

The Dynamics Behind Doctrinal Development, Part 2

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[0 : 00] The title of the message this morning is the dynamics behind doctrinal development, part two. And we'll be in the Gospel of John, and there are two different passages we'll be looking at this morning.

Please turn to John chapter 14. And in John chapter 14, we will be looking at verses 16 through 26. I will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper, that he may be with you forever. That is the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see him or know him. But you know him, because he abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you. After a little while, the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Because I live, you will live also.

[1 : 31] In that day, you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. He who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me.

And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will disclose myself to him. Judas, not Iscariot, said to him, Lord, what then has happened that you are going to disclose yourself to us and not to the world?

Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. And my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him.

He who does not love me does not keep my words, and the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.

[2 : 41] These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

Please turn one page back. And you're probably at John chapter 16.

In John chapter 16, we'll be reading or looking at verses 7 through 15. But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away.

For if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

And he, when he comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.

Concerning sin, because they do not believe in me.

[4 : 02] And concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see me. And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.

For he will not speak on his own initiative. But whatever he hears, he will speak. And he will disclose to you what is to come.

He will glorify me, for he will take of mine and will disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are mine.

Therefore I said that he takes of mine and will disclose it to you. Important and critical and vital and essential and necessary.

[5 : 26] All of these terms are an expression of the importance that we are going to devote to the subject we are now undertaking. And they all relate to the value of doctrine.

Doctrine simply means teaching or content. But it does not mean the same thing as truth. Because truth is doctrine. But so is error.

Because there is sound doctrine. And there is unsound doctrine. So at the outset this morning, I want to express a few concepts to you. And then we'll be looking at some passages that Paul wrote

to Timothy.

And returning to what Gary was sharing with us from John's Gospel. Much doctrine that is taught and believed is not true and does not correspond to reality.

Doctrine that is true enlightens, edifies, comforts, and aids in spiritual growth and maturity. Doctrine that is false leads astray, confuses, and may ultimately contribute to the damning of those who embrace it.

[6 : 39] This is what makes doctrine important, critical, vital, essential, and necessary. And I would be the first to admit that doctrine poorly taught can be dry, boring, and uninteresting, even if it is true doctrine.

Doctrine is mentioned 60 times in the Bible. And the word teaching, countered to it, is mentioned 25 times.

Turn, if you would please, to what Paul wrote to young Timothy. And I think you can understand the importance of what he wanted to communicate to him by way of teaching.

Because the Apostle Paul knew that he was not going to belong for this world. And he wanted to communicate the most essential things to young Timothy that would stand him in good stead as he picked up the baton from Paul and went on with the Gospel.

So we're going to be looking for just a couple of moments at 1 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 3. Paul wrote to Timothy, And then verse 13.

[8 : 47] And verse 16. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching, which is a synonym for doctrine. Persevere in these things, for as you do this, you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

And then over another page or two into 2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 10. We get a distinct impression that Paul is trying to emphasize this because it is critically important.

But you, Timothy, you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecution, sufferings, etc.

And all of this centers around the teaching and the doctrine. And then verse 16. All scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching.

I think the King James renders it for doctrine. And then verse 16. For reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness. So that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

[9 : 59] And then in chapter 4 and verse 2. Preach the word, preach the word, be ready in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience and instruction.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled. That means they want to sit under the teaching of teachers who will tell them what they want to hear.

That's the meaning of the tickling of the ears. And then, if you would please, in Titus. These are, again, keep in mind, these are personal letters that Paul is writing to individuals.

And he says this to Titus in verse 9 of chapter 1. Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

Chapter 2 and verse 1. But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. And then he describes some examples of that.

[11 : 12] And in verse 7. In all things, show yourself to be an example of good deeds with purity in doctrine.

Dignified sound in speech, which is beyond reproach in order that the opponent may be put to shame, have nothing bad to say about you.

All of these passages emphasize the importance of teaching and of doctrine. So, the question is, as was posed in our bulletin for this morning, how is it that doctrinal positions are arrived at?

