

Monthly Study - Church and Kingdom

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Date: 30 December 2021

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[0 : 00] This is the kind of session that I wish we had three hours for, with maybe a bathroom break in between, or maybe even a sack lunch, because it's very, very involved. But it is tremendously important, because there is no bigger picture that anyone can talk about than what we are going to be discussing now.

And we are going to be discussing the eternity's big picture in less than an hour. How's that? And to say the least, we're going to be flying rather fast. But what we are talking about has to do with the kingdom of heaven coming to earth, so that what is commonly referred to as the Lord's Prayer, which has never been answered, will in fact become a reality.

It is a prayer for the kingdom to come, so that God's will will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

And anyone who believes that that is taking place now, in the presence of all of this chaos that we see in this tired old globe, you're looking at a different world than I am.

[1 : 23] Because the world that will be, when the kingdom of heaven is established, will be akin to that which it was when God created it in the beginning, and was able to pronounce it very good.

It wasn't until just a few verses after that, that everything came crashing down, with that initial disobedience of our parents, that injected something into the scene that God did not put there. And that was a sinful nature, which they in turn transferred to the next generation, which transferred it to the next generation, which is where we are today.

Many generations removed. So, we live in a fallen world. This is not the world that God has created. This is the world that man has altered from that which God created due to sin.

And, of course, the principal player in this, besides God and ourselves, has to do with none other than the adversary who is introduced in Genesis 3. And he is assured by God that the seed of the woman, which will be the offspring of the woman, or the child of the woman, of course, many generations removed, will come into this earth, and he will be here for the express purpose of paying a redemptive price for the creation that was lost.

[3 : 05] And in doing so, when Christ, who was God in the flesh, paid that ultimate price on Calvary, he secured the right to reclaim that which was lost from Satan himself.

And we are told that in the meanwhile, Satan, Lucifer, the devil, whatever you want to call him, is referred to as the God of this age.

And he has succeeded in blinding the minds of those that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, which is the image of God, should shine unto them.

So, we live in a fallen world that is governed in so many respects by the adversary. But, Satan, the adversary, can only take the liberties that God is willing to grant him.

I have often described Satan like a mad dog on a chain. And God is the one who is in control of the other end of the chain, and he can yank on his chain anytime he wants.

[4 : 15] But, in the meanwhile, Satan has great liberties, and he functions alive and well on planet Earth. We do not understand much about him.

We know that he is the prince and the power of the air. We know that he is the evil one. We know he is the one of whom Jesus said he was a liar from the beginning, and there is no truth in him. The word Apollyon is described of Satan in reference to his being and character.

And the word Apollyon means the destroyer. And as God is the creator and sustainer, Satan is the destroyer. And what we have that has taken place day by day as we live, that is often not all that obvious, is, and for lack of a better term, and I realize this is inadequate, but it's the only way I can think of describing it, I don't mean to say that human existence and life and everything else is nothing but one grand chess game, but I do want you to see the similarities in a chess game where there are moves involved, and one party moves and the other party moves to counteract that, and

you go on through that, and the whole game is made up of moves and counter moves until there is a check bait.

Somebody wins. And those of you who have read the book of the Revelation already know who the winner is and how it's going to turn out. But in the meanwhile, we are engaged in an enormous conflict between the powers of good and the powers of evil.

And when Jesus Christ came, he came to offer to Israel the remedy, and it became viable as soon as he paid the price for the kingdom.

[6 : 14] And in doing so, the expression I use, and I've never thought of a better one, is that in Jesus Christ dying for the sins of humanity, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, in his doing that, he balanced the moral scales of the universe.

And that provided the right for God to maintain his holiness and maintain his righteousness in extending forgiveness to us, because the penalty for our sin has been met in Christ, and thus we have a clean slate.

And Jesus Christ is the only reason for that. That's what he accomplished when he came the first time. He balanced those moral scales. And then, having done so, he was at liberty to offer to Israel, which happens to be the spearhead nation of the world, he offered to Israel himself in a continuing basis, because this was done before the cross, when Christ was presented as the Son of God and as the Messiah, and Israel rejected him.

As a result, he went to the cross, and that too, by the way, was prophesied. He went to the cross, and there he paid the ultimate price. He existed after his resurrection on earth in a glorified body form, different from that which he had when he went into the grave.

