

Prophecy and Mystery Contrasted - Mystery 27 - An Obscure Grace and an Obvious Grace

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] I'm reminded that Beethoven, who is arguably one of the greatest, the great composers, wrote that magnificent Ninth Symphony from which this hymn was taken, Ode to Joy.

And he was never able to hear it because Beethoven was deaf. And the only way he could hear what he had created was to feel the harpsichord upon which it was played and put his ear over down to it and get the vibrations from the notes because he could not hear the sound.

And yet he created such incredible masterpieces like the one that we just sang. Just absolutely amazing. Well, we are going to begin this morning with an order of business.

And it will not take long, but it is a very important order of business. So I will ask our moderator if he will come forth right now and call you to a business meeting. Thank you, Ron. Good morning.

This is one of the good things that we do here at Grace every year. We really love to see new members come into a membership of Grace Bible Church. And that's what we're going to do this morning. But first of all, we have to initiate a business meeting.

[1 : 23] And to do that, I need all members to raise their right hand, please. Okay. We just squeaked by.

We have enough members to open the meeting. And I opened our meeting this morning. And this morning, our Board of Elders has recommended two ladies to become members of Grace Bible Church today.

And one of those is Aaron Evers, and the other is Brenda Brunati. And, well, for some of you who may not know them, could you ladies just stand up for a second?

Okay. Thank you. And we'd like to start. You can sit down now, please. We can start by the Board is recommending these, and we'd like to open this up for a vote.

So if anybody would recommend these two ladies to be brought into membership with Grace Bible Church. We have one recommendation.

[2 : 31] Has anybody second that? John, second that motion. Okay. We have these ladies. We have the motion on the floor. Do we have any comments?

Before we vote. Okay. Then all those in favor, please raise your right hand. And these members only. Okay.

All those who are opposed. Okay. Those in favor has won. And, ladies, we welcome you to membership of Grace Bible Church.

And afterwards, we'll have a hand to the table. Hand to fellowship. Yeah. And after the service, you'll come forward, and the congregation can come and meet our new members.

Thank you. This meeting is adjourned. Great business meeting. Short and sweet. And welcome, ladies.

[3 : 31] Look forward to giving you the hand of fellowship apart from social distancing. Okay.

Would you pray with me, please? Loving Father, we have just sung a hymn, Ode to Joy.

And all who are in Christ have more for which to be joyful than this world could ever understand.

And we are so grateful that you are at the center of our joy.

It is you who have put a new song in our hearts, even of praise and salvation to our Lord. We are grateful for what we have already heard this morning, that two more believers are uniting with this local fellowship.

And we are so grateful that there are assemblies like ours scattered all over the globe who are praising and honoring the Lord of glory. And that's as it should be.

[4 : 32] Thank you that we can be among them. Thank you for the season of the year and for the anticipation of families being more active and more able to be about than previously.

And we are grateful for the improvements that have been realized. We thank you for this gathering this morning and the word that is before us. We look to you for facilitating it and being able by your grace and through your spirit to live out the things that we have learned.

We continue to pray this morning for Suji and the situation she's facing. We ask that as she undergoes treatment there in Cincinnati that you will undertake for her and for the technicians and the specialists who are attending her.

Pray for your peace to be the portion of Dave, her husband, as he goes through her through what is a very difficult and life-threatening time. Thank you again for the assurance that is provided us who are in the Lord Jesus Christ.

That you are at the center of our lives. And although many things enter our lives that we would not care for, would not want, do not understand. One day it will all be made clear.

[5 : 46] And we thank you even for that promise. So we commit this time to you this morning in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen. Amen. Well, we've got a situation that needs some immediate response from you.

And that is the Clark County Fair is coming up. And we didn't even have a fair last year, you'll recall, because of the pandemic. And in connection with the absence last year, it kind of makes us even more determined to want to do something this year.

And there is a sheet on the bulletin board, a sign-up sheet there. And if you are able to fill any of those spots, and I know some of you maybe are retired, you're more flexible with your time, and you may be able to fill more than one of those, and we would appreciate that.

We want you to know that these responsibilities will be met in two-hour increments. If you commit to a two-hour time, there will be somebody there to relieve you at the end of the time.

And everything you need to know is there on the bulletin board. And it will depend on whether or not we have sufficient people to staff our booth, which is an evangelistic opportunity.

[7 : 00] We just give out literature and CDs and things of that nature and answer questions that people have regarding salvation or whatever it is that's on their heart and mind.

And you don't have to do anything other than just stand there and smile and maybe shake hands. That may be returning to legality once again.

I don't know. But it's a great opportunity just to meet people, and if you would like to participate in that, we would love for you to do so. You don't have to have any special abilities or anything like that.