And we all know full well that doctrine is all over the place, even within Christianity. And I have here, as exhibit 1, a book that is called Handbook of Denominations in the United States.

This is authored by Frank Mead. There are over a quarter of a million copies sold. This is the new seventh edition. And it covers just about anything and everything that could be considered.

[12 : 23] A denomination, a split, a splinter, a sect, a cult, you name it. It is in here. Accurate, objective, and comprehensive, this seventh edition of the Handbook of Denominations has been completely updated.

It is an essential reference for those dealing with any aspect of faith and the faith community. The author describes more than 250 religious bodies in the United States, their historical background, doctrines or main teachings, and governmental organization, including statistics on the number of churches and church members, and church-related schools and institutions.

This is the go-to volume if you want to know anything about any particular church, group, or denomination. They've got the content right here.

It is rather authoritative and well recognized by virtually all denominations as to its content. And suffice it to say, The variations and the differences that exist between these groups as regards doctrine is just virtually unlimited.

This volume contains everything, including Baptists, which are probably in the majority insofar as Protestant denominations are concerned.

[13 : 55] At least they have been for several decades now, particularly in connection with the Southern Baptist Convention. But we all know that there are several different varieties of Baptists, as there are different varieties of Methodists, and Presbyterians, and Lutherans, and Episcopalians, and Church of God, and Nazarene, and on and on it goes.

And the only thing that they have in common, as I said before, each one believes that they are right and the other folks are wrong. And that's just... But that's predictable.

If you don't believe that what you believe is right, what business do you have believing it? You need to be persuaded that what you are pursuing is indeed the truth, to the best of your ability to understand it and to know it.

All denominations, as well as those we call non-denominational, are based upon doctrine, much of which is sound doctrine, but some of which is not sound doctrine at all.

Nearly all doctrine, and here's what I really, really want you to understand, because this is where we're going to be for several months.

[15 : 13] Nearly all doctrine is based upon what men believe to be true and was set forth by them with sincerity and the best of intentions.

But as we have already discovered, sincerity is no guarantee for the truthfulness of a position that is taken.

Sincerity is commendable and it is essential. But simply being sincere in what you believe does not guarantee its accuracy. That is because there is that which God has said in His Word and there is that which man has said God said.

But God did not say that or mean that at all. So that's the distinction that needs to be made. And the distinction is sometimes very startling.

The difference between what God says and what man says God says can be enormous and sometimes is.

[16 : 22] So, doctrinal conclusions were reached by men in positions of power, influence, and respect and then passed on to those under their authority and influence who then accepted those positions and built them into their statements of faith.

And I say that doctrinal conclusions were reached by men in positions of power. And this is because early on in church history women had very little input.

In fact, it was not considered necessary or even particularly desirable for women to have an education or even be able to read and write. They were simply looked upon as subservient to the demands and the wishes of men.

And we see how that has been in many instances not only corrected but sometimes overcorrected with the women's liberation movement and so on. But we won't get involved in that except to simply say that early on it was almost exclusively the territory of males to determine doctrine and to write it into statements of faith.

And I think it goes without saying that almost all who did that did so with the best of intentions. They were honorable people. They really believed what they believed was true and they believed they were justifying and propagating it.

[17 : 53] No one is questioning their sincerity and no one is questioning their motives. Of course, there are some who did have nefarious motives in that charlatans have always existed in areas of religion and medicine and philosophy and you name it.

There have always been people who have been out to shear the sheep and all they want to do is somehow enrich themselves and there is not a generation that has escaped these kind of people

and they are with us today.

many of them in abundance in some of the television programs and radio programs you see whereby if you will just send me your best offering I will send you this blessed prayer rug and when you pray on this rug you will receive blah blah and on and on and on and on and on and on these are scam artists they are religious manipulators and there are people who are desperate who fall for this stuff all the time but we are not actually talking about them.

Virtually all of these individuals who formulated doctrine early on claim to be and were accepted as the meaning or the true interpretations of the word of God in their findings.

