

# The Gospels: Prophecy & Promise Realized (Part 2)

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] In this present series, we are attempting to relate to you an all-important key for interpreting and understanding the Bible. And to say that many Christians are deeply divided over how the Bible is to be understood is, of course, a classic understatement.

I am personally convinced that much of the disunity that exists in Christendom over the biblical interpretation principles is closely related to the very thing that we are right now engaging, and that is the progressive revelation of Scripture.

What do I mean by that? Very simply put, let me characterize it like this. As the Word of God opens, we really have no one on the scene except God and our first parents.

God revealed Himself to a certain degree to Adam and to Eve. But we are of the contention, and I am satisfied that the Scriptures really require this, that God had revealed Himself in a further way and additionally to Noah, who lived several hundred years after Adam.

What's more, we would go further and say, as the patriarchs are born and as some die off and new ones take their place, Abraham arrives on the scene.

[ 1 : 3 1 ] And to me, it is very apparent that God had revealed Himself in a yet further way, even more clearly to Abraham than He had to Noah and to Adam.

And can we not go even further and say, while that is true, when Moses came on the scene, he was given additional information and additional revelation and additional requirements from God that neither Adam or Noah had.

And then King David, another patriarch, a descendant of Judah, one who really establishes the royal line.

It's very apparent that David had certain insights into the character and being and nature of God that none of the others had. And as the centuries roll on, God becomes more and more clearly revealed and known in a greater way than He was in the earlier times.

When you come to John the Baptizer and the twelve apostles, after having bridged the space of four hundred years from the book of Malachi, where heaven has been silent, John the Baptizer arises on the scene and begins preaching his gospel, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

[ 2 : 5 6 ] Now it is patently clear that nobody in the Old Testament proper ever preached the message that John the Baptizer preached. It would have been a message that for them was not opportune at all.

It would have been premature for Isaiah or Jeremiah or Elijah to preach such a thing because it wasn't true. But when John the Baptizer preached that message, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, that constituted a yet further revelation from God and an additional commission that God had given to His servants that He had not given to those during the Old Testament.

We will see how that Jesus' message was identical to John's message. It was intended to be. It was only proper that it should be.

And when John was cast into prison, Jesus kind of took up the mantle, if you will. Now some people are bothered by that. They don't like for Jesus to take up the mantle after John the Baptizer because that almost makes Him look like second string, you know.

John's finished, so you call in the reserves, and that's Jesus. And I don't like to think of Jesus as being a reserve or a backup man to John the Baptizer. But it wasn't that really at all.

[ 4 : 1 7 ] In fact, John's message was Jesus. John's message was, John's message was Jesus.

But, and here's an important point to remember, Jesus as the King of Israel was never to be divorced from the kingdom that was promised to Israel.

When John preached Jesus as the King, he also announced the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The king and the kingdom, they go hand in hand. You can't have the one without the other.

This message was one that has its seed in the Old Testament in prophecy and promise. And the kingdom of heaven simply refers to that time when God is going to reestablish upon earth what has been lost and forfeited due to man's sin.

He's going to bring Eden back. He's going to lift the curse. Paradise is going to be restored. The announcement of the kingdom means the promise of God that he is going to bring restitution to the whole earth, all of humanity and all of creation.

[ 5 : 47 ] And it's right at hand and it is going to be done through the instrumentality of the king. That was an absolutely electrifying and stunning message that was delivered. John the Baptizer and the 12 apostles had the commission, as we shall soon see.

of delivering that strategic and important message. But, here's the point. That's not the epitome of New Testament revelation. Progression goes on and it is further yet.

It's demonstrated in the fact that Paul the Apostle received an abundance of revelations that the others had not received. It isn't that they were supposed to have received them and didn't get the word.

They were not supposed to receive them. This was a unique kind of message. It is referred to, and we shall see it when we get to the Acts and the epistles. It is referred to as the mystery which God had ordained and prepared.

and the emphasis is on the fact that which in former times was not made known to the sons of men nor the prophets.

[ 6 : 56 ] Now, that says it quite clearly. Paul says, folks, this information was revealed to me. It wasn't known before. Isaiah didn't know anything about it. Jeremiah didn't know anything about it.

