

The Gospels: Prophecy & Promise Realized (Part 3)

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] In the year 1535, a man by the name of Miles Coverdale gave us the first complete printed English Bible.

And along with it, he gave us a very brief, concise, but invaluable set of guidelines for approaching that Bible.

I do not know that they have ever been improved upon. I have attempted to adopt this little phrase as an ongoing methodology each and every time I come to the Word of God.

And it goes something like this. It shall greatly help ye to understand Scripture, if thou mark, not only what is spoken or written, but of whom and to whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goeth before and what followeth.

If there were some way that we could impress upon the whole population of Christianity the importance of heeding those words, there would be a great many divisions just laid aside that would evaporate overnight.

[1 : 10] Those are valuable, valuable principles in the interpretation of the Word of God. Someone has said, It is customary with most readers of the Scriptures and the great majority of Christians to take all of the Bible as referring to all time and to all persons.

That's true. And when you do, confusion and division abounds. And has it ever been abounding? For the past 2,000 years. Well, today marks our third consideration of the Gospels in the light of what we call progressive revelation.

It is such an important concept. We simply mean by that, progressive revelation. The Bible is a book of continuous and ongoing development of doctrinal truth.

It isn't now. It's closed. It's finished. The canon of Scripture is complete. But within the writing of that, there is a gradual unfolding of the revelation of God as regards His plan and program.

Being written over 1,600 years and encompassing a period of nearly 4,000 years of human history, it is a gradual unfolding of God's dealings with man.

[2 : 32] We know a whole lot more about God at the end of the Old Testament with the writing of Malachi than what we know at the beginning.

In fact, we know a whole lot more about man at the end of the Old Testament than what we know at the beginning. We know a lot more about everything at the end as opposed to the beginning.

And then when you come to the New Testament, there is a quantum leap of knowledge and revelation and information. It wasn't just dropped upon us in one fell swoop out of heaven as though, plop, there it is, all in one accord.

But it was gradually unfolded over a period of hundreds and hundreds of years. God is making more and more of Himself known. It is a story.

Do you not expect a story to have progress to it? The Bible is not merely a book of doctrinal truths and theological premises set forth.

[3 : 40] It is that. But it is a story. It has an ongoing unfolding drama. And the theme of the story is redemption. There is a beginning.

There is a plot. There is progress. There is a conclusion. And you've got to give it that when you study it. You've got to see it gradually unfold. You have to know where in the story this is taking place.

You cannot read New Testament truth back into the Old Testament and expect it to fit. Because it won't fit. It can't fit. It isn't supposed to fit.

Any more than you can take modern technological warfare that exists today. They're talking about all kinds of Star Wars defense systems.

And try to cram that back into the Revolutionary War time. And expect those people back there to understand. Well, it's ridiculous. The whole idea is erroneous.

[4 : 36] You cannot do that. And yet that is precisely what some people try to do in studying the Bible. So, we have made much of the fact, and will continue to do so, that the manner in which God has revealed himself and his purpose to mankind has been progressively unfolded.

We told you that the Old Covenant is filled with promises. That the New Covenant is filled with fulfillment of those promises. And the Gospels in particular we have been looking at from the standpoint of prophecy and promise realized.

Now, because we have been off the track due to my absence for a couple of weeks, I am going to very quickly run through some basic premises that we have established thus far to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.

And I am going to resist at all costs the temptation of stopping and elaborating on these. If you're taking notes, forget it. You won't be able to write quickly enough, but you will be able to get the tape if you want it.

Point number one. The plan and program of God is progressively revealed book by book by book. Line upon line, precept upon precept. Point number two.

[5 : 47] The theme of both books is redemption. It is the restoration to the original state of that which was ruined, marred, and fallen. Point three.

The object of redemption is all of creation, of which man is the principal and federal head. Four. The agent through which this redemption is to be realized is Jesus Christ our Lord.

He is the one who is going to make it happen. Point five. Thus, Christ the Redeemer came to fulfill the promises made to the patriarchs under the Old Covenant.

He established with the New Covenant what was promised in the Old Covenant. Point six. Christ labored and lived under the dictates of the Old Testament, not the New.