We will have a meeting where all of those who are participating will be briefed on exactly what to do. And it's very informal, very simple, nothing threatening about it.

It just needs people. That's all. And if we have sufficient numbers of people to sign up for the slots that are on the bulletin board, we'll have it. We'll commit to the fair for that week.

[8 : 03] It's the last full week of July, Friday through Friday. And if we do not have sufficient signatures, we just won't be there. As simple as that.

Because you need to have adequate people to staff it. And if you'd like to help with that, we would appreciate it very much. But today is the deciding factor.

And that's why I mentioned it last week for you to be thinking about it during this past week so you could be prepared to make some kind of a decision or commitment today. So it has to be today or not at all.

And that means we'll try to remind you before you leave because this is always a problem at Grace. But it's a good problem. People fellowship and they stand around and talk and chat and get caught up in everything.

And for my part, that's just a wonderful sign of a healthy congregation. And I love that. But the problem is we get engrossed in conversations and we forget about other things like the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

[9 : 03] So I'll try to remind you of that. And hopefully you'll be able to participate. I can promise you, I think you'd find it a very rewarding time. Other items in the bulletin that I think are pretty much self-explanatory.

The men's class will be on Tuesday. And the prayer meeting that follows June 2 in the evening. And ladies fellowship, they have a great time to get together. It's a great time to get together.

This is Christianity Clarified that is aired on a number of radio stations. But it's designed for a five-minute program.

Actually, it's even less than five minutes. And not very many people respond to a radio program at all. I was in radio for 10 years when I was with WEEC back in the 1960s.

And I don't write to radio programs. Most people don't. Most Christians don't. But these people do or did. And I don't mind telling you that for somebody to write and respond and to thank the station for airing a program, and it's just a five-minute program, that's quite significant.

[10:49] And I don't know. Most people are not aware of that. But being an old radio program guy like I am, I was aware of it, there's a saying that goes about in radio that for every listener who writes, there are 10,000 who don't.

Now, I don't know that there's any way of verifying that number. But this is very encouraging. And I thought when I first got this that there were some comments from listeners. And I thought, well, that's, yeah.

But, you know, sometimes you kind of question some reports that you hear. You don't know exactly how valid it is, whether these people are actually.

But I've never seen this before, where they actually gave the name and even the telephone number of the person who called.

I thought, that's strange. I've never seen that before. And, you know, whenever you see, especially on commercials, on TV, when people give testimonials about a product, you know, I've been using this product and it's wonderful and I've lost 85 pounds in 10 days and stuff like that, you know.

[11:57] You tend to take it with a grain of salt. But they never put the full name of the person in. They just put Roger or so-and-so or maybe the first initial of their last. And you don't know if it's true or if it's just hype or commercialism or what.

But they even put the phone number of these people in. I don't, I can't say that I plan to call them, but that's quite interesting. So, anyway, I tell you that just to tell you this.

There's another sheet about what Nathan Rambeck has done regarding podcasting. And Christianity Clarified is available now as a podcast, thanks to him.

And I don't know how many programs are on there. What is it? I think we're up to 15. Up to 15 programs. Well, there's only 1,200 to go. So, and you'll be finished.

No, that's 15 CDs. Well, 15 CDs. Well, great. Then that means we're a fourth of the way done because there's 60 so far. But another 15 are planned. Anyway, if you'd like to be a part of that, then just let Nathan or let me know.

[13:05] And some have already expressed some interest. And, well, Nathan, would you give them an idea of just a ballpark figure of how much time would be involved for somebody that wants to do that?

A week? Yeah, depending on how technically savvy you are, I think it should just take less than an hour a week. And like you said, I think we're about a quarter of the way through. So we're trying to post about two or three a week.

And you can do that all in one sitting in about an hour once you kind of figure out the process. So, and that's... Can they do this at home?

You can do it from home, yep. And so I'm willing to, we can get on like a Zoom call or a video call. We can even do it maybe after church or something and just go through the process. Great.

Well, that's even simpler than I thought. I might even be able to do something like that. We all know how technologically challenged I am, though. But if you'd like to be involved in that, and this could mean, this could be available to the whole English-speaking world by way of electronics, which is pretty fantastic.

[14:18] And if you would like to be a part of that, we would like very much to enlist you. And as he says, maybe an hour a week or maybe a couple of hours a week at the most. And once you got used to what you were doing, it probably wouldn't take very long at all.

So I really appreciate Nathan doing this. He's involved in technology. It's his occupation. And he's, I'm sure, covered up with his own responsibilities that he has as a job.

And I would like to get more people involved in this because I think the rewards are great. And it's the kind of thing that only heaven will reveal the actual results.

