

Monthly Study - The Kingdom Has Not Come

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 27 December 2021

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] Good morning. Thank you all for being here this morning. I want to begin with an important announcement, and that is, ordinarily we have these monthly classes on the last Thursday of each month.

However, for November and December, it's going to seriously clash with Thanksgiving and also with Christmas and New Year's and all of that.

So we thought it was a better part of wisdom to dispense with it for the balance of this year. That being the case, this morning's session will be our final monthly session for this year.

But we look forward already to the last Thursday in January, and it will be here before you know it. So keep that in mind, if you would. And with that, I want to also make this announcement.

I tried to tell you that I intend to leave time for questions and comments at the end of the message, but somehow it never happens.

[1 : 04] So I want you to know that it is perfectly appropriate for you, if you have a question or a comment that really needs to be injected, that is pertinent to what we're talking about, and we'll shed a little bit of light on what we're talking about, please feel free to just raise your hand, and I will stop right there, and we'll take up whatever you have to contribute, and then we'll move on.

So I don't want you to be hesitant about that, because sometimes pertinent comments or questions injected at just the right time can be very beneficial.

So please don't think in terms of it being rude or interrupting me necessarily, because we're here to learn, and we're here to gain all the information we can.

And keep that in mind, if you will, please. Also, there was something else I wanted to mention, but it completely escapes me now. Maybe I'll think of it later on.

I don't know. But at any rate, I want you to turn to what happens to be perhaps, if not the most, certainly one of the most, I would say at least the top ten or maybe the top three controversial passages in all of Scripture that has divided and caused argumentation among believers for at least the last 2,000 years.

[2 : 29] And it is time that we discuss it, because we have already, in our radio series, having to do with Christianity Clarified, we have already discussed in some detail what we consider to be the faulty assumptions of Judaism.

And having treated that, and certainly not as thoroughly as it might be treated, but we trust adequately so, we moved on then to that which came from Judaism and eventually came to be known as Roman Catholicism.

And we are beginning now to examine the faulty assumptions of Roman Catholicism. When that is concluded, whenever that is, we'll be also looking at the faulty assumptions of Protestantism.

And one of the benefits of putting those two together is that Catholicism and Protestantism both have a lot of the same faulty assumptions.

So, in some respects, it will be two birds with one stone, if you will, because there is a great deal of commonality there. But, there is a great deal of controversy, disagreement, bitterness, argumentation, etc.

[3 : 47] that has surrounded this passage in Matthew chapter 16 for as long as I can remember. And if you will turn to it, we will get to the context as soon as we can.

I do want to give you this heads up, though, while you're looking there. This passage in particular focuses upon two individuals. The first, of course, being our Lord.

And the second being Peter. And in, I think it's volume 65, I'm not sure. I don't know that it's even been duplicated yet.

But the master has been made. We talk about Peter's rise to prominence. And it is indisputable. And as you go through the Gospels and follow each and every contribution that Peter makes, it becomes quite obvious that he is the number one man of the twelve.

There's no disputing that. And if you will keep in mind, the first encounter Jesus had with Peter, is actually not recorded in the synoptics at all, but it is recorded in John's Gospel, chapter 1.

[4 : 54] And in it, we have two unnamed disciples. Well, one of them is Andrew. He's named. The other disciple is not named. And John the Baptist is preaching.

And these two are disciples of John. That is John the Baptist. You've got to remember that before Jesus had his disciples, the core of them were John the Baptist's disciples before they became disciples of Jesus.

And the controversy arose when they started leaving John, you'll recall. John wasn't at all put out by it. John said that he must increase, I must decrease, and he who comes after me is before me, and so on, so on.

So anyway, Andrew and an unnamed disciple are listening to John the Baptist deliver his message about the coming of the kingdom of heaven.

And they are intrigued by it, and they see it as a fulfillment of a long-awaited promise that Jews have been looking forward to from the time there were Jews. So they are so enamored with John's message, and they certainly buy into it.

[6 : 08] And then, on that, maybe not the first occasion, but surely one of the earliest occasions, a new person is introduced to John's audience, and it happens to be the second cousin of John, and his name is Jesus, and he comes from Nazareth.

And John the Baptist identifies him as the Lamb of God who will take away the sin of the world.

Well, Andrew and the unnamed disciple are completely intrigued by that.

And the text tells us, we won't take time to go to it, but it's in John 1. The text tells us that they began following Jesus. When he left John's presence and started walking away, Andrew and the unnamed disciple, I can see them talking to each other and saying, where's he going? I don't know. Let's follow him and see where he's going. So they start following Jesus. We don't know how far they get, but probably not very far. And all of a sudden, Jesus turns around and says to them, what are you looking for?

