

Prophecy and Mystery Contrasted - Prophecy 28

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[0 : 0 0] Let's pray, shall we? Father, we are grateful for this morning that you've given us, for the presence of each one here, more than that, for your presence, and we are grateful that you are accommodating us as you are thousands of other groups like ours meeting all across this country with one particular objective in mind, to illuminate people in the scriptures and to exalt the person of Jesus Christ who alone is worthy. This morning we are mindful particularly of the situation that Suji is facing. We are grateful for the medical care and technicians and medical technology that's available to her, and we pray that as she undergoes the treatment and the tests and the results are examined that you will provide a level of accuracy there that is beyond that of those who are reading and evaluating it. Thank you for her relationship to you and her relationship to Dave and what they enjoy as husband and wife, and we pray that you will undertake for her and for him in accordance with what you know to be best for them. Thank you for the word of truth that is set before us. We look to you for the understanding and appreciation of it, as well as the day that lies ahead. In Christ's name, amen.

We are considering going through this little pamphlet that we have distributed, and we have them in quantities, and they are available out there everywhere around here for you to pick up. And we are examining this because we are satisfied that it is perhaps the greatest key to the understanding and appreciation of the scriptures that all too many do not have. And it is sad to realize that this is a marvelous, marvelous volume, the most wonderful that has ever been provided, and it is given to mankind that he might be able to connect with his creator. And yet we all know that on too many occasions it is merely a dust collector on somebody's coffee table, and they never do really get into it.

For a number of reasons, one of which some people are intimidated by its size, and they just look at how thick the book is and say, oh my, I am just kind of overwhelmed by that, I wouldn't know, you know.

Or they get into Genesis and start reading and they run into a few names that they can't even pronounce and it gets a little discouraging. And the next thing you know, it's laid aside again with maybe good intentions to later examine it and look at it, but they just really aren't able to get all that serious about it. And because of that, they are deprived of incredible spiritual assets that can be made and are intended to be made available to them. I've often said, well, I guess I haven't often said it because I only thought of it not too long ago. But it's it maybe it's in my advancing years that it has come to me, but it is it is the concept that there are multitudes of people across this globe who are born and live, become occupied in some kind of life's work and marry and have children and may see their grandchildren and they grow old and they die and they never did know what it was all about. Never had a clue as to why they were here, what was the purpose, where did they come from, where are they going? And you just, you're saddened to realize that so many people are are part and parcel of this wonderful world living as they do and just don't have a clue.

And when you get that clue, when you understand what God is communicating to us and has provided for us, it makes life so much richer and fuller and understandable and ability to cope with and a provision of hope for and all the rest that goes with it. So it is really sad that so many people are shortchanged by the very things that I have mentioned. And this is, this is why we're here. This is why we're here, is that we may know what God has provided for us and who he is and who we are in him and what this is all about, what the future holds and the whole ball of wax. And it's just the most wonderful thing in the world to be let in on it with a book, with a book that everybody in their own language, well, at least all the basic languages can read and are intended to, to understand. Because this book, this book that God has made available to us called His Word, the Holy Bible, was never given to intimidate people. It was given to elucidate people. It was never

given to, to be just admired from a distance, but to get into and, and be able to grasp those principles so that you can respond to it. Because the Bible has a message. If you don't know what the message is, you don't know how to respond to it. Because information needs processing and a conclusion and something to do about it. So when you read the Bible, it's so what? And well, well, it's, that's, that's my little thing for the morning. So let's look at this little pamphlet, if we may. And we are talking about the contrast that exists in item number 11. This is the prophecy portion and it has to do with, in prophecy, salvation by grace through faith alone is not contemplated.

[6 : 15] It just isn't. And as we pointed out in our last session, there is no, there is no grasp at all of what we know and what we believe to be heaven absent from the body present with the Lord. You die here and the body is buried and the spirit exits and goes to be with the Lord. That is not an Old Testament concept. That concept is not found in the Old Testament. But it is the core, absent from the body present with the Lord and the resurrection and all that goes with it. It is so vital to the New Testament and what has been revealed for the body of Christ. So radical changes have taken place.