And we just leave that with the Lord. But we do what we can. And if you'd like to be involved in that, that would be great. We'd appreciate it very much. On the shelf where the bulletins are kept and the

announcements are made, there's a lineup for the Berean Bible Fellowship.

And it will start again on Father's Day, June 20. And here is a complete lineup of the time and the dates and the speakers for each of those sessions.

[15:26] And it's going to be in Tip City once again. And it's right on Route 571, just across the interstate, and it's just on the right. It's about, from Grace Bible Church, it's about maybe 20 minutes max from here.

So that will give you an idea of the location. If you have any other questions about it, let me know, and we'll be glad to address them. Have you announcements or something you'd like to noise abroad that isn't in the bulletin?

Anybody? Anybody? Okay. Yes. Didn't I just do that?

I will, I'll go ahead and say something about, so we still have two weeks, two weekends, the men and boys retreat.

It's about an hour away, and we've got one in the bunkhouse. And if you're a student coming, there's a sign-up sheet, or just talk to me if you have any questions. Two nights, but even if you just want to come for the day or something like that, that'd be great to talk.

[16:46] Thank you. And, you know, I was a little questioning why more guys hadn't signed up for that, and it occurred to me why. Everybody's still a little, are we able to do that?

Is this kind of a borderline thing, you know, with the COVID stuff easing out and everything. We want to be cautious, and yet we want so bad to be normal again.

And there's probably some mixed feelings about that. Is this thing really over? Should we? And I think we can safely involve ourselves in that without any repercussions.

And so give it some thought, and the sign-up sheet is there, and you're welcome to be a part of it. It will be a great time together. Anything else?

Anybody? We had a good session this morning at 9 o'clock, and we are continuing to work our way through this little pamphlet that has been provided through the written legacy of C.R. Stam, and we were dealing with item number 11.

[17:52] In prophecy, salvation by grace through faith alone is not contemplated. And we noted that there were several Old Testament characters who functioned and believed God on the basis of faith, and examples were given.

The first one was Abraham, and then Moses, and Joshua, and different ones. Because they believed God, they did what they did. So believing God has always been something that is closer to the heart of God than anything else.

How many times have you heard me say over the last 50 years? More than anything else, God wants to be believed. He wants to be trusted. He wants us to have confidence in Him.

And He rewards that. And to reject the information that He has provided, or to deny it, makes God out to be untruthful.

If you really believe the Word of God, and really believe what God says, then you go with that. And if you don't, in effect, you are saying, I don't believe that.

[19:06] Which is tantamount to calling God untruthful. God isn't worthy of being believed. He doesn't deserve to be trusted. And I'm not going to trust Him.

And I'm not going to believe that stuff. Well, The Almighty does not appreciate that. Especially in light of the fact that He's given more than enough evidence to demonstrate that He is there, and He is what the Scriptures claim Him to be.

The counterpart of that, which we plan to undertake now, which is, by far and away, the most...

You know, it just occurred to me, in connection with preparing this message. I said to myself, Marv, do you realize that you, of all people, you, Marv Wiseman, you are privileged and in a position to be able to communicate and explain to a group of people the most incredible truth that has ever been known to mankind.

I never thought of it that way before. That's true. Now, fortunately, I'm not alone in this.

[20:47] There are thousands like me, tens of thousands, and may their tribe increase, all over the world, that have that same privilege.

And I want to assure you, it is not one that I take lightly. And I do not retract one iota of anything from that. What I and many others like me are going to be communicating to you this morning is the single most important thing you will ever hear in your life.

No equivocation. No equivocation. No fear of contradiction. And it also involves this.

Either it is what I just said it is, or it is the greatest scam and hoax that has ever been perpetrated upon the human race.

You've got to choose one of the two. To not choose is to choose.

[22 : 00] You get that? To not choose. Say, well, I'm just going to be neutral. No, you're not. There is no neutrality. You're in or out.

You're with it or you're not. And these things that we are privileged to communicate are so vital, your eternal destiny is hanging in the balance.

And that is either true or it isn't. That's pretty sobering. Well, I just want you to understand the importance of it.

Under prophecy, which we considered at the 9 o'clock hour, in item 11, salvation by grace through faith alone is not contemplated.

It's not preached. It's not provided. And we looked at Hebrews 11 just a little bit. And we saw that there were men and women of God in the Old Testament who did do things based on their belief of what God told them.

[23 : 15] Abraham believed God. And he left Ur of the Chaldees and traveled to where he didn't know where he was going. But he just believed God. So he headed out.

Noah, because Noah believed by faith, because Noah believed God, he built an ark. And other examples are given as well.

But no one in the Old Testament had a message to preach, a concrete, straightforward, understandable message that could be delivered, accepted, processed, believed, and acted on. There was no such message. And I have searched the Old Testament through, and I've never been able to find it. And the contrast is quite different with what we call the New Testament, or this dispensation, or the administration of the grace of God.