We don't understand all of the ramifications of a glorified body, except you're going to have one one day. And in doing so, he continued to present himself as Israel's Messiah, and they continued in their mode of rejection.

[8 : 04] When you open the book of Acts, you see very shortly thereafter, the ascension of our Lord, where Jesus is offered by Peter, who had already received the keys of the kingdom from Christ.

We'll be looking at that a little bit later. And he was making a plea to the nation of Israel, who had crucified the Messiah, telling them that the opportunity for you to receive the kingdom is still on the table, and you then would be the spearhead nation and the light to the Gentiles for bringing everybody else in.

But after the resurrection, the Jews never did, of course, buy the resurrection. They never did believe it. And we're told in, I think it's Luke's gospel, that the Jews after the resurrection did not believe that Jesus was really resurrected from the dead, and that they entered into a story that his disciples came at night and stole away the body while he slept, which is still believed among the Jews to this day.

So, in Acts 3, following the day of Pentecost, Peter made a new presentation, and he actually said there in chapter 3, which we haven't time to go to, but it's in Acts 3, Peter said, Now, again, you have an opportunity.

If you will repent, that is, change your mind about Jesus, who he is, and why he came, God will send him back.

[9 : 50] Well, he had only been gone about six weeks, when you read that in Genesis, I mean, in Acts chapter 3, God will send him back, and he will continue with that kingdom program that you earlier rejected.

But then you read in the very next chapter, chapter 4, where the persecution of the early believers began, and it intensified until you come up to chapter 9, and the chief persecutor of all was selected, and his name was Saul of Tarsus, and you know about his conversion in chapter 9.

So, what we are talking about is, the eventual establishment of this glorious kingdom, which means sin and death and disease and all of the negatives that go with this fallen world, will be eliminated.

And there is a sheet that I gave you before, and I'm involved in closing out my office, and I've got a piling system that is, and I couldn't find the one other sheet that I was looking for, but it is a complete description of what is involved in the kingdom, and it's an Old Testament description of what it's going to be like when it is established, and it is wonderful.

And I already distributed it to the Sunday crowd, but I know many of you here this morning probably didn't get it. So, my apologies for that. And by the way, while I'm talking about that, I want to put you on notice that the Thursday monthly class for July is canceled.

[11 : 29] We will not have one in July, but we will return for the next class that will be the last Thursday in August, and we'll continue on so long as the Lord wills. So, this whole kingdom thing is such an enormous concept, and it is so grossly misunderstood.

And one of the greatest reasons why it is misunderstood, what I call a faulty assumption, is because the majority of Christendom, and I keep making this emphasis because I want Grace people to understand you are a minority.

The minority position which we embrace is not at all embraced by the majority of Christendom, and by the majority I'm talking about the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church.

They are both pretty much together in this concept of the kingdom. And the position that we take is that they are both subject to a faulty assumption.

They assume certain things, believe them to be true, but they were not true. And they still are not true, but they are still held. And I want to make this very clear, too.

[12 : 54] What I am going to present to you this morning, I wish I could say, is free and clear of faulty assumptions on my part, because I don't make any faulty assumptions.

But that would be a huge lie, because I am as susceptible to faulty assumptions as anybody else. You think you got it right, but you got it wrong.

Your heart might be in the right place, and you might have good intentions, but that is no guarantee for truth. It just doesn't work that way. Because that which is true is that which corresponds to reality.

That's what's true. There are a whole lot of things that seem to correspond to reality, but they don't when you really investigate them further, only to discover that you were wrong.

What do you have to do when you discover that you're wrong? You have to repent. That doesn't mean that you're begging forgiveness or anything of the kind. We're not talking about repentance in the sense that we are seeking to be resolved or absolved of something.

[14 : 06] The word repent, metanoia, simply means through the mind. It means change your mind. It means, thus and so was the conviction that you held before, but the introduction of information that counteracts that has convinced you that you were wrong.

You need to change your mind. Will you do that? Well, if you won't do that, then you are a hardhead. You won't be confused by the facts.

Someone says, don't confuse me with the facts. I know what I believe. My mind's all made up. Don't confuse me with the facts. You'd be surprised how many people there are like that. So we are all under obligation, if you will, to be in an ongoing state of repentance.