Point seven. The New Testament does not begin with Matthew 1.1. Nor does it begin at Bethlehem with the birth of Jesus.

[6 : 52] The New Testament or the New Covenant began at Calvary where Jesus Christ instituted it in His blood. Point eight. The events and teaching found in the Gospels prior to the death of Christ must be given special consideration in interpretation.

They are principally Old Testament in character. That is super important. And it is so casually overlooked and missed by so many people.

I'm speaking from experience. It was casually overlooked and missed by me for the first 15 years of my ministry. And I want to tell you, I paid a dear price in trying to study and interpret the Bible.

And I feel sorry for the people who were then sitting under me. They paid a dear price too. Because they got a lot of wrong information. They are principally Old Testament in character.

Example. Jesus Christ frequented the temple and the synagogue. Why did He do that? Well, He was supposed to do that. He was a Jew. And that was required of all loyal Jews.

[8 : 08] Jesus Christ was circumcised on the eighth day. Why was He? Because He was a Jew. He was born under the law. He lived under the law. He functioned under the law. He fulfilled the law.

It is very, very important to note that. Some people think that when Jesus Christ appeared on the scene, well, here it is. This is the New Testament. But it isn't. And one of the greatest things that misleads us is when we move from the Old Testament to the New.

And there on the frontispiece of the page of Matthew's Gospel, it is the New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And then you begin Matthew 1.1. And everybody just automatically assumes that's the way it is.

But there's nothing inspired about that. That's just something that men put on the page with the idea of being helpful. And sometimes they're helpful and sometimes they aren't. And that time they really weren't. The New Covenant was ushered in through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And that did not happen until the conclusion of His ministry. Certainly not in Bethlehem nor in the beginning. He kept the feast days.

[9 : 19] He underwent the baptism of John. He did everything that a Jew was supposed to do.

Point number nine. The theme of the Gospels. The theme of the Gospels.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Relates to the kingdom. This kingdom. Point ten. This kingdom is rooted in the Old Testament promises.

And is preached by John, Jesus, and the twelve as being at hand. In Matthew, it is referred to as the kingdom of heaven exclusively.

And in Luke, it is referred to as the kingdom of God. These are interchangeable terms. They refer to one and the same kind of concept. This kingdom.

Point eleven. This kingdom, while thoroughly Jewish in origins and promises, will embrace all people on earth when it is established.

[10:25] Point twelve. This kingdom, of which the Gospels speak so often, is not to be mistaken for heaven, the abode of God, and departed saints.

The kingdom of heaven, of which Matthew is speaking, the kingdom of God, of which Luke speaks in Mark, that kingdom will be on earth, and Jerusalem will be its center, and Jesus will be installed literally as the king of all the earth.

This will occur at the second coming. Now the question is, is this literal? Is this second coming and the establishment of this worldwide kingdom, wherein Jesus is to sit upon the literal throne of David and rule the whole earth, is that second coming literal?

And I answer that question with a question. Was the first coming literal? The first coming was as much a promise and prophecy as the second coming.

What kind of track record does God have? Does it appear that he is committed to fulfilling what he has promised in a literal way in accordance with what they anticipated? It certainly does.

[11:37] It certainly does. He is coming again, just as surely as he came the first time. Now today, in our wrap-up consideration of the Gospels, I would like to briefly consider, and it will have to be brief, two of the areas that probably evoke the greatest amount of confusion in the Gospels.

Not that we are going to treat these with any degree of finality or completeness, but I at least want you to get a handle on what is involved so you'll know why I make some of the statements that I make and why at times they may appear to be so contradictory to what you have heard in times past.

And I am talking principally about the Sermon on the Mount, which contains the Lord's Prayer, which we've already touched on briefly, and that which is commonly referred to as the Great Commission.

So it will be necessary for us to go first of all to Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 5. And I'm going to try and limit our time here in Matthew because he probably treats the subject of the Kingdom of Heaven as completely as any.

And you should bear in mind that the Sermon on the Mount, as Matthew deals with it, is covered in an abbreviated form by Luke in Chapter 6, wherein he includes most of the Beatitudes.