So let me just couch it like this, with a little bit of repetition from the 9 o'clock hour. Suppose you were someone who lived back in the Old Testament day. Suppose you lived a couple of thousand years before Christ was even born.

[24 : 32] And someone came to you and asked you, please tell me what must I do, or what must I believe, in order to become acceptable to God?

What would you tell them? Just sum it up in a simple sentence. What would you tell them? Yeah, it works.

I have no idea what you'd tell them. They just said, be good. Do good things. Be nice. And the few examples that are given are all based on human merit.

Merit. It was the humans that did something. And there was a performance-based kind of thing. And even then, even then it cannot be said to have brought them into what we think of as a relationship with God, whereby sin is an issue that is passé, and everything that goes with it, that's just not in the Old Testament.

And it isn't in the Old Testament because it isn't supposed to be. So don't fault the Old Testament for what it doesn't include, because it includes everything that it's supposed to. It is the Word of God.

[25 : 42] But it anticipates something that was the very heartbeat of the Jewish people for thousands of years.

And that was the time is coming when God is going to provide a miracle man, a fix-it man, a man who is going to be able to right all of the wrongs in this miserable world.

And people lived in misery and in conflict, in disease, in war, and in death. And that went on for thousands of years.

And all the while, they were longing for God's remedy. Each time a baby boy was born in Israel, they had no idea of knowing whether it would be the Messiah or not.

It was the dream, the fondest dream of every Jewish mother, that she might be the one that would give birth to Mashiach.

[26 : 55] Mashiach, the Messiah, the anointed one. The word Messiah means the anointed one. And to anoint one means to designate, to specify, to make special a certain individual.

And the Jews had a way of anointing people. They would anoint people with oil, and it assigned them to a particular office or whatever. And it was a way of bestowing an honor and responsibility upon a certain individual.

And the thinking was that one of these days, someday, God is going to anoint one, and make that one special, and that one will be the Redeemer.

He will fix everything that's wrong with this broken, miserable world. You can understand, can you not, how every generation would just long for and look forward for someone like that to come. And the centuries rolled by, and they rolled by, and they rolled by. The promise was given way, way back in general. The promise was given when there was still just two people, Adam and Eve. [28 : 07] And they really messed things up. And they did something by way of obedience that forever impacted and affected their very being.

Because it somehow, in a way I don't understand, and in a way that is not actually explained in Scripture, but Adam and Eve both became somehow, someone different than they were before they partook of that forbidden fruit.

It somehow changed them. It made them in some way different from the way God made them originally, in a state of innocence.

And now their innocence is gone. And guilt sets in, and guilt produces fear. And the God that they had always had fellowship with before, and enjoyed talking and communing with, now they're hiding from him.

And they're covering their nakedness with this makeshift apron of fig leaves sewn together. Ladies, Eve was obviously the first seamstress.

[29 : 22] And what she put together and sewed was some fig leaves. And sewed them together and made some kind of an apron to cover their nakedness. And that's a study in itself.

I don't want to particularly go there, but I think that it is a great argument for creation as opposed to evolution, because the evolutionist has no justifiable reason for us wearing clothes.

You understand that? The creationist does. And it started with our first parents. And they communicated something to their children that was the same as themselves.

And it had to do with a changed nature. A changed psyche.

And it involved things that God never put there and never created. And he even warned them against him. He said, You've not eaten this tree. Any other tree, any other tree you want, you can eat of, eat your fill.

[30 : 29] But this one tree, you are not to eat of it. Because in the day you do, you will surely die. And doggone, if that one tree didn't turn out to be the best looking, most desirable tree of the whole bunch.

You just tell people that there's something they can't do. And all of a sudden, that's the one thing they want to do. That's just part of our makeup. We're all like that, you know. Oh yeah? Oh don't tell me what they can't do.

That's just the way we are. We're self-centered. And Adam and Eve turned from being focused entirely on God, their creator.

And they had a relationship with him that was remarkable. And when they rebelled, that changed. The focus changed. And God was no longer their focus. Now their focus is inward. Same as yours. Same as yours.

[31 : 40] Same as mine. We are all self-centered. And I told you before, the person who says, not me, I'm not self-centered. I don't have a, I don't have a selfish bone in my body.

I'm the most generous person. Blah, blah, blah. That person is also self-deceived. Because we're all self-centered. And the first human being born murdered his own brother.

How's that for being self-centered? There was a conflict between these two boys. Argument arose over the offering, etc. Jealousy set in. This too was an emotional dynamic that apparently didn't even exist in Adam and Eve before that time, before that fall.

And I don't profess to understand what all happened. And because I just don't know. But all I know is they were different after they ate it. And what God told them would happen, happened.

