

Year-End Odds and Ends

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] Well, we are prepared to entertain whatever questions, and it doesn't have to be a question. It can be a comment statement that you want to make regarding anything in particular.

And this is a kind of a wrap up at the year end. And we would just like to have this opportunity to perhaps tie up some loose ends that might be dangling out there if we can.

But you rest assured, I've got a text, and I'm fully prepared to take off if you don't.

So who would like to – okay, Gary back there has a comment or a question. Thank you.

Theology obtained its name from the concept that the Christian church has replaced the nation of Israel as the chosen people of God.

[1 : 23] And the thinking is that whereas Israel at one time were the chosen people of God, because of their disobedience and their rejection of the Messiah that God sent them, God has rejected them permanently.

So there is no more future prophetically for Israel than what would exist regarding Ireland or France or any other nation like that, that God has set them aside permanently.

And that the church, and that the Christian church has replaced them. And if I were to talk to someone about that, I think, at least for me, by far and away, I think the most persuasive and the most consistent argument is simply this, that one must be limited to a literal interpretation of the scriptures where Israel means Israel and the church means the church.

Words mean things. And they are to be taken at face value unless the context makes it quite clear that they are being referred to in a figurative way.

And then it is almost always obvious. So really what replacement theology has to deal with is the fact that they do not take the scriptures literally.

[2 : 58] Now, here's another very interesting point. They interpret the Bible just like we do. They take things at face value. It means what it says, except when it comes to prophecy.

And when it comes to prophecy, they spiritualize or take it figuratively. And where in the prophetic passage of scripture, Israel is in question or Israel is the subject spoken of, they just automatically make that become the church, the New Testament church.

And it's all about hermeneutics. It's all about how you approach the scriptures. You've heard me say time and again that you can prove anything you want by the Bible. It's all in how you interpret it.

So what my plea is for a consistent literal approach. Now, this does not mean, this does not mean, and this is something that we are often accused of, this does not mean that you take everything in the Bible literally.

Of course not. There are plenty of places where it is quite obvious it was not intended to be taken literally, and it shouldn't be. There's figurative language. There are a lot of these things that we are utilising today.

[4 : 19] So I use these things just Mission Respecting Project. available and so far there are 43 different volumes and the subject of hermeneutics begins I think with volume 25 through about 35 something like that and I think you will find those enormously helpful and if it's not 25 it's 26 but you can look at the table of contents on the back of it and see about hermeneutics the introduction of it etc what it means and why and how there are principles of interpretation that are so important and if you ignore them you're going to get all kinds of wrong answers Joe wait for the mic here the Word of God in Romans makes it very clear that God will deal with the Israelites in the future they are still going to be dealt with it talks about them in the past it talks about what they are in the state during the church age and then

Romans goes ahead and tells us what after the rapture how he's going to deal with the Israelite peace it's all laid out right in Romans you know Romans 9 10 and 11 especially we talked about this

a little bit in the nine o'clock hour this morning pursuant to the beginning of the chronological study that we'll engage in next week but this is a subject that is it's very very old it goes all the way back hundreds and thousands of years in fact it goes clear back to Augustine's time St. Augustine was a very brilliant man no question about that he lived in the fourth century and he probably popularized this idea more than anyone and of course the Roman Catholic Church which was in its infancy then really picked up on this and believed of course believed the Roman Catholic Church to be the lawful God ordained successor to the nation of Israel and they adopted their own priesthood and their own doctrine and so on and brought some of the things from from Judaism into

