

The Jewish Final Solution to the World's Problem - What's Missing Without Paul, Part 3

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[0 : 00] to please turn in the Scriptures to 2 Corinthians chapter 5. And in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, we'll be looking at verses 14 through 21 this morning.

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died. And he died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who died and rose again on their behalf.

Therefore, from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh, even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him in this way no longer.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature. The old things passed away.

[1 : 20] Behold, new things have come. Now, all these things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

Namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ. As though God were making an appeal through us, we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

This morning's message is the third part of the theme, What's Missing Without Paul.

[2 : 52] The doctrinal information and truth that the risen Christ revealed to the apostle Paul were given him for only one reason, that he might then deliver them to us.

He did. They are revealed in his several letters to various churches. We will briefly review some of these this morning. Please be reminded that these all belong exclusively to the gap, which we are now a part.

The gap we have described as being the dispensation of the grace of God, or the church age. It is that parenthetical period that is that which has interrupted the plan and program that God had originally with the nation of Israel.

And according to Romans 9, 10 and 11, Israel has been bound over in their unbelief for a period of chastisement until the fullness of the Gentiles become in.

And when that is realized, the church will be raptured, removed, translated from this earth, and that will be the end of the gap. And then that which had been a parenthesis will be lifted out, moved out, and God's plan and program with the nation of Israel will resume from the point where it left off in the book of Acts, some of the earlier chapters.

[4 : 26] So what's missing without Paul? Everything that pertains to the church age. That's all missing without Paul.

Because it was to Paul, the apostle, exclusively that God revealed to him the features, the doctrine, the particularities regarding the church age or the dispensation of the grace of God.

And I know there are people, well-meaning Christians, who say things like, Paul, Paul, Paul, Paul. Frankly, I'm getting sick and tired of hearing about Paul.

Just give me Jesus and you can have Paul. And these dear folk have no idea at all what they're actually saying. And I want to give you an Old Testament example of that, because it really rang a bell in my mind when I heard someone say that one time about the apostle Paul.

In fact, I even read you some of the quips earlier about how some people thought, you know, Christianity was doing just fine until Paul came along.

[5 : 37] And they see him as some kind of an impediment or somebody who created lots of turmoil. Well, he did do that. But truth has a nature of creating turmoil.

And wherever truth lands and error is present, you can be sure that turmoil is going to result. Come back, if you would, please, to Numbers chapter 12.

We'll be back in the New Testament shortly, but I want you to see a parallel in Numbers. Very interesting thing that happened here. Book of Numbers chapter 12.

This is, of course, after Moses has been well entrenched as the leader of Israel.

God raised him up, used him to lead the nation of Israel out of the land of Egypt and so on, and all of the things that they experienced in the wilderness. And chapter 12 opens with then Miriam and Aaron.

[6 : 48] Now, keep in mind, Miriam and Aaron are sisters and brother to Moses. They spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman.

And in all likelihood, this woman was a very dark skin. We would say that she was well enhanced with melanin. And they said, has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses?

Has he not spoken through us as well? And the Lord heard it. Now, if I may take the liberty of reading a little bit in the white spaces here, it might be something like this, coming from Moses' sister and brother, Miriam and Aaron.

Moses, Moses, Moses. I'm sick of hearing of him. Does everything have to come through him? Hasn't God given us some wisdom as well?

The Lord heard it. The man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth. And suddenly the Lord said to Moses and Aaron and to Miriam, You three come out to the tent of meeting.

[8 : 09] It's kind of like all three of you in my office, five minutes. So the three of them came out. And then the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the doorway of the tent.

I have no idea what this must have looked like, but it must have been soul-stirring, to say the least. And he called Aaron and Miriam.

When they had both come forward, he said, Hear now my words. If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, shall make myself known to him in a vision.

I shall speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my household. With him I speak mouth to mouth, even openly and not in dark sayings.

That means not in obscure sayings. And he beholds the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses?

[9 : 30] And what God is saying to Aaron and Miriam is this. When you contend with Moses, you contend with me.

Do you understand that? That's exactly what he's saying. God had one mouthpiece. And it was Moses.