John the Baptizer did not preach this message. Neither did Jesus. It doesn't mean that anybody was wrong, but it does mean that they were different. When he preaches, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, that struck a chord in the heart and mind of every responsive Jew.

They really got excited about that. You know, if you went about today, of course, they might come after you and put you away, but if you went parading down the main street of Springfield, Ohio, saying, repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

First of all, they would think you were crazy. And secondly, there wouldn't be a soul who heard you who would have any idea what you meant. They would probably equate it with the end is near, judgment day is coming, or something like that.

They wouldn't know what it meant. They have no frame of reference. They don't understand that at all. But when this message was preached to Israel, to the Jew, you'd better believe they know what it meant. And they were excited about it.

[ 8 : 10 ] And those who were predisposed to belief and to faith believed the message of John. And those who weren't, didn't. Now, the great and unfortunate tendency is to take all of these things and all of the various revelations that were given to these different people down through hundreds of years and just lump them all together and say, well, after all, they're all in the Bible.

So you just kind of mix them all together and stir them up. Some feel, in fact, I've heard this charge, and perhaps you have too, some feel that assigning progression to the Bible requires that we embrace the latest revelation and depreciate or cast off the earlier revelation as being of no importance or consequence.

And I've even heard people say this. Oh, you think Paul the Apostle is the only one who has anything worthwhile to say to us. Nobody else counts, only Paul, because that's the latest revelation.

So everything before Paul is completely irrelevant, has no bearing on the church at all. Well, anybody that I know who holds to the progressive revelation of Scripture would find that accusation not only untrue, but offensive.

Let me illustrate it this way. Not too many of us here, if anybody, knows anything firsthand about World War I, but we remember reading about it in our history books.

[ 9 : 37 ] And we know that there were a number of things about World War I that represented tremendous advances in technology over, say, the Civil War fought in the 1860s.

I mean, technology had come a long ways. By our standards today, World War I was almost primitive. But when World War I, 1914, began, there had been tremendous strides made since 1865 when the Civil War ended.

And there were a lot of things pressed into service by way of implements and technology that simply weren't available. And that's even true with the Spanish-American War in 1898. While we can't identify with World War I too much, some of us can identify with World War II without any problem at all. And we look back and we compare those two wars.

World War II, World War I. Hmm, World War I, old trench warfare. They wore those real funny-looking hats and funny-looking uniforms and they had the leggings and the band-aids, you know, the infantrymen and they would run around in trenches.

[10:56] And you know, they still used horses and mules. They had mule-drawn cannon. Well, they, now, mechanized vehicles existed in World War I.

Sure, there were 1906 and 1907 this and that, but the problem is mechanized vehicles were so unreliable, so undependable. I mean, they didn't have fuel injection, they didn't have electronic ignition, they didn't have front-wheel disc brakes, they didn't have any of those good things. You were lucky if you got that critter started and you had to get out and crank it in the mud and then half the time it wouldn't go and it's pitiful. If you want to make sure that the cannon get from here up on that hill, you get a team of mules.

They'll get it there. But this newfangled machine, well, you didn't see too many mules in World War II because technology had advanced so that mechanized vehicles were a lot more dependable in World War II than they were in World War I.

World War I, there were no aircraft to speak of. I mean, we had our Snoopy's Red Barons and the old Camel Sopwith, but after all, they really didn't begin to compare with the fighter planes that we had in World War II.

[12:15] And aircraft carriers were unheard of in World War I. Who's never heard of such a weird thing as an air? But when World War II opened, we had the Hornet and we had the Yorktown, we had the Enterprise, we had the Wasp, and you could put planes on those decks.

They could take off from there. Floating islands. Incredible. Now, I just want to ask you one simple question. Can you imagine fighting World War II with World War I technology?

Be absurd. I can promise you we'd probably all be speaking Japanese now if that were true. Or German, or whatever. It isn't likely that it would have turned out the way that it did.

And when you advance from World War II into Korea, we didn't even have jet fighters in World War II. I mean, they started coming in on the end of that and fortunate the war ended when it did because Germany had them before we did and they never got them in the air but they were in the test stage.