Romanism and this continued for hundreds of years and then along came a man called Martin Luther actually he wasn't the first John Wycliffe was was in the late 1300s middle 1300s referred to as the morning star of the Reformation so Wycliffe and Tyndale and Martin Luther virtually all of these were Roman Catholic priests in good standing the church until of course they went against the teachings of the church and they eventually they were all excommunicated and when Martin Luther made his break from the Roman Catholic Church he brought a lot of baggage with him and as we were talking at nine o'clock one of them was a very negative posture and position against the Jewish people and the Jews the Jews have been the recipient of untold persecution and marginalizing and rejection for the last almost 2000 years and many of those who were on the on the dishing out of that persecution were those who embraced this idea of replacement theology and they saw the Jew nationwide or worldwide they saw the Jew as under the just and ongoing punishment of God and that it was the responsibility of those who were members of the church which in this case for the most part was the Roman Catholic Church to inflict any pain that they could upon the Jew because it was well deserved and Martin Luther took that position as well I think I told you in the past that that Martin Luther and I don't he's one of my heroes I am awed at the amount of work that this man turned out in the 1500s absolutely amazing Martin Luther had to have been one of the most brilliant individuals that ever lived but he had his flaws as we all do and one of them was his replacement theology thing he did not understand that he wrote some of the most vicious vitriolic diatribes against the Jewish people that you could ever imagine and I think I related to you before that as late as the 1990s no more than maybe 20 years ago the Lutheran church worldwide issued a worldwide apology to the Jewish people for the nasty things that they're found in Martin Luther is the

■yandro and the listeners through the 94. of the pulpit. People tend to be persuaded and as we were talking at nine o'clock, sometimes people are persuaded more because of the messenger than they are the message.

[10:10] That's wrong. That is completely wrong. The messenger may be very eloquent, very fluid, very gifted, very glib, very entertaining, and very wrong.

And one of the examples we gave, a spellbinding speaker, Adolf Hitler.

Have you ever seen that man, any of the speeches that he made? I'll tell you what, I was mesmerized by Adolf Hitler's speaking even though I didn't understand a word he said. Didn't understand a word.

I can't speak German. I didn't hear. But you talk about power and rhetoric and the people. Hey, listen, the German people are not a bunch of dummies.

The German people, as a race, as an ethnic group of people, have distinguished themselves as among as among some of the leading thinkers, movers and shakers of the world for centuries.

[11:18] But look at how many of them got on board with Adolf Hitler. Amazing. And you see some of those Nuremberg rallies that they had and him standing there and delivering those speeches.

It's just amazing. And look at Jim Jones and people like that. You know, the pulpit can be a very dangerous place. The speaker's podium can be a very dangerous place.

I would just emphasize it's all a matter of interpretation and to be consistent with the interpretation.

If you want to get into this hermeneutics thing, that's the art and science of interpreting the Bible.

If you want to get into it, you will find the rules and the principles beginning with Miles Coverdale in 1535, how to approach and interpret the Bible in a way that is consistent, that makes sense, that's logical, that is doable.

And I think you'd find it very helpful. And it starts with volume 26. Other comments or questions?

Yes, up here. Sort of along the chronological Bible thinking.

[12:23] How did it come about that the Bible really got divided into the Old and New Testament at that particular point since the Gospels really are probably a continuation of the Old Covenant or Old Testament?

Well, I have come to a conclusion that is so unorthodox.

I'm almost ashamed to even share it with you. But I'm going to do it. But this is going to be some of the weirdest things you've ever heard.

Okay? And some of you might say, well, that proves it. Marv needs to retire. That's the icing on the cake.

That's for sure. Let me just say, what I'm going to share with you now is not a hill I want to die on.

[13:27] Okay? And I'm not saying that this is the way it is, absolutely, and anybody that disagrees is completely wrong. I'm just saying this is the latest conclusion that I've come to and I may well be making a faulty assumption like I've been talking about because I'm as capable of them as anybody else.

But I have pretty much come to the conviction that what we call the New Testament does not exist. There is no Old Testament and New Testament. And I know people will hold up their Bibles and say, well, you're crazy. What do you think this is? And the New Testament is published sometimes as a single volume by itself like I got when I went in the army.

Everybody got a Gideon copy of the New Testament. Boy, how can I? I've already opened this can of worms. So, well, let me begin by saying this.

every single time the word used in the New Testament is the word testament. Every time. It should never be translated testament.

[14:46] It should always be translated covenant. Covenant. It is diatheke. And it literally means through cutting.

Cutting. Well, what is it that you're cutting? The Bible uses the term the cutting of a covenant. And the reason it uses the term cutting is because they cut.