[13:03] And Mark does not mention it at all, and John does not mention it at all. But we really have all we need here in Matthew, and for the most part we will just kind of park right here.

The Sermon on the Mount is referred to as the modus operandi for the Church. And it isn't, and it wasn't, and it never will be.

The Sermon on the Mount set forth the constitution of the Kingdom. The Sermon on the Mount consists of the standards of behavior for Jesus' disciples.

The Sermon on the Mount is the Kingdom code of conduct. And it is not to be followed per se.

Now I want to emphasize that. It is not to be followed per se by believers living in the Church age. We have our own code of conduct. And it is found in those writings that will be subsequent to the Book of Acts.

[14:07] When the Kingdom dispensation has finally been closed and set aside, and we get on with the business of the Church administration, then our marching orders will come very closely into view.

Now that does not mean, and I emphasize this, I really want to emphasize this, that does not mean that there is nothing of value in the Sermon on the Mount for us.

That is ridiculous. You cannot find any portion of the Word of God that does not contain something of value for believers today. But so much of what is couched in the Sermon on the Mount is linked to the situation as it existed then in anticipation of the establishment of the Kingdom.

And we are not now living in the anticipation of the establishment of the Kingdom. That's why our message is not, repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. That's for a different order.

So far as the requirements of godly living are concerned, the Christian not only adheres to the principles set forth in the Sermon on the Mount, we are even to exceed them.

[15:19] Because the New Testament ordering for our lives today takes into consideration a dynamic concept that these people did not have to whom Jesus spoke in the Sermon on the Mount.

We have the indwelling Spirit of God who empowers and enlivens and guides and supernaturally provides us with resources to draw upon that these people did not have.

If anything, I would say that the requirements for godly living for believers in the Church Age much surpass these that are set forth in the Sermon on the Mount. This has a great deal of legalism involved in it.

And it is supposed to because it was under that dispensation of law. Let me show you what I mean. But first of all, let's go to chapter 4 of Matthew. Chapter 4 of Matthew.

And look, if you will please, at verse 23. And we're going to set the stage for the giving of the Sermon on the Mount. Whenever you read something in Scripture, you need to understand not only what it is saying, but when it was given, and to whom it was given.

[16:24] Many times, a key factor is found in simply who is the audience. To whom is Jesus speaking?

Because some things he would say would not be applicable to everyone. In other words, you will hear Jesus say one thing to his disciples. You'll hear him say something entirely different to the Pharisees.

You have to know to whom he is speaking. 4.23 Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues.

Now, he is in Jewish territory, and he is in a Jewish institution, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel, which is Jewish good news, of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease, and every kind of sickness, among the people.

And these people are Israelites, Jews. And the news about him went out into all Syria. That's Gentile territory. And they brought to him all who were ill, taken with various diseases, and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics, and he healed them.

[17:45] And great multitudes followed him from Galilee, and Decapolis, and Jerusalem, and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

You cannot go about performing the miracles that Jesus performed without collecting a considerable crowd. I mean, these people are just absolutely enthralled by this man from Galilee, and they have seen with their own eyes absolutely undeniable healings take place.

These people knew, hey, this isn't some phony healer who has come into town, who has a bunch of gimmicks, and who has people planted in the audience out there to say that they were sick of this, or they used to be blind, or whatnot.

I know this person who was healed. He's been my brother-in-law for 20 years. I know this man. This is not some faker who has come to town.

He has established his credentials, and the people are absolutely enthralled with him. Well, they should be. And they begin following him in droves. The man doesn't have a moment's time to himself.

[18:56] Everywhere he goes, people congregate, and they gather together. Now, as chapter 5 opens, keep in mind, we do not recognize chapter divisions, and what we want to read are the great multitudes of verse 25 following him, and we want to open chapter 5, continuing the continuity, and when he saw the multitudes, what multitudes?

The multitudes in verse 25. When he saw the multitudes, he went up on the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him.

Now, note, if you will, please, multitudes are there, but those whom he is directly addressing are disciples. These are people who have already made a commitment to one degree or another regarding the Messiahship of Jesus.