And yes, Christians have a need to repent of anything and everything that you discover that you were wrong about and you need to change your mind.

Because if you don't, when you see something is true, you believe it to be true, but you say, well, I'm not going to change my position anyway.

[15 : 17] What you've done is you just shut down the whole process for receiving more truth. Because the best way to keep truth coming your way is to embrace and live by what you already know to the best of your ability to be true.

And when and if you find out something that is not true, you need to change your mind. So when Peter preached his powerful message on the day of Pentecost, which we'll be looking at shortly if we ever get there, he tells them, they said, they admitted when Peter preached the message, the text says in Acts 2 that the audience was pricked in their heart.

It's a powerful statement in the King James. It means Peter's message got through. It touched them so that they were overwhelmed by the truth of it.

And they looked at each other and said something like, you know what? This guy's right. He's right. That's exactly what we did.

And God raised him from the dead insofar as David speaking in the Psalms about thou wilt not allow thine Holy One to seek corruption and so on. And that wasn't speaking of David.

[16 : 41] David wasn't talking about himself at all. That was a prophetic Psalm and it was spoken of regarding the Messiah when he came. God would not allow his body to seek corruption.

That's why God brought him back after three days from the dead so his body didn't seek corruption. But he wasn't talking about David because we know where David's buried. We know where his tomb is.

You can go visit it. That's David. His body did seek corruption and so on and so on. And then in chapter 4 even though there were 3,000 that believed on the day of Pentecost the shakers and movers of Israel the Sanhedrin the council remained in a posture of unbelief and rejection and they started a campaign of persecution that resulted in what we would call the establishment of the Jewish church and that's what Acts 2 is all about.

So the first thing I want you to look at and this is so so intertwined that I I despair having adequate time no matter how much time I have but we're going to look at at Matthew 16 and it is perhaps one of the most if not the most glaring faulty assumptions in all of Christendom and in all of Christendom I'm talking about Catholicism and Protestantism because the Catholics made this faulty assumption in the beginning and the Protestants jumped on board and bought into it and they own the same faulty assumption and that is that the church that Jesus is talking about and the kingdom in Matthew chapter 16 has come to pass and is already fulfilled and prefacing to the reading of this passage I want to give you this statement up front so that you can be germinating it in your mind even as we read it and what I am saying sounds so outlandish and so bizarre you're going to be thinking Marv where in the world are you coming from but I've been through this thing backwards and forwards I've spent several hours on it and I have already repented of the previous position that I held and I have embraced this and it's up to you to decide what you want to do with this Jesus is talking about giving Peter the keys to the kingdom he's talking about establishing his church Jesus said I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it and my contention up front is this the church of which Jesus is speaking here and the kingdom of which he is speaking has never yet come into being still doesn't exist the church that Jesus is talking about still does not exist and it will not exist until the kingdom of heaven is established because the church and the kingdom go together now let me give you this caveat because it's really important very important and here is where by the way our catholic friends and protestants have I'm convinced really gone astray they equate the kingdom and the church as being synonymous they are not words mean things the kingdom is the kingdom the kingdom is the sphere it is when the kingdom is established it will be global it will be over the whole earth

[20 : 33] Christ will be ruling and reigning from Jerusalem and the whole earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord the whole globe and the church consists of residence in the kingdom we are not the kingdom we will be in the kingdom living in the kingdom in the same way that wherever you live you are not the house you are the resident of the house the house is the sphere or the object in which you dwell but they are not the same one exists because the other exists so they go together and in many respects they are inseparable but they are not identical they are not the same you cannot say well the church is the kingdom and the kingdom is the church no it isn't no it isn't they are separate and if you try to make them the same which is what the Catholics and the Protestants for the most part have done then you're going to have all kinds of problems because the kingdom the kingdom is going to be everything that is broken on this life on this world fixed it's going to be reestablished refurbished rebuilt reenergized renewed and Christ is the one who's going to do it and it is going to be absolutely wonderful now to say that that is what we are experiencing today is simply nonsense so how can we have that but still not have to deal with the conditions that it describes and the answer is you spiritualize it you say well it isn't going to be a real physical literal earthly kingdom it's going to be spiritual that means non-material well how is that going to function how is that going to play out well