This is how and why different denominations have come into being and it is very very important to understand this. It goes back all the way to the first century and we may we may see this kind of activity taking place within just years after the last apostles died off and these were followers of the apostles and some of them came to be known of and still are known today as church fathers.

[19 : 41] They are individuals who contribute in writing and in preaching and teaching based upon what they thought the scriptures taught and I think that you can say that almost all of these were honorable individuals and they certainly wanted to serve the Lord and were doing the best they could to affect that.

But again that does not mean that their findings were valid and there is a phrase that you have already heard and you're going to be hearing time and time again because it is so key and critical to what we are talking about and that is so very much of doctrine and doctrinal positions have been based upon faulty assumptions.

Things in the Bible that certain people believed were the case or that were true and they built upon that but their assumption was fallacious.

Their assumption was not justifiable at all but if you build a system or you build doctrine upon a false assumption then your conclusions are going to be incorrect also and that is precisely what has happened and if you are not aware of it let me inform you right now there is far more error that is available out there than there is truth.

Error has always dominated error has always been in greater abundance and greater supply than truth. Truth represents the narrowness of a way and when something is declared to be true it is the same as saying everything that is contrary to it is false and that's all the rest of the neighborhood.

[21 : 25] The moment that something is asserted to be true then everything that contradicts that or is opposite to that is automatically categorized as false.

So there is far more falsity and far more untruth out there than there is truth and you need to keep that in mind. This ties in with what our Lord talked about the narrow way and the broad way and the contrast between them and how many go in at the broad way because it is so broad and so expansive and how narrow the way of truth is and that is just an axiom that is found throughout scripture Old and New Testament.

What is the difference that actually separates what the Bible teaches and what man teaches that the Bible teaches and sometimes the difference is as great as night and day.

It is found in the simple fact that while the Bible is inspired of God man's interpretation of the Bible is not and don't let anybody tell you that it is.

The word of God is inspired by the spirit of God who came upon those individuals whom God utilized as the original writers of scripture and he gave them a supernatural ability that is called divine inspiration to write what God wanted written while all the time still utilizing individualistic vocabulary and writing style.

[23 : 01] Yet the word came with the authority of God himself as it was filtered through the human experience and put into the original autograph so that as we said before the Bible we have is a divinely authorized book but it is humanly flavored.

God built the human aspect into it by utilizing humanity to write it. He could have just dropped the Bible kerplow out of heaven but he didn't do that.

He partnered with individuals to give us the word of God and that gives us an entirely different take. The inspiration of the Bible is infallible but man's interpretation of the Bible is not.

The inspiration of the Bible is inerrant but man's interpretation of the Bible is not. And I want to return now for just a few moments to the passage that was read earlier in John's Gospel chapter 14 and we can see very early on how some erroneous thinking allowed positions to be taken that are really unjustified and they even persist unto this day.

Let's look at the first one in John's Gospel chapter 14. John chapter 14 and for time's sake we will begin with verse 16.

[24 : 43] I will ask the Father, he will give you another helper that he may be with you forever, the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it does not behold him or know him but you know him because he abides with you and will be in you.

And then he talks about he will not leave them and orphans and come down if you would please to verse 24. He who does not love me does not keep my words, the word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

Question. To whom is Jesus referring in this text? I remember how I answered that as a very young Christian early on.

As I excitedly read my Bible and came to John's Gospel and read this passage, I had been informed, and it certainly sounded good to me, it made good sense to me, that everything that is written in the Bible is for the Christian and is to the Christian and is about the Christian.

[26 : 12] And I was a Christian, even though a relatively recent one, so that meant automatically these things had my name on them. This was written to me. It's written to Christians in general.

Isn't it? No, it isn't. Actually, those to whom Jesus was speaking constituted a limited audience to whom these things were written.

This was personal information. Jesus gave to the apostles. He's not talking to you, not talking to me, not talking to anyone else except those who were there present.

And what is he assuring them? Look at the reinforcement over in chapter 16, just another page over. This is really very, very important material.

