

Prophecy/Mystery Combined #10 - The Essence and Condescension of God

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] A mother rocks her baby boy. Beautiful rendition of a beautiful truth. I suspect there would be a lot of people, and there may even be some here, who wonder, what is that I am you are?

What does that mean and what is that about? It is my privilege this morning to tell you, and I will explain that in the body of the message, the great I am.

So, thank you for your presence this morning. It is a different kind of Christmas Sunday, not only here in the United States, but all over the world, just because of what is taking place in regard to this little unseen, seemingly invisible thing called the virus.

We all, of course, lament the tremendous toll that it has already taken on humanity worldwide, but at the same time, we need to realize it could also serve as a wake-up call for humanity because here we are brought to our knees.

Quite remarkable when you stop to think about it.

[1 : 25] A number of people have been affected by that, and really glad to see Mary Rogers here this morning. She had a bout with COVID and is a survivor and is here this morning.

Mary is our congregational matriarch. She has a few years on all of us. So, we're delighted to see her here this morning. Thank you, dear lady, for being here.

And regarding the COVID thing, many of you remember, you know the former Julie Gannon. Well, her husband, her husband, Bert Battisher, has been a retired police officer in Illinois for some time. And just recently, he came down with the COVID, and last night, he was taken to the ER with some complications developing there.

So, we want to remember Bert in prayer this morning. Would you join with me, please? Father, we get the impression that the world really does not know how to deal with this issue.

[2 : 41] And there isn't much that we know about it either. But we know that behind it all, there is a loving, omnipotent God from whom nothing is hidden. And beyond whom nothing is capable.

And we pray that you will undertake for Bert especially. We know he will be receiving serious treatment from doctors and technicians and nurses who will be attending him.

And we simply ask that if it would please you, his body may positively respond to the treatment that is being offered him. Thank you for your great love and faithfulness to us so that no matter what comes into our lives, if we belong to you, nothing else really matters.

We look forward to a time of rejoicing when the saints will be gathered together. And if we are even able to recall the unpleasantness of this life, they will be but a fleeting memory.

We are grateful for the perspective that you provide those who are in Christ because perspective means everything. It fashions our attitudes and our actions.

[3 : 54] And it pours courage into us because we have a certain hope beyond this life and how grateful we are for it.

For that incredible price that was paid in order to make that a reality. Our minds are overwhelmed by it. We'll never be able to enter into it.

But with whatever meager understanding we have, we want to express to you again our appreciation for that babe born in Bethlehem and for the reason for which he came.

And because of all that, we look for him coming again. And we are so overjoyed this morning to be in on such a wonderful revelation.

Thank you for it. Will you take charge of this service and use it to bless and to convict and to comfort and to encourage hearts, whatever the need may be.

[4 : 54] We pray in Christ's name and for his sake. Amen. Amen. I want to remind elders and their wives that one week from today, immediately following the dismissal of this service, we would like for you to meet and be introduced to our newest applicant for membership here at Grace Bible Church.

These are always times of real blessing and rejoicing when other believers who have been fellowshipping here at Grace have come to the position where they want to be an official part of our fellowship.

And we are grateful. If you've been here for any length of time, you understand that we do not really push or promote church membership as such because we just don't have a biblical mandate for it. There is no chapter and verse in the Bible that says that a local church has to have an official membership. But there is a membership to be enjoyed, and that is that which belongs to the body of Christ.

So if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are an official member of that body, which means you are in union with Christ.

[6 : 10] And that's the membership that really counts. But as I was explaining to the gentleman this morning who is applying for membership, Russ Kimball, we do have an official kind of membership because the state of Ohio, as well as other states, has decreed that anybody who is going to own property has to have a deed, and you have to have a name on the deed.

Well, the name that is on our deed for these 13 acres here at Grace Bible Church is Grace Bible Church. Grace Bible Church is the owner of this acreage and this building.

Then the question surfaces, well, who is Grace Bible Church? Well, it isn't just anybody that happens to be here on a Sunday, but we have a kind of a system developed whereby we set forth our doctrine, et cetera, and people who want to identify with that and are comfortable with that sign on, and they become members of Grace Bible Church after they are received into membership by the official membership.