Jesus will be ruling and reigning in your heart spiritually and you will be in the sphere of that kingdom and that will be the kingdom of heaven come to earth now what I've just explained to you is the majority position you get that this is what most believe and the Roman Catholics believe that this passage of which we are referencing in Matthew 16 was fulfilled in the twelve apostles spiritually not physically and that spiritually the authority to operate and to be the leaders of this kingdom has been passed on spiritually to the next generation consisting of the descendant or the successor of Peter and his rule and reign and the twelve apostles has been passed on to the cardinals and the bishops of the

Roman Catholic Church and that is the fulfillment of which Jesus is speaking in the present day now I'm going to be as kind as I can be but that is just pure hokum that just will not fly at all the scriptures are intended to be understood and when Jesus told the apostles in Matthew or I'm sorry in Luke 12 and I think it's 48 shortly before his crucifixion he said to his twelve apostles fear not little flock for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom and I can assure you that Peter and James

and John and Matthew and Nathaniel and all the rest of them weren't thinking well Jesus is talking about something spiritual way off in the future doesn't mean us literally yes he did yes he did and when he was talking with the rich young ruler

I think it's in Matthew 19 before the cross and before the payment for sin was made rich young ruler came to Jesus and said what do I have to do to inherit the kingdom or to have eternal life and Jesus said well you keep the commandments you know the commandments and the guy said well I've done all that he said I've kept all that from my childhood from my youth and Jesus said well you just lack one thing then just sell everything that you have and give the proceeds to the poor and come follow me and the young man went away sorrowful for he had many possessions and wasn't about to part with them and I just want to inject this so you can connect some dots we're going to try to connect some dots today when you find shortly after Pentecost the apostles and the people in Acts chapter 3 and 4 and on rejoicing and having great praise and thanksgiving and miracles being accomplished among them and those who had houses and lands sold them and gave their money to the poor and brought the money to the apostles for the distribution what was that all about they were stepping up and fulfilling and beginning to meet the qualifications for that kingdom it looked like it was getting underway it really did now we know that it wasn't and it eventually the whole thing got short circuited but the continuation of those miracles and they're divulging themselves of their assets and selling and giving to the poor was all part and parcel of the kingdom program as well as the ongoing miracles that were being performed by them because Jesus had empowered them way back in Matthew 10 to also preach the kingdom of heaven as at hand and he gave them authority to perform miracles and they went out and replicated the ministry of

Jesus all over the place and it was just incredible so what we are talking about here is just one grand awesome package that is all interrelated with a lot of spokes to the rim and to the hub but the hub is the person of Christ and all the outer spokes and so on has to do with all of the accoutrements and everything that's going to accompany that kingdom so I want you to look for the first few minutes at least to Matthew chapter 16 this is shortly before our Lord's crucifixion and I want you to notice the context and the timing of what's said and we read in beginning in verse 13 when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi this is way up north by the way by the sea of Galilee he begun asking his disciples saying who do people say that the son of man is and you who've been to grace for a while know that

[28 : 41] Jesus constantly referred to himself in the third person we're not real sure exactly why he did that but he did it almost all the time instead of saying who do people say that I am he said who do people say that the son of man is now there are times when he's going to say that he's the I am like like John 8 58 but that's entirely different so he's asking the question here and they said well some say that you're John the Baptist now you've got to keep in mind that John the Baptist is already executed Herod put him to death and the thinking of some people is because some of these Jews believed in reincarnation some of them thought do you know who Jesus really is he's John the Baptist come back to life again well of course he wasn't but some believe that and the disciples simply report that's one of the positions and some say that you are Elijah and of course Elijah has been off the scene for a long time because he was taken to heaven in that chariot whirlwind of fire and some say that you're

Jeremiah or one of the prophets and Jesus I can see shaking his head and saying oh that's really interesting now fellows I'd like to ask you the question who do you say that I am and Simon Peter answered Peter is installed apparently as the spokesperson I won't go into this but I think one of the reasons he got the job is he was probably age wise the senior of the twelve there isn't any place in scripture that says that but it does seem to be akin to the Jewish concept of the oldest one in the family assuming the responsibility like similar to the eldest son when the father passed off the scene it was the eldest son who became the new head of the family so it's just a wise man opinion but I think Peter was a chief spokesman and by the way this man always had his foot in his mouth you know that as you read about Peter he was always quick to speak slow to think and quick to speak we all have some Peter in us don't we so Peter answered and what