And we're just going to look at a few of them. And you may wonder, well, if you're talking about prophecy and it says that in prophecy, salvation by grace through faith alone is not contemplated. And I'm going to show you an example of that. So would you turn to Matthew's gospel, please? And while we're doing that, some of you are thinking, well, if he's talking about salvation in the Old Testament not being contemplated, why in the world are we going to Matthew? That's in the New Testament.

No, it isn't. It's in the New Testament in most of our Bibles. But the time frame that is involved belongs to the Old Testament. And the evidence of that, and this is really, really important. The evidence of this is Jesus came and labored and functioned and performed his miracles and gave his parables and died on the cross under the Old Testament economy, not the new.

Matthew. And that throws a lot of people for a curve. And for some, they're just ready to reject that. Well, this guy's crazy. He doesn't know what he's talking about. My Bible's Matthew, Mark, Luke.

[8 : 15] That's a New Testament. Well, yes and no. It's the New Testament as far as our documents are concerned, as far as the publication is concerned, as far as selling them and all the rest of it, and considering the New Testament is the New Testament. But the content, the ability to understand Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is arrived at only when you see it part of the Old Testament concept. That's where it belongs, the Old Testament construct. And when Jesus came, he fulfilled everything that the law required.

He lived under the law. He was an observant Jew. He kept the Sabbath. He had problems with the Sabbath in accordance with those who criticized him for violating it. But we'll talk about that later when we get there. And he no doubt ate the typical Jewish food. And he did everything according to the law of Moses. And he made it quite clear, I haven't come to destroy the law. I've come to fulfill it. And he also came to bring, ultimately to bring the law to an end because mankind under the law was one colossal failure. Because the law was never given so that people might keep it and become become acceptable to God. The law was given to reflect the character and the nature of God, which is absolutely perfect.

And when you compare your behavior or anybody else's behavior with that standard, you know you're in big trouble. And that's what the law was designed to do. By the law is the knowledge of sin. But it can't remove it.

It can only reveal it. It can show you that you're in trouble and something needs to be done. So let's go, if we may, to a couple of passages here that I think will help explain this better than I can.

And Matthew 5 and verse 20. Let's look at that for just a moment. Matthew 5 and verse 20. And we'll see that the salvation, if you want to call it that, that the concept under the old covenant had to do with quantity, not quality. What am I talking about?

[10 : 44] Well, we'll see that, I think, as it surfaces here. Let's look at verse 18. Truly, well, verse 17. Okay.

Matthew 5 and 17. Jesus is speaking. He's giving this Sermon on the Mount, which is his longest single sermon. And it is quite remarkable. And it is amazing how many Christians, I mean people who really know the Lord think that what we're supposed to live by the Sermon on the Mount.

Oh, well, let's go on. Verse 17. Do not think that I came to abolish the law or the prophets. I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the law until all is accomplished.

Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments and so teaches others shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Now, can I go on or do I have to stop here and talk about the kingdom of heaven?

You got that? I hope so. I'm just reluctant to really repeat that concept again because it'd taken another five or seven minutes.

[12:19] So it teaches others shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whosoever keeps and teaches them, is that meritorious?

Of course it is. Of course it is. It's meritorious. Whoever keeps and teaches them. That's humans doing something that is to be recognized and rewarded.

Okay? This is an emphasis on doing. He shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

And there's that term again. This is an earthly thing. The kingdom of heaven is not heaven where God dwells. The kingdom of heaven is on earth.

It's on planet earth. What is it that confuses people about that? It's simply the word heaven.

Because when you hear heaven, you automatically think of the dwelling place, the abode of God, and where Christians go when they die.

[13:28] That's heaven. It's sometimes called the third heaven. The kingdom of heaven is right here on this planet. And it does not now exist.

And it never has existed. But it will. That's the kingdom that Jesus is talking about. It is a physical, earthly, material kingdom. And it's here on planet earth.

You have heard, verse 21, that the ancients were told, you shall not commit murder, and whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.

But I say to you, that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court. And whoever shall say to his brother, Raka, they shall be guilty before the Supreme Court. And who says, you fool, blah, blah, blah.