So Board of Elders and their wives meet with these individuals, and they hear their testimony, and then they recommend to the congregation that they be accepted into our fellowship because we are a congregational government, and the congregation makes that decision.

And that's what we'll be doing for the next week or so. And if you are attending here and you're interested and wonder what this is about, I trust this explanation will serve to help you somewhat.

[7 : 39] If you have any other questions about it, feel free to ask me, or any of the elders would be glad to talk to you about it. I've neglected to mention that in the back there where the tables are over in that corner, there are dozens and dozens of compact discs, and they are all previous messages or radio messages delivered here at Grace or by myself.

There are so far 52 volumes of Christianity Clarified, and each volume has 20 segments on it, and each segment is just three and a half minutes long.

So each CD is approximately 68 to 70 minutes, and they are all available free of charge, no strings attached.

Feel free to take any that are of interest to you. And if you know of friends or neighbors who would enjoy and appreciate the content, by all means, feel free to take one or two for them as well.

And they are all, I think, on the face of the CD, gives you an idea of what the contents are. And we emphasize that these are for free distribution.

[8 : 53] We've already distributed thousands of them in the mail and locally through some of the restaurants and other establishments. We've even got one in my dentist's office for people to take if they will.

So feel free to avail yourself of them, and they are available for distribution. We are just doing what we can to get the word out, and thank you for any help you may give us along that line.

Also, I probably should have mentioned this before, and it keeps slipping my mind, but there's also a set back there called Marriage on the Rock, and Marriage on the Rock is a contrast to Marriage on the Rocks, with an S on the end.

Unfortunately, there are in the United States a lot of marriages that are on the rocks. They are unhappy, unfulfilled, feel trapped, and all the rest that goes along with it.

I cannot imagine the pain that must be involved in being attached to someone where there is not harmony and love and understanding.

[10:07] I just cannot fathom what that is like, but I know there are a lot of people who live in that situation day after day. And Marriage on the Rock is designed to counter that kind of relationship.

So, to make a long story short, Marriage on the Rock can be a minor tune-up for those that are already good marriages, where husband and wife are just enjoying the union and each other. They will benefit from that, although their need may not be as great as some others that are marriages in great trouble. So, the content is there for marriages from one extreme to the other and everything in between.

And they, too, are available free of charge. And if you know of people that would especially benefit from them, feel free to take them. That's why they're there. Thank you for your input.

In your bulletin as well, there are inserts that are annual. The first has to do with our membership renewal. And I think it's pretty much self-explanatory.

[11:15] This simply sets forth the principle that everyone who is a member of Grace Bible Church, including your pastor, membership expires at the end of the year.

And those who want to retain their membership are welcome to do so. But all you need to do is fill out this insert sheet. It'll take you all of about 20 seconds to do it.

And make any changes that need to be made, any updates of address information or phone numbers or anything like that. And just drop it in the offering box there on your way out.

And this information will be utilized for the making of the 2021 church directory. So, we need an update information in case there's a change of address or phone numbers or whatever it might be. And if you would care for that this morning and leave it in the offering box on your way out, we would appreciate it. And the ladies who are here, God bless them. I say this every year and I mean it with more emphasis every year.

[12:16] Without the input of the femininity that we have available here at Grace Bible Church, we probably wouldn't be able to function. And I say that with all the seriousness I can muster.

Women's service committees, pretty much self-explanatory. Some of you are especially gifted in certain areas where you can really make a valuable contribution. And you do and have for a long time.

We appreciate that. For others who are interested, just take this and look it over, if you will. Check anything that is of interest to you. And drop it in the offering box. And that, too, will be much appreciated.

I don't know. Yes, we have a men's class. Men's Bible class weekly meets here at Grace. We'll be here Tuesday morning, upcoming.

And we meet at 8 o'clock. And we just have a simple continental breakfast, usually a pastry and some juice and coffee. And then we have our Bible study, which dismisses around 9.

[13:18] So all men and boys are welcome to join us. You don't need any reservations. Just show up. And we have a great time of fellowship and camaraderie together. It's just a time that I, as your pastor, look forward to every week getting together with these men.

And it just gives me a shot in the arm and a spiritual boost that I can't tell you how much I appreciate. So that's every Tuesday. And along that line, by the way, I was talking with a gentleman by the name of Studebaker, Kurt Studebaker, and he and his family own and operate a few restaurants in the area.