And by the way, you ought to remember that Moses didn't even want the job. He came up with all excuses as to why he couldn't do it and shouldn't be the one to do it.

And God chose Moses. Because Moses is described as the meekest man on all the earth. And you have to know something about what meekness means. Because meekness does not mean weakness.

Meekness is great strength that is under control. That's meekness. So the anger of the Lord burned against them, and he departed.

[10 : 36] But when the cloud had withdrawn from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow. Now, I have never seen, other than pictures, of a hand that is leprous.

But even the picture presents a pretty ghastly scene. It looks like anything but a normal hand. As Aaron turned toward Miriam, behold, she was leprous.

And Aaron said to Moses, Oh, my Lord. Now, here he is calling Moses, Lord. And that, of course, is not to confuse him with the deity. It is simply a recognition that Moses, his brother, occupied a position that was superior to his own.

And he is acknowledging that in addressing him as Lord. I beg you, do not account this sin to us in which we have acted foolishly and in which we have sinned.

That's a beautiful thing. One of the most important things that any human being can ever utter is, I have sinned.

[11 : 52] And don't come around with this, I have made mistakes. No, no, no. That will not do. Mistakes do not involve any morality. Sin does. And these are moral issues we're talking about.

It is amazing what God is willing to do with and for one who is honest enough to admit, I have sinned. No excuses.

I have sinned. My bad. It's on me. My fault. Nobody else. That's exactly what they're saying. God is so impressed with that. The hand of God is moved more quickly and more greatly in connection with man's repentance than anything else.

And repentance is nothing more than owning up, changing your mind, taking responsibility for what you have done. And that's exactly what Aaron is doing here and Miriam too, I trust.

Which we have sinned. Do not let her be like one dead whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes from his mother's womb. And Moses cried out to the Lord saying, Oh God, heal her, I pray.

[13 : 04] The Lord said to Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, I'm not going to go into that, but that deals with an oriental idiom and a custom thing that we cannot identify with here, so we'll not take time to explain it, but it certainly meant something to them.

Would she not bear her shame for seven days? Let her be shut up for seven days outside the camp and afterward she may be received again. So Miriam was shut up outside the camp for seven days and the people did not move on until Miriam was received again.

Afterward, however, the people moved out from Hazoroth and camped in the wilderness of Paran. And I kind of have a hunch that never again did Miriam or Aaron had any bad mouthing to direct toward their brother Moses.

They realized that Moses was God's man. Would to God that more Christians today would realize that Paul, the apostle, is God's man for this dispensation.

Never lose sight of the fact that what Moses was is to the children of Israel. Paul, the apostle, is to the church which is the body of Christ.

[14 : 29] In Galatians 5 and verse 14, the passage that was just read briefly, I want you to look at a couple of verses that are found there because I must admit after having been a believer for a number of years, and I'm sorry to say that it was probably about 15 years, I remember having read this and it really never clicked with me.

I just never saw through it. I never picked up on it. I never really grasped it. And the most embarrassing thing about it is I'd even preached through it before. Right here.

Probably in the 1970s, maybe 1980s. But I didn't see it then either. I see it now and what a difference it makes. And I'm talking in particular about verse...

Well, let's see. We'll have to, for time's sake, because I do want to have a Q&A; this morning.

And in order to do that, we're going to have to be brief with this. So let's just jump in with verse 14, reading again what Gary read earlier.

[15 : 54] The love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died. And he died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died and rose again on their behalf.

Therefore, and here's the verse, therefore, from now on, we recognize no man according to the flesh.

What does that mean? Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him thus no longer.

What in the world is he saying here? I want to direct your attention to some alternate readings that I have from my 26th translation New Testament.

And I think they will convey some light that our new American standard is not shedding upon this. And it is remarkable. Essentially, what Paul is talking about is this.

[17 : 02] He's talking about the person and nature of Jesus Christ when he walked on this earth before his crucifixion as opposed to the ascended Christ who is now the Lord of glory with a glorified body so that whereas he is the same person as he was before the cross, he is also radically different, exalted, glorified, and all that accompanied that.

Other translations render it this way. 20th century New Testament says, For ourselves then, from this time forward we refuse to regard anyone from the world's standpoint.