Chapter 16. And, again, for time's sake, we must limit ourselves to some of this passage here.

[27 : 21] Verse 13. When he, the spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. I naively thought that was speaking about me and to me.

After all, this Bible is a Christian book, and those who are Christians are those to whom the contents of this book are written. This is for me.

No, it isn't. It is for my learning. It is for my edification. It is for my understanding, but it is not for my appropriation personally.

You've heard the little ditty, I'm sure. Every promise in the book is mine. Every word, every line.

That is not true. We teach our children that little ditty in Sunday school, but it isn't so.

Every promise in the book is not yours. Sometimes a promise was given to someone completely different. God gave promises to Abraham. He didn't give to us. God gave promises to Moses.

[28 : 25] He didn't give to us. God gave promises to the Apostle Paul. He didn't give to us. I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.

For he will not speak on his own initiative, but whatever he hears, he will speak, and he will disclose to you what is to come. All things, verse 15, that the Father has are mine, therefore I said that he takes of mine and will disclose it to you.

What is that all about anyway? What is he saying here? What he's saying is simply this. Fellas, the time is coming later, after I'm gone, that you are going to need to recall what I said to you while I was here.

But you're not going to be able to do that. Because during the three years that we spent together, I said a lot of things. I taught a whole lot of things.

Much of those things, you aren't going to be able to remember. But I am going to use you, Peter, James, John, Matthew, I'm going to use you to record what I said while I was with you.

[29 : 50] And the Spirit of God is going to give you a supernatural ability to recall what I said to you. Jesus is going to say a lot of things to the disciples that's just not going to make any sense to them at all at the time he said it.

But after certain events have transpired, it will all come back to them. And by being aided by the Spirit of God, they are going to be able to supernaturally recall the words of Christ and be able to incorporate them into what they are writing.

he is talking about the problem that they would have in being able to accurately recall what he said. And you are going to be aided to do that. This is the ministry of the Spirit of God and the lives of the apostles who are going to be called upon to actually write scripture.

It doesn't apply to me. It doesn't apply to you. It applies to no one except to those to whom he was speaking. But it is amazing how people today, and I'm one of them, naively as a new Christian, I thought all I have to do is pray and the Spirit of God will inform me as to the truth of the text so that I will know that that's the right interpretation.

How do I know that's the right interpretation? Well, right here it says that the Spirit of God is going to take the things of Christ and reveal them to me. So the interpretation and the answer that I come up with from this text, I know, is provided by the Spirit of God and is the true interpretation of the text.

[31 : 38] Now there's a problem. What am I going to do about all those other Christians who relied on the same Holy Spirit and came up with different answers and different meanings of the text?

How am I to know which one is right? And they come up with a completely different thing. Listen, this is the stuff that denominations and churches are built upon.

The thing that separates all of these churches that we have mentioned, all of these denominations, the thing that separates them is what they believe, their doctrine.

And while all of them, I suspect, all of them reach their doctrinal conclusions with great sincerity and great earnestness and great desire to be well pleasing to the Lord.

But when the doctrines that some reach are completely opposite of the doctrines that other reach, something's wrong somewhere. how can this be?

[32 : 48] And while it sounds really spiritual to say, well, I know this is the meaning of the text, Acts 2, the day of Pentecost, the arrival of the church, the birthday of the church, the arrival of the Spirit of God, I know that's what the text means.

And the reason I know it is because I prayed about it and I've asked the Lord for light and meaning and understanding of the text and this is what he revealed. So, therefore, I know that it's true.

But the guy who pastors the church around the corner, he's a godly individual and he's prayed about it too and he's come up with a completely different answer. Now, some solve that by this.

And I think I mentioned this just briefly earlier. The meaning of Scripture is determined by the reader, not the writer.

This is a new slant that is in vogue today and many have picked up on it and I think it is disastrous and destructive and just plain crazy.

[33 : 56] Each one is to come to Scripture and read the Scripture and whatever it says to you, that's the meaning of it. So, the meaning of Scripture fluctuates from person to person as each one brings their own background, their own values, their own prejudices, their own biases to it and interprets it in the light of that.