Whom seek you? What are you following me for? And they said, where do you live? Where do you live?

[7 : 25] And he said, come, I'll show you. And we're not told exactly where Jesus took them, but it wasn't to a local comfort inn, and it wasn't to an apartment or someplace that he had rented.

In all likelihood, it was some kind of an outdoor encampment that he himself had erected. So in a very real sense, I guess we could say that Jesus was homeless.

That was not a terribly unusual situation in that day, however, like we might compare it to today, because home was a very frugal, bare-bones thing in that day.

And Jesus said, the Son of Man does not, foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests. The Son of Man doesn't have any place to lay his head. And that was not all that unusual.

So he took them to what obviously was a little homemade campsite, and there they were spellbound as Jesus spoke.

[8 : 32] And they were absolutely amazed. And the conclusion they came to, right up front, was, this has to be the Messiah, the long-awaited one.

And he fits the credentials. He has to be the one. And Peter, I'm sorry, Andrew says to himself, I can't wait to tell my big brother.

And that was Simon Peter. His name wasn't Peter at the time. It was Simon. Jesus is going to give him the name Peter.

Petras. Petras. Which means stone or rock. And scholars have been divided for centuries over which that means. Because one has reference to a small rock, such as one could pick up and throw with your hand.

And the other possibility is that it is a very large rock, such as one wouldn't even be able to lift. It would be like a boulder. So we don't know which it is.

[9 : 43] And the Protestants argue for the boulder. And Catholics argue for the small stone or whatever. So we don't know which it was. But at any rate, it became a very controversial issue.

And when they find Peter, Andrew tells him, You've got to come and see this man. You've got to come and hear what this man has to say. So they make their way to Jesus.

They find him. And upon doing so, we've got some of the words here in Matthew 16 that are accepted from John 1 and 2.

So let's look at it, if we may, beginning with verse 13. Now, when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he began asking his disciples, saying, Who do people say that the Son of Man is?

And here, again, is another example of Jesus referring to himself in the third person. We would say, Who do people say that I am? But he refers to himself in the third person, and he does so very frequently.

[10:45] And here's another case. And they said, Some say that you're John the Baptist, some Elijah, others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. Then Jesus said to them, But who do you say that I am?

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Now, right here from the get-go, we have Peter kind of acting as the spokesperson.

And you might wonder why that is. But as you look at Judaism and the way their traditions were cast and what they tended to follow, it becomes, I think, rather apparent that deference is always given to whomever the senior of the group is.

And we see that in a number of places in the Old Testament. It doesn't necessarily mean that the senior is the smartest or the strongest or anything else, but by being the senior in the family, the oldest boy, he has the position of responsibility.

In fact, upon the death of the father, it is this oldest son that receives a double portion of the inheritance and so on and so forth. So this is a very important thing. And I say all that to say this.

[12:01] It identifies in my mind, and I cannot prove it with a chapter and verse, but it identifies in my mind how and why Peter rose to the ascendancy of being the spokesman for the Twelve.

I was not as aware of that as I became when examining and researching this in connection with the radio program, Christianity Clarified. And I was amazed how many times Peter was the speaker and all of the eleven remaining were silent.

He was always the one to speak on behalf of the Twelve. And that does fit the idea and the tradition of Judaism and the way it was practiced in that day, how the deference was always given to the oldest son.

So Peter identifies him as the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

And that's a verse like many others that I just kind of skimmed over and thought on the surface it was kind of interesting but never really dove into it. Nor did I even realize that it had any particular significance to it at all, but it does.

[13:21] And what Jesus is saying is this, Peter, your answer is correct. However, you did not figure that out on your own.

My Father in heaven revealed that to you. Then the question surfaces, well, why would that be necessary? Why would he be requiring heaven to reveal to Peter who Jesus really was?

Wasn't that rather obvious? No, it wasn't. And the reason it wasn't is because the identity of Jesus being the Son of God and the Messiah was held by a very distinct minority.

And among Judaism, that has never changed. It is still a minority who see him as the Messiah. And the question then arises, well, why should this be such a kind of issue?

Why wasn't it rather obvious? And the answer is, there are two comings of the Messiah that are prophesied.

[14:33] And the one that the Jews had focused on, zeroed in on, is the prophecy regarding the second coming of the Messiah.

Because when he comes, he is coming as the Lion of God. He is coming to exact justice and vengeance.

He is coming as a mighty warrior of the Lord. He is coming militarily to put down and defeat all of the enemies of Israel. That's the second coming.