Weymouth translates it, Therefore, for the future we know no one simply as a man. Well, how else can you know him but simply as a man?

And what the Apostle Paul is inferring here is that there is a spiritual dimension to man that is often not recognized. Moffat says, Once convinced of this, I estimate no one by what is external. Well, what is external? What is external is what you can see. the physical appearances of an individual. That's how we generally recognize and see each other. What Paul is talking about here is that after regeneration, after Christ becomes a reality in people's lives, they do see each other in a different way.

[18 : 52] And you're supposed to because you are not the same. You are different. If anyone be in Christ, he's a new creation. Old things have passed away. All things have become new.

This is what he's getting at here. The RSV says, From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view. Something supernatural has been added.

New English Bible says, With us, therefore, worldly standards have ceased to count in our estimate of any man. Yea, though once my view of Christ was carnal or fleshly, yet now it is no longer carnal or fleshly.

Well, if it isn't carnal or fleshly, what is it? It's spiritual. It is immaterial. It is real. It is just as real as the physical, but it is spiritual.

It is on a different dimension. And this is what he is saying. The point that he is making is that once Christ comes into a person's life, it's a whole new ballgame. Everything is changed radically, upset.

[20 : 05] Everything is overturned, regenerated, made new, given life, whereas before there was nothing but death. Weymouth translates it, even if we have known Christ simply as a man, when was that?

Before the cross. Yet, he says, now we do so no longer. Why not? Because of the resurrection and the ascension and the glorification.

Everything has changed. It's a whole new ballgame. That's what Paul is saying. And let me ask you this. Who else in the New Testament recognizes this and makes mention of it?

No one. This is exclusive. And the only reason Paul is making much of it and mentioning it, and the only reason he knows it, is because the risen Christ has revealed this to him.

And he, in turn, is revealing it to others. Moffat says, even though I once estimated Christ by what is external, I no longer estimate him thus.

[21 : 20] The Apostle Paul is saying, you know, back in the time when I was busily engaged, persecuting my fellow Jews who had embraced Jesus as the Messiah, I looked upon the Jesus that they believed in as just a man, just another human being, who had been able to arouse a great deal of attention to himself, and it was reported of him that he did miracles and all the rest, and I don't know about that, but you know, he was just a man.

But since that Damascus Road experience and an introduction to who Jesus Christ really is, everything changed. And now what Paul is saying is, my estimation, my understanding, my appreciation of Jesus Christ now is radically different from what it was when I was chasing down those people who believed in him, because now I've seen him in the glory.

Everything has changed. Now my point is just this, please hear me well, because this is the crux of the whole thing. Too many Christians today are sentimentally worshiping the Jesus before the cross rather than the ascended Lord after the cross.

The difference is stunning. The difference constitutes the mystery of which Paul is speaking, which he identifies as a mystery, with which he closes out the book of Romans when he says that God is able to establish you, establish you.

He writes to these believers at Rome and he's saying God is able and willing to fortify you, to establish you, to empower you, according to my preaching of the mystery.

[23 : 38] And it has everything to do with death, burial, resurrection, glorification, ascension. That's the Christ we serve. The difficulty we have today is that we cannot get people out of the Gospels because they think that's the only place that Jesus is located, is in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Especially if you've got a red letter Bible, and don't get me into that, I won't go there. So what I am saying is, what the Apostle Paul has to share is an incredible update of information that does not exist in the four Gospels, and it is not supposed to be in the four Gospels.

They reveal to us the Christ who was before death, burial, resurrection. And so many are still back there.

Now, I don't discount the Gospels. I love them. Why do you think we spent five years in the Gospel of John? them. And we spent a great deal of time in the Synoptics when we went through those

verse by verse.

It took us years to get through them. They are tremendously powerful. And they are written, as Paul says, for our learning, as is all the Old Testament. But as I've said so many times before, all of the Bible is for us, but not all of the Bible is to us.

[25 : 01] Whatsoever things were written before time were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope. But they were not written so that we can go and do likewise.