I'm sure was a bold positive way thou art the Christ the son of the living God Jesus answered and said to him blessed are you Simon bar Jonah or Simon son of Jonas because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you but my father who is in heaven now I cannot tell you with what great temptation I am going to bypass that because it's a study in itself and it is it's a wonderful thing and I've been studying this book for over 60 years but this is a new conviction that I came to within just

the last few weeks and I'd love to share it with you but we don't have time and Jesus said in verse 18 and I also say to you that you are Peter and upon this rock I will future build my church and it will be the kind of church that the gates of

Hades shall not overpower it and here we have by the way in the next verse the very first clue that we ought to pick up on that Jesus isn't equating the kingdom and the church and neither should we because he goes on to say I will give you in verse 19 the keys of the kingdom of heaven doesn't say I'm giving you the keys to the church that's what some try to make it say Jesus didn't say that he knew very well what he was talking about and if he meant to say church he would have said church but he said kingdom because he meant to say kingdom I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven and what the way this reads in the Greek and the tense indicates that it is an action that had already previously been taken or established in heaven and all Peter is doing is carrying out the executive order of what was already established Peter is not making the decision he is enforcing the decision the decisions already made in heaven and

Peter is simply implementing it that's what he's talking about whatever you bind on earth shall have been or shall have already been bound in heaven whatsoever you loose on earth shall have already been loosed in heaven and then he warned the disciples that he should tell no one that he was the Christ what in the world is that about I thought the whole point was presenting him as the Messiah wasn't it well it was up to a point but the time came and it is going to be evidenced in Matthew 13 please don't go there because again we don't have time but it marks a real turning point in the earthly ministry of Jesus when Matthew 13 begins with saying something like this and from that time on Jesus taught them in parables what was that all about why did he change his methodology why speaking in parables in fact the disciples are going to come to him and ask him what what's this parable stuff what why are you why why aren't you just speaking like you always spoken what's with the parables and

[34 : 31] Jesus said because for you for them the common crowd the large crowd it is not given to know the mysteries of the kingdom but to you meaning the twelve it is given and in Jesus speaking in these parables it's almost like his speaking in a code so that only certain ones would be able to pick up on it and it would go right over the heads of everybody else that's why he said he's given the parable but to them it is not given to know that too is significant and folks all of these things are significant this whole book is given to inform us not to confuse us but to enlighten us and the vast majority of it is to be taken at face value so that it means what it says and it says what it means and when

Jesus finished talking to that rich young ruler in Matthew 19 I'm jumping all around but this is all related trust me it's all related it's all connected he tells this rich young ruler sell everything you've got get the proceeds of the poor and come and follow me and you'll have treasure in heaven and the young man goes away sad because he had many possessions and and Peter and the 12 come up to Jesus and say we heard what you just told him liquidate everything come and follow me and Peter says we did that we did that we left our business the fishing the boats the families everything followed you and then Peter asked the question what's the payoff what what are we going to what are we going to get for these sacrifices we've made Jesus said verily I say unto you you who have followed me in the regeneration he's talking future now you who have followed me in the regeneration when the son of man comes into or establishes the kingdom you also will sit upon 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel and this is a parallel passage actually ties in with the Luke 12 48 I think it is where he calls them the 12 little flock he says fear not little flock it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom and and there is absolutely no reason whatever to believe or for the 12 to believe Jesus is not talking about real thrones that we're going to sit on he's not talking about a real literal kingdom and actually he's not even really talking about us he's just talking about those who are going to eventually descend from us they will be the ones who will be sitting on the 12 thrones but they won't be real thrones they'll be spiritual thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel but that won't be a literal Israel that'd be what is this nonsense these 12 took that to be very literal they and it will be fulfilled very literally one day that's exactly what's going to happen he will make good on that promise so back now to Matthew 16 where we would like to conclude this from that time on verse 21 Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders chief priests scribes be killed and raised up the third day that really sounds like establishing the kingdom doesn't it well all he's doing here is paying for what the