And he was telling me that the former Collier's Restaurant has been purchased by them and that they plan to reopen it shortly after the first of the year.

And I asked him if he would be interested in the men's Bible class that met there for the last 15 years, if he would be interested in welcoming us back.

And he said, oh, by all means. And he said, by the way, he said, I want to tell you that the ladies who served your men in that class, most of them are returning.

[14:26] And they were asking whether the men's class was coming back or not, because we did have a great relationship with them. So we'll keep you posted as to the exact date. I can't say that it'll be the first week in the new year because he couldn't either.

But they are working, refurbishing the place, doing some remodeling. And we'll keep you apprised of when the opening date is so that we can resume our class there. This is a men's Bible class that started in 1965.

And Paul Ponis was the teacher. We met at the old YMCA in the patio room. And that was located right across the street from the main post office downtown.

Of course, it's not there now. Everything's been torn down and replaced with something else. But that's a class that has met continually since 1965. And I've taught it since, I don't know, been a long time.

Been a long time. So we have a great time fellowship. And I tell fellows who are interested in coming to the class, I said, I just want to give you a heads up about the men at that class.

[15 : 36] Because about half of them are golfers and about half of them fish and some do both. So sometimes it gets pretty deep in there.

You have to be advised of that. We just have a super time. So pass the word, if you will. And I think everything else is pretty much self-explanatory. Oh, we did run out of these.

People were asking about the Have a Good Days for December. And we have been resupplied. And there's more of them back there. Make sure that you get your Have a Good Days as well as your daily bread.

They are there as well. And I want to say something about the handouts. I do this every year. And now we're talking about December. So you will, if you have not already obtained, you will want to get these because they address the situation that our nation is in right now.

And it has to do with humanity's rejection of genuine wisdom. And we are a country that is suffering from the rejection of our leadership of what genuine wisdom really is.

[16 : 53] And we believe that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. But we have many in positions of authority who do not agree with that.

And they have replaced it with human wisdom and with satanic wisdom. And that goes a long way to explaining the mess we are in worldwide, not just in this country.

But Dr. Reynolds Showers, who is with the Lord now, authored a series of articles that were published in the Jewish Christian magazine, Israel My Glory.

And one of them is called Human's Rejection of Genuine Wisdom and Humanity's Rejection of God's Moral Absolutes. And we've explained what that is about in the past.

I won't go into it again. But if you have not obtained those, would you please do so before you leave today and make sure you give them a serious reading because they are very, very informative.

[17 : 55] And you know something? How many times do I say this? Information is critical because you cannot process and give any thought to what you haven't taken in.

And if you do not process it and give it thought, you are not able to reach any accurate conclusions. And if you do not reach any accurate conclusions, you are unable to take any direct action.

You see how all of these things are tied together? It all begins with information. We'll be talking about that in the body of our message this morning because all of God's information is incarnated in a human being.

And he's called, interestingly enough, the word of God. Is there anything that communicates information more than a word?

I'll give you a little exercise. Try to think. Try to think of anything right now.

[19 : 14] Bow your head. Close your eyes. Try to think of nothing. Make your mind blank.

Try it just for a few seconds. Try it right now. Try it. Try it. Try it. Try it. Try it. Try it. Try it. Try it. Try it. Try it. Try it. Try it. You couldn't do it.

Neither could I. All I could think was blank, blank, blank. But that's a word. You cannot think without a word coming to mind.

A word is the essence of communication in any language. Even if you're using sign language, what you're doing, you're still communicating words with sign language or with body language.