But in Korea, and look at the difference between Vietnam and Korea. This is all progress, folks. Now, maybe it's progress for death and destruction and war and all the rest and we don't like to think of it along that vein but the truth of the matter is it is a progress in technology.

[13:37] There are advances being made and that's important. Helicopter gunships in Vietnam played a strategic role that didn't even exist for all practical purposes in World War II.

You do not fight World War II battles with World War I weapons technology. The results would be disastrous. Now, let me ask you this. While we're talking along this line and while we're thinking in this vein, does this mean then that our military commanders in World War II had nothing to learn from World War I or that they couldn't benefit from it?

Is it not true that our most valuable military commanders in World War II were the very same men who could remember and were involved in World War I?

They had the experience, the background, they made tremendous contributions because of what they were exposed to in the former. I'm told that Patton not only benefited from World War I, Patton studied Alexander the Great and the strategies militarily of Caesar and the Gallic Wars, Hannibal and his campaign in the Alps was beneficial to George Patton, tank commander in World War II. Now you can look at Hannibal, Caesar, and the Gallic Wars and he studied intensively Robert E. Lee from the Civil War and Grant and you could lump all those together and say, oh, that's old-fashioned, good grief, we've got all these things now, they can't teach us anything.

[15:20] He would have been the first to disagree with you and one of the reasons for that is because people haven't changed. Men in combat conditions are pretty much the same no matter what war it is and their weaknesses and their strengths are the same and you always need to understand about strategy and how the enemy thinks and you need to know how to make the best deployment of your troops and of your armor and whatever else it is that you have and you can learn and benefit tremendously from men who use technology that is long since outdated.

You wouldn't use their weapons but you sure would benefit from their know-how. What was revealed to the Apostle Paul, the mystery of the body of Christ and the dispensation of the grace of God constitutes our most recent and potent means for conducting spiritual warfare and there are a lot of Christians today who are spiritually fighting today's modern warfare with outdated, outmoded weapons and strategies and they're asking the question how come we can't seem to win these battles?

How come when I try to pray with faith believing and really claim this like I say brother so and so on television doesn't work for me? how is it when my aunt was sick and dying I was told to pray for and faith believing and the cancer would be healed and the tumor would go away and she died?

I'm depressed and discouraged and defeated. I hear all these dazzling testimonies on TV but it doesn't work for me how come?

what's wrong with me? am I a substandard Christian? am I some kind of a second class spiritual Christian and I just don't have the faith and I just don't believe and I don't do it right and what's wrong?

[17:13] Christians are engaged many of them in conducting their lives with the outmoded kingdom of heaven strategy and a warfare that is designed for the strategies of the dispensation of the grace of God and many Christians to whom I just made that statement wouldn't even know what I'm talking about now folks that's out of it and if you're one of them I implore you for the cause of Christ get plugged into it makes all the difference in the world I do not know that there is anything in the time of battle that is so deadly or that guarantees defeat more thoroughly than confusion confusion confusion you take a general out in the field with subordinate officers under him and these officers don't know what their orders are what am I supposed to do?

I've got 3,000 men under me what am I supposed to do with them? and here are commanders all out in the field and the battle is getting ready to get underway and these guys are standing around wondering what's my orders man?

what am I supposed to do? listen any success they have is going to be a result of dumb luck and sometimes I fear that that's about the size of the success in a lot of Christian lives today the grace of God still operates in them and through them even though they aren't operating in the vein with the grace of God and it is only the grace of God that things aren't worse than they are the Christian church is so divided and anemic we are like spiritual keystone cops running around and bumping into one another because we don't have our orders straight this one's going off that way and this one's going off that way and this one's bringing in the kingdom and this one's doing something else and good grief and the world stands back and says isn't that pathetic and they're right it is pathetic after 2,000 years the orders have been delivered and we still haven't got them straight we're still back there muddling around in an outdated outmoded technological battle plan and strategy and wondering why in the world this thing won't work items we've taken the position the New Testament did not begin with the birth of Jesus Christ it began with his death that may seem like a little thing that may seem like well yeah