kingdom is and when Jesus came the first time he came to pay the price for the kingdom when he comes a second time he will collect on what he paid for and we are living between those two times that's where we are now now for the time that it remains I want you to come to let's go let's go to the to Pentecost in Acts 2 here is where there is major major major faulty assumption in the next chapter 2 and I'm not being facetious but I'm trying to make a point and trying to emphasize this everybody knows everybody knows this is the beginning of the Christian church in Acts chapter 2 everybody knows that except it isn't true it isn't true who believes that it is all of the Catholics and probably 90% of the Protestants believe that this is the birthday of what we call the Christian church is no such thing now let me clarify something it is the beginning of a church it is the beginning of a church what church it is a Jewish church these people are all Jews they're there on a Jewish feast day no Gentiles allowed these are all Jews and they are a church because the biblical definition of a church is a called out group or assembly for a common purpose that's a church that's an ecclesia and the word ecclesia comes from a compound Greek word which means from the word ek it's related to our word exit in English which means a way out and kaleo which comes from the word the word kaleo from our English word called and it means called out for a common purpose the Septuagint is the Septuagint is a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek that's the Septuagint and it was provided because so many Jews had been scattered by way of persecution and other means and slavery etc had been scattered all throughout the Mediterranean world they're called the diaspora or the dispersion the scattered ones and so many of them began adopting the language of the country to which they were scattered and the lingua franca of the Mediterranean the common language of the Mediterranean in the first century was Greek virtually everybody spoke Greek by the way do you have any idea what the lingua franca of the world is today it's [42 : 28] English you'd be surprised how many people in Europe can speak very good English it's English is the world language well in the first century Greek was a world language and so many of these people who were Jewish by religion had been scattered into all parts of the Mediterranean world and they began adopting the language of the vernacular of the people where they were gathered and for the most part that was Greek so they began speaking Greek and many of them lost their Hebrew especially with the coming on of a new generation of people they would be trained and taught in the same in the English language just like kids are today when they go to school they come from a foreign country they start in a grade school and they begin learning and sometimes they end up teaching their parents English because that's the language that they picked up so what happened as a result of that as you read the Greek language of the translation of the Hebrew guess how many times the word ecclesia which means a called out assembly that we translate church guess how many times that's found in the Septuagint in the Greek over 40 and this is a translation of the Old Testament not the New and yet they're calling all of these incidents places ecclesias church do you realize that it's perfectly appropriate to call a baseball team a church well you said well that's the craziest thing I ever heard no it is you're talking about words listen words mean things a baseball team is a called out assembly or group for a common purpose play ball win games well you would call them a church well technically they are a church keep that in mind you know when Stephen is speaking and defending himself before the Sanhedrin who ends up stoning him to death Stephen calls Israel the church in the wilderness it's translated that way near King James Israel the nation is called church in the wilderness what's the wilderness the wilderness is what they traveled through when they left Egypt the common purpose for which they came out was their freedom and release from bondage from Egypt and Peter or Stephen calls them the church in the wilderness called out assembly that's all it means so when you see a church in Acts 2 47 if you've got a King James version Acts 2 47 says and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved so that means that you can't add to something if you don't already have it so the church existed and it did as it was it was a Jewish church but what is the church that we call the Christian church what is that is that the same as the Acts 2 church no it isn't what is it the Christian church is the dynamic of Jew and Gentile bonded together as one person a concept totally unheard of in the Old Testament and not well accepted in the New because God broke the barrier the dividing wall that separated us and made the two Jew and Gentile into one new man as it were and that is called the Christian church so it is different from the church in Acts 2 that was exclusively Jewish now no doubt some of those people are going to be melded into what will become then what we call the Christian church but there are a lot of