So, it means whatever the reader gets from it. And the really nice thing about that in this day of political correctness is that nobody has a wrong interpretation.

Everybody's right. Isn't that wonderful? It isn't wonderful. It's nonsense. The interpretation of any passage of Scripture is not determined by the reader.

It is determined by the writer. It is what the writer intended to convey when he wrote what he wrote.

It is the message that he wanted to communicate to those to whom he is sending that message. what was in the mind of the writer. And that is singular. The application thereof is multiple. There are all kinds of lessons that can be drawn from it.

[35 : 14] Applications. There are reminders of it. There are all kinds of things, tidbits that you may pick up on it that are good. But that's far different from the interpretation. The interpretation is the meaning.

I know what the text says. What does it mean? Because if you cannot determine the meaning, there is no such thing as an intelligent response to the text.

In fact, not only can you not obey the text if you don't know what it means, you can't even intelligently disobey the text if you don't know what it means.

So all of the stops need to be pulled out to determine what the text means. And we have shared with you before, Miles Coverdale. And if you want to get into this in an extensive way that will be extremely enlightening to you, I suggest that you pick up Christianity Clarified, beginning with volume 26.

and you will find laid out for you the rationale, the approach, the essential input that has to be present when it comes to interpreting not only the Bible, but interpreting any item of literature. [36 : 35] literature. And we take great pains to labor with all of the rules of language and the metaphors and the similes and the figurative language and the literal language and the whole nine yards because hermeneutics, which is the art and science of interpreting the Bible, operates within a parameter of fixed principles and rules that will allow for a consistent understanding of Scripture and not only Scripture but of literature in general and I heartily recommend it.

If you would like to get into that, it would certainly do you in good stead. Miles Coverdale gave us the rules for interpreting the Bible in 1535 and I've been through them a number of times and we will not belabor that point now.

But the points, the doctrine that has reached, the conclusions that are reached are those upon which people base their beliefs and their actions and their giving and their worship and their financing and everything.

It's absolutely critical. There isn't any way that you can overestimate the importance of this. And when you realize that all of these interpretations are man-made and my interpretation of a particular passage of Scripture, may be true, may not be true.

And how many times have I told you in the years that we have been together, you are not to believe anything that comes from this pulpit just because it comes from this pulpit. You are not to believe what I preach just because it comes from it.

[38 : 16] Well, Marv wouldn't lie. Well, no, of course not. I'm not going to lie to you intentionally, but I'm certainly capable of giving you something that is not true, even though I think that it is true.

And I would not teach it if I didn't believe it to be true. But that doesn't guarantee that it is. That's why we always have to be in the train of the Bereans. Search the Scriptures daily and see whether those things spoken by Marv or by Paul or by whoever comport with Scripture.

and that's absolutely critical. This is, we're going to get into some areas that are going to be very controversial and I'm, in a way, I apologize for that, but in a way, I don't apologize, I don't apologize for proclaiming what we believe to be true.

And, and, no, it is not true that we are, we are not in a position where we are called upon to respect other people's religious beliefs.

This is sheer nonsense and I don't know where or how Christians picked up on this, but it's, it's fallacious from this very root and we need to have a clear understanding of this.

[39 : 36] I've, I've heard people say things, I've heard responsible people, people who ought to know better, say things like, we need to respect other people's religions and beliefs. No, you don't.

Where did you ever get that idea? We do need to and we have an obligation to be kind and courteous and compassionate to other people, regardless of their belief.

We owe them that, just because they are a human being. They are made in the likeness and image of God, just like we are. And we owe everyone, even those who strenuously disagree with, even those we would call cultic or heretical.

We owe them kindness, compassion, an effort to understand where they're coming from, even if we don't agree with them. We owe them that. But we do not owe them and we dare not give to them credence, acceptance, approval, of erroneous doctrine or teaching.

There is a distinction there that needs to be made. We have an obligation to be kind to people. We have no obligation to be kind to erroneous doctrine. Get the difference?