And if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go your way. And first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

[14:30] Make friends quickly. With your opponent at the law, while you are with him on the way, in order that your opponent may not deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, you'll be thrown into prison.

Truly I say to you, you shall not come out of there until you have paid the last cent. And that, verse 26, is remarkable. It is one of the proof texts that the Roman Catholic Church uses to justify purgatory.

And it requires quite a stretch for this. And then he talks about you shall not commit adultery and so on. And as we move on down through the Sermon on the Mount, we're just going to have to, for time's sake, skip some of this.

But let's come over to chapter 6 and verse 8, what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer.

Pray then this way in verse 9, Our Father who art in heaven. Now there, there is the use of the word heaven in the context that we usually associate it with.

[15:36] Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Which of course implies that it is a prayer for the coming of the kingdom to earth, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever.

Amen. And then verse 14. If. Is there any way that we can avoid attaching conditionality to that?

No. If means if. It's questionable. It's this or it's that. If. If. If. You. Forgive men.

For their transgressions. Your heavenly Father will also forgive you. Is that meritorious? Of course it is. Absolutely.

[16:37] Is it conditional? Sure is. It's dependent on you forgiving others if you expect God to forgive you. There's a condition there. There's no grace here.

This is law. It is law principle. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Does that make sense? It sure does. And that was true. Now, we've got a passage in Colossians that the Apostle Paul was inspired to write and it talks about God having forgiven us all trespasses.

How do you square that with this? And the answer is, you don't. It can't be squared and it isn't supposed to be squared because it's talking about two entirely different operations. And the first has to do with the operation under the law. The law was the Old Testament standard and it set forth what was required.

[17 : 57] And while we're in Matthew, come back, if you will, a very familiar passage. We've been there many times, but it's in chapter 3. And John the Baptist is on the scene preaching and he says in verse 2, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

And in verse 8, he talks to the legalistic crowd, of the Pharisees and the Sadducees coming to him for baptism.

They were just, I think they were just looking for a, well, I'm not sure what they were looking for, but we do know that they rejected John and they rejected John's message and that's led them to reject Jesus also.

And many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism said to them, you brood of vipers. Now this is not politically correct language. Sons of snakes is what he's calling them.

Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore, bring forth fruit in keeping with your repentance. Is that meritorious?

[19 : 15] Is that conditional? Sure is. What is he saying? He's saying you have got to have the proper fruit, that is the products of your living, your lifestyle, your attitudes and your actions need to comport with what God requires if you expect to be accepted of him.

And of course, we know that the major charge that was laid constantly at the feet of the Pharisees was hypocrisy because they were always those who were demanding and requiring, but themselves did not do.

So, we've got a situation here that is meritorious and it is right in keeping with the Old Testament and the standards that were delivered by the prophets to the people of Israel and it was do, do, do.

And there was no question about that. In a comparison, come over to Mark's gospel simply because Mark makes it even, even clearer when what he says about about the baptism.

And in verse 4, we are told, John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for or to achieve or to gain the end of the forgiveness of sins.

[20 : 49] This is the submission to a religious act, which was water baptism that John was providing, in order to have your sins forgiven.

Is that meritorious? Sure is. Where is the grace in that? There isn't any need for grace in that. It is do and thou shalt live.

Do and thou shalt live. That's the message essentially of the Old Testament. Now I would be the first to agree and admit that in reality, apart from the sheer grace of God, no one has ever been brought into a right relationship with God.

Old Testament or new. And best examples of that, of course, goes all the way back to Noah. We're told Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

And it's just axiomatic that God's grace needs to be the element in anyone's life in any, what we would call, in any dispensation because human merit alone could not satisfy.

[22 : 00] But that is what is required. And that is what is required here in John's baptism. I don't want to be assuming that everybody's got this.

So if you don't, if I'm not coming clear to you, raise your hand and ask a question because if you have a question, six other people have the same question. Yes, Mara, Mara?

this brings a thought to my mind that you have to do, which I understand, but I'm thinking about people that lived back then. How much did they have to do before once they died?