And that's the one that Judaism in general focused on. Well, what was the first coming? The first coming was meek, lowly, lamb, undefended, innocent, all the rest harmless that went with it.

And the exact picture, a complete opposite picture, of the lamb or of the lion. We've got a lamb and a lion. First time he comes, he comes as a sacrificial lamb.

[15:38] Second time he comes, he comes as a lion. But Israel, as a nation, was fixated upon the lion. And when the Messiah comes, he's going to chase out the Romans.

He's going to sit on the throne of David. He's going to exercise power and judgment and so on. And that was the majority view and will continue to be so.

And by the way, that's the majority view today among the Jews. They are not looking for the second coming of the Messiah. They're looking for the first coming.

They've completely missed the second, the first coming, and they focus on the second coming. And this is why, when Jesus was on the road to Emmaus, right after his resurrection, and he confronts these two unnamed disciples, they are completely, what shall I say, depressed, down, strolling, walking along, mumbling to themselves, and Jesus catches up with them and says, you fellows seem really down.

What's the problem? And they said, you must be a stranger around here. Don't you know what's taken place the last few days? And he says, what are you talking about? And they said, we're talking about Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God, miracles and so on, which God did through him.

[17:05] And we thought that he was the Messiah. And they crucified him. They killed him. We were wrong. He was the Messiah. And were.

And Jesus' response was, oh, foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

What did he mean? And then he said, ought not the Messiah to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory.

You see the two parts? The suffering and the glory. There's the cross and the crown. There's no crown without the cross. The majority opinion of Judaism was, hey, let's just skip the cross thing. Let's go right to the crown. And that's where they were. And that's where they still are. So what Jesus is telling Peter is, you didn't figure that out on your own.

[18:06] My Father revealed that to you because he enabled you to put together my appearance and my words and my miracles and identify me as the Messiah in spite of the fact that I am not making militaristic claims, I'm not threatening Rome, I'm not doing anything of a militant nature, but I am meek and lowly in heart and so on and so on.

So it was a supernatural revelation that allowed Peter to identify who Jesus really was. And he continues by saying, and I also say to you that you are Peter, Petras, and upon this rock.

This is a new name that Jesus is giving him. That's not his name when he entered the picture. His name was Simon, son of Jonas. But he is given an additional name of Peter, which in Aramaic is Cephas.

And sometimes that's used in the New Testament too. So Simon, son of Jonas, Peter, and Cephas, it's all the same individual. It's all the same person. And we are of the opinion that he was the chief spokesperson and he rose to a position of ascendancy and influence among the twelve.

And as you read the Gospels and the book of Acts, almost every time any of the twelve apostles has anything to say, almost always, it's Peter who either says it or asks the question.

[19:38] And all the rest are there just listening along. And Jesus says, upon this rock, and that's, of course, the question is, who or what is this rock? I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.

Well, we have to identify who or what this rock is. And in Roman Catholicism, and I have a reference here that I consider probably the ultimate authority on Roman theology, Roman Catholic theology.

And I want you to get it from the original source rather than my saying, this is what Catholics believe. We need to hear it from themselves. And this is the catechism of the Catholic Church and it comes under the imprimatur of Pope John Paul, who has since passed on.

But he, of course, was the Pope for a number of years, very influential. And on page 155 in this document, which is labeled number 551 in their numbering system, it says, From the beginning of his public life, Jesus chose certain men, 12 in number, to be with him and to participate in his mission.

He gives the 12 a share in his authority and sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal. They remain associated forever with Christ's kingdom, for through them he directs the church. [21 : 18] Quote, As my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel.

Now, I cannot emphasize too much that this kingdom he's talking about is the big deal. It is the big picture.

What we commonly think of as being the big picture is the church, the body of Christ. It isn't. It is an important picture, but it isn't the big picture.

The big picture encompasses everything, including the church, the body of Christ. It is the overall thing. I cannot emphasize this too much because in layman's language, let me put it this way.

This is everything. The kingdom is everything. The Jew lived, slept, ate, drank the kingdom. What's that all about?

[22 : 25] The kingdom is the restored earth, the planet rescued from destruction, from evil, from sin, from everything, and brought into what it is supposed to be.

That is the end game. That is the kingdom of heaven established on earth. Not to be confused with the kingdom, not to be confused with heaven where God dwells, but it is an earthly sphere.

And Jesus Christ is going to sit on the throne of that kingdom that will be worldwide. There he is going to rule and to reign. And the twelve will be ruling and reigning with him.