Then you're into Sabbath keeping, animal sacrifices, everything that goes along with it. And what I am saying is, not only is there an update between the Old Testament and the New, there is an update within the body of the New, because it is doctrine that is moving, it is growing, it is expanding, expanding, it is enlightening, it is unfolding, it is increasing, more and more information is being divulged, but there was simply one through whom God wanted it divulged, and that was his man, the Apostle Paul.

So Paul was and is to the church what Moses was to the nation of Israel. That ought not to be that difficult to grasp. It wasn't for me once I finally saw it in perspective.

So what's missing without Paul? Absolutely everything that belongs to our present dispensation of the grace of God. This is all stuff in the gap.

This dispensation or administration itself would be missing, according to Ephesians 3.2. The gospel of the grace of God, according to Ephesians 2.8 and 9, would be missing.

[26 : 33] The concept of the one body of Jew and Gentile into one new man, Ephesians 3. That would all be missing if Paul were not where he was, revealing what he is.

Christ established as the spiritual head of this new spiritual body. Where do you find that in the gospels? None of these things are in the gospels. They're not supposed to be in the gospels, because they were never revealed.

The concept of the translation or the rapture of the church that we spent considerable time on in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 and 1 Corinthians 15.

You will not find the rapture of the church in the Old Testament. It isn't a subject of prophecy. That's why Paul said, behold, I show you a mystery. Folks, this is brand new stuff.

Nobody's ever heard this before. I've never heard it before. Until the risen Christ revealed it to me and instructed me to give it to you, the Gentiles.

[27 : 36] The sealing of the spirit until the day of redemption, Ephesians 1. Do you think they had that in the gospels? Of course not. It didn't exist. Of course the spirit of God is in the gospels.

He's in the Old Testament. But the sealing of the spirit until the day of redemption, the branding of a believer that makes them into union with Christ, that's a whole new truth.

It was never known until Paul revealed it. And when it was revealed to Paul, his reaction was probably, wow, really? Okay, well, if that's what you say, that's what it is, and that's what he did.

The setting aside of the nation of Israel in unbelief, Romans chapter 11, the abolishing of the law of Moses, taking out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, abolishing it, nailing it to his cross, this is all new stuff.

They would not have even thought of that. And if they'd thought of it, they wouldn't have dared mention it, not back in the Gospels, because the Gospels contain content that was experienced and carried out and lived under the dispensation of law.

[28 : 52] Moses was still in the driver's seat in the Gospels. Jesus Christ functioned, carried out his daily activities as an observant Jew, and observed the law of Moses in everything it required, because he came not to destroy, but to fulfill the law.

The law of Moses is what is in force in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. It is not the gospel of the grace of God. It had not even been heard of there. The judgment seat of Christ or the award throne, the Bema seat, told by Paul in Romans 2 and verse 16 in 1 Corinthians 3, how that all the believers works are either gold, silver, and precious stone, or wood, hay, and stubble.

Where do you find that in the Gospels? Not there. And it isn't there because it doesn't belong there. It's not supposed to be there. The replacement of physical circumcision with spiritual circumcision. What in the world is that? Colossians chapter 2 talks about spiritual circumcision, a circumcision made without hands.

Now, every Jew knew what circumcision was. And it wasn't something that was made without hands. It was made with hands. And the official village circumciser was the hands that made it.

[30 : 16] And he would take his flint stone and go around and find an eight day old baby boy and circumcise him. And it was a bloody thing. And it was a ritual thing.

And it was a required thing. And if you were a Jew, it was unthinkable that you not be circumcised. And now, Paul is talking, writing to the Colossians about a spiritual circumcision?

What is that? And do you not see that in the Gospels and in the Old Testament, so much emphasis is on the material, the physical.

It's the land. It's the temple. It's the animals. It's the sacrifice. It's the articles of furniture. It's everything physical.

And the promise to Israel is the land, the land, the land. Everything is physical. When you come to the New Testament, there is a radical change. Things are moving from the physical to the spiritual.

[31 : 24] It doesn't mean that nothing is physical. It means the emphasis is on the spiritual, not the physical. Of course, the physical is very important.

It's very much with us. But there is something that greatly transcends the physical. And yet, it's the physical that we get so hung up on. what do you think Jesus meant when he said, man shall not live by bread alone?