These are not unbelievers. These are disciples. These are people who for the most part have already made up their mind about Jesus of Nazareth. And to them, to them he says, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Now, right away, we've got that phrase. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. You've got to ask yourself the question, what did that mean? To these people who heard Jesus utter those words, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[20 : 34] What did it mean in verse 23 of chapter 4, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom? That is not the gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

The gospel of the kingdom is that which God had promised in the Old Testament. The Messiah has come to fulfill. He is going to establish this kingdom. He preaches that the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Now, for those of you who may be asking and wondering, what would have happened if the Jews would have accepted this message? And if they would have accepted Jesus, then there would have been no Calvary.

There would have been no cross. How does that work? Well, the way it works is that the kingdom is never proclaimed as present or as immediately available.

it is always proclaimed as at hand. At hand. Big difference. Big difference. Huge difference. At hand means it's near.

[21 : 43] It's around the corner. It's within striking distance. Doesn't mean it's here. Except in the person of Jesus, some have said that wherever he was, the kingdom was there embodied in him.

And I don't dispute that. That's true. The language of the kingdom is the language of the king and they are frequently used interchangeably. But when he proclaims the gospel of the kingdom, you have got to transfer yourself back.

Now, this is difficult. But folks, let me tell you, this is what interpreting the Bible is all about. What you've got to do is you have got to mentally transport yourself back and be a member of the audience on the receiving end as to what Jesus is saying to these Jews 1900 years ago.

What would it have meant to you then to say blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Now, what Jesus is saying is simply this and what these people I think understood it to mean is simply this.

Fellas, when the son of man comes into his glory and the kingdom of heaven is established on earth and I am ruling and reigning in righteousness, then those of you who are poor in spirit are going to have a place and to share in that kingdom.

[23 : 14] you're going to be involved. There is a spot there for you for those who are the poor in spirit. Now, we cannot go into the definition of what that term is because that's a study in and of itself, but it has nothing to do with empty pockets and not having any money.

It has nothing to do with that. This is not material poverty he is talking about. This is spiritual poverty and those who recognize it. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Notice verse 10. Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Do you know what most of us mean by that and what most of us take that to mean and what I did like many others for years and years and years?

What that means is that blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness for when they die they'll go to heaven. I dare say that's the way the vast majority of people would interpret it.

And the watchword is the word heaven because when we use the word heaven we almost automatically invariably think of the same thing in the starry great beyond by and by in the abode of God that's where my dear departed grandmother is and that's heaven.

[24 : 33] That is heaven. That is heaven. But that's not the kingdom of heaven of which Matthew is speaking. In the Lord's Prayer what is the disciples' prayer that is commonly referred to as the Lord's Prayer there is a promise that is given in the Old Testament that finds a prayer request in that disciples' prayer and it is for the coming of the kingdom.

It isn't for the coming of heaven. It isn't for the abode and dwelling place of God to come down to earth. it is thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven because when the kingdom comes God's will will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

And folks with all due respect to some colleagues who believe that we are now living in the kingdom and that this is it I have a real problem with that.

I have a real problem believing that the will of God is done on earth today as it is done in heaven.

Because based on the revelation of scripture that I have before me if God's will were being done on earth to the degree that it is in heaven there would be a whole lot of things different.

It isn't being done. God's will is being done always will always has been done from the standpoint of his divine sovereignty in that nobody can thwart his plan or his purpose.

[26 : 06] God is the sovereign Lord of the universe across all times. Always has been and always will be. But where his will is done on earth as it is in heaven you will find the kingdom conditions fulfilled as promised in the Old Testament and will not be at war anymore and will not be hating one another anymore and will not be murdering one another anymore and will not be stealing from one another and will not be engaged in the strife and discord and envy and all of those things that characterize a fallen world.

This is a fallen world we live in. In many respects it is a beautiful world. In many respects it is an ugly world. Nature is red in tooth and claw. world. We live in a hostile environment. It is a jungle out there. It has been a jungle for thousands of years. And when Jesus Christ rules and reigns it's going to be changed. And I mean changed. And I cannot believe that we are now living in that kingdom and that Satan is now bound and that righteousness is now prevailing. God help us if we think that. Verse 19 chapter 5 Whoever then annuls I'm sorry Yes, alright, let's go on and read that.