nothing matters so much as words they are the essence of communication little wonder jesus christ is referred to as the word of god the logos and well i'll give you my message later okay uh and this incarnation you've gotten this sheet i give this out every year we'll continue to do so it's probably the most scholarly thorough biblical thing i've seen on the incarnation of jesus christ and we'll be looking at that as well this morning in our message and it too is available back there in the literature rack so avail yourself if you will of any or all of those and by all means if you know of a neighbor or friend that would really enjoy one of those feel free to take one for them as well and we will appreciate your helping us to distribute that well in connection with the word would you open your bibles please to john's gospel chapter one and that will not come as a surprise we're talking about the most incredible series of events ever to take place in the history of the universe and i am segregating or dividing these into four different parts the first we will look at this morning and it is

called the incarnation when the word became flesh the second we will be looking at lord willing a week from today and it is what happened when the word became flesh it is the word will be made sin for us he who knew no sin will be made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of god in him and that will be the crucifixion and then the third is that which happened to the word and that is namely his resurrection from the dead all of this is connected with his personhood and then the fourth of course will be the second coming to which we yet look forward so with your eyes focused now on john's gospel chapter one and beginning with verse one we read in the beginning was the word and the word was with god and the word was god well now what kind of double talk is that does that make any sense on the surface it really doesn't it looks like somebody got their words mixed up or got something placed in there out of place that shouldn't have been there because to say in the beginning was the word and the word was with god and the word was god kind of puts the word in two different areas at the same time how can that be that is part of what we'll be talking about it will be a superficial and i emphasize it will be a superficial examination of the triune nature of our god and i say superficial because that's all i'm capable of giving it no one has ever plumbed the depths or even halfway examined what is involved in the triune nature of the being of god but i want you to think about this for just a moment i want you to exercise your mind if you can to the extent that and this will not be easy because we're just not used to doing this to try and reflect back when there was nothing i mean no earth no universe no stars no space no anything [24 : 10] yet there was this being called the uncaused first cause now we know i think everybody understands the simplest basic of reality and of matter that nothing and no one comes into being without a cause every reality has to have a cause nothing just happens without a cause and the question has been asked and i suppose that they think that it's supposed to be some kind of a stumper well if everything is caused then who calls god because if somebody had to cause god then you have to have a causer before you have the product and our only answer is and the only one that we can give because we're dealing with something akin to affinity is that god and god alone is the uncaused first cause that's the best we can do in fact that's all we can do so this uncaused first cause is the cause of everything in him you realize that all power dwells and all wisdom dwells and all of the power that men have all of the power that machines have all of the power that technology has it all comes from him because he is the source of all power and that's what omnipotence means it means possessing all potency all power he is omnipotent and the word omni carries over from the latin and it simply means all and potent we say omnipotent only we pronounce it a little different with the accent or with the someone said with the accent on different syllables and we call it omnipotent instead of omnipotent and he is also omniscient which means all-knowing and he is also omnipresent which means he is everywhere at one in the same time and this of course is understandably mind-blowing there was a time when there was nothing no angels no universe no planets no stars no anything yet there was this uncaused first cause and if i suppose then the natural question to ask for that was how long was he there well you can't say long anything because the moment you use the word long you are identifying with time how long you're looking for a time but there is no time associated with the infinite he is timeless he is the eternal being the bible says in one of the psalms that he is the one who inhabits eternity and eternity is not time stacked on top of time eternity is not even millions and millions of years because the thing that makes eternity eternal is it has no time constriction no matter what no matter how many millions or billions of years you can think of eternity exceeds that because it is time less so the text is telling us that in the beginning was the word yet the word was the only thing the only one who was in the beginning some translations render this when the beginning began the word already was that's one way of expressing it because we tend to think in our humanness we tend to think of the beginning of our world planet earth the beginning of time and space that's what we associate with the beginning and whenever we use that term that's generally what we think of but what john is talking about is when the beginning began the word already was the word predated the beginning the word was and the word was not only with god the word was god now that immediately poses another problem and it'll develop as we go on through let us see he was in the beginning with god all things came into being by him by who the word well we thought god was the creator of all things he was and he is but jesus christ is god he is a creator of all things matter of fact when you look at genesis carefully you will see in beginning in the very first verse in the beginning god and i pointed this out to grace audience before i'm certain we've covered this before the word that is used there is plural elohim in english when we want to add a plural to a word we put an s on the end of it but in hebrew