[40 : 57] It's huge. And sometimes it's a problem in separating the person from the doctrine, like separating the sin from the sinner. But it needs to be done. And we must not embrace, nor accommodate, nor applaud, nor okay, nor approve of what we know clearly to be untrue.

We have an obligation, as Paul said, to have nothing to do with the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. And the Apostle Paul so often makes clear about strange doctrine and erroneous doctrine and wrong doctrine and how we are to be people of sound doctrine and the scriptures spell out what is sound doctrine and that's what we are to embrace.

And of the groups that belong to this volume, the 250 some, there's a huge number of them that are in very serious doctrinal error.

And when Jehovah's witnesses or Mormons come to your door, don't be rude to them. Don't be unkind to them. treat them with respect.

Show compassion. Show interest. Show concern. But that does not give you license to countenance to or embrace or even approve of their teaching.

[42 : 21] It's clearly error. And the difference is remarkable. It is indeed a bitter pill to swallow to admit that we have been led astray, often, usually by well-meaning people who were also led astray by those before them.

And this is something that has gone on down through the centuries because as churches develop, going all the way back, and I'm going to use this example because it is the largest, and I think that so far as the record is concerned, it is the earliest.

You know, Roman Catholics make much of the issue that their church, the Roman Catholic Church, is the first church. Well, that is not an altogether untrue statement.

They've got something to be said for that. When you come to organization and development and recognition and history, etc., the Roman Catholic Church does go back further than any Christian group can identify with.

And I'm not saying that, I'm not, no, I'm certainly not saying Peter was the first pope, as our Roman Catholic friends believe and insist upon, but I am acknowledging and admitting that what developed and became the Roman Catholic Church, was the earliest and the first religious body that is universally recognized, that history recognizes, let me put it this way, it goes back further than anything else that we can identify with.

[44 : 11] Now, to be sure, the first believers were not what you would call Christians at all, and they were not Roman Catholics at all, and they were not Protestants at all. The first believers were Jews, exclusively.

And it would not be accurate to call them Christians, because the term didn't even develop until you get into the book of Acts, sometime after Cornelius. Jews, but what these people were, were simply Jews who had come to faith in Yeshua HaMashiach, Jesus as their Messiah.

And for about the first eight or ten years, there were no believers in Christ except Jews, exclusively Jewish.

Jews, and we do not find the first example of a non-Jew embraced as one of the brethren until you get all the way up to Acts chapter ten, and that's Cornelius.

And this man's conversion from paganism as a Roman army officer who was probably involved in paganism, worship of many gods like the Romans were, when he came to faith in the Jewish Messiah, that raised eyebrows all over the place.

[45 : 35] In fact, many of the Jews didn't even consider him at the first to be legitimate. Why? Well, simply because he wasn't a Jew. I mean, how can a non-Jewish person believe in a Jewish Messiah?

That doesn't make any sense. Well, it made perfect sense. And as it turned out, there are going to be a whole lot more non-Jewish people who will believe in a Jewish Messiah than there are Jews who believe in him.

But early on, this was not the case. Early on, it was all Jews. And when these came to faith, they began forming their own group.

In the beginning, they all went to the same congregation that they were in before, which was what? The synagogue. And they all went to the Jewish temple to worship. And in the cities all throughout Israel, they had synagogues, just like we have churches.

They had synagogues, and they were the center of Jewish activity and life. And in that synagogue, there were Jews who believed that Jesus was Israel's Messiah, and they were a minority.

[46 : 38] Most of the Jews in the synagogue did not believe that. The religious establishment did not believe that. But these people who had come to faith in Jesus as their Messiah were so excited about it, you couldn't shut them up.

And eventually, and by the way, keep in mind, this is going to divide families, communities, neighborhoods, because you've got these people who insist that Jesus is the Messiah.

And they won't shut up about it. So what's the majority going to do after they get tired of tolerating these people? Because they've got relational ties.