In Matthew 19, when Jesus is talking to the rich young ruler and he asks what must he do to inherit eternal life, Jesus said, well, you know the commandments, keep the commandments, blah, blah, blah.

And by the way, he's talking in a pre-cross situation. You've got to keep that in mind. And the rich young ruler says, well, I've done all of those things from my youth up.

[23 : 41] And Jesus said, all right, well, if you would if you would be accepted then, if you would be accepted by God and have a place in the kingdom, you divest yourself of your money and give it to the poor and come and follow me.

And the young man went away sorrowful because he had many possessions. And John tells us, as well as some of the others, that the twelve were listening to this conversation there in Matthew.

And when the rich young ruler goes away, it is Peter who turns to Jesus and says, what you just told that young man? Jesus said, yes.

About divesting himself of his goods and giving to the poor and following you? Yes. Peter said, well, we did that. We did that.

What are we going to realize from that investment? And Jesus says, verily I say unto you, that you who have followed me in the regeneration, did you get that?

[24 : 46] The regeneration, the regening, the making new, everything, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man, and there's he speaking in the third person again, when the Son of Man comes into his kingdom, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And Peter says, okay, that's good. So now let's get back to our text here in Matthew. I'm going to be shifting back and forth between this and between the Roman Catholic Catechism.

Jesus said in verse 18 that you are Peter upon this rock, I will build my church. This is my ecclesia. And the word ecclesia simply means an assembly or a congregation or an aggregate of people called out from something to a particular mission or idea.

So that means that an ecclesia that we call the church could be any number of things. And I don't want to be coy about this, but you realize that in this keeping, a football team can be an ecclesia or a baseball team or any other kind of a team.

What are you talking about? Could be a church? A football team can be a church? Yep. If words mean anything, what is a football team? Well, it is a group called out of a larger number for a specific purpose.

[26 : 28] Well, what's their purpose? Just to play football and to win football games. Well, you don't call that a church. No, we don't call it a church. But it is an ecclesia. It is a called out assembly.

And there are at least 40 different times the word ecclesia is used in the Septuagint, which is a translation of the Old Testament Hebrew into Greek.

And there are at least 40 places there where different entities are referred to as an ecclesia or a church. And we won't look at those in the New Testament, but there are some there in the book of Acts where, well, there's one in Acts 7 where Stephen is giving his defense before the Sanhedrin

and he says that Israel was a church in the wilderness.

Israel was a church in the wilderness? Yep. They were a called out assembly. What were they called out of? They were called out of Egypt for a common purpose.

What was their common purpose? Their freedom. Their liberty from bondage. And they are called a church. So all I'm saying is don't get locked into the word church and always associate with it the same thing every time you hear the word because it may mean a whole host of different things.

[28 : 00] And that has to be kept in mind because words mean things. Alright, let's go on now. I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail over it or overpower it.

The gates of Hades always speaks of one thing. It is the authority of Hades. And what is the authority of Hades? Death.

Death. The gates of Hades speak of the place of authority and responsibility and it is found many times in the Old Testament a few places in the New where the gates of the city are referred to as the place where the town council met.

We would call it kind of a city hall. It's where all the decisions were made, official pronouncements were made, judgments were passed, whatever they might be, sentences were passed.

They were always at the gate of the city. And the gates of Hades means the place of authority and responsibility insofar as death is concerned.

[29 : 10] And he is saying here that the church that he is going to build will not be overcome by the authority of the gates of Hades.

In other words, death will hold no sway over them. He is talking about that which is not subject to death. That's the church that Jesus is going to build.

What about the church today? Well, it doesn't qualify. The gates of Hades do prevail over us. Every time one of us dies and passes on the glory, the gates of Hades has taken its toll on our physical body, and we've died.

This is something entirely different. Jesus is talking about building a church that has never yet been built. Now, let that sink in.

Because the first time I contemplated that thought, my response was, well, Marv, that's ridiculous. Where'd you get an idea like that? And the more I thought about it, and the more I researched it, it isn't ridiculous at all, it is true.

[30 : 25] The church of which Jesus is speaking here has never yet been built. But I can easily see why many think it has, especially when you realize that not too many months after Jesus made that statement, Acts 2 is going to occur, and the day of Pentecost will take place, and guess what comes out of that?

It's an ecclesia, a church. church. These are 3,000 people who are called out of a greater number to exercise their faith and their trust in Jesus as the Messiah, and to follow that with being baptized with John's baptism, and they are a church.

However, they are exclusively a Jewish church. There are no Gentiles. There are no non-Jews involved. Never lose sight of the fact that non-Jews are not even introduced in the book of Acts until about 10 years after the resurrection of Christ.