In the day that you eat, you will surely die. And death comes in two packages. One is emotional. And one is physical.

[32 : 50] And the emotional death they died was in their connection with God. No longer were they in fellowship with him. Now they are afraid of him and they hide. And the other is physical death.

And Adam eventually died that. But when they partook of that tree, they died right then. In their separation from God. Because death, please understand this now.

Death is not a cessation of existence. That is not what death is. Death is a separation.

That is what death is. Physical death separates the human spirit from the human body. So that you are no longer intact.

Spiritual death separates the human spirit from God. That is spiritual death. Adam and Eve died spiritually right away.

[34 : 03] Adam lived to be 930 years old. And yes, those are real years. Those are real years. Things were a lot different back then. So, we've got a situation that has been created because when Adam and Eve, and they had other sons and daughters, and we don't know how many, and we don't know how long they lived, but some of them are named.

And the population continued to grow and grow. And the seeds of rebellion and rejection of authority became so great that the whole earth just became impacted by this evil that had taken over.

And it all began with the tempter, Satan, and the goods that he sold and they bought.

And may I just say this, and this is, I'm saying this because of where we are right now. In our present world, Satan is alive and well. And he is engaged as we speak.

He is engaged in a massive international plan of deception. The thing that interests him most is corruption and death because God is the pure one and God is life and God is the creator and Satan is the destroyer.

[35 : 36] That's why one of his names is Apollyon, which means the destroyer. And he is set about, that chart, you see that chart back there on the wall? That long chart? That's the history of humanity and it's pretty accurate.

And as you look over that chart and go through it, century by century by century, what you see is death and destruction and ruination and wars and conflict.

That's the history of humanity. You don't have to be a super student in history to understand that. It's pretty general knowledge. The world's in a mess and Satan is the prince of this world.

He is the god of this age and he sows deception. Now let me ask you, do you think that there is any deception going on today?

Do you realize that Washington, D.C. is a hotbed of deception? Of corruption? Hey, this is the place where decisions are made for, what, 300 million people?

[36 : 48] And what's coming out of there? Some truth, some lies. You try to figure out which is which.

Satan is the master deceiver and we are told by Paul in writing to the Corinthians and here was a man who was soundly deceived by Satan himself so much so that he had set about to persecute those fellow Jews of his who had believed in Jesus as their savior and he saw those people as being the enemy and Jesus was the enemy and Jesus never came back from the dead and Jesus is a hoax and Jesus is just a false story and his people who are buying into that are hoodwinking all of my other Jewish countrymen and these people need to be shut up and put out of business and I'm going to take it upon myself to do it and he did and it took something as stunning and as bold as that Damascus Road experience to turn that man around and even then and even then I don't think he was convinced until after three days when he hadn't eaten anything or drank anything and he's sitting there in the house of this man called Judas not to be confused with the other Judas and the street called straight and he's trying to process what he had seen and heard from this person who claimed to be

Jesus of Nazareth and he was stunned he was just the man was in shock and he was wrestling and he was asking himself was this true was I dreaming was it a vision and it was a real and the men who were with him confirmed that they saw they saw the blinding light they weren't blinded by but they saw the light and they heard the voice from heaven they didn't hear what the voice said but they know it said something and Saul got the message Saul Saul why persecutest thou me he got the message and he relived that and relived that and relived it and finally at the end of three days and three nights Saul said okay I'm your guy I'm your man you talk about changing sides oh good grief oh that is as radical as it gets Saul Tarsus is still held out worldwide to be the poster boy of spiritual conversion and he was and he was so convinced of what he had seen and heard that he devoted his life to spend and be spent for the proclamation of this information that this risen Christ had imparted to him and what was the information that's what

I am privileged to tell you that information is that in long prayers consideration anticipation and dreaming of the Messiah coming for four thousand years four thousand years from the time he was promised to the time he showed up four thousand years one day out there in the wilderness this

funny looking man wearing funny clothes and had a funny dye is shouting a message repent repent the kingdom of heaven is at hand and people heard what he was saying and they said can this be right is this guy does he know what he's talking is this and he said the spirit of the Lord is upon me he has anointed me to introduce that long awaited Messiah here he is Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world you talk about electricity it was a bolt that shot through that crowd like you cannot imagine these people are euphoric they are jumping up and down they are questioning they are congratulating each other they are shaking hands and Jesus