different things in the Bible that are referred to as a church and yet we always think of one thing and one thing only and words mean things and that's why we have to be very careful about this so in well I won't go there but let's let's continue on here I want to show you another concept that is often misunderstood and that is when Peter preached his message in Acts 2 we search in vain to find a salvation message as such because it just isn't there when we preach today what we call the gospel message of Christ our message is simply this believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and Peter is not preaching that Peter is preaching to these people that they need to believe that Jesus was the Messiah and if you read Acts 2 and read it carefully you will note what Peter does not say he does not say this is the beginning of the Christian church in Acts 2 47 and the King James renders it that way but by the way in the Greek the word church isn't even there it says simply says Acts 2 47 says and the Lord added to their number daily such as should be saved and the number he's talking about was the 3,000 that believed earlier the Lord added to that number those who would be saved but it was a church so it's not wrong to call it a church it's just not the church that is the body of Christ it's a different church it's a different assembly and as I've said words mean things so in verses 17 when Peter stood up to give an explanation of what was taking place when they were trying to figure out what was happening because these people were speaking in languages that they had never heard and what this was in essence was as you read as you read Acts 2 and verse beginning with verse 8 in their own language into which we were born Parthians Medes Elamites Mesopotamia Judea Cappadocia all these people were speaking these languages of these countries from which they came so they couldn't understand if Peter was speaking in Hebrew they didn't have Hebrew and God all I can say is this seems to me to be the best solution God just reversed what he did at the Tower of Babel when he confounded the languages and he opened it up so everyone could hear the message in their own language whatever that was and that of course was a miracle and people are gathering and coming in there's a big crowd hey there was a huge noise here the sound of a rushing mighty wind has anybody here ever had the experience of being next door to a tornado everybody who I've heard of who has says you know what it sounded like it sounded like a fully loaded speeding freight train rolling right by your window and the noise was deafening well I don't know if that's exactly what this was or not but that might be a pretty good description everybody that's ever survived a tornado says that sounded like a huge freight train just roaring by and this is going to draw a crowd and these people are coming over what's that over what's that noise over there they're in a huge complex they're in the they're in the court this huge upper court that is the equivalent of 12 football fields that's pretty good size acreage huge huge but they're all in this one particular location that accommodates thousands of people and out of the thousands who were there there are 3 000 who are positive for the message and we don't know how many rejected but they're all asking what's going on here what's going on and somebody says oh these people are drunk that's all that's that's all they're just they're just they're and peter says listen these people aren't drunk as you suppose it's nine o'clock in the morning for crying out loud they're not drunk but he says this that you are hearing is what joel was talking about the prophet joel who lived hundreds of years before jesus was born and joel said it shall be in the last days and they were living in the last days last days are decided by the cross everything on the other side of the cross is the former days everything on this side of the cross is the latter days peter and the disciples lived in both they lived in the former days and in the latter days we are living in the latter days they began when jesus said it is finished and died on that cross that was the end of the former days and the beginning of the latter days and he says in the last days god says i will pour forth of my spirit upon all mankind and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams even upon my bond slaves both men and women i will in those days that is those last days pour forth my spirit and they shall prophesy and i want you to know the huge change that takes place beginning with verse 19 and i will grant wonders in the sky above and signs on the earth beneath blood and fire and vapor of smoke the sun shall be turned into darkness the moon into blood before the great and glorious day of the lord shall come where are those where are those no indication that that happened i want to submit for your thinking there is a gap between verses 18 and 19 and we are in that gap we are sandwiched in between there you say well i don't i don't see us there well you don't see us because we are not prophecy we are part of the mystery the church which is the body of christ is never referred to in the old testament never prophesied never promised never described it's a brand new thing and that is a principal reason why paul had such a hard sell when he came on the scene and presented this jew and gentile in one body they would

say well where is that predicted it isn't predicted that's the thing that makes it so different and if you want the best commentary ever written on that read ephesians 3 and there paul makes it very clear that that the body of christ the church which was not known before but was kept secret in the mind and heart of god to be revealed at this precise time so we are a johnny come lately this thing called the church and prior to that everything was israel everything was the prophets everything was the coming of the messiah and what we know as a church didn't even exist except in the heart and mind of god and he chose the most unlikely individual in the whole wide world to spring it he chose his worst enemy and paul says you know what's so neat about that i am the premier trophy of the grace of god if god could reach down and save me he can save you he can save anybody wow that is really something so this granting wonders in the sky above signs on the earth beneath blood and fire and vapor of smoke sun turned into darkness the moon into blood before the great and glorious day of the lord shall come hey that sounds very tribulational doesn't it this is exactly what jesus is talking about in matthew 24 in the olivet discourse he's explaining what will happen and then shall they see the sign of the son of man coming from the heavens and the whole earth will be enshrouded in darkness but they will see jesus because he's bringing his own light