They are family. They are neighbors. And yet they have these wide differences of opinion. Eventually, they're going to say, well, maybe it would be best if you just didn't come to the synagogue anymore.

Because every time you come, you keep insisting on this same thing. And you start arguments. And you talk about Jesus being the Messiah. And we know that he wasn't the Messiah. And you talk about him being raised from the dead, and we know that's not true.

[47 : 46] So why don't you just go someplace else? And eventually, that's what it came to. You know, the closest we came to that here in the United States? The Civil War. When families were divided, brothers and families were divided over the South and the North and the slavery issue.

Broke up a lot of families. A lot of relationships. Churches broke up. Southern Baptist Convention and the Northern Baptist Convention came out of the Civil War because of the differences there. So this goes all the way back.

And eventually, these Jews started forming their own little groups. And you know where they met? They didn't meet in the synagogue because they became persona non grata there. They met in each other's homes.

They were called house churches. When Paul closed out his letter to the Romans, he talked about, oh, by the way, remember, say hi to so-and-so who has a church in her house.

So these house churches were all over the place. And these Jews who were solidly behind Jesus being the Messiah began fellowshiping and hanging out with other Jews who believed the same thing.

[48 : 54] And these became Jewish congregations informally meeting in each other's homes. And it grew and grew. And then the persecution thing came in.

And here, first it was Jew on Jew, the persecution. Saul of Tarsus was at the beginning of it. And eventually the Roman authorities began persecuting Christians. And as Paul was raised up, his commission was to who?

Be the apostle to the Gentiles. And that is going to change everything. This was the wildest concept anyone could ever imagine.

Where you're going to take Jews and non-Jews and put them in the same boat and call them all Christians?

Among whom there is no distinction of Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female? This is a whole new thing. Who are these people?

[49 : 57] Well, eventually, non-Jews began to grow in greater number than the Jews. When it came to believing in Jesus, as you read Acts 13, it becomes very apparent there.

The Paul says, we're going to the Gentiles and they will hear it gladly. You rejected it, but they will hear it. And multitudes of these non-Jews, former pagans, came to faith in Jesus Christ.

And they started their own fellowship groups. And where did they meet? They met in houses. And when the persecution threat was on, they met secretly in houses.

They didn't go build a church, the first church of whatever, down on the corner of 4th and Elm. They were all hunkered down in house churches and secret meeting places.

And they began to grow and develop. And the earliest development that we have of this, although it probably was not at all what you would call Roman Catholic, is that which Roman Catholicism came out of.

[51 : 08] And if there were other groups, and I'm sure there were other groups of believers who had come to faith in Christ as their Savior, and they were serving Him and worshipping Him, but they were not recognized.

You don't read about them in history. They were very small in number, and eventually an organization began to be founded. and doctrine began to be established.

And it was established by those who followed the apostles first, second century, third century, and so on. They kept building and adding on to it, and it became more and more organized, and they developed more and more doctrine, much of which was based upon faulty assumptions.

And I want to say this with no rancor or bitterness. I want to be, well, I don't want to apologize for the truth.

I don't want to be unkind. But I just want to make it very clear, and I think you're going to be able to see this, that much of what is regarded today as Roman Catholicism is based and built upon sincere, earnest, but faulty assumptions.

[52 : 39] Certain assumptions were made that were not valid, and they were built upon. Who made these assumptions? Leaders in the church, men of respect, men of schooling and training, men who held positions of authority, they came to certain conclusions based on faulty assumptions, built

doctrine upon them, and then the common people looked to them for leadership, and the mantra became, well, if that's what so-and-so believes and says it's true, then the loyal and the faithful have to fall in behind it and subscribe to it.

And that is precisely what happened in so many cases. And let me say this, it isn't true just of Roman Catholicism, it's true of Protestantism too.

Men in positions of influence and power and authority and respect formulate positions, come up with doctrine and begin teaching it, and the faithful just kind of fall in line.

And you have people line up behind this group, and people line up behind this group, and people line up behind this, and you know, very often, very often, what it came down to was personality and persuasiveness.