Nazareth is on the scene and baptism who knows how many thousands of people are told the whole region people came out to be baptized eyes of John because what John was saying you know what that means do you understand what John is saying he is saying that God's fix it man God's savior God's redeemer the Messiah is on the scene and he is on the job and here he is behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world well how is Jesus going to how is he going to validate that how is he going to verify that the miracles the miracles the miracles the miracles the miracles and no one is going to deny them no one is going to say these aren't real miracles these people weren't really healed blind didn't really see the deaf didn't really hear the Lamb didn't really walk it's all a hoax no it was real it was real nobody denied it even those who opposed Jesus didn't deny it what does this mean anyway it means that God is getting about his business and this Messiah is the one who is going to fix the world and then he ends up on a cross are you kidding me why the cross those who were in positions of leadership and influence that had all the clout that was the religious establishment of Israel hey listen

[42 : 57] Rome didn't have anything to do with this Rome looked upon these Jews and their anticipation of a Messiah and all the rest is just so much nonsense they didn't care they weren't interested Rome was only interested in one thing just one thing politics politics and militarism that's all Rome cared about conquering and keeping the peace and ruling and reigning and these Jews they get all crazy about their religion and about the Messiah and all of this nonsense and we don't pay any attention to that we don't have any interest in that you Jews see to it yourself you scabble about that about yourselves you argue about your own religion leave us out of it we Romans we've got plenty of gods as it is and they worship multiple gods and deities and all the rest so the Jewish establishment had already put out the word they'd already put out a contract Jesus has got to go this guy is threatening us you know what he's doing look he is influencing more and more people and you know what's going to happen when more and more people get on board with Jesus do you know how these people are going to start thinking he's the Messiah he's coming to establish the kingdom what are we going to do about these Romans do you think they're going to go quietly into the night and say oh well you Jews have your Messiah now excuse us we'll just exit ourselves and leave your country and leave you all alone no they knew full well what was going to happen as more and more Jews start embracing Jesus they're going to start talking nationalism and that's why that's why right before Jesus ascended in Acts 1 the disciples ask him

Lord are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now they thought he was going to do that when he rode into town on Palm Sunday before he was crucified but he didn't he went to the cross and three days later he was raised from the dead and then he spends the next six weeks with his disciples and right before he leaves and ascends to heaven right before their very eyes as they stand there and watch him go they ask him this question is it now that you're going we thought you were going to do that before but you didn't think is it now that you're going to set up the kingdom and Jesus said it is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has put in his power but you shall receive power after that the Spirit of God has come upon you and you will be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth and as he was speaking he bodily physically started levitating right before their very and they stood there gawking and he's looking up up up and he's just a speck and he's gone they stand there looking at each other what what what what what do we do now what do we make of this and they were dumbfounded an angel appeared you men of Galilee why stand you here gazing up into heaven this same Jesus that is taken from you into heaven shall so come again in like manner just as you've seen him go into heaven and they went out and they got about the business of proclaiming the kingdom to a nation that had already had one shot at it and rejected it and Peter is going to tell them in Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost guess what the door is still open what you mean after

Jesus died on the cross was resurrected and taken from our midst the kingdom is still a possibility well the king is gone Peter says yeah I know he's gone but in chapter 3 if Israel will repent and change their mind God will send him back and he will finish what he began but Israel it all depends on you the ball is in your court what are you going to do and you read the next chapter and here comes the shakers and movers of Israel and they arrest them take them out of commission threaten them got to stop preaching this these lies that you are telling the people they are they are so naive they believe this stuff and they're going to get very frisky and the Romans are going to get very nervous and the Romans will only know one way to clamp down and that is with force and a lot of people are going to get hurt and a lot of people are going to die that's one reason they didn't want and the Romans will come and take away our place you see the ruling establishment of Israel was in cahoots with the Romans the Jews who were in the leadership position of Israel were allowed to maintain that position and the Romans gave them that position and that authority with the idea and listen you'd better keep your people in mind keep them in line because if you don't we will and it won't be pleasant and Rome had a reputation for doing that brutal they knew their position was at risk and that's why

Jesus had to go and now these disciples of his they're preaching this ridiculous stuff about him coming back from the dead and people are going to get all excited and they're going to get nationalistic again and Rome is going to be threatened and they will clamp down and they will fire us and relieve us of all of our perks and privileges and position and everything else so what are we going to do chapter 3 of Acts contains one of the most one of the most gut rending statements in all of the Bible when Peter and John were used of God to heal that lame man who laid at the gate beautiful who was over 40 years of age and he was born crippled and had never walked a day in his life and Peter says silver and gold have I none such as I have in the name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up

Peter reached down and grabbed that guy's hand and yanked on him and he came up and stood on two feet and he's looking at himself wobbling and he can't believe it his legs he's never stood on in his life and he's jumping around and he goes over and he hugs Peter and he goes over and he hugs John and he looks at his legs again and he's going like this and the crowd is gathering because the crowd knew this guy he was there every day that was his occupation he was in the begging business and that was his spot they all knew this guy what's going on and Peter delivers that message in Acts chapter 3 and it is stunning and he says you know what you crucified the Lord of glory God raised him from the dead he's gone back to heaven but let me tell you something now if you as a nation will do what you refused to do before Jesus was crucified and accepting him as the Messiah if you will embrace him as the Messiah