Which place did they go? How was that determined? That's a good question. I wish I had the answer. But don't let that keep you from asking questions.

Seriously. The Old Testament is very vague about what we would call personal salvation. There are people who are dubbed and required as righteous, and I'm thinking now of Zacharias and Elizabeth.

[23 : 09] the mother and father of John the Baptist. And early on in Luke's gospel, when they surfaced, they are referred to as righteous people before the Lord, good people before the Lord.

Were they perfect? No. Were they justified by grace? No. But they had entered some sphere where they were at least considered acceptable to God. Well, let's go for maybe a little help.

Come to Acts chapter 10. Acts chapter 10. And by the way, in Acts chapter 10, we are still talking about an Old Testament economy.

And that is so hard to get a fix on because we know the book of Acts is in the New Testament, and it is after the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.

How can we say that this is... And yet, I am confident that it is. And so, when did the change actually occur?

[24 : 16] I don't know. I don't know. A lot of grace people believe it occurred with Paul the Apostle and his conversion in Acts chapter 9.

These are called the mid-Acts people or chapter 13 or so, with Paul's first missionary journey that had occurred there. Other grace people of sincere persuasion opt for the end of the book of Acts where the Apostle Paul delivers his last word to the Jewish people who came to him while he was in the hired villa there in Rome.

And he... Literally, bottom line is, he says, since you have rejected this, you who are in the position of authority and responsibility in Judaism, you reject the message that Jesus is the Messiah and what he did.

Therefore, Paul says, and this closes out the book of Acts, he says, therefore, we turn to the Gentiles. And everything is going to change from there. Joe? And also, don't we think, too, that at the stoning of Stephen, that was a rejection of the Spirit.

The God had already been rejected, Jesus had been rejected, and now the Spirit had been rejected. The whole Trinity had been rejected, so that was a change. And the case was building. Absolutely.

[25 : 38] If you look at Acts, chapter 10, and the account of Peter going to Cornelius, and we're not going to read the whole chapter, I think most of you are familiar with it anyway.

We are told that in the next day, verse 24, 23, I'm sorry, he invited them in, gave them lodging. On the next day, he arose, and Peter went with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him, and on the following day, he entered Caesarea.

Caesarea, this is Caesarea by the sea. This is, this is Caesarea that was named after one of the Caesars, and it was the seaport.

And we are told that Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends, and when it came about that Peter entered, Cornelius met him.

Remember, Cornelius is a God-fearer. That is, he's a Roman army officer who had embraced Jesus, had embraced the God of Israel as being the one true God.

[26 : 41] Cornelius met Peter and fell at his feet and worshipped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, Stand up!

I too am just a man. And as he talked with him, he entered and found many people assembled. And Peter is very, very nervous, because all these who are assembled are Goyim, they're Gentiles. And he said to them, verse 28, You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew, which is what I am, to associate with a foreigner, which is what you are, or to visit him, and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean.

How did he arrive at that? That was the vision of the animals, all kinds of animals and the sheep let down from heaven earlier in the chapter. And Cornelius says, I'm sorry, verse 29, verse 29, that is why I came without even raising any objection when I was sent for, and so I asked for what reason you have sent me.

And Cornelius said, four days ago to this hour I was praying in my house during the ninth hour. Behold, a man stood before me in shining garments and said, Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, your alms have been remembered before God.

[28 : 19] Send, therefore, to Joppa and invite Simon who has called Peter to come to you. He's staying at the house of Simon the Tanner. So I've sent to you immediately and you've come. Been kind enough to come.

Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you've commanded by the Lord. And I can just see all those people around the room or this crowd and they're all nodding. Yeah, what is this information that you've got to tell us?

They're waiting with bated breath. And look at what Peter says, verse 34. Opening his mouth Peter said, I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality.

Well, why should he have thought that before? He said, I understand now. Why was he of a different opinion before? He was a Jew.

Everybody knew how the Jew was the chosen people of God. Did God show partiality to the Jew? Well, of course he did. Absolutely. You show partiality to anyone that you select above others. [29 : 28] Of course he did. But, look at what he said, but in every nation, in every nation, does that mean, is Peter saying, other than Jews, besides Jews?