It's all Jewish up until then. All Jewish. That is key. So what we have here is a church, but it's strictly a Jewish church.

Well, what about the church that is referred to as the body of Christ, that is spelled out in Ephesians 3? What's unique about that? That church is unique in that it is a mixing, a melding, of Jew and Gentile in one body with no distinction between them.

[32 : 11] Well, is the first in Acts 2 a church? Yes. In fact, Acts 2 47 even renders a church in the King James, but in the Greek it isn't there.

The Greek simply says they added to their numbers such as should be saved. So Acts 2 is a church. It's strictly a Jewish assembly, but the body of Christ to which we belong is also a church. It is an assembly. assembly. And the word is the same for both and it means exactly the same thing, a called out assembly. So our problem is we take the word church and we assume, here is a faulty assumption, we assume that it means the same thing everywhere it is used and it clearly does not.

And folks, let me tell you, this is a perfect example of the need to rightly divide the word of truth. You've got one kind of church that belongs here, another church that belongs here, another church that belongs here, and when you say, oh well, they're all the same, don't split hairs, nonsense.

Words mean things. The context means things. So you have to keep these things separate. That's what it means to rightly divide the word of truth. And I can promise you this, if you do not rightly divide the word of truth, you will wrongly mix it, because that's the only other alternative.

[33 : 47] So it makes the right division of the word of truth so absolutely critical. And then he says, I will give you, verse 19, the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven.

Now that's an interesting way, and that's the peculiarity of the Greek language and the way it is spelled out in Greek. And he uses that very definitely here.

He says, whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven. Well, where then is the origination of this binding? It's not on earth, it's in heaven.

And what he's saying is, what you will be carrying out on earth will be what has already been determined previously in heaven. heaven. So, in effect, you are simply manifesting what the order was that came from the top down and you are carrying it out.

And the same way with whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven. That is a decision already made. Whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. And then he warned the disciples, and this is remarkable too, it requires a study in itself which we shan't go into, but then he warned the disciples that they should tell no one that he was the Messiah.

[35 : 09] Now, the bomb that I have to drop, and you just have to, that's all. This church that Jesus is talking about has never come into being.

It does not exist. There is absolutely no doubt that it will, but it does not exist. this is the kingdom church. This is the church that will be in the kingdom, part and parcel of the kingdom.

And here is an important distinction. Please hear me. The kingdom and the church are not synonymous.

They are not the same. They are inseparable, but they are not the same. The kingdom is the over all sphere, the whole thing, over all the earth, and Christ will be ruling and reigning.

The church, the body of Christ, will be in that kingdom, but it is not the kingdom, it is merely a part of the kingdom. All the rest of it, all the rest of it will be the majority, and the church, which is his body, will be a minority in that.

[36 : 29] Now, I haven't either the ability or the time to tell you the makeup of all of the other people, but they are not in this same body of Christ that we are.

And when he says that he warned them not to tell anyone that he was the Christ, well, that, no, I can't, I better not do that.

that'll be the rest of the session. Well, I've decided I must absolutely not do that.

Okay, what? Yeah, John? So the keys of the kingdom is future, it's not now. It's not the Gentile Jew church now, but it's future.

Okay, well, that too is, that's another, okay, let's do this. That's okay, that's okay, it's all part of the picture.

[37 : 43] You see, this is a many-prong thing, and every prong is important. Can you repeat John's question? I do. Yeah, repeat the questions.

The keys of the kingdom of heaven is future. Is that what it's saying? Yeah. It's millennial kingdom. Yeah, right. And when Jesus said to Peter, he gives you the keys of the kingdom, Peter began using those keys. I am satisfied, and this is just a wise man opinion, because there's no chapter and verse that says this.

But I am satisfied that when this great sheet was let down from heaven, in Acts chapter 10, 9, where Peter was told to rise, Peter, kill, and eat, Peter says, no, and the sheet was let down three times, and in the sheet, and this was a vision, by the way, and in the sheet were all manner of four-footed beasts, clean and unclean.

And Peter is told in this vision, because it was noon, he was on the housetop, at about noon, we're told, it was lunchtime. And Peter is told by the vision, rise, Peter, kill and eat.

[39 : 06] And Peter said, no, I've never eaten anything unclean, I wouldn't consider that. And three times that sheet was let down, and the voice said, that which God hath cleansed, call thou not unclean.

Well, here are these clean and unclean animals in this vision. What is that all about? Well, the vision portrays them as animals, but they're not animals.

They're people. They are Jews and Gentiles. And Peter's trying to figure out what's going on anyway. And then, there's a knock at the door.