[51 : 13] God will send him right back and he will pick up where he left off and this kingdom business will get underway and you read the next chapter and they were arrested confronted by the religious crowd shakers and movers threatened them and Peter and the apostle says you want us to be silent you need to know we don't have the ability to do that we cannot help but speak what we know what we have seen and what we have heard with our own eyes there's no way we can be quiet we've got to speak and they said what are we going to do you guys come over come over here let's have a look so they so they get the crowd

I don't know how many there were maybe 12 or 15 all shakers and movers in Israel long robes long beards all their regality and everything and they come over together and and one of them says this is this is so depressing one of them says that a notable miracle has been done we cannot deny it for all the people know it do you understand what's taking place there do you see what they're saying they admitted the reality of the miracle and they said we would love to deny it and say that it's all a fake but we can't because all the people know better do you realize what kind of a light that puts them in as the leadership of Israel wanting to deny something but unable to simply because it is undeniable but we would deny it if we could but we can't so let us straightway threaten them that they speak no more and then the persecution was on and who's persecuting who it is Jews persecuting Jews and the Romans they don't have anything to do with this they're only interested in the government and the politics they don't have nothing to do with this but they'd have plenty to do with it if the Jews believed embraced this got to the place of where they are feeling nationalistic and frisky and Rome knows that's going to present a problem and that's all of the dynamics that are taking place here and this message that Peter is preaching that the apostles are preaching is that this Jesus whom you crucified God raised from the dead and he is who he claimed

to be and the opportunity for Israel as a nation is still open if the leadership will come along the people will come along and the leadership again refused and that's the way that scene ended and that's the way it remains to this day so what are you going to do about the resurrection everything hinges on the resurrection you know so what are they going to do about that well they're going to maintain the same story that they had in the beginning when these guards who were supposed to be guarding the tomb that had been sealed with the authority of Rome Pilate says you have a watch he gave them a seal they put the seal of Rome on that tomb stamped on that rock which as much as said this tomb is sealed by the authority of the Roman government and woe be unto anybody that should violate it so the stone was rolled away Jesus of Nazareth was resurrected it becomes an integral part of the message the death burial and resurrection of Christ and Rome is just kind of on the outside looking in they don't know what's going on with these Jewish people but the Jews knew they understood what was going on and the question is what happened what really took place the guards come the guards come to the religious authorities and say they tell them what happened solve this thing this being this angel and these guides who were guarding the tomb these were Romans Pilate had given them the watch these were Romans and they tell they tell the Jewish authorities what happened and they talked about this angel I can just see these hoi polloi priests looking at each other and these Pharisees and scribes and these soldiers are saying tell me this angel and frankly we never seen anything like it in our lives and it was probably four of them because that was the usual Roman watch they'd do four soldiers and they'd be replaced by four new and then they'd be replaced by four new and they would pull six hour shifts around the clock and 24 hours four guys each time and and and and we we couldn't we couldn't do anything and this angel this this being rolled away this stone so these these Jews are looking at each other and saying what what what are we going to what are we going to do with this and all of these soldiers were there and it came up with this and it's recorded in the gospels last verse and Matthew's gospel I think it is that the saying is reported to this day and the soldiers who were guarding the tomb said that Jesus disciples came and stole away his body while we slept do you realize what a sorry offense it is for a Roman soldier to go to sleep on guard duty it's punishable by death it'd be executed by his own people and the question has also been asked well if all of that happened while you were asleep how did you know that it happened because you were asleep you see the story the lie never holds up it always gets found out and they told these soldiers they said look we know this is not going to sit well with your authorities with your commanding officer and the text says they gave the soldiers large money we don't know how large it was but it was significant it wasn't an extra week's pay

[58 : 49] I can promise you that to testify to this thing and the text says and that is the explanation that is noised abroad among the Jews to this day that's the official line and if you ask any Jew today what is the official position what is the official explanation for the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead if they are Jews who are in the know they will tell you well the answer is quite obvious his disciples came at night and stole away the body and that's still the preferred explanation to this day and all of that points to the resurrection what accomplished was accomplished on that cross was so significant and so stunning and so earth shaking that it's really for a lot of people pretty hard to believe that on that cross when Jesus as the son of

God expired he had succeeded in taking upon himself the suffering and the punishment and the payment for the entire human race one man no no one God man theanthropic person God in the flesh Emmanuel God with us he had succeeded in paying the penalty for every sin every offense to God committed by every human being of all times how could he do that because of who he was because of who only because of who he was because had he not been who he was he could not have done what is claimed that he did one man one