when they add a plural to a word they put an i m on the end of it so it is elohim e-l-o-h-i-m elohim and it literally means and is translated in the original hebrew gods plural but if the scriptures attest to anything they attest to the fact that there is but one god and the hebrew if you want to call it a motto or a mantra or the one saying that best expresses hebrew and judaism more than anything else it is deuteronomy 6 4 hear o israel the lord our god the lord is one that which characterized judaism throughout the centuries and still does to this day is that it is monotheistic that means one god and the reason that that was such a standout in its day is because all of the nations that surrounded israel all the other people were polytheists which literally means many gods they had many deities to which they sacrificed that the apostle paul later describes all of them as being dumb idols having ears they hear not mouths they speak not and people don't realize it but when they sacrifice to those dumb idols they are actually sacrificing says paul to the corinthians they are sacrificing to demons and they don't even know it so everybody is going to worship something it wasn't it can't think of his name now but he was a famous songwriter singer jewish man came to faith in christ who was it yeah yes bob dylan and he wrote the song everybody's got to serve somebody and there's a lot of truth in that because that's that is the truth and the idea of their being but one god is that which characterized and set israel apart from all of their neighbors because they were all into polytheism and for various reasons that we won't go into now but you need to note the distinction was something that characterized them and still does to this day and that of which our jewish friends accuse christians is the same accusation that is leveled against us by the muslims and that is you worship three gods we insist that that is not true that we worship one god who subsists in three persons and if you can understand that please explain it to me i don't claim to understand it but i do claim to believe it because throughout scripture the bible makes it very very clear that the father is god and that the son is god which we will see a little later and that the holy spirit is god and they comprise a triunity that we reduce to the one word trinity and as we pointed out before and someone has made the observation well you don't even find the word trinity in the bible and they're ready to dismiss it on that grounds alone but my response to that is you don't find the word bible in the bible either but we're not ready to throw it out because it isn't in there all of these characters all of these persons of the godhead constitute the one god and our difficulty is in this and let me be as well i was going to say as clear as i can be but i can't be that clear i can't be i can't make it as clear as i would like but suffice it to say this when we try to extrapolate the being of the deity using our humanity as a base and attempting to make comparisons because of that you're already led astray and this is simply because the deity and i'm talking about the godhead the father son holy spirit the deity exists and dwells in an area that is totally foreign to anything we know yet this god graciously condescends to speak of himself using human like words with which we can identify otherwise we wouldn't get anything so god is continually condescending to address us to minister to us he is forever stooping down he has to do that with his creation because he has no equals he has to condescend in every area because he has no equals in order for us to appreciate anything about the deity he has to communicate to us in language we can understand and we can understand about ourselves somewhat about ourselves so we try to transfer what we understand about ourselves and apply it to him and it doesn't work it doesn't work because the deity is the the only thing i can think of and it too is inadequate he is the otherness do you get that he is the otherness he isn't like us he is the otherness and yet the miracle of this thing called

Christmas is when the otherness took upon something of us for himself to present and to communicate to us on the level that we could grasp and it is an act of incredible grace and love that he has done that let us move on through the text because we've got quite a bit of territory to cover all things came into being by him by who by this word but don't we read in Genesis 1 1 in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth so here we have this being called the word being with God and being God and also if we're talking about completing the triune nature of God in Genesis 1 we have the spirit of God brooding upon the waters so all three members of the Godhead are active in the creation the father the son the holy spirit all of them are active and all of them are active in the crucifixion Jesus said no man takes my life from me i lay it down of myself but we are also told in Romans 4 and i think it's 25 that Jesus was delivered up for our offenses who delivered him his father delivered him God the father delivered the son up for our offenses and yet the writer of Hebrews tells us that he was offered by the

[38 : 13] Holy Spirit so we've got all three active and operative there too we are trying to plumb the depths well let's forget it because we're not going to plumb the depths we're not even going to get

halfway down think if you will think in terms of God as being the otherness and our friends who embrace Islam they have the same problem with this that the Jews have with it and that is it's impossible that God could have a son and for many Muslims that is grounds right there for dismissing anything having to do with Jesus Christ as the son of God because they say it's inconceivable that God could have a son well I would certainly agree if you're thinking in terms of humanity because the only time the only the only what shall I say the only model that they can think of is maleness cohabiting with femaleness and producing a third that is no picture of the

