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