I can see that and who doesn't know that but it is amazing how many people think the New Testament begins with Matthew 1:1 it doesn't it doesn't and when you try to operate on the basis that it does that's the beginning of confusion right there listen I know what I'm talking about I operated that way for 15 years it didn't work for me either I've been there I know what it means to be befuddled and confused and discouraged and depressed and perplexed and I look at this and I say man this doesn't seem to fit with this over here and what's what's the problem here anyway and it's all inspired and it's all the word of God and yet Matthew says this but Ephesians says that I don't understand this what's wrong well folks I'm trying to tell you right now I'm trying to tell you what's wrong the New Testament which Jesus Christ so vividly described the night he was betrayed took the cup and he said to his apostles gathered around the table he said this cup is the New Testament in my blood now what that means to me is there is no

New Covenant without the blood of Christ what that means is it is the death of Jesus Christ that provided the basis for the New Covenant being established he sealed the New Covenant with his blood and his blood was shed on Calvary that's the beginning of the New Covenant when Christ laid the basis for it what that means by way of implication is quite simple then Jesus lived and functioned as a human being on earth for some 33 years under the Old Testament economy not under the New he was circumcised the eighth day because he was a Jew under the law Christ was born of a woman in the fullness of time made under the law to redeem them that were under the law

he was a minister of the circumcision to fulfill the promises given to the fathers he was presented six weeks later in the gospel of Luke under the law he was baptized by John the baptizer not for the same reason that everyone else was but for he had no sin to repent of but he identified himself with that believing remnant of Israel and he told

[ 22 : 59 ] John thus suffer it to be so for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness Jesus Christ observed the Sabbath and the feasts because he was a Jew under the law he was a loyal observant Jew who kept all of the law of Moses and he fulfilled the law for he himself said I come not to destroy but to fulfill the law doctrinally the gospels belong to the Old Testament I can never forget the time when that when that came to me and I'll show you where it started Mark chapter 1 let's go there please this just you talk about the roof falling in when you start going through the word verse by verse like we usually do all kinds of interesting things happen we say doctrinally the gospels belong to the Old Testament not to the New because the New Covenant was not established until the end of the gospels you see many people think in terms of the New Testament originating with the birth of Jesus the New Testament began as it were in Bethlehem did not did not the New Testament began at Calvary that's where it began at Calvary in order for Jesus Christ to be able to lift the curse and establish the kingdom one thing he had to do was finally fully and forever pay the price for man's sin and rebellion that started in the garden and when Christ died on the cross he afforded

God the right the moral right to lift the curse because Christ satisfied all the demands of the holy law in Mark chapter 1 and verse 14 here's what we read and after John had been taken into custody by Herod Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of God now that word gospel means good news and it has to be something that wasn't known before or it isn't news if somebody tells you something and you say well that isn't news I already knew that well to you it isn't news but when you hear it for the first time it's news and here Jesus is preaching the good news of God what was the essence of his message God has a message to man he hasn't had any messages for 400 years now he's got a message for man what is the message what is this good news of God the essence of it is couched in verse 15 here is his message and saying the time is fulfilled which is another way of saying folks this is it the hour has come things are ready this is the jumping off place zero hour is arriving the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand repent and believe in the good news what good news that good news he says repent and believe in the gospel and when I got a handle on this it it started a chain reaction in my mind and it it hasn't stopped it just led to all kinds of things I cannot tell you how many times I have heard people preach out of the gospels I'd never heard anybody preach through a gospel never had I've heard a lot of people preach from the gospels I've heard lots and lots of messages on John 3 16 and God knows everyone who's ever been in a bible school or college is going to hear a lot of messages on Matthew 28 19 and 20 missionaries just work that over really royally I've heard all kinds of messages from the gospels but I never heard any preached through the gospels where you had to deal with line upon line precept upon precept and when we started through the gospel of Mark verse by verse when we were meeting at Roosevelt School 1971 what is this gospel that Jesus is saying repent and believe in the gospel and you ask anybody today what's the gospel well that's simple the gospel is what Paul said in Romans or in 1 Corinthians 15