[27 : 41] Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments and so teaches others shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. That is that future earthly reign that's going to be established. But whoever keeps and teaches them he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Chapter 6 And beginning with verse 8 we have what is referred to as the Lord's Prayer.

And I've given you that phrase in verse 10. Thy kingdom come Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And I would venture to say that most of us do not pray that today.

Most of us at least in a meaningful way. But in accordance with Revelation 13 the backdrop against which this will be set when these things are fulfilled. It will be during the tribulation period and you will be selling off your gold and silver those who are here for a scrap of bread because you can't eat gold and silver.

And these things will be at a premium during this great tribulation period. May I make this injection too to clarify something. These things that are found in the Sermon on the Mount and this which is commonly referred to as the Lord's Prayer are not they are not addressing conditions that are going to exist during the kingdom.

[29 : 18] During the millennial reign of Christ. It is not speaking about conditions that will exist then. This is in anticipation of that kingdom.

It is that which comes before. For instance Jesus said blessed are you when men persecute you. Well there isn't going to be any persecution in the millennium. That's one of the things that will make the millennium the millennium.

Is that men will not be persecuting one another. But prior to that time there is going to be a lot of persecution. And it will intensify in the great tribulation period. When men will be praying for their daily bread.

Because they will not have eaten for three days. It will really mean something to pray for your daily bread then. And the rest of it. Deliver us from the evil one.

Is the way it reads in most translations. And that is a clear reference to the antichrist who has declared open season on Jews and believers and anyone who has not received the mark of the beast will be looked upon as uncooperative and needing to be eliminated.

[30 : 27] And many will be delivered into the hands of the evil one. Now there is more that is scattered throughout the Sermon on the Mount. And if you read it carefully I think you will understand that it is in anticipation of that which is coming.

May I before we leave it however give you just one instance that will illustrate what I have been trying to talk about in chapter 7 and verse 11 of Matthew.

Chapter 7 and verse 11. Jesus said, If you then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your father who is in heaven.

Now the heaven there is clearly the heaven that is the abode of God. It's not the kingdom of heaven. He is talking about the heaven where God dwells.

And we don't know where that is except Paul identified it as the third heaven. It is beyond the stellar heaven. It is beyond the atmosphere and it is beyond the starry heavens.

[31 : 29] Wherever that is and however far away it is that is your father who is in heaven. But then when you come down to verse 21 same chapter, Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my father who is in heaven.

There are two different heavens there, folks. If you make those two heavens in verse 21 mean the same place, the same thing, wow, there is lots of problems. The father dwells in heaven.

The kingdom of heaven is going to be established here on the earth. Now let us go, if we may, to chapter 8 and verse 11. Here's an interesting contrast.

And I say to you that many shall come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

Now wait a minute. Those, do you have any idea how long these people have been dead? What does Jesus mean here when he says this?

[32 : 46] Does he mean this literally? Does he mean that they are literally going to recline at table? This is a feast. With Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

I mean, the Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Well, what do you think the disciples thought when Jesus said that?

Do you think Peter nudged Andrew and says, of course we know he's not talking literally, he's talking spiritually. Not really Abraham, and really Isaac, and really Jacob, but people who are kind of, you know, manifesting their virtues.

Nonsense. Listen, if there is a resurrection of the body, then Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are coming back, and there's something for them to do, and there is a place for them to occupy, and this is it. Now, the striking thing about this to me is that these who are coming from the east and west appear to me to be non-Jews.

[33 : 55] They're Gentiles. Gentiles are going to have a share in the kingdom of heaven, but only because of Jesus Christ and what he has accomplished through Israel as a nation.

He goes on to say, but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness. I'm not real sure exactly what all is involved with that, but it sure doesn't sound good.

That's about as negative as the first part is positive. And what Jesus is saying is some of those that you would expect would not even be in the kingdom are going to be there, and they'll be coming from the east and the west, other environs of the earth, and they will sit down with the patriarchs in the kingdom of heaven, and some whom you would have thought would have had an automatic entrance into the kingdom.