Peter goes to the door, or Ananias goes to the door, a different fellow. No, it wasn't Ananias, what was his name? His name slips my mind.

But anyway, he was the owner of the house on the street called Straight. And Peter goes to the, the man goes to the door and says, there's a man here by the name of Peter.

[40 : 08] Well, yeah, it is Peter here. It was Simon the Tanner. That's where he was. It was Simon the Tanner's house, and it was in Joppa. door, and one of them may have been in military uniform, but there were three of them, and they were all Gentiles.

And they were from Cornelius. And Cornelius was way up the coast at Caesarea. He was an army officer, a Roman army officer in the army stationed there at Caesarea, which was the headquarters for Israel.

And he is a proselyte, and he is praying, and his answer, an angel appears to Cornelius and says, your prayer has been heard, and what you are to do is to send men all the way down the coast and find Simon the Tanner, where Peter is staying, and tell him that he is to follow you, and he will tell you what you need to know.

And Cornelius is already a believer in the fact that he is not Jewish, but he is a Gentile, who has already come to the conclusion that Israel's God is the one true God as opposed to all of the gods that the Romans worshipped.

And in fact, he was so convinced of it that he put his money where his mouth was. We are told that Cornelius was one who gave alms to the synagogue. So he was in with the Judaism, but his prayer, the angel said, your prayer has been answered.

[41 : 44] What do you think he was praying for? I think I know. He was already convinced that Judaism recognized the one true God, and what I think Cornelius is praying for is more light, more information.

And why didn't the angel give it to him? Why didn't the angel just tell him what he needed to know? Well, I hate to appeal to a songwriter to verify this, but when we sing redemption story, angels will bow their heads, for angels never knew the joy that our salvation brings.

I don't think angels are privy to what we enjoy by way of salvation, but they told Cornelius, I can tell you who can, and you find Peter and bring him here, and he will tell you what you need to know.

So Cornelius sends this delegation, probably three men, and Peter is told to go with him, and he is not at all excited about this. Why? Because these are Gentiles. He doesn't have any business hobnobbing with Gentiles.

He's a Jew. So he says, well, okay, I'll go with you, like the vision said three times, but I'm not going alone. And Peter takes three of his Jewish friends with him, and then they start heading down the coast to, or rather up the coast to Caesarea where Cornelius is.

[43 : 14] And when they get there, Peter asks them as he walks in the door and sees all these people there, and Peter is very, very uncomfortable.

And he says, you all know how that it is illegal for a man who is a Jew to be accompanied with Gentiles like this. And frankly, I don't know why I'm here, and I'm out of my element, but I had this vision, and this voice said that I was to go, and that's why I'm here.

And Peter says, so, why did you send for me? What do you want? And Cornelius told him about praying, and about his looking for light and information, and Peter gives a very, very interesting response.

He says, well, what do you make of that? Now, we know that God receives and accepts all who come unto him, and those who do righteous, and so on.

And what's Peter doing? What's Peter talking about? He's talking about meeting kingdom qualifications. He's not saying, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

[44 : 27] That's a message that's coming later. That's not up front now. And Cornelius responds to what Peter tells him, and lo and behold, what happens?

The Spirit of God descended on them, just like it did on the day of Pentecost, when Peter was preaching there in Acts chapter 2.

Peter is dumbfounded. He can't get over what's happening. Why is he so dumbfounded? Because these are Gentiles.

They're not Jews, they're Gentiles. So what is Peter doing? He's using the key. He may not even know it, but he is using the key.

And in connection with that, there's going to be a whole slate of miracles that Peter is going to be involved in. What's that all about? What's the kingdom thing? Miracles, miracles, miracles.

[45 : 30] Because miracles, those performed by Jesus and those performed by Peter and by Stephen and others of the apostles in the book of Acts, they are all oriented toward the kingdom.

What's the big deal about miracles in the kingdom? Because miracles, every time one was performed, was nothing more than a return or a restitution of normality to a situation that had become abnormal because of the fall.

What is it with a blind person? Well, it isn't normal that he be blind. That's an abnormality. What about death? Same way. What about dead?

Same way. Those are all abnormalities. What was the norm? The norm was life. And living and health and all that went with it. That was life in the garden before the fall.

After the fall, everything came crashing down. And the chief enemy of man became death itself. So, Jesus, bringing kingdom character qualifications with him, returned all of the abnormalities that were around him to normal.

[46 : 45] evil. He even stilled the storm. Because in a perfect world as it was created, there wouldn't be any storms.