[56 : 02] boy that's going to be something that's going to be something so this church here peter calls out this assembly is called out for a common purpose they are a church they have come to faith in jesus as the messiah and john says or peter says and if you fellas if you folks want to demonstrate that you're really on board you know what you need to do you need to submit to john's baptism you need to be baptized of john with john's baptism john's off the scene he's dead and buried but the apostles were continuing on with john's message preaching the kingdom of heaven is at hand baptizing and it's john's baptism this in chapter 2 has nothing whatever to do with what we call christian baptism this is john's baptism it was the baptism they were already familiar with and they were already practicing but many of the people rejected john's baptism and we are told in luke's gospel but the scribes and the pharisees did not submit to john's baptism neither did they believe john's message now this is a time that peter is calling all of these people to repent you need to change your mind why because you've gotten information that justifies you changing your mind so what are you going to do and 3,000 of them said sign us up and they became part of this

Jewish church I've never seen a clock that I didn't hate and I hate this one too but well I'm not finished but I quit yeah Scott what I don't know if you have time for the question but he's saying saying the words mean something and when you look at the kingdom age versus the church age and the terminology that was used and I read this so I'm not I'm still kind of digesting it born again was referring to the Jews as a birthright but when it comes to Paul the terminology is now saved are they synonymous do obviously both involve repentance and yeah well I know there are some there are some believers by the way let me if anybody needs to be someplace because you're obligated at a certain time feel free to leave and just just leave and thank you for coming and nobody will think you're rude because you get up and walk out but

I know that there are a number of grace people who say that repentance is not part of the gospel that that is adding to the gospel but because words mean things what does what does repent mean it literally means through the mind it's a mental thing we've talked about Christianity in the past being a thinking faith it requires hearing information assessing the information and reaching a conclusion based on the information and and when you repent in Acts 17 Peter is preaching on Mars Hill and he is and by the way he's talking to an intellectual group of Greeks this is this is Athens this is the place that produced Plato and Socrates and Aristotle and all those big thinkers and he says as he's preaching there on Mars Hill he says in verse 30 therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance and I'm still not sure what that means

God is now when he's delivering this message to the Athenians on Mars Hill he is saying God is now that is as of that time that he was speaking God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent and for those who think mistakenly that when you tell people they have to repent that you were adding to the gospel when all the gospel says is just believe and when you tell people they have to repent you're adding to the gospel and that's a that's a misunderstanding because the word repent means change your mind that's exactly what it means change your mind and let me ask you something can you become a believer in Jesus Christ without changing your mind it's impossible because listen everyone who is not in

Christ they're not a believer not a Christian they are believing something even if they're an atheist they believe something they believe there's no God or they believe they're good enough the way

they are or they believe they're a nice guy and God will smile upon them because they've always tried to do the right thing believe all kinds of things you've got to change your mind about that whatever it was you were trusting in or believing before when you hear the gospel the good news that Christ died for your sins you've got to change your mind from the position that you held before based on the information that you've got about Christ and who he is and what he did and why it matters you've got to change your mind about that you can't be saved without changing your mind so that's why repentance is a mental thing and it is a God given thing and I'm sorry I'm sorry I did it again so my apologies and we won't even be meeting for the last of

[62 : 19] July and by now and by the last of August you'll have forgotten everything I told you so we will do our best to pick up from here and try and you know what we're trying to do this is this is all we're trying to do and I use this illustration for and I'll close with this all we're trying to do dear friends is connect some dots and I've explained before you've seen a picture sometimes that's given to children with a bunch of numbers on it and you're supposed to draw a line starting with number one and number two and you go around and you connect all of those dots consecutively the number and lo and behold what emerges it's a picture well I didn't even know that's what I was drawing but it's a picture it's a horse I can see that now that's called connecting the dots and when it comes to the Bible everything in this blessed book is connected to everything in this book it all fits together and all we're trying to do is connect some dots there's nothing more exciting more revealing more energizing that produces more gratitude than this I've been doing it for 65 years and I've never gotten tired of it so thank you all for your kind attention and I'm sorry

I'll tell you what I would really appreciate it if you would do this if you would before any thoughts leave your mind if you would jot down on paper any questions you have about anything I said and stick it in your Bible and the last of August we'll talk about it okay but if you wait if your mind works like mine you will have forgotten about in a couple of days so thank you again for being here appreciate your presence you you you you you you you you you you you you you you you you