I delivered unto you that which I first of all received how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and that he was buried and rose again the third day according to the scriptures that's the gospel death burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ that's the gospel that is the gospel and it's the only gospel and what gospel is this repent and believe in the gospel what gospel is Jesus talking about here in Mark well the gospel that he's talking about there is his upcoming death and burial and resurrection and that's what he's asking these people to believe now come on come on is there anybody for one moment who can look at that and say what Jesus is talking about is now you people understand of course that I am the Messiah you all understand you Jews you all understand that the Messiah is going to be crucified for the sins of the world and for your sins in particular and that I'm going to be buried and I'm going to be raised again from the dead the third day and that's what it is that I expect you to believe and that's what

I'm preaching to you now and that's what John the Baptist is preaching is there anybody for a moment who believes that apparently so apparently so what we have repeatedly got to ask ourselves is what did this mean to the people to whom Jesus spoke it and what did he mean by it when he said repent and believe in the gospel it is the gospel of the kingdom of God or the gospel

of the kingdom of heaven the terms are used interchangeably Matthew uses exclusively kingdom of heaven uses it over 30 times and many other places in the gospels it's repeated and it is the kingdom of God and they are used in parallel passages undeniably they are synonymous what it means is this listen folks you have been told all throughout the old testament that that the kingdom of heaven is going to be established that the son of

[ 30 : 00 ] David a descendant of David is going to sit on the throne of David governing Israel and all the world you've heard that the time is coming when all things are going to be restored to what they were originally and the kingdom conditions will prevail that gospel that good news it is at hand it is on the scene it is right around the corner get ready for it get prepared because you are the target nation through which that is going to happen the nation of Israel that's the gospel that these people were supposed to believe now let's solidify this by going to Matthew well actually no wait stay where you are stay where you are look if you will at Mark 1 and verse 29 no sooner had Jesus begun preaching this gospel of the kingdom and he begins to authenticate his message and his claims as the Messiah with his miracles immediately after they had come out of the synagogue they came into the house of Simon and

Andrew with James and John now Simon's mother in law was laying sick with a fever and immediately they spoke to him about her and he came to her and raised her up taking her by the hand and the fever left her and she began to wait on them nobody had ever done that we have some isolated miracles in the Old Testament principally through the instrumentality of Elijah and Elisha but this folks you must understand this is not standard operating procedure this wasn't commonly done it wasn't even uncommonly done there is the arrival on the scene here of one who goes with and is part and parcel of this message one who really needs to be contended with in a way that nobody ever has before and when evening had come after the sun had set they began bringing to him all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed and the whole city had gathered at the door and he healed many who were ill with various diseases and cast out many demons and he was not permitting the demons to speak because they knew who he was now let us come back a gospel to

Matthew Matthew I cannot tell you how much the gospels have come to mean to me when I do not demand from them that which they were never intended to give oh it is just absolutely glorious and by the way let me insert this if I may the kingdom of heaven is not the domain of God God dwells in heaven and we really don't even know where that is I mean that's that's way out there we aren't talking about that the kingdom of heaven is not heaven where God dwells the kingdom of heaven is not where people who are believers go when they die the kingdom of heaven is here on planet earth that's where it was promised to be that's where Jesus Christ is going to establish it and that's what everybody understood him to mean by it the kingdom of heaven is going to be the kingdom and throne of David established on the earth it will be the rule and reign of heaven fulfilled on the earth never has been it never has been that's the essence of what is referred to as the Lord's Prayer it is a prayer for thy kingdom come that's a request that's a prayer request and by the way it ought not to be it ought not to be the subject of just a repetitious prayer some little mechanical ritual that you tack on to the end of the service in fact in the very same passage where our Lord gave that as a model prayer for the disciples he warned them he I mean he specifically warned them do not pray in vain repetitions repeating the same thing over and over and over as do the heathen who think that for their much praying they will be heard and we turn right around and say well yeah that doesn't apply to us and repeat the same prayer over and over and over again it is a prayer that is totally out of keeping with the whole thrust of the New