Godhead at all that has nothing to do with the being and nature of God we have a father a son and a holy spirit that are identified as such identified as such but not in comparison to our humanity because he cannot put into language that we could grasp who and what he is he is incommunicable in that respect just because of his very nature but we try to humanize him and in a certain way God condescended to speak to us in at least one level that we could understand one sphere and that was when the word was made flesh we can get that but I'll tell you something that's about all we can get and do you realize this word that was made flesh pre-existed from eternity along with the father and with the spirit but not as a result of some cohabitation like we think of people or animals doing male cohabiting with female and producing a third nothing like that at all that's trying to reduce the deity to humanity and it cannot be done and those who attempt to do so are certainly going to arrive at a wrong conclusion and no wonder if that's what the

Muslims think if that's what the Jews think no wonder I suppose I would think that too but that isn't what we're talking about he is don't ever forget this word God is the otherness totally completely unlike anything that we know yet to get to us to communicate with us he condescends that means he comes down he stoops he bends he comes down into our world to communicate to us and that is glorious beyond description my oh my in him was life and the life was the light of men and the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it you know something two thousand years later it still doesn't isn't that interesting and we are told about

John and the John that is spoken of here not to be confused with the John who wrote this gospel because this is John the Baptist that he's talking about and in verse 10 he says he was in the world and the world was made through him and Colossians says that all things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made Colossians says that he is before all things and in him and by him all things consist and that word literally means it is through Jesus Christ that this universe is held together that's the meaning of that word consists he is holding it all together and then he goes on to talk about this one coming into his own and his own here of course is the nation of Israel and they did not accept him but as many in verse 12 as did to them gave he the right the authority to become children of

God even to those who believe on his name and verse 14 and the word became flesh that's the body of Jesus and dwelt among us the word that's used there in the Greek is the word for tabernacle beautiful a tabernacle is like a tent it's a temporary structure it isn't meant to be here forever a tabernacle is meant to be disassembled erected set up and then later disassembled and moved on to another area and that's precisely what Jesus did he came to this earth and he dwelt here for a while for his 33 years were and then he moved on the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory what does that mean we're not too far away come over if you would please back just a few pages to Luke's gospel chapter nine Luke's gospel chapter nine in verse 27

[44 : 01] Jesus is talking to his apostles and this is right after they have identified him as being the son of God the Messiah and then in verse 27 Jesus says to the twelve but I tell you truly there are some of those standing here and who do you suppose was standing there well probably a number of people but the twelve for sure they were standing there they were with him they traveled with him and he says those some of those standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God and verse 28 says and some days after these sayings it came about that he Jesus took along Peter and John and James this is Peter Andrew's brother but Andrew's not along and

John and James and this is the James who is one of the sons of thunder not to be confused with the other James and these three we are told went up into the mountain with Jesus to pray and while he was praying the appearance of his face became different I've often wondered what must that difference have looked like and his clothing became white and gleaming and behold two men were talking with him where did they come from we've got three men Peter James and John where did these additional two people come from they they came from the glory and they were appearing in

glory they were

Moses and Elijah both long since dead so far as the flesh is concerned both gone long time since and they are talking about well look at that would you speaking of his Jesus departure could it be that they were discussing with Jesus his crucifixion precisely and Jesus had told the disciples earlier that the son of man must need to go up to Jerusalem be shamelessly entreated handed over to the Gentiles be crucified the third day raised again and you know as well as I that Peter then took him aside and rebuked him Peter was the only apostle that ever had enough brass to rebuke Jesus but he did and he said you stop saying that that is not true and the text makes it quite clear that this saying was hid from their ears so that they did not understand but you know when they would understand after the events happened when they got together they would say that's right he said that he said we heard didn't you hear him yes he said that it didn't register at the time because we thought it couldn't mean what he said couldn't mean that but it did it's exactly what it meant and it never registered with them or meant anything to them until after the fact and we are told that he told them those things before so that afterwards they would recall it's a beautiful beautiful thing this departure that they're talking about and this brilliance and brightness that they saw this is the glory that