There wouldn't be any death. There wouldn't be any disease. There wouldn't be any of those things. So, what I'm telling you is, Jesus took the kingdom with him in his own person everywhere he went, and he dribbled out samples of it everywhere.

everywhere. And on one occasion he said, if I, by the spirit of God, cast out demons, then the kingdom of heaven has come among you.

And on another occasion he said, the kingdom is in your midst. And he meant his own person. The King James says, the kingdom of heaven is within you.

Lousy translation. The kingdom of heaven could not have been in the crowd that Jesus was talking to because most of them were his critics and detractors. He wasn't saying the kingdom of heaven is in you.

[47 : 58] No. But he was saying the kingdom of heaven is among you, in your midst. And he was referring to his own person.

Now let me give you a take on this. I don't know. I guess, well, I won't say that it's new. I'll just say it's new with me. The kingdom had gotten underway.

Now I'm saying that it's future, that it has not yet happened. And now I'm saying when Jesus was here, the kingdom was getting underway. And the best way that I can illustrate this is just a homemade illustration, and it's not all I'd like it to be, but it'll have to do.

When you go out to where mountains are, and you look off in the distance, and you see the principal mountain, whichever one it is, the highest one of all, what do you always see and drive through before you get to the mountain?

You drive through the foothills. You drive through the foothills. You drive through hills, hills and hills, until finally you get to the hill, and it's the mountain.

[49 : 14] But up until then, all of those things surrounding it, all of those elevations, we call the foothills. And what I'm telling you is that the miracles that Jesus performed and the miracles that the apostles are going to perform in the book of Acts represent the foothills of the kingdom, samplings of the kingdom.

It was the kingdom in miniature, and it was individual, and it was pronounced by the miraculous power of Christ and the twelve to whom he gave that authority, wherever he went.

He was giving them samples of the kingdom. And that is in effect saying this is the way it's supposed to be. This is the way it's going to be.

And what was it conditioned upon? Two things. Two things. Number one, Jesus is going to have to pay the price for the purchase of the broken earth.

And he will do that when he dies on the cross. The second thing that has to happen is that Israel has to embrace Jesus as their Messiah, and when that happens, then the kingdom of heaven will be established on earth.

[50 : 35] The first part has taken place. The second part still awaits fulfillment. Israel is not online, and they haven't been online for the last 2,000 years.

The time is coming when they will. And when they are online, then the kingdom of heaven will come. So where are we now? Now, this is not the kingdom of heaven. This isn't even close. We are still living in a fallen world that has all of the deficiencies that sin brings with it. But that's going to change, and it won't change until the king returns and establishes that kingdom.

So what I am saying is, contrary to the majority opinion, which is held by Roman Catholics and most Protestants, this is not a spiritual form of the kingdom that we are living in.

Folks, it's difficult for us to get our brains around this because we are so accustomed to living in a fallen world. To us, this is normal.

[51 : 43] To God, this isn't normal at all. God is looking at this broken world and he's saying, this is not what I created. This is what man with his volition and sin has made it and has reduced it to.

But I'm going to see to it that it is fixed. And Peter, in chapter 3 of the book of Acts, refers to it as the time of refreshing and restitution.

And this is not it. We still labor in a broken, fallen world. So what I am saying is, the kingdom that Jesus is speaking of to which he would give Peter the keys, has still never come into existence.

What is in existence right now is an interim thing that was never prophesied, never predicted, never expected, never anticipated, and when it happened, not even recognized.

And that is something entirely different. And it is called the body of Christ. And the emphasis is not where the kingdom is.

[52 : 55] What's the emphasis of the kingdom? Literality, physicality, observance, so that there's absolutely no question. Seeing is believing, and when you see in the kingdom what is taking place, that will be the basis of belief.

But what is the basis for belief in this age, called the age of grace? It is not seeing that is believing. It is believing without seeing. Why did you believe?

You believe because of what you heard about what this world was, who changed it, who died for it, all the rest of it. That's what you believe.

We believe not on the basis of seeing. We believe on the basis of hearing what has been declared. And this is why Jesus said to doubting Thomas, Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed.

Blessed are they who having not seen, shall believe. What's that called? That's called the dispensation of the grace of God. That's the faith thing.

[54 : 07] So what I am saying to Roman Catholics and to Protestants is that this passage of which Jesus is speaking in Matthew chapter 16 has never yet come to fulfillment.

But I must add this, and honesty compels me to say, had I lived back when they did and assessed the situation as they did, I would probably have come to the same conclusions that they did.

And they reached them in good faith. And the first I want to mention, and then I recognized that our time was gone. The first I want to mention, because I think it's very important.