Testament I know some people are really deeply offended at that I know people who do not feel they've been to church if they haven't recited the Lord's Prayer because that's you that's just as automatic as anything could pop you look at and we're going to do this we're going to dissect the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount context in which it is found and I hope that it will be as revealing to you as it has been to me it is a beautiful prayer beautiful prayer but it is so abused and so misused it's just amazing just amazing Christians ought to pray we need to pray we are enjoying to pray we are disobedient when we do not pray but Christians are not supposed to say prayers there is a vast difference between praying and saying prayers when it is reduced to nothing but a mere mechanical ritual where you mumble the words I I don't I don't see it appropriate at all to stand over the grave of a little baby that's being buried and pray give us this day our daily bread that's like going to a funeral and saying offering comfort and consolation for the bereaved and saying now

Lord we sure do need rain bad we sure appreciate if you'd send us an inch or two of rain and oh by the way comfort this family who's grieving over this baby that they've lost it is just so out of character but that doesn't seem to bother a great many people they just plow our father who are going to have a little blah blah blah blah blah blah and it's just automatic ritual Matthew chapter 3 verse 1 in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea and here is what he was saying repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand for this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet saying the voice of one crying in the wilderness make ready the way of the Lord you see this is rooted in Isaiah John's ministry is make ready the way of the Lord make his path straight and he talks about John and John's message and come over now please to chapter 4 of Matthew and look at verse 12 now when he had heard that John had been taken into custody he withdrew into Galilee and leaving

[ 37 : 56 ] Nazareth he came and settled in Capernaum which is by the sea in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali this was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet and I'm not going to read verses 15 and 16 our time is nearly gone but note verse 17 from that time from that time from what time well from the time that John was taken into custody from that time from the time that John was removed from the scene so he wasn't available to preach anymore Jesus began from that time began to preach and say repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand now I want you to notice that phrase from that time now notice please what his message is from that time Jesus message is repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand now come please to Matthew chapter 16

Matthew chapter 16 verse 21 very significant phrase from that time from that time from the time of Peter's confession of the identity of Christ that precedes.

From that time, Jesus Christ began to preach the kingdom of heaven is at hand. That's not what it says. Look at what it says. He began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised up on the third day.

May I submit without sounding facetious, that sure is a different message than he was preaching before. And the key in both of those is from that time.

Now, folks, it ought to be obvious that between the first from that time when Jesus began preaching the kingdom of heaven is at hand to this from that time when he begins to talk about his impending death, there must have been something of significance happen in between to change that message.

[ 40 : 25 ] And there was. Great significance. And what was it? Matthew 13. Here's what it was.

On that day, Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea, and great multitudes gathered about him, so that he got into a boat.

Now, he's using the boat as a pulpit. And he gets into the boat, and they push the boat a few feet off the shore, and they just line the whole shore with people, and Jesus is in the boat out from the shore, and he's addressing this huge crowd of people.

And he sat down, and the whole multitude was standing on the beach, and he spoke many things to them in parables. Now, that is really significant. But Jesus had always spoken in parables, and he said, No, no, no, he hadn't.

He might have dropped a parable here and there. But this is really significant. Because what he's doing is, he's changing his teaching methodology.

[ 41 : 40 ] And he's speaking in parables. And he starts with the parable of the sower. Now, from this time on, he's going to bring a lot of parables. But I want you to notice that the difference becomes immediately obvious to those who knew him well.

Notice, if you will, in verse 10 of Matthew 13, the disciples came and said to him, Why do you speak to them in parables?

Now, that would be an absolutely redundant question if that's what he'd always done. But they noticed the change. And the fellows are standing there, and Matthew, and Alphaeus, and James, and John, and they're saying, What's he doing anyway?

I don't know. He's talking in parables. Why is he doing that? He beats me. Let's ask him. So when it's over and the crowd disperses, they go up to him and they say, Master, we couldn't help but notice things were really different today in your teaching.

How come you were teaching them in parables? Why were you addressing them in parables? And the answer is, in verse 11, parables are being used as a code.

[ 42 : 53 ] But to them it has not been granted. parables are being used as a code.

Some have the ability to decipher the code, and some don't. lest he cast his pearls before swine, he couches much of his teaching in parabolic language, because he said, He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear.