Yeah, that seems to be what he's saying. And then he goes on and says, the man who fears him and does what is right is welcome to him.

Where's the grace in that? Where is the grace in that? There isn't any. What is this? This is do-good realism.

This is works. This is meritorious. And, it was exactly what it was supposed to be for that time. Peter was not out of line here with what he was saying. He's going to be radically updated, though, by the message of grace that will come along later. But, what I'm saying is, listen, this far into the New Testament, it is based on merit.

[30 : 43] And, this is why, Mr. Stamm says in this little pamphlet that we've given you, verse, in item 11, in prophecy, which is what we're talking about, salvation by grace through faith alone is not contemplated.

It is not promised. It is not predicted. It is not prophesied. It just springs on the world seemingly out of nowhere because, all the while, salvation by grace through faith alone was a concept hidden in the heart and mind of God purposely kept secret, waiting for the right time to be revealed.

And, when was the right time? It was when the most unlikely man in the whole world came on the scene. It was the premier hater of Jesus of Nazareth that is going to proclaim this whole brand new message.

And, it's called the grace of God. Yes, Dolly? When I look at that verse 34, where Peter states that God is no respecter of persons, then isn't that a big contradiction when he confronts Paul on the topic of circumcision?

Well, in a sense, I guess it is. You have to take that statement with a qualification. You have to take everything Peter says with some qualification.

[32 : 16] Because, Peter, yeah, Peter demonstrates on more occasions than one. What shall I say? There's a popular term today.

Can we say that Peter was flirtatious with flip-flopping? Hmm? He was. In a lot of ways, Peter had some pretty serious character flaws and deficiencies.

And when we all do, but ours aren't put on displays like Peter's was. I mean, here was this man, now, Lord, I can't speak for these other guys.

When the going gets tough, they may not be there, but you can count on me. Though all others forsake you, yet I will not forsake you. And Peter was the one who made the biggest issue of that. And Jesus said, Jesus as much as said to him, Peter, you don't even know yourself, but I know you. And when things get tough, well, let me put it this way, Peter, and it was nighttime then.

[33 : 30] He says, before the cock crows, when does that cock crow? Pretty early in the morning, usually before it's even daylight, the cock crows. And Jesus was saying as much as Peter, within just a few hours, you who have made this macho statement, you're going to be the one to deny me three times.

And Peter, I'd like to have seen the expression on his face when Jesus told him that. And Peter was the one who rebuked Jesus when he said he was going to Jerusalem, suffer many things to the hands of the chief priests and scribes and be crucified.

And Peter was the one who said, stop talking like that. What are you talking about? That's not true. That's not going to happen. And Peter was saddled with impetuosity.

His heart was often in the right place, but his mind was breaking up the rear. And when the soldiers came to arrest Jesus, it was Peter who pulled out that sword and sliced off that guy's ear.

And that's just how rambunctious he was. And when Paul said, when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face publicly because he was to be blamed.

[34 : 49] And Peter, the one who, the one that God used to open the doors to the Gentiles, Cornelius, when he was there in Antioch of Syria, where Paul had gone to persecute and to bring back those believing Jews, when Peter was there in Antioch, he was fellowshiping with those Gentiles, why they would go to Burger King together and sit down and have a meal and just have a great old time and fellowship and back slapping and telling the stories and all the rest of it.

And then here comes a delegation of big wigs from Jerusalem. And they are deeply entrenched, highly observant, well-positioned, respected, highly thought of Jews with all their paraphernalia and their garb and everything.

And when they get into town, all of a sudden, Peter disowns his Gentile friends, won't have anything to do with them, ignores them, I'm sorry, no, I'm sorry, I couldn't, and because of the pressure that he put himself under with the top-flank Jews there in town, and after all, I've got a reputation to protect, you know, this kind of thing.

So Peter was wishy-washy on more occasions than one. And here, here he says, and you know, when the sheet let down from heaven, it took quite a while for him to get that message.