Those who were Jews, they are not automatically going to be in the kingdom just because they are Jews. These sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness in that place.

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And I think you can place a lot of people in that category. I think Judas will be one of them. I think Caiaphas and Amos, the high priest, will be among them. I think there will be a whole lot of others among them.

[35 : 13] in, well, yes, let's, let's, oh, I can't believe this clock.

Let's come over to chapter 10, Matthew 10. While we're here in Matthew, let me sail right on in, if I may, to this business of the commissions.

The first commission that our Lord gave of a missionary type venture is found here in Matthew 10. We've looked at it before.

Notice, scan over. I won't read it, but look at verse one. He's delegating authority to them. The apostles are named in verses two, three, and four.

In verse five, he tells them where to go and where not to go. Do not go in the way of the Gentiles. Do not enter any city of the Samaritans, but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

[36 : 25] And as you go, preach, saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.

Now, folks, I do not think that there is any way that we can ignore the specificity that is involved here as to whom these disciples are to go.

They are to go strictly to the house of Israel. Don't go to Gentiles. Don't go to Samaritans. And we pointed out to you before, it isn't because Jesus doesn't care about these people.

It isn't because he cares only about the Jew. It is because he has unfinished business to conduct with the nation of Israel first of all. It is to the Jew first.

And when once the Jewish nation gets on track, then all of the other nations of the earth are going to come in line. Problem is, the Jewish nation has never gotten on track. Still hasn't.

[37 : 25] That's why we are living in this interregnum right now. We are living right now in the parenthesis between the 69th and the 70th week of Daniel. This is emphasized again in Matthew chapter 15.

Come there, please. Matthew 15. I want you to note the importance and the selectivity of the audience. Jesus went away from there. Verse 21. Matthew 15, verse 21.

Jesus went away from there, withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon. Behold, a Canaanite woman came out from that region. Now, those of you who have been with us in the Genesis studies know something about the Canaanites.

I mean, this woman, you talk about the other side of the tracks. She was from the other side of the tracks. Canaanite woman came out from that region and began to cry out, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David.

My daughter is cruelly demon-possessed. Now, all I can say is that Jesus' reputation preceded him. This woman had heard some of the miracles that Jesus had performed, and even though she is not a Jew, she is obviously persuaded that Jesus is able to help her.

[38 : 36] He has these powers. She seeks him out, and she cries after him. My daughter is cruelly demon-possessed, but he did not answer her a word.

I say, isn't that a bit rude? That's another way of saying he's just completely ignoring her. Why would the gentle, compassionate, loving Jesus do that?

That isn't even good etiquette. His disciples came to him and kept asking him, saying, Send her away.

She's shouting out after us. This woman's pestering us to death. Can't you get rid of her? But he answered and said, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Now, folks, I want to tell you, if that is not true, then it is extremely misleading. Extremely misleading. Extremely misleading. And our Lord Jesus, although he often spoke in enigmas, he never deliberately misled anybody.

[39 : 46] I am sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But she came and began to bow down before him, saying, Lord, help me.

Now, look at what he says. It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. Is that nice?

By our culture and by our standards, it is a consummate put-down. That is really rude. But had you been living in that culture, and had you had some appreciation for Jewishness and the Gentile, and the promises to one and to whom Jesus came and why he came and how he was going to do it, it would not have been so strange at all.

This woman did not stand back and say, well, I've never been so insulted in my life. How dare you talk to her? None of that. None of that. She said, yes, Lord.

She said, I understand. I agree. I hear what you're saying. I know that salvation is of the Jews.

[41 : 10] I know you are a Jew. I know I am a Canaanite. I know there are miles and miles that separate us. I know we have no claim upon you. I know you did not come to us.

You came into your own Israel. But couldn't you just please make an exception?

I really appreciate it. I know you are a Jew. I know you are a Jew. I know you are a Jew.

I know you are a woman.

Do you know what one of the things was that broke the heart of Jesus? Was the fact that many Jews did not have the faith in him as their Messiah that many of the Gentiles had.

[42 : 15] And on more occasion than one, he had to say, I have not seen such great faith, no, not in Israel.