When Israel rejected Jesus as their Messiah, right before he died, as he went into the city, he wept, and he said, O Jerusalem of Jerusalem, thou wouldst stone us the prophets, and kill us to sin unto thee, how often would I have gathered you and you would not.

And then Jesus went on to say, you did not know the hour of your visitation. What was he talking about? He was talking about then, when he was riding into Jerusalem on the colt, the foal of that donkey, the crowd was gathering and people were saying things like Hosanna to the son of David and so on, but they constituted a minority.

[55 : 49] The vast majority of the people didn't understand what was taking place and Jesus said, because you knew not the time of your visitation, the enemy is going to come upon you and it's going to devastate your city, it's going to tear down this temple, Jesus said earlier, not one stone will be left upon another but all will be cast down.

Well listen, it wasn't even finished building yet and the disciples are dumbfounded by what he said and they say, what are you talking about? And he tells them that the time is coming when all of these things are going to be destroyed.

And when did that happen? A.D. 70. Titus Roman general came in, leveled Jerusalem, took huge pry bars, pried those massive stones one from another because the heat, the heat that had been applied to the whole situation melted the gold and all of the gold that was there ran off to the lowest level, ran down in the cracks of the rocks and everything and those Roman soldiers were in there

prying those big massive rocks apart and gathering up that gold that had melted it going down into the cracks.

And all of the people looking on said, mm-hmm, this was 40 years after the crucifixion. Jesus said this was going to happen and here it is.

And do you know the logical conclusion to reach from that? Judaism is done. God has allowed the very nerve center of Judaism, the temple, to be destroyed, ruined.

[57 : 40] Judaism is done. What's taking its place? The church. The church has become Israel's replacement.

That is the standard Roman Catholic position and the standard Protestant position as well. We are the replacement for Israel.

They used to be God's chosen people, but because they rejected the Messiah, God has rejected them permanently. And now, we are the new Israel, the church.

church. This is why I say, the kingdom of which Jesus spoke and the church that he said he was going to build in connection with it has never yet been built.

But the reason they thought it had been, and the reason so many think it had been today, is because in Acts 2, when the Spirit of God came, there was an assembly created, a Jewish assembly, and it was assumed, it was a faulty assumption that that Acts 2 was the fulfillment of what Jesus was saying, that he would build his church, and the gates of Hades would not prevail.

[58 : 59] But fellows, folks, this congregation, this body of Christ, made up of all the congregations like ours all over the world, does not qualify for being the kingdom.

We qualify for being something entirely different, the spiritual body of Christ, not prophesied, not predicted, not promised, and not expected, but boom, there it is.

And if you want to get the best commentary on it, read Ephesians chapter 3, because there Paul the apostle tells us that this church, which is the body of Christ, was never imagined, never prophesied, never promised, never expected, but here it is.

And we are in the dispensation of the grace of God. This is not the kingdom. It is not the spiritual kingdom. It is not the literal kingdom. It is the church, the body of Christ, entirely different.

And I already passed on my time, and I didn't get to what I wanted to in this, because I wanted to give you the Catholic position. You see, this is a problem I've had for 50 years.

[60 : 09] I mean, I'm serious, I'm serious. I'm never able to organize my material so that I get to what I want to communicate all the way. And you know why?

Because every time I say something, and I suspect that one or more of you don't understand what I mean, I can't resist the temptation to stop there and explain it.

And when I do, that clock keeps right on spinning, and all is lost. I tell you, well, those of you are great, you know, I fought this for 50 years, and I've just given up, I'm not even trying to beat it anymore, because that's just the way it turns out.

And I've got here, let me conclude with this, I've got to give you this, I've got to give you this. For those Roman Catholics and Protestants who believe that Peter was the rock of which Jesus was speaking, and that the church is thus built on him, as is set forth one of the positions in this book, I have got here, and I'm going to have to reserve these, I'm going to have to reserve these until next year, because they've got 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 20, 23 references in the Old Testament where God himself is referred to as the rock.

How likely is it that in all of these places in the Old Testament where God himself is referred to as the rock, all of a sudden when you get to Matthew 16, the rock becomes Peter?

[62 : 06] That does not compute, not even close. And you've got to keep in mind that the Old Testament was all that existed at the time Jesus made that statement.

So he was obviously referring to God himself being the rock upon which the church is built. And Peter, of course, is to be the chief spokesperson.

But that's, I'm not finished, but I quit. because that■■■■ all to tris one of to be pregnant and going back.

Not what I do números are going back? No, it's that you're going back? There's a way. Well, it's what it's like.

How do you debris and what it's going back?