And what do they cut? They cut animals. That's the way you made a covenant in the Bible. Come for a moment to Genesis chapter 15.

Would you please? Genesis 15. We've been there before. Some of you grace people are very familiar with this passage. It's one of the most fascinating passages in all of scripture.

While you're turning there, let me say this too. In getting into the Old Testament, which is what we're going to be doing for quite some time while we are engaging the chronological study, in the Old Testament we find numerous examples, especially beginning in Genesis, where God is dealing with humanity in what I call an infantile kind of way.

[15:59] The human race is in its infancy when we read things in the book of Genesis. And because of that, God uses very straightforward, in-your-face kind of situations that he doesn't use today.

God spoke face to face with a number of individuals, one of whom was Abraham. We'll be talking about him right here in chapter 15. And you've got to see how these people lived and the culture that existed in their day.

Otherwise, this is just so much gibberish and doesn't make any sense at all. So God tells Abraham that he's going to have a son, and Abraham says, well, I'm not sure that that's necessary because I've got an heir.

His name is Eliezer. Actually, I purchased him in Damascus. And he stands to inherit everything that I have. And Abraham was obviously a very wealthy man. And God said, no, he will not be your heir, but one who shall come forth from your own body.

He shall be your heir. And he took him outside. Now, wait a minute. Who is the he? If we look at the text, it is the word of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision.

[17:24] all right? So the he in verse 5 must be, I think according to the context, the Lord in verse 1.

And in this vision, he took Abraham outside and said, now look toward the heavens and count the stars if you're able to count them, so shall your descendants be.

And he believed in the Lord and he reckoned it to him as righteousness. This is one of the most fabulous verses in all of the Bible. It just means that Abraham did not have the necessary righteousness that God required in order to be accepting of him.

There was no way that Abraham could measure up. So what God told Abraham was, Abraham, if you will just believe me, if you will have faith in me, I will count your faith as a substitute for the righteousness that you don't have.

That's an amazing thing. And this, by the way, is called justification by faith. So he reckoned it to him.

[18 : 36] He counted, put it to his account for righteousness. He said, I'm the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, give you this land to possess it. And he says, how may I know that I shall possess it?

Well, now wait a minute. Didn't he just tell him that? You know what Abraham is actually asking here? He's asking, I heard what you said, but would you mind putting that in writing?

That's exactly what he's doing. He is, in a sense, he is insulting the Almighty. God, in his infinite patience, didn't come back and say, well, Abraham, you skunk, I just told you.

Isn't my word good enough for you? No, he didn't do that. God is infinitely patient, infinitely kind, and what he tells Abraham is inasmuch as this.

Okay, Abraham, I've told you that you're going to have a son and inherit all of this, but you're having a difficult time believing that. So I'll tell you, okay, we'll do it your way.

[19 : 40] We'll do it your way, Abraham. Well, what was Abraham's way? Abraham's way is what follows here. God said, verse 9, Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, and a turtle dove, and a young pigeon.

Then he brought all these to him and cut them in two lengthwise and laid each half opposite the other. He did not cut the birds.

Obviously, it would seem like probably because they're too small. But all of these others, so you got a side of beef here and a side of beef over here, cut lengthwise in between, and half of the animals are put over here and half of them are put over here in a row.

And we look at that and we say, that is so strange. Well, it is strange. This is called cutting a covenant.

covenant. They were going to make a deal. And the deal they were going to make was on the terms and in the familiar area that Abraham was accustomed to.

[20 : 53] This was standard operating business procedures of Abraham's day. This is drawing up a contract. When we draw up a contract, we do it in writing, and we have the party of the first part sign here, and then the party of the second part signs here, and then you've got a document that's valid, and both signatures are on it, and both are responsible to adhere to the terms of the contract.

Well, they didn't do that. They sliced up these animals, put animal parts here, animal parts over there, and then the two parties entering into that covenant would walk arm in arm, join arms, and they would walk between those animal pieces.

and the message that was being conveyed is, if either of us entering into this covenant violates the terms of this covenant, may what has happened to these animals happen to them.