He meant there is more to your life than food, than your body. You are more than you eat.

You may be what you eat physically, but you are a lot more than that. that's where the emphasis is in the New Testament. This is why Paul is going to say, for by one spirit, for by one spirit, are we all baptized into one body.

The spirit is not physical. The body into which we are baptized is not physical. The baptism with which we were baptized is not physical.

[32 : 38] It is spiritual. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, and have all been made to drink of one spirit. This is an upgrade. It is a radical departure from the physical to the spiritual.

And this is why Paul could say, Christ didn't send me to baptize. What's he talking about? He's talking about John's baptism, which every Jew was completely familiar with.

Started out with John the Baptist. And he was doing what he was supposed to be doing, and he was baptizing all of these Jewish people in connection with the repentance. The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. And the water that John was using was wet. It was water. It was H₂O. And Christ came on the scene, and John baptized him, and we talked a little bit about that earlier, and why he refused to baptize him, and then why he agreed to do so, and Christ was identified with the believing remnant of Israel.

And now, Paul is saying, Christ didn't send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel. What does that mean? That means the emphasis has changed from the physical to the spiritual.

[33 : 58] Just like spiritual circumcision replaced physical circumcision. Now, spirit baptism is replacing physical baptism, the water. And boy, you're going to have a major fight on your hands if you try to convince a lot of your friends about that.

And I speak as one who was ordained in a Baptist church, buried in a Baptist church, saved in a Baptist church, and a deacon in a Baptist church.

And when I first heard this, I thought, well, that's the craziest thing I ever heard. everybody knows you're supposed to follow the Lord in baptism, and that's water. Anybody knows that, just like everybody knows the church began on the day of Pentecost.

Yeah, right, that was another thing I had to be embarrassed about, but it's true nonetheless. And if you are confronted with truth, and you deny it simply because it doesn't fit what you've always been taught, then you've got a bigger problem.

I'm not asking anyone to buy this. I'm begging everyone to consider it. All of these things represent this radical update that we're talking about.

[35 : 12] It is a movement from the physical and the material into the spiritual and the immaterial. This is why, by the way, this is why you find the miracles, the physical miracles, sight to the blind, raising the dead, and all the rest, diminishing as you move through the book of Acts.

It becomes more and more rare. And it gets to the place of where even the great apostle Paul was not able to receive the healing he wanted for his thorn in the flesh.

But what God did provide him with was a spiritual reality called grace that will enable him to overcome that problem.

This is amazing stuff. There is a gradation, there is a development of the revelation of God and his plan and program.

And you can see the progression as you move from the Old Testament all the way through and get through the book of Acts and into the Pauline epistles. There is more and more and more revealed.

[36 : 20] It is doctrine in progress. It is not doctrine that is static. That is the problem. We want to make it static. We want to make this all one big body of truth and it all supposed to fit together.

It doesn't fit. It doesn't fit. This is why Paul said that the word of truth needs to be divided. There are certain things that belong to certain places and certain people in certain times and certain situations and they don't fit everywhere because they're not supposed to fit everywhere.

What an eye opener that was. People have all kinds of seeming contradictions, things they can't square in the scripture and they can't square them because they're not supposed to be squared. They are different and they need to be treated in a different fashion. You need to rightly divide them. The word in the Greek is from the word orthomontus and has to do with cutting straight and it means to rightly divide something like you are cutting something in two and you do that for the purpose of separating things.

That's the only reason you cut anything is to separate something from something and that's what needs to be done with the Bible and we've given you Miles Coverdale's rules for interpreting it written in 1535.

[37 : 47] I'll not quote them but I've never found anything that is more applicable. The institution of the Lord's table 1 Corinthians chapter 11 this is provided us by Paul the truth of reconciliation of universal reconciliation and a plea for personal reconciliation none of these things and by the way while we're still here in 2 Corinthians I want you to look at this if you will because this too is part of the mystery of Christ and in verse in in verse chapter 5 and verse 19 Paul says God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

Reconciling the world. Who's the world? Everybody. Everybody in it. Every human being. He reconciled the world to himself and then in the next verse he says he is entreating us to be reconciled to God and what that simply means is this is that Jesus Christ has done what was necessary in dying for the sins of the entire world and he opened the way of access to God through his death burial and resurrection.