John is talking about in chapter one of John's gospel when he says he dwelt among us and we beheld his glory who's the we John saying me and my brother James and Peter all three of us were there now let's get Peter in the picture as well if you would please come back quickly to second Peter the second epistle of Peter chapter one and verse twelve and Peter says therefore I shall always be ready to remind you of these things even though you already know them and have been established in the truth which is present with you and I consider it right as long as I am in this earthly dwelling to stir you up by way of reminder knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling Peter is talking about his own death is imminent as also our Lord Jesus to me and I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure that is after his death you may be able to call these things to mind for we did not follow cleverly devised tales we weren't sold a bill of goods what we got was the real deal the true scoop when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ we were eyewitnesses of his majesty for when he received honor and glory from God the father such an utterance was made to him by the majestic glory this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased and we ourselves Peter saying myself and Peter and John who was with me heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain so here he is testifying to that and Jesus Christ is the container of the kingdom of heaven and where he is the kingdom is when he was here on earth he brought kingdom conditions with him that's why he healed the sick and raised the dead and gave sight to the blind those are all kingdom characteristics one more reference that we have to conclude with and it's in

[50 : 39] John's gospel chapter 8 John's gospel chapter 8 and let's begin reading if we may with verse 47 John 8 and 47 he who is of God hears the words of God for this reason you do not hear them because you are not of God in other words you are on a different wavelength the Jews answered and said to him do we not rightly say that you are a Samaritan and have a demon this is coming of course from the opposition Jesus answered I do not have a demon but I honor my father and you dishonor me but I do not seek my glory there is one who seeks and judges truly truly I say to you if anyone keeps my word he shall never see death the Jews said to him now we know that you have a demon

Abraham died and the prophets also and you say if anyone keeps my word he shall never taste of death surely you are not greater than our father Abraham who died the prophets died too whom do you make yourself out to be in other words he said just who do you think you are Jesus answered if I glorify myself my glory is nothing it is my father who glorifies me of whom you say he is our God and you have not come to know him but I know him and if I say I do not know him I shall be a liar like you but I do know him and keep his word and this is just mind boggling coming up your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day and he saw it and was glad

I really wish I had better light on that verse I delved into it different times but each time I've come away with a longing with the dissatisfaction as to what is really involved here Abraham rejoiced to see my day and he saw it and was glad I know the typical expression is that Abraham was given a sneak preview or that Abraham may have be able to put together the lamb or the ram that was caught in the thicket when he was ready to offer Isaac as a sacrifice and he was able to offer the lamb instead and the ram instead and that that ram was a picture a prefiguring of Christ who would

come and be offered and I don't doubt what that is involved but I'm still not satisfied with it and when he made that statement now they're really perplexed and verse 57 says the Jews therefore said to him you are not yet 50 years old have you seen

Abraham how long had Abraham been dead physically speaking 2000 years Abraham has been off the scene for a long time and you say you've seen Abraham what are you talking about and Jesus said to them truly truly amen amen I say to you before Abraham was born I am you understand how significant that is it would have been a lot easier for us to wrap our finite brains around it if Jesus had said before Abraham was born I was but he didn't say that he said I am whatever could that mean it hearkens all the way back to Exodus chapter 3 when

God explains to Moses his true identity and Moses is trying to put all of this together and he says now wait a minute you want me to go back to Egypt the land from which I fled as a fugitive because I had a murder wrap over my head for the Egyptian that I killed you want me to go back there and tell the Pharaoh that the thousands and thousands of free labor that he is getting from the Hebrews needs to be released and freed and just like that Pharaoh is going to release them and he's going to say what is the name of your God who is it that told you this Moses and Moses said what am I supposed to tell him what's your name the Egyptians had all kinds of gods and they gave a name to each and every one of them what's your name and he said you tell him that the I am hath sent you well what in the world does that mean it is an expression that conveys the breadth and the depth if you can call them that of eternity he is not saying I was or I shall be he's saying he is the [56:18] I am and the I am is the ever present personal one who was never involved in non existence he always was always is always shall be that's an incomprehensible kind of being well that's what he is he is the otherness he is the I am and do you know they picked up on that immediately and if you look at what the text says therefore they picked up stones to throw at him why just for saying something like that just for saying before Abraham was born I am why pray tell me is that an offense punishable by death because they knew very well what that meant these were Jews remember they were fully familiar with