That's pretty serious. They took making a covenant very, very serious, and what God is doing here is stooping, condescending, to Abraham to be able to convince him that he really means what he says.

And then the fascinating thing about this, that is just the icing on the cake, verse 12 says, the sun was going down, deep sleep fell upon Abram, and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him.

[22 : 30] and God said to Abram, know for certain that your descendants, now Abraham is out, he's passed out, he's under this deep sleep, call it if you will, a divine anesthetic, he's out, and God says to him, know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs.

Who's he talking about? He's talking about Abraham's descendants, and who will that be? That's going to be Jacob, his grandson, and all of Jacob's sons, twelve sons, and where are they going to be?

They're going to be in Egypt. They're going to be down in Egypt. This is four hundred years later than the text that we're reading here. Your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years, but I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions, and as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace.

You shall be buried at a good old age. Abraham's going to live to be 175 years old when he dies.

And then in the fourth generation, they shall return here.

That is, here where Abraham was conducting this covenant, cutting this covenant with the Lord. for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete. That's another study in itself.

[23 : 59] I don't want to stop there. And it came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch, which passed between those pieces.

It's a little bit like, kind of like the burning bush. This is the representation of the deity. And it is God being represented here, and he is passing between these animal pieces.

But where is Abraham? He's out cold. He's completely asleep. He's not walking through those pieces. And what does this signify?

To me, it can signify only one thing, that this is a covenant, and that God is really serious about establishing this covenant, but Abraham has no responsibility at all in it.

Where is he? Why isn't he walking between these animal pieces? He's sound asleep. And all that says is that this is a covenant that is dependent upon one party, and one party only.

[25 : 07] Who is that party? It's God. So what that makes this is an unconditional covenant. That means this is what God is going to do for the children of Abraham.

No strings attached. Well, let me ask you this. Well, what if they proved themselves unworthy of the covenant?

Well, they do. They do. They are. Who do you think God was dealing with all the time in the wilderness, with all of their griping and complaining and doubting and everything?

It was these people, these descendants of Abraham, these Israelites. And why doesn't God just throw them over and say, I've had it with you people, I'm going to get a new group of people and just kick them all out?

Well, replacement theology says that's what God did, and he replaced them with the church. And what we're saying is, no, no, this is an unconditional covenant.

[26 : 09] And what that means is, God is saying, Abraham, this is what I'm going to do for you and your descendants, and it doesn't make any difference what you do or don't do. This thing is totally on me.

And our replacement theology friends say, no, no, no, no. This is a conditional covenant, and Abraham's seed has certain terms that they have to meet, and if they are unfaithful to the Lord, God is going to punish them by kicking them out and getting another people, and that's what he did. That's the great divide between replacement theology and dispensational theology. We see this as an unconditional covenant. They see it as conditional. Now, there are covenants that are conditional.

The Mosaic covenant, the Palestinian covenant, was conditional. In Deuteronomy, and we won't take time to go back there because we've already used more than we should on this, but God told them, look, if you disobey me, if you violate my laws, I'm going to scatter you to the far winds. I'm going to spread you over all the earth. And you know what? That's exactly what God has done. And he did it because they were a disobedient and gainsaying people.

[27 : 32] All the day long have I stretched forth my arms into a disobedient and a gainsaying people. They gave God one reason after another to kick them out of the land.

And you know what? He did. And he told them he would. He said, I'm going to scatter you. But he also said, he also said, I'm going to scatter you and punish you, but I'm going to bring you back. This is a love affair that God has with the nation of Israel that from a human standpoint is totally unreasonable. And you know what he uses to illustrate it?

Hosea. Hosea, I want you to go and take this woman as your wife.

Oh, yes, one other thing you need to know about her, Hosea. She's a prostitute. I want you to marry this unfaithful woman, unfaithful, undeserving woman.

[28 : 34] And why is that? God is using that situation to illustrate his love relationship with the nation of Israel that has gone astray and has gone whoring after other gods in idolatry and everything, just like Gomer did when she betrayed her husband.