Where you would have expected it. But these are non-Jews. If my own people would accept me the way these have accepted me.

Be it done for you as you wish. And her daughter was healed at once. It is imperative that you note this is an exception.

The exclusiveness of that audience is borne out time and time and time again. In chapter 28 now, and I want to close with this, we find what is referred to as the Great Commission.

Now, it is important to note that nowhere in the Bible is this called the Great Commission. Men have called it the Great Commission.

[43 : 31] Chapel speakers have called it the Great Commission. Writers of commentaries have called it the Great Commission. Missionary executives and boards have called it the Great Commission.

And the talk is fulfilling the Great Commission in our time. May I submit, every commission that Jesus Christ ever gave is a great commission.

The commission that he gave to the twelve in Matthew 10 to limit their ministry to the children of Israel was a great commission. This is a great commission.

We do ourselves a great disservice when we look upon this passage in Matthew 28 as the greatest of all commissions. Because what we need to understand, folks, is not is one commission greater than another.

Is this the greatest commission? The question is, is this the latest commission? No, it is not the latest commission. We have a progress of doctrine that has unfolded.

[44 : 35] There is another commission that is going to be added yet to this. Now, you say, I do not see the progress. I do not see how this differs from our commission today.

Well, let me point this out to you. Right here, within the context of this one gospel, we have a dramatic and undeniable progression.

We already saw in chapter 10, go not into the way of the Gentiles, neither to the Samaritans. Limit yourself to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Matthew 10. But look at what Matthew 28, 18 says. Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations. Now, friends, I can't ignore that.

[45 : 46] I just absolutely cannot ignore that. If language and words mean anything, we have got a clear-cut, obvious, undeniable distinction between Matthew 10 and Matthew 28.

Don't go to the Gentiles. Now, here he's saying, go to the Gentiles. In Matthew 28, he's saying, go everywhere. Go everywhere. All the nations. And that's different.

And I can't look at the ones and say, well, you know, basically they say pretty much the same thing. That's nonsense. They do not. They do not say the same thing.

Now, what I am getting at, which is very, very germane to our point, is that this commission in Matthew 28 is a later commission than the one he gave in Matthew 10.

And there is yet a commission that is later than the one in Matthew 28. So what are we doing trying to fulfill the commission in Matthew 28 if there is one later than that that is for us?

[47 : 04] We would be just as much at fault as these apostles in Matthew 28 if they said, hey, I'm not going to go into all the world because Jesus already said that we are supposed to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

I'm not going to the far-flung regions of the world. But it was Jesus himself who updated this command. He has given a later word. He is saying, fellas, look, I know what I told you in Matthew 10.

I know to whom you were supposed to go, and I told you to whom you should go. Now I'm changing it because things have transpired in the meanwhile, and this is now the scope of your mission.

You go into all the world, and here's what I want you to do. Make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

And may I suggest, this is the identical commission that is given in the closing verses of Mark's gospel, in the closing verses of Luke's gospel, and in John chapter 20.

[48 : 25] They are all parallel passages. They are all referring to the same thing. And in Mark, if you adopt the longer ending of the gospel of Mark, and I do, but I'm not ready to fuss about it.

I don't know for sure whether it should be or shouldn't be. But if it is, we find an addition of something there about taking up serpents, and if they drink poison, it will not harm them.

And they shall speak with other tongues, and these miracles will follow those who believe. Now, what I am saying is, all of those promises and all of those provisions were for these disciples back at this time.

They are not for us today, because we've got a later commission. And that's why I'm not advocating handling snakes and speaking in tongues and drinking poison and not being harmed by it, and all the rest that goes along with these commissions.

Because, folks, those things had very practical importance. If you're going to send these apostles into all the world to preach the gospel, what are you going to do? Send them to language school? No.

[49 : 36] God superintended and marvelously intervened and provided a miraculous ability to speak in languages that they had not learned. And that is manifest in Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost.

Had a very practical purpose for them. But it is entirely out of keeping with our commission for today. And that's what we'll be looking at as we start to investigate the Acts.