Not everybody had ears to hear. Some people, many people, were absolutely negative toward Jesus Christ. Certainly the religious crowd was. Now here is an important thing, and we're winding down to this.

This is where we left you last time. Remember, we asked the question, how is it that Jesus came performing miracles, delivering his teaching, and did so in such a convincing and compassionate and authoritative way?

And so many of them missed him. They just missed him. How is that possible? Nobody ever taught like this man. Nobody ever performed miracles like this man.

[ 43 : 58 ] Nobody ever lived a life like this man. And the vast multitude missed him. They've been praying for their Messiah, yearning for their Messiah, longing for their Messiah for thousands of years.

And the Messiah came, and they didn't recognize him. Why didn't they recognize him? How could they possibly miss him? There's a very, very important principle here, and it is super applicable today.

And the principle is this. Only those who by their volition are predisposed to receiving truth will get it. Those who aren't, won't.

That means people who are turned on to truth and are willing to follow the truth wherever it leads them, whatever the cost, they'll have plenty of truth. And the people whose minds are already made up, it doesn't make any difference what you show them.

It doesn't make any difference how many miracles you give them. It doesn't make any difference what the teaching is. They're not going to accept it. Period. There's some of those. The principle is this.

[ 45 : 14 ] When you hear something that you understand to be truth, you'd better go with it. Now, if you don't believe it to be true, you've got to be true to your conscience. If you don't believe that it's true, or if you don't know that it's true, you'd better put it on hold.

You don't go with it until you find out. But when you understand something to be true and you reject it, you've just brought a terrible judgment down on your head.

That's exactly what the scribes and Pharisees did. And you know where it began? Do you know why they had problems with Jesus? Listen, this is important. This is very important.

I'll tell you why they had problems with Jesus and I'll tell you why they rejected Jesus. You might not think there's a connection, but there's all the connection in the world. And here it is. They had a problem with John.

They rejected John. Do you understand that John the Baptizer and Jesus the Messiah cannot be separated? You can't take one and leave the other?

[ 46 : 21 ] When Jesus had a showdown with the Pharisees, he said, tell me, the baptism of John, was it of God or of man?

They really squirm. They knew he had them. If they said, well, the baptism of John was just authorized by men, that's all. They knew they were in trouble with the common people because the common people considered John to be a prophet indeed.

But if they said, oh, John was a man from God, he was a prophet indeed, then Jesus would say, then why didn't you believe him? Oh, man, he had them. He had them. And they said, well, we don't know.

They did too know. They were liars. They knew from whence John came. And let me tell you something else. They knew from whence Jesus came too.

And that's what made their unbelief so wicked. That's why Jesus said, all manner of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto man. But he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven, not in this age, nor in the age to come.

[ 47 : 30 ] And that means they heard the truth, they knew the truth, they saw it as truth, they understood it as truth, and they still rejected it. That's terrible.

That's a consummate wickedness. And it's true for every age, for every dispensation, whatever it is. When we hear truth, God help us if we don't go with it.

If we don't know it to be true, we need to investigate it and consider it and make sure that what we're rejecting needs to be rejected. There are people today who hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. He died for their sins. He rose from the dead. He's coming back again. Men are sinners. They need to repent and trust Jesus Christ for their salvation. There are people today who know that, who understand that, who comprehend that, and they still turn a deaf ear.

No, I won't. That is sin against knowledge. The greatest kind of sin there is. It means we are doing something while all the time we know better.

[ 48 : 35 ] totally out of count. I'm not finished, but I quit. Let's pray.

Father, these are such important principles and truths. We want to garner from each and every one of them all that they have to yield.

We are delighted in the manner in which you have put your word together and we owe you an apology for the manner in which we poor creatures have often handled it, ignored it, abused it, not taken into consideration the distinctions you've made, muddling it all up.

This is regrettable because the consequences are shameful. We don't want to be guilty of that.

We want to be open to truth and eager to receive it when it's revealed as truth. And we bless you that you've made that promise and that provision. We ask that as we contemplate these things, you will use what we've learned to build upon with further truth.

[ 49 : 54 ] In Christ's wonderful name we pray. Amen.