And you go and you buy her back. You pay good money for her. She's on the slave market. She's on the slave block as a prostitute. She's already been unfaithful to you.

And you go and you pay good money to buy that woman back. Now we look at a situation like that and we say, wow, that's terrible. Why would God expect any man, any decent man to go and listen, I can promise you one thing.

When you get to heaven, Hosea is going to be there. You ask Hosea if he thinks he got a raw deal. Ask Hosea if he thinks God took advantage of him and made him marry this unfaithful woman.

And he'll give you the real low down. This is a beautiful, beautiful picture of God's love and care for the nation of Israel. A nation that was totally undeserving of his protection and his love.

[29 : 53] Yet, he gave it anyway. That's what we're talking about. And you know something? That same love, love, that same quality of love is extended not only to the nation of Israel, it is extended to every single individual child of God who has come to put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

He loves you that same way. That's an incredible undying love. And we look at that love and we say, man, that is unreasonable. And you know what? You're right. You're right.

It is unreasonable. That's not logical. Nope, it is not logical. And it certainly is not justice. It is grace with a capital G.

That's what makes this whole thing so amazing. So, they established this covenant and this is referred to as the Abrahamic covenant.

God made this covenant with Abraham and it started back in chapter 12 and verses 1 and 2. God called him out of Ur of the Chaldees, said, I'm going to make you great, make your name great.

[31 : 07] I'm going to give you seed that will populate the earth and those who bless you, I will bless and those who curse you, I will curse. And let me ask you a question.

You look at every nation, you look at every nation that has depreciated and persecuted the Jew. through the years and tell me where and what they are today.

That says something. And God is implementing this covenant, this Abrahamic covenant, and when you come into Exodus chapter 20, there's going to be another covenant given and it's going to be called the Mosaic covenant.

covenant, and it is the covenant of the law. And what's going to happen with that? I've got to abbreviate this, but Abraham, Moses is called up into the mountain, and God gives him the tables of the law.

And he says, Moses, you take these commandments down and give them to the people and see what they say. it's important for you to understand, God did not impose the law upon Israel.

[32 : 29] He didn't say, I don't care whether you want this law or not, you're going to take it and like it because it's my law, here it is. No, no, no, no, no, no. God offered them the law.

This is Exodus 19 and 20, and we don't have time to turn to it, but you can look at it your leisure later. And he said, you take these tablets down and you tell the people what the deal is and see what they say.

And by the way, you tell them that if they will be obedient, if they will listen to what I say, they will be my people and I will know them like I have never known any other nation on earth.

They will be my people and I will be their God. I'll provide for them, I'll protect them, I'll take care of them, and you tell them that's the deal. And Moses went down and he laid it out before the people, says, thus saith the Lord, here are the terms, what do you think?

And do you know what the text says? The people responded and said, all that the Lord has said will we do and be obedient.

[33 : 43] And Moses said, okay, we're going to cut a covenant. And he took blood, we didn't have the animal parts thing, remember this is 400 years later and this is in Egypt, not in Israel.

But they did slay an animal and Moses took the blood of the animal and he sprinkled it on the law, the tablets, and then he sprinkled it with a hyssop branch on the people, or at least some of the people.

And that signified bringing these two parties together, the law and the people. And the covenant was established. This covenant is going to be found, expressed in Exodus, beginning with chapter 20, all the way through the book of Exodus, beginning with 25 to chapters 24.

It's going to cover the dimensions and the building of the tabernacle where God said he would dwell with his people. It's going to include Leviticus, which is the handbook of the priests.

That's all part of the Mosaic law. This is the law. The Jews break down their Bible in three sections. It's called the law, the writings, and the prophets.

[35 : 03] Those are the three. They comprise the whole of the Old Testament. And that's the extent of the Jewish Bible. We call it the Old Testament.

The Jews call it the Bible. They do not accept the New Testament at all as being from God. Only the Old Testament. The law, the writings, and the prophets.

And the see how I can encapsulate this. Well, all of these things comprise the law of Moses.

And it's actually the whole Old Testament is referred to as the covenant. And if you will turn to Jeremiah chapter 31, many of you are already familiar with it.