Exodus chapter 3 and they knew that what Jesus was claiming was an equality with the father and what is that what sin is that that's the sin of blasphemy and it is punishable by death you heard what he said let's take care of him right now and they picked up stones to stone him to death and the only reason they were unable to succeed in that was the same reason that the people in Nazareth his hometown were not able to throw him down off the cliff when he delivered that message saying that this day this thing is fulfilled in your ears because his time had not yet come Jesus Christ could not be stoned to death he could not be thrown off a cliff he could not be killed by jumping from the peak of the temple when Satan tempted him he could not be killed any other way other than the way that was predetermined he had to go to the cross and constantly throughout his earthly life he would say things like mine hour has not yet come mine hour has not yet come

Jesus was indestructible until his father was finished with him and so are you so are you and you know the night that he was betrayed in the garden Jesus prayed father the hour has come this was the hour they would go out into the night cross the ravine climb up the steep hill to the Mount of Olives and probably about three or four o'clock in the morning when the disciples had conked out from a long day and they were dozing and sleeping Jesus was praying and says what shall I say father save me from this hour but for this hour came I into the world this is the word became flesh and this is going to be his earthly destiny it's going to end there on that cross arise he is at hand that would betray me and often the distance in the dead of the night like I said about four maybe five o'clock in the morning

Jesus could see flickering lights lamps and torches of men coming up the path to where he was and it was the temple police and they were being led by Judas and one of them walked up to Judas as they were traversing up the path and said it's dark out here how will we know which one to arrest because there are going to be several there and Peter says leave it to me he said the one I approach and kiss take him he's the one all of this predetermined preplanned for one specific reason and one reason only so you and I could enjoy the pleasure and the presence of God throughout eternity that's the price that was paid that cross those three hours the agony the encrusted blood that will accumulate on his body worn down worn out dehydrated dying death that you and I could not begin to imagine and don't you ever forget he did it for you he did it for you and for me that's the word the word became flesh so it could be subjected to what it was subjected to and I guess we just have one thing to ask to say as a result of it and it's this so what so what what

does that mean to you have you personally appropriated what Jesus provided so that you could enjoy his life his forgiveness his forever his blessings his benefits all that he wants to lavish on you we are talking about an incredible kind of love

I've told you this before but it bears repetition and a good note to close on in John 3:16 there's a little word that is so often overlooked that most people just run right by it and it's the word *so* so for God so loved the world that he gave what does that mean well *so* means so it means this much no it doesn't mean this much it's got nothing to do with quantity it's got everything to do with quality and the word in the Greek language won't mean anything to you but it's the English spelling would be O-U-T-O-S but it has a rough breathing mark at the beginning so that the O is pronounced with an H and it literally is HUTOS HUTOS in Greek and what it means is in this manner or in this way so [63:50] I like to make the distinction because it just kind of really grabs me it isn't saying that God's love was of this much because God doesn't love in degrees he doesn't love this one a little bit and love this one a little bit more and love this one even more yet it means that when God loves he loves with the totality of his being nothing reserved goes all out it is a love of this kind so John 3:16 ought to be rendered for God in this way or in this manner loved the world that he gave so it isn't that God's love built and increased and finally his love got to the place of where it overwhelmed him and he had to do what he did no no when God loves he loves with the totality of his being nothing held back that's the way he loves you isn't that something that's all in that little Greek word so translated in the English

God so loved the world in this manner this is what he did and you know what I've never gotten over it and I don't ever expect to if you'll stand we'll be dismissed once again father we have been exposed to this oldest and grandest of stories and yet it is so much more than a story it is something that bears the very heart of deity itself and we know that we are walking on sacred ground and we know we are well in over our heads trying to get a better fix on this and so much of it escapes us but for what and to what degree we do understand we are profoundly grateful we just wish we had a greater capacity for appreciation than we do and we look forward to the time when it comes that we will until then help us to be faithful and help us to be grateful for so great salvation and father if there is anyone here or anyone listening who has never come to grips with the reality of who Christ is and why he came and what it means to them our prayer is that they may see themselves as undone as we once did and recognize that forgiveness and salvation comes only from the one who paid for it and they can get it from you all they need do is admit their sin and their inability to do anything about it and place all their trust upon the one who rightfully wears the name savior and let

Jesus save them forgive them cleanse them pardon them we pray in his name amen amen you are dismissed you are dismissed but he that aches it are who can you are na who have you are sue you are override are you kapod are you on