God man taking upon himself the sins of the whole human race and in doing so he threw the gates of salvation wide open for anyone who will may come and the only condition is you have to acknowledge your sin admit it which is tantamount to admitting you're a member of the human race and look to Jesus as your sin bearer the one who died in your place and paid the penalty that you owed and he took all of that upon himself and he offers it forgiveness salvation full and free to you on a platter and all you have to do is take it that's called the gospel or the good news of the grace of God and we are justified we are declared to be righteous before

God solely on the basis of exercising our will in believing on Jesus Christ to be your savior that is the best good news the world has ever heard that I told you I am privileged to proclaim 2,000 years ago it was made available and for 2,000 years it has been embraced and rejected both by millions down through the years and Satan has been in the mix because he is the deceiver and I don't understand exactly how he operates but I know that he is afoot and his minions and his demons and they are active and they promote violence and destruction and confusion and death and chaos and they are working overtime as we speak because our world right now is inundated in a new kind of confusion that we've never had to deal with before and it is very very powerful very blinding chaos and confusion created and people don't know what or who to believe that makes a wonderful climate for the adversary to work in it makes deceiving people so much easier when they don't know what is true anyway they're a sucker for a good line and we've got a lot of people today in fact most of the people have been taken and they don't even know it think of that what's going on we've got this one thing this one panacea that God has provided and it is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and why should you believe because you have a need that you cannot meet and when you believe on Jesus Christ it is a gift of God's grace it has no works and no human merit connected with it at all you simply exercise your will and you acknowledge your sin you can't come to Christ because your sin is the reason you're coming you understand that if there is no sin there's no reason to come and people who think they have no sin they don't have any interest in a Savior what do they need a Savior for but the Bible makes it so clear all have sinned all have sinned and come short of God's standard so we all need a Savior and when we come to grips with that and we acknowledge that it was our sin that put Christ on that cross we are one person out of the corporate humanity that contributed to the death of Christ you put him there I put him there Pilate put him there Judas put him there the world put him there everyone put him there he put himself there he put himself there the father gave the son he was delivered up for our offenses who delivered him his father delivered him are you kidding me what kind of a father would do something like that his father delivered him yes his father delivered him there was in this corporate group we call the trinity father son and holy spirit there was an incredible kind of relationship and connection and and cooperation whereby whereby an incomparable love was realized for this lost fallen humanity and [66 : 04] God in the person of the father communicated to the son what could be done and what needed to be done and the father sent the son and the son was willing to be sent and when Jesus realized in his humanity what was taking place he cried out oh my father if it be possible let this cup pass from me what was he talking about he was talking about the separation that's what death is he was talking about the separation he knew he was going to experience from his father when he was made sin for humanity there would be a cleavage that was the cup if it be possible let this cup pass from me and then you can be so grateful that Jesus uttered the next words that he did nevertheless not my will but yours be done and

Jesus went to the cross and he paid the full price and he offers redemption and forgiveness and salvation to everyone who will acknowledge that and have you would you pray with me please father we recognize that this gospel of the grace of God is mentioned so frequently by Paul is really contrary to the way we think because you are contrary to the way we think we recognize that you so love you love the world in such a way that you gave your only begotten son so that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life and there's so much about this story that we don't understand but we do understand enough to be able to act on it and our prayer right now is that anyone who has not really come to grips with that reality but perhaps now see it with more understanding our prayer for them should there be one here in our midst is that they may say dear God there's a lot that there's a lot that pastor marv's talking about that I still don't understand but I do understand my own failings and my own sin and I do understand that like everybody else I've done a lot of things I shouldn't have I've said a lot of things I shouldn't have I've sinned a lot of ways that I shouldn't have I'm a member of the human race and I want to come to you for the only forgiveness that really matters I want to trust Jesus as my sin bearer that he who knew no sin was made sin on my behalf I want to acknowledge that and I want to thank you for sending him and I want to thank him for being willing to do what he did don't understand that love but I want to benefit of it if that's your prayer this morning dear friend God will hear you you don't have to give anything you don't have to promise anything you don't have to join anything you don't have to pay anything it is a free gift waits only for you to receive it father would you be pleased to speak to the heart and mind of anyone in a way that we can and cause them to see the seriousness of our situation and

the grace and the love and the mercy that provided a way out and may they have the courage and the will to say yes to your gracious offer we pray in Christ's name amen if you've made that decision this morning or if you've made it sometime in the past but haven't informed anybody about it it's time that you do so we're going to dismiss now but before we do we're going to ask these two ladies if they will come forward and we want to welcome them the hand of fellowship and forget about the social distancing give them a hearty handshake beats and continue to take h 2 and anytime