What you need to do now as individuals is respond to what God has done in Christ and that is called an act of faith.

With your will, with your will, you deliver yourself to Jesus Christ for his salvation. You put your trust in him as your savior and that's acting upon this universal reconciliation.

The word is undeniable. He died for the sins of the world. I know our Calvinist friends say he died only for the sins of the elect, but that's not what the text says.

[39 : 48] The text says that he died for all. And because he died for all, he rendered every single person savable. No one is beyond the grace of God because of the payment that Christ made.

So what you and I need to do today more than anything else is ask ourselves whether you have responded to and appropriated what God has done for you in Christ.

And that's called becoming a Christian. That's called being born again. That's called being saved. That's called being regenerated. Whatever you want to call it, that's what it is.

I'm not finished, but I quit. My sweetie gave me the high sign. I should have been finished five minutes ago. We're going to have a quick Q&A; for about five or six minutes. And I'd be happy to entertain any questions that you may have.

Anyone? It's always been about grace with the Bible. I mean, Noah found grace, Abraham, it's all been about grace, but the risen Lord Jesus Christ defined that through Paul.

[41 : 04] Yeah. And you're right. And it's always, salvation has always been by grace through faith. But the thing that is so dramatic about what Paul is revealing is this is the administration of grace or the dispensation of grace.

It means this is the new order. And this new order is you are justified by faith, justified on the basis of grace through faith.

You see, grace is grace is the foundation or the platform. And faith is the vehicle through which that grace gets to you and through which your response gets to God.

And that results in regeneration. And it's a marvelous thing. Just incredible. Absolutely amazing. Other comments? Okay. I have a question.

This has always been a little confusing to me. Were the Old Testament saints sealed but didn't know it? And if they were not sealed, how did they lose or retain their salvation?

[42 : 15] Well, I'll tell you this, Marcus. I really, and I've struggled with this for years and years. I really wish I had a better handle. I wouldn't even say a better handle.

I wish I had an adequate handle on Old Testament salvation. It just is not as clear as I would like it. I cannot escape what I think is an incontrovertible fact that no one has ever been saved in any dispensation apart from God's grace.

But I just don't know exactly what the content was for belief. And I suspect it might have been different. I know in the case of Abraham, Genesis 15, 6, and this is one of my favorite passages, where the text says that Abraham believed God and it.

What was the it? It was the belief. And it was counted to him for righteousness. And that is simply saying that Abraham did not have in himself the righteousness that God required.

So God told Abraham and boy, this is grace if ever. God told Abraham, Abraham, if you will believe me, trust me, I will count your belief in the place of the righteousness that you don't have.

[43 : 43] That's amazing. So the best I can say, and it's not satisfying to me either, is that God required certain things to be believed at certain times.

And those who did believe them simply registered their faith or their trust in the Lord. And you read Hebrews 11, and the text says that by faith Noah built an ark.

Well, it doesn't communicate that so much to me. If you put it this way, to me, it lights it up. If you can say, because Noah believed God, he built an ark.

To me, and I think that's exactly what it's about. They believed what God revealed. And you see, to refuse to believe what God reveals is to call him a liar.

It's to say God can't be trusted. God is just a politician. You can't believe what he says. Well, he does not take kindly to that. God resents being called a liar.

[44 : 48] And as I've said so many times, more than anything else, God wants to be believed. He wants to be trusted. God wants a whole bunch of Jobes out there who's willing to say, though he slay me, yet will I trust him.

That's what God wants. Somebody else question or comment? Yes, up here in the front, Sandy has a question or comment.

Okay, I have always been taught that as we look back to Christ on the cross and put our faith in that because of grace.

The Old Testament people, because of the sacrifices, they looked forward to the Savior. just as we look back and trust him, they looked forward and placed their faith.

Okay, I've heard the same thing and I've believed the same thing for a number of years, but I can no longer embrace that idea for the simple reason that even the disciples, or let me put it this way, even the apostles, the twelve, I can't say that they looked forward to the cross because they didn't.