And followership should never be based upon that, but it often is. Because if you don't like the person that you're following, you're not going to follow them. Simple as that. Personality comes into play.

[54 : 16] It really does. And sometimes, if you really like someone, you just assume that everything they say is true. Don't do that.

Don't do that. You ought not to assume that what someone teaches is true because they have a pleasant personality. It's just like going to a doctor.

He's got a great personality. He's got a wonderful personality, great bedside manner. doctor. But in the operating room, all the nurses call him Dr.

Oops. Well, what are you going to do about that? Oh, but the guy, he's a great guy. Yeah, he's a great guy, but he's going to die on his operating table too.

Who wants that? So all I'm saying is objectivity is what is required here. And we've got to look at these things. so much of what is believed and taught today has its roots in faulty assumptions, things that people assumed were true.

[55 : 32] They built on it and went with it and a whole host of people lined up behind them and said, it is so. Do you know what they call that?

that's a denomination. And all you have to do is look at the leaders and the personalities that founded each of them. And many of them were bastions of truth.

And they had a lot of good stuff. But they also had error. Now, am I here to tell you? Well, you don't have to worry about that from old Marv because you're going to get nothing but pure, unadulterated truth.

Yeah, well, if you believe that, I want to sell you a bridge. You've got to be a Berean. You cannot assume, you cannot assume that he knows what he's talking about.

Matter of fact, I think more has been the time when I told you I didn't understand what I was talking about. and you can be comfortable with that, can't you? Well, we're just going to be opening this thing up week by week as we go along and I think you are going to be amazed.

[56 : 52] When we get through, the Lord wills, you will know where a lot of the stuff comes from and that a lot of it just isn't so.

Wasn't it Josh Billings that said, I'd rather know a few things for certain than a whole lot of things that ain't so. So that's what we're going to be doing, focusing on a few things for certain.

And we've got a long list of faulty assumptions that are made by Roman Catholics and Protestants. Protestants have certainly not escaped.

In fact, listen, nobody has escaped this. Non-denominational grace churches have not escaped this. We are all supposed to be on the lookout for what we find to be untrue and rooted out.

We are always to be searching for that which is not true in the midst of what we believe to be true. And as I've said before, all of our theologies, I don't care who you are, Roman Catholic, Protestant, I don't care who you are, all of our theologies have wrinkles in them.

[58 : 08] Nobody has got this thing called truth altogether. And when we get to heaven, we're all going to get straightened out. Meanwhile, our obligation is to arrive at as much truth as we can with as little error as we can, and it's line upon line, precept upon precept.

So, I trust if I've done nothing today but just give you something to think about, I will have succeeded. So, we're talking about the origin of doctrine.

How did all of these people in this handbook of denominations, and hey, in all of these groups, all of these 250 groups, there is a lot of truth.

A huge amount. Luther, Luther has given us a lot of truth. And so has John Wesley, and so has Charles Spurgeon, and so has Billy Graham, and so has a whole host of others. But none of them gave us pure, unadulterated truth, because that comes only from the source. So, here's this handbook of denominations in the United States.

[59 : 20] And by the way, this is just the United States. It's not talking about the rest of the world. And you're getting into Hinduism, Shintoism, Buddhism, Bahaism, and all the rest of it.

So, we are in for a ride that is going to be, I think, very memorable, and I trust it will be stabilizing to your soul. So, what I would like to do now, we're going to close with a hymn.

And I'm going to ask Maestro back there to cue up number five, and would you turn in your hymnal to number 33, and we'll use this music accompaniment, and I'm going to lead you in number 33, and I just want you to be aware that there is a musical bridge at the beginning, and a musical bridge between each verse, but I love this hymn, and I just want to lead you in it, and it is the hymn that we use for Christianity clarified in the opening, and it's got a wonderful message to it.

Maestro, play it on. Number 33, would you stand please? through. Spinning talk pix..

The End The End The End

[62 : 22] The End The End The End Thank you. You are discussed.

And those of you who are interested in music, please listen to the back. Thank you.