And here he says, in every nation, the man who fears him and does what is right is welcome to him. Now I ask you, is there anything, is there anything at all really definitive about that?

[36 : 44] No. Is there any kind of certainty with that? No. Anyone who does right, how much right do you have to do? And how much wrong can be offsetting that right so that you still make it?

And the whole concept of salvation in the Old Testament is unclear.

It's just, if you were going to give someone in the Old Testament time, you were living back then, and they ask you, what must I do to become rightly related to God, what would you tell them?

What's the plan of salvation for the Old Testament? Keep the whole law. Yeah. And keep the law, and keep the law, and keep the law. And where you blow it, you know it.

And when that happens, you sacrifice an animal to atone for your sins. And is there any security there?

[37 : 53] No. Is there any assurance there? No. It's very nebulous. And this is why, exactly why, this little article says that in prophecy, salvation by grace through faith alone is not contemplated.

And that, by saying that in prophecy it isn't, let me ask you this, where in the Old Testament is it ever predicted or prophesied that the time is coming when man will be justified solely on the basis of grace alone.

It's not there. It is not there. And I'm not faulting it for not being there. The point I'm making is it's not supposed to be there. Not supposed to be there.

And so many people see this and what we're talking about now as a kind of, oh yeah, well that's what I tell you. See, the Bible's got contradictions in it. It says one thing in one place. No, it isn't a contradiction.

It's a progression. It's a development. It is a change. And I can understand on the surface it looks like a contradiction because here it says one thing, or in the Old Testament it doesn't make it clear at all.

[39 : 09] And in the New Testament if there is anything, if there is anything that is provided with crystal clarity and is hammered and hammered and hammered, it's the concept of the grace of God.

Whereby man is justified by faith plus nothing. Now I saw a hand, Susie, did you have a comment? Yes. So I'm thinking of Hebrews chapter 11.

Yeah. And by faith, you know, the hall of fame of faith. Right. And so it still seems that it's God's grace acting upon us to put our faith, for the Jew, to put his faith in future Messiah.

Just like for us as believers, we put our faith in the Christ who has come. Yeah. Yeah. I appreciate what you're saying.

And that is a common position taken by a great deal of Protestantism. And it comes out like this. In the Old Testament, the, what the people were limited to in the Old Testament was looking forward to the cross and the death that Christ would die or the death that the Messiah would die on their behalf.

[40 : 40] And with faith, they anticipated and looked forward to the cross whereas we look back upon the cross.

And you know what? That sounds pretty good. But we've got major problems with that. And the reason we do is because those who were contemporaries of Christ and who was closer to him than his twelve apostles, do you think they looked forward to the cross?

Think about that. They didn't understand the cross. They didn't back to Peter again. Peter was the one who said there isn't going to be any cross and you're not going to be on it.

Forget that. We'll see that doesn't happen. They did not at all look forward to the Messiah dying on the cross.

Now, Isaiah 53 comes pretty close to spelling out exactly what was going to happen. But did the Jew understand that or appreciate that at all?

[41 : 56] Matter of fact, let me put it this way. Before Jesus was executed on the cross, what was the principal position of the nation of Israel regarding the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, especially the leadership of Israel?

What was their position? It was one of rejection, was it not? That's why they conspired with Pilate to have him crucified. What then do you suppose was the position of those same people when Jesus was actually on that cross?

Did you think that for a moment that they thought, oh, it's terrible that Jesus is on the cross, but actually this was prophesied and he's dying for the sins of the world, so it's all going to be okay because in three days he's going back to life again.

There wasn't a soul there that believed that or understood that. And I don't believe that even Mary, the mother of Jesus, was one of, I think she was right there with him.

I think she was agonizing as a mother, seeing what her son was going through. Do you think for a moment that Mary said within her heart, it's terrible that Jesus has to undergo this, but actually it's for the good of the whole human race and in three days he's going to be alive again.

[43 : 19] Mary didn't have a clue about that. Do you think she did? I suspect not. So how can we say, well, those who lived long before the cross, thousands of years earlier, they looked forward to the cross, how can we possibly say that they looked forward to something that was going to happen thousands of years in the future when the contemporaries of those who were right then and there when it actually happened didn't believe it either?