[46 : 16] They didn't have any idea that Jesus Christ was going to the cross even though he told them he was. Peter, Peter rebuked Jesus for even saying that.

This be far from you. You're not going to the cross. No way. We're not going to let that happen. And Jesus said to him, get thee behind me, Satan.

he was simply saying, Peter, you are acting under Satan's influence right now because you are savoring the things of man, not of God.

And to savor the things of man means no cross. No cross. No man in his right mind would ever volunteer for it. No cross. But God's plan was there has to be a cross.

There cannot be a crown without the cross. cross. So they did not look forward to that. And I cannot, I don't see any place in the Old Testament that indicates that anybody, that anybody had a handle on the idea that God is going to send a Messiah and when he comes he's going to die for the sins of the whole world.

[47 : 31] This, Sandy, this is the mystery. This is the mystery. The mystery of Christ is that in his death, burial, and resurrection he is going to provide salvation for the entirety of humanity.

Nobody knew that before. And when Peter preached his message in Acts chapter 2, he didn't indicate that. What he charged them with was the death of Christ.

He indicted them for the crucifixion of Christ. But you'll not find Peter saying something like now, you have by wicked hands have crucified and slain the Lord of glory.

But in actuality, that's okay because through that death he's going to reconcile the whole world to himself. Peter wouldn't have dreamed that. He didn't say it and he didn't dream it.

Paul said it. Paul knew it. This was the very heartbeat of the plan and program of God from the beginning and that through that death on the cross he was going to meld Jew and Gentile together in one body by the cross.

[48 : 48] Wow! That is the mystery of Christ. Christ. They thought they were just putting him to death. God was exacting a penalty upon the person of Christ and that in his death he was going to be able to offer salvation to the entire world.

That is the mystery of Christ and it is so often overlooked or not understood at all. We have been custodians of this message. Listen. We have been custodians of this message.

for 2,000 years and we have not done a good job of disseminating it. It is still a mystery to most of the world and aspects of it are mystery even to some who name the name of Christ and I am one of them for the first 15 years of my Christian life.

We'll take one more and then we'll have to dismiss. Anybody? Okay. Marvis? This is more a comment than a question.

I'm reading the book Seeking Allah Finding Jesus and I got to the part where the Christian and the Muslim are friends but mantering back and forth and they're talking about Paul and the Muslim is saying that's crazy.

[50 : 20] Some man can't die for every even if he died he can't die for everybody's sin in the whole world. That's like me saying I'll pay a dollar against the debt, the U.S.

debt. Here you go, you're all good. That doesn't make sense. And he comes back with the idea, the Christian comes back with the thought of how it's not a dollar, it's more money than anybody could, you know, it's more worth than any money could ever pay.

But they talk about the Apostle Paul and the Muslim says, you know, this guy's just crazy. He, you know, he just wants to have the big head and everybody look at him.

He's not important. And the Christian comes back and says, what are you talking about? He was the head of the Jews. He was the Jews Jew.

He was perfect in the Jewish people's eyes until the Lord got a hold of him on the road to Damascus. And I just thought, wow, this really shows why the Lord had to choose somebody like Paul who had everything, who would be willing to give up everything to make it clear to those who were Jewish, Muslim, whatever, that it wasn't gaining everything on the earth.

[51 : 49] So that just really struck me when I read that. Interesting. Interesting. Yeah. Yeah. Paul was the ideal Jew. His pedigree is in Philippians chapter 3, and he talks about his history and everything.

And you're talking about Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus, a book that I really recommend, and we've circulated it here for a while, is Nabil Qureshi. And he's a former Muslim, also a medical doctor, and he has become a team member of Ravi Zacharias International.

And they put together quite a team, and Nabil is a real important part of it. Let me close with this. How could one man die for the sins of the world?

Well, one man could not. But the God-man could. And therein lies the difference. Jesus Christ was not simply a man.

Don't ask me, how could he be fully human and fully God? I don't know. But I do know that in him, there was a theanthropic union.

[52 : 54] He was the God-man. He was Emmanuel, God with us. And God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

And the only way in which one could be able to make payment for the sins of the world is that it had to be in the identity of the one.