This commission is reiterated in Acts chapter 1. I'll not ask you to turn there, but right before our Lord was ascended, he gathered the disciples together, his apostles together, and he said, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons that the Father hath appointed when they ask about establishing the kingdom.

Are you going to do it now? He said, You will be endued with power from on high when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. You are to tarry in Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father. And then you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. And I am saying that the commission in Acts chapter 1 is identical, same commission that he gave them in the closing verses of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

[50 : 53] That is a great commission. That was a great commission. But today there is a later commission. We'll take about three minutes for questions and comments.

And Daryl, would you and Harold Monhank and Randy, would you and Nick get the offering plates here? And we'll receive an offering while we're entertaining questions and comments. This is for the Wade family.

And if you would like to give, if you would like to write a check, make it payable to the church, and we'll make sure that he gets it, and you'll get a tax deduction that way. Steve.

Just briefly clarify what the kingdom is that he's talking about in 2 Thessalonians 1.5. 2 Thessalonians 1.5.

Yeah, where it says you'll be counted worthy of the kingdom. Okay. There are a number of places where Paul refers to the kingdom, especially when he's talking to Jews, that he refers to the kingdom, and he elaborates upon the kingdom.

[51 : 52] Hold on. 2 Thessalonians. For this is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment, so that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.

Well, I think that is simply one more reference to the fact that all believers are ultimately going to be in that kingdom.

All believers are going to rule and reign with Jesus Christ. It is not going to be a Jewish kingdom as such, although it will be headquartered in Jerusalem. And you who are here today, who know the Lord Jesus Christ, are going to have a part in this kingdom.

We are going to rule and reign with Jesus Christ for that thousand years. And that's part of what you're going to do when you are resurrected. We'll either be changed in the twinkling of an eye and not see death at the rapture of the church, or we will be resurrected and our spirits and souls will be rejoined with our body, and we will rule and reign here on earth with Christ for that thousand years. And then at the conclusion of that, there will be a brief interruption, one final rebellion by Satan. He'll be put down. Then the eternal state will enter. So it needs to be made clear, and I'm glad you brought that up, that while I have been laboring to point out to you the Jewishness of this kingdom, its origin and promise and so on, it is going to have worldwide ramifications, and it is going to affect all believers, everyone in the church age, everyone in the dispensation of the grace of God is going to have connection to and involvement in this kingdom.

[53 : 42] Barb? It helps me to keep the concept in my mind about the New Testament as in contrast to the Old Testament, if I think of the birth of Christ as laying the foundation for the New Testament.

Much as the book of Acts, the beginning, the day of Pentecost lays the foundation for the church, which later comes into being, it's almost like the conception takes place then and the birth later. Okay. The birth of Christ, the New Testament is wrapped up in Christ, and he had to be born before the New Testament or the new promise and the new covenant could come into fruition, but the foundation was laid in the beginning of the gospel.

Right. Good. Okay. I've got 918, and we're three minutes over, but I'll tell you what I will do. I'll be glad to do this. We'll work this the same way we have a couple of other issues.

If you have questions that you would like to submit in writing so that you'll get a better answer, write them out. I don't care whether you sign them or not. Write them out and put them in the offering box, and I'll promise to treat them and give them as good an answer as I can.

[54 : 57] Questions from the floor will still be in order, but I do think that we'll probably end up having to devote a whole session to this because I know there are going to be a lot of questions, and it's just not productive to try and cover it in the last five or ten minutes of a message.

So when we conclude the series on progressive revelation, we'll have as many sessions as it takes for questions and answers both from the floor and in writing.

So why don't we leave it at that for now? May we stand, please. Thank you. Again, our Father, we thank you for the preciousness of your word, for the manner in which you have been pleased to reveal it, and for the power that it wields in the lives of those who are willing to obey it.

We ask that you will use these things we've studied this morning as building blocks for further information and further truth. We thank you for the offering that has been received on behalf of the Wade family, and we are grateful to you that we are in a position to be helpful in this way.

We simply want to encourage them in every way that we possibly can. So give us an ongoing sensitivity to their needs. In Christ's name we ask it. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[56 : 13] Amen. Amen. Amen. You are welcome. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.a