Wow. John? Before the law was ever given, Abraham believed God. Yeah. And so belief and faith in God was required and was present.

Yeah. In fact, Paul gives that as an illustration in Romans chapter four when he is presenting faith and justification by faith as something that was not a new concept.

And that's what they were charging him with. And matter of fact, that's what the Roman Catholic Church was charging Martin Luther with. And Martin Luther was saying, hey, this thing has been around for a long time.

All I'm doing is resurrecting it. Justification by faith alone. And Paul in Romans chapter four says, what shall we say then regarding Abraham our father concerning this issue of faith and grace?

[44 : 57] And then he says, if Abraham, if Abraham were justified by grace or by faith, I'm sorry, if Abraham were justified by works, he has wear of the boast.

But Abraham was justified on the base. And that Hebrews 11 chapter, all that is saying, and let me put it this way, the exercising of faith as is demonstrated in the lives of so many in Hebrews 11, which we call the hall of faith instead of the hall of fame, is a perfect illustration of how no one, even with the patriarchs, ever measured up to the standards that God had, and faith was their only possibility.

And when we read in Genesis 15 and verse six, a stellar verse, where Paul says, or Paul's writing, the writer of Hebrews is writing about Abraham, and he says that Abraham believed God and it, and what was the it?

It was his believing. And it, his belief, was counted to him or placed to his credit for justification.

So Paul, the argument that Paul is making in Hebrew, or the argument that Paul is making in Romans 4, is that, don't charge me with bringing this new concept of justification by faith, just springing it on you as though it was something that never even existed before.

[46 : 38] This thing goes all the way back to Abraham, and as I told you earlier, it predates Abraham, it goes all the way back to Noah. And by faith, he's one of the characters that the writer of Hebrews uses, by faith, Noah built an ark.

And what does that mean? That simply means this. And I've suggested that you use this in place of the words, by faith, by faith, by faith, because it doesn't communicate as much as this phrase does, I think.

It is because, because Noah believed God, he built an ark. Now, it was only because he believed God that he followed through with the action.

What would have happened if God had, if Abraham had said, yes, Lord, I believe you, build an ark, got it. But I'm not going to do it.

But I'm not going to do it. It wouldn't have been true faith. Yeah, it would not have been true faith. It would not have been true faith. True faith is that which responds to a concept.

[47 : 50] It responds, the word literally means believe. believe. In the Greek, the noun for the word faith is pistis, P-I-S-T-I-S, pistis.

And the verb form is pistuo. And the verb form is an action form. It means to believe. It is an action word. You believe.

And Abraham believed God and it, his belief, was counted to him for righteousness. And did Abraham follow through with the kind of obedience that he should have?

Nope. Abraham was a miserable flop. Time after time after time. But he grew in grace and finally he became, well, yes, Joe?

Back then, the Old Testament, saints, God dealt with them differently than he deals with us today. Oh, yeah. Back then, he spoke to them.

[48 : 52] He talked to them. They re-interacted with him, with God, directly. Today, we don't have that. We have this. God's word that we have to believe.

Back then, he talked to them. And if they did what he said, they believed him. Because that's what they had to believe. What God was talking to them, what he was telling them to do. I appreciate that, Joe.

And that's a good note to quit on because we're already three minutes past our time. So, thank you for your kind attention. And listen, I would really encourage you, if you have questions, and there are some really tough questions that can be asked of these concepts.

And as I've tried to make clear in the past, write them down because, well, most of you are a lot younger than I am. You don't have the memory problems. I do. But if I don't write them down, I don't remember them.

My problem then is I write them down and I forget where I wrote them. But write them down and feel free to bring any questions or objections. I've tried to make clear to you, have I not?

[49 : 53] I am not offended by anyone who disagrees with me. Because if we are really looking for truth, like we say we are, and you've got something that will refute what I'm saying, you owe it to me.

I want to hear it. Because I want truth too. And I think we all do. And there's a delicious array of goodies back there. So thank you all for being here. And nobody leaves till the cookies are all gone.