And you're talking here about the law of proportionate value. And the law of proportionate value says that the thing which is purchasing redemption for others has to be greater than that for which he is purchasing it.

So what we are saying, and what I think the text is saying, is that in this person of Christ, the God-man, he is the one who is before all things, and by him all things consist, etc.

He is deity. He is very God of very God. And in the capital that he possessed, he was able to pay for, adequately provide payment that was necessary for the sins of the whole world.

[54 : 03] Because the value of one deity who is creator-sustainer is greater than the value of all that that deity could create.

And if you want a really earthly illustration, let's talk about this. Let's talk about human beings and ants. Okay? Go out there and look someplace in the grass and you'll find some ant hills.

Try counting them. There may be thousands. There may be hundreds of thousands. You may find millions of ants scattered all over. more. Okay?

How many ants does it take to equal the worth of one human being? Do you see the trade-off? How many ants does it take to equal the value of one human being?

You say, well, there isn't any number of ants that could equal the value of a human being. After all, human beings are made in the likeness and image of God. And an ant is just an insect, a bothersome insect at that.

[55 : 16] Well, the law of proportionate mention says that this one man in whom God dwelt, Emmanuel, this one man, was able to more than adequately atone for, pay for the sins of the entire humanity.

And all that remains for individuals in that humanity is to recognize that, acknowledge it, acknowledge their need. And when you acknowledge your need, you will call upon him.

And whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. But you won't call if you don't think you have a need. If you know you have a need, and you're willing to be honest and admit to yourself that you have a need, that you're not all God wants you to be, and that you're not all you want you to be, God will hear, and God will answer, and God will save.

And would you stand please? Pray with me. Once again, Father, we've talked about a number of things that we wish we understood a lot better.

But the understanding that we do have just overwhelms us with gratitude. First of all, for you being who you are and willing to do what you did, and then make this wonderful revelation available to us.

[56 : 45] Thank you for the ministry of this one whom you chose, whom we would regard to be the very least likely to want anything to do with Jesus Christ, man by the name of Saul of Tarsus, who through the miracle of regeneration was more than willing to lay down his life for this one whom he earlier sought to destroy.

We recognize that so much lies within the purview of information, and each time we receive information, we are responsible for what we do with it, and we trust that as the gospel has gone forth and as people have seen the substitutionary death of Christ, they may be able to make a connection between what happened on that cross 2,000 years ago, and who and what they are right here and now.

And with our heads bowed, each of us in an attitude of prayer before God, if this is your prayer, I invite you to pray it along with me, and if it isn't, then you just remain silent in your own heart and mind, and you can go on your way, and I'll dismiss you in a moment, but if you've seen yourself in a new light this morning, and you recognize that you are weak, and you are, like all the rest of us, you are a sinner, you are unacceptable to a holy God, that's why Jesus Christ came, to do for you what you couldn't do for yourself, and if you are willing, right now, right where you are, to say to God, oh God, I recognize, I admit, I'm not what I need to be, to be accepted by you, and yet, this is why Jesus Christ came, to make me accepted, and I want his righteousness put to my account, I don't understand how you can do that, but the Bible says you can do it, and I want to open my heart and mind, to Jesus Christ, and invite him in, I want the efficacy of his death, put to my account, I want this salvation, I want to be made a new person in Christ, I want a new life, a new beginning, a new hope, and heaven to be my home, and I recognize that it's all available through what you did, through the Lord Jesus Christ, here is my heart and life, I want to trust you right now, and dear friend, if you've made that your decision, I can assure you that God of heaven has heard you, and he will respond, he will save, he will regenerate, he will forgive, he will cleanse, he will pardon, he will make you his child, and he will seal you with his spirit.

If you made that decision, or if you want more information, you feel free to see me when we dismiss, be happy to talk with you, give you some literature. Thank you, Father, for this marvelous gospel, we never get over it, we reveled in the privilege of preaching it and proclaiming it, thank you for the honor of doing that, we ask your blessing upon each now as we depart our separate ways, in Christ's name, amen.

[60 : 15] Amen. Amen.