The time is coming, says the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with them before which they broke.

[36 : 18] What covenant was that? That was the Mosaic covenant, the covenant of law. He said, Jeremiah said, I will establish a new covenant with them, the days are coming, when he would do that.

And Jeremiah was written about 500 years before Christ was born in Bethlehem. And you will remember the night that Jesus was betrayed, when he took the cup, and what did he say?

He said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. And very specifically, he did not drink of it.

If you look at the text, he gave the chalice to each of the twelve and told them, well not twelve, probably eleven, I think Judas was already gone out into the night, and he told them, each one of them, to drink from it.

And then he said, I will not drink from this cup until I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom. Well, that's never happened. That kingdom has never come.

[37 : 29] That kingdom is still subject to prayer, in what's called the Lord's Prayer, but misnamed we believe. So, the new covenant has never been established.

And what does that mean? That means there is no new covenant. And if there is no new covenant, what that really means is there is no new testament.

covenant. Why is it that it hasn't been established? For the simple reason that Israel has never accepted it.

Israel is never signed off on the new covenant. Jesus did his part in making his own body a sacrifice to establish the basis for that covenant, but Israel is never signed off.

And do you know what? When Peter preached his message on Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost, he was providing Israel with an opportunity right there in Acts 2 to get on board.

[38 : 37] Three thousand of them did. The vast majority of them did not. Peter repeats the message again one chapter later in Acts chapter 3, and he says, God has fulfilled his part.

He sent Christ to die. Now, Israel, it's up to you to fulfill your part. And if you will sign on and do what your ancestors did when they said all that the Lord has said will we do, will you do that Israel? That's the offer that is made. It is repeated in chapter 3 of Acts, and in chapter 4, the persecution begins. What was Israel's answer?

No. Nothing doing. We will not have this man to rule over us. And they rejected the gracious offer that Peter was extending to them.

You know when the Lord told Peter, I give you the keys to the kingdom? This was it. This was Peter using those keys. He was unlocking the door. He was providing a way of access for Israel to get on board.

[39 : 52] And Israel said, no, nothing doing. And a couple of chapters later, the most august body in the nation of Israel comprised of 70 of the leading male citizens of the whole country called the Sanhedrin, the council.

people, they got together, they cooked up a con job where they went out and hired some ne'er-do-wells off the street who lied against Stephen and said they heard him blaspheme God and they had two witnesses and they took Stephen out and they stoned him to death.

And here are these august gentlemen, the most refined, educated, respectable men in all of Israel comprised of 70 of the Sanhedrin and they physically stoned Stephen to death.

And that was Israel's final answer. And you move on through history and in 70 AD the Romans come in and destroy Jerusalem and the city and the temple and everything in connection with it and Israel is scattered to the four winds and they still are to this day.

So the new covenant is the basis for the establishing of the new covenant has been cared for.

[41 : 24] Peter says God has done his part. Christ died to provide the sacrifice, the basis for satisfying this covenant, for cutting the covenant.

Now Israel, if you will get on board, God will send Jesus back. That's chapter 3.

He will send him back. Well he's only been gone six weeks. He will send him back. Maybe eight weeks he's been gone. He will send him back and this kingdom thing will get underway and Israel said nothing doing.

So even though the basis for the new covenant has been laid in the finished work of Christ and guess who gets the benefit of that? You do. And so does every Jew who places their faith and trust in Christ.

But what about the new covenant doesn't exist? It has never come into existence and it won't until the revelation.

[42 : 27] So if that's not the new covenant, if that's not the new testament, pray tell me what in the world do you call Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and the book of Acts, I'll tell you what you call them. You call them the revealed word of God that came to humanity 400 years after what we call the Old Testament was concluded.

But it is not the new covenant. It does not yet exist. It will. That does not take away from the authority of what we call the New Testament. It's every bit the word of God.

But it is not the new covenant. It doesn't exist. Well, then, where did that come from? How did that get in? I've got it right here in my Bible, and you probably got it in yours, too.

You look between the pages. There it is. New American Standard Bible, New Testament. Doesn't that make it official?

Nope. It just makes it a printer's statement. Testament. And this is commonly accepted. Hey, don't go out of here and try to convince anybody of what I've said.

[43 : 36] They'll think you're nuts. Or my pastor says there's no such thing as the New Testament. What kind of a kook is he? And I'm not interested in splitting hairs.

You know. And God knows I do not enjoy being in a minority. I would much rather be in the comfortable majority where it's warm and cozy and everybody respects you and loves you and nobody thinks you're crazy.

But hey, truth is truth. And am I 100% sold on this? Nope. I'm not 100% sold on anything except the integrity of this book.

And people give me books all the time and then they ask me later, what did you think of that book? And I said, well, I agree with a lot of it and parts of it I don't agree with. And I told you this too.

If I wrote a book, I would write it completely true to my convictions and my beliefs. And five years later, I'd look at that and say, man, I wish I hadn't said that.

[44 : 38] I wish I hadn't, you know, because we change. And there's nothing wrong with that.

That's what growth is all about. Growth is all about unlearning something that isn't true and picking up on something that is.

That's what growth is. And we're supposed to be growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. And how do you do that? You just search the scriptures. Does everything I teach 100% true?

Nope. Do I teach some error? Yep, I'm sure I do. How do I know that? I'm a human being. I have to teach some error because I don't have access to 100% truth. Only God does.

So you know what I'm doing with the error that I think is out there? I'm looking for it. I'm trying to find it. And if I find it, I'm going to root it out. And I'll tell you what, it's a painful process because I have to come to you and say, folks, I know this is what I taught you for 40 years, but I was wrong.

And then you're thinking, well, what else has he taught us that was wrong? Hey, that just goes with the learning process. That's all we can do is learn and preach and teach to the best of our knowledge and ability at the time, knowing that we don't even come close to having all the truth.

[45 : 54] And if you ever find anybody other than Jesus Christ who says he has all the truth and you can believe everything that he says, head for the exit. You don't want anything to do with him. We all have flaws in our theology.

And with this, I'm going to close with one of my favorite statements. Every preacher has flaws in his theology, and when we get to heaven, we're all going to get straightened out.

Amen? Meanwhile, the Lord is gracious and just puts up with us with our meanderings and our misunderstanding and our getting it wrong and preaching it wrong and all the rest.

And I tell you, the more time I spend in the pulpit, the more I am in awe of God's grace and God's mercy. Would you stand please? Our Father, we don't know what we don't know.

And there is so much that escapes us. And we all have questions and we all have curiosities about all kinds of things regarding heaven and hell and everything else.

[47 : 04] things. But how grateful we are that you've made simple faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ so plain and so clear that anyone honestly looking for answers cannot help but find it.

Thank you that in the midst of all of our questions and fears and doubtings and disagreements among people with good intentions, there is that clarity of the gospel.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. We just cannot imagine anything more wonderful or more glorious than that. Thank you for making that as crystal clear as it is.

And thank you for each one here today that has tapped into the reality of that and knows the joy of sins forgiven. And Father, if there is anyone here today, boy or girl, man or woman, who cannot honestly say that they know the joy of forgiveness with you and acceptance with you, our prayer is that they even in the quietness of their heart right now, they say, Lord Jesus, there's so much about all of this that I don't understand.

But I understand that I want you and I need you and as best as I know how with all my questions and doubts and fears, I just want to put myself available to the Lord Jesus.

[48 : 43] I want to trust him. I want to thank him for dying for me. I want to be what he wants me to be and I want him to come into my life and make me what he wants me to be and I just want to follow you in any way that I can.

That's my prayer. Would you pray that? If that's the desire of your heart, I promise you, God will hear you. God will forgive you and save you and cleanse you and pardon you and make you his child and make heaven your home.

As surely as God is God. And if you do, be sure to tell somebody else so they can rejoice with you and help you. Thank you, Father, for the time we've shared together. We look forward to the new year and more of your faithfulness in Christ's wonderful name.

Amen. God bless you.