

Prophecy and Mystery Contrasted - Mystery 23 - The Mystery of Christ's Absence

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Date: 25 April 2021

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] Uh, there are, the CDs of this morning message are, as usual, available immediately in the back, as are the CDs for Christianity Clarified.

And in speaking of that, on the off side of your, uh, you have an insert on one side is, is a, uh, is the passage from Two Minutes with the Bible.

On the off side of that, you will find instructions that Nathan has given us. If you wish to access Christianity Clarified by podcast or access the podcast, Nathan has identified the way to do so. And so don't lose that if, if that is your interest. Um, Tuesday, this coming Tuesday, is a men's Bible study.

It would, they will, uh, meet at Studebaker's Restaurant, 7 o'clock. And, uh, the, uh, the study from James is continuing there.

[1 : 16] Uh, this lasts approximately an hour and a half total. Wednesday, April 28th. Then, this Wednesday, is the, uh, prayer meeting here at the church house at 7 o'clock in the evening.

If you can, gather for prayer with our brothers and sisters. Thursday, then. There is, uh, Thursday morning.

The once a month Bible study for everyone is, is meeting here this morning. There will be a breakfast at 9 and Bible study to follow.

And then, uh, the ladies' fellowship resumes at 11 o'clock Monday, the, May the 3rd. So remember that one.

And, uh, that, they will meet, pardon me, at 11 here. And there'll be food, games, fellowship.

[2 : 19] We know of two, we know of two birthdays in April. But, uh, if your birthday falls in this month, please avail yourself of the book table back there.

And take your choice as your birthday present for, for the, this month from the church. Uh, anyone else, by the way, as far as the books and the book table is concerned, it's a free donation.

So if you go back there and you find something of interest and you are disinclined or unable to, uh, donate toward that book, please feel free to take it.

The, the church provides those. If you are able to, there should be envelopes back there and you just simply put whatever you wish in there and, uh, drop that in the offering box that's on the wall outside here.

Um, beginning next Sunday, there is a, uh, there is a membership class conducted by the pastor.

[3 : 34] Now, your bulletin says that it's going to be in, meeting in the office. But that has been changed and it's going to be a general, it's going to be a general class that meets here on the, uh, for all of us, whether we're members or not.

Uh, and, uh, we will meet here at nine o'clock Sunday morning and, uh, that will be conducted by Pastor Marv.

We're very thankful for Josh and Mary being here this morning. Uh, this is a pleasant surprise to me, but this is great and look forward to your sharing with us what's happening in your ministry.

Um, on the back of your bulletin, you will note that the, there are the original 24 tickets to the La Comedia Dinner Theater have been taken up.

Uh, but if you still wish to go, you can see Chris and see if there's a possibility that we might be able to secure a few more.

[4 : 51] Is that still a possibility? All right. So, if you still wish to go to that, to the Sound of Music, please do so. Uh, the Men and Boys Retreat, there is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

That is forthcoming here in June and, uh, early June. So, if, if possible and if you are inclined so, please sign up for that.

Now, if you will, look at your, uh, insert on the face page. This is taken from two minutes with the Bible. We read it, we read it from the pulpit because of those who cannot be with us.

They can't see it, perhaps. So, uh, we read it from the pulpit, although you have it in hand from your, uh, from your bulletin insert.

This is entitled, Are You Listening? The Apostle Paul had much that he yearned to teach the Hebrew believers. Wonderful truths that would have thrilled their hearts.

[6 : 03] But these truths were hard to be uttered or difficult to explain to them since they were dull of hearing. The word dull in Hebrews 5.11 really means slothful or indifferent, as it does in Hebrews 6.12.

They were not merely hard of hearing, as we say, but were too lazy or indifferent spiritually to pay attention. They were not sufficiently interested.

This is always serious condition in the light of the fact that God hath said or God hath spoken. And in that disobedience to his word, that will be judged.

Hebrews 1.1 and 2. Hebrews 2.1 through 3. The great majority of religious people are not sufficiently interested in what God has said to engage in a diligent, prayerful study.

And, like those of Paul's day, still have to be taught the first principles of the Bible. They have remained babes spiritually, unable to digest anything but milk, and so remain unskillful in the word of righteousness.

[7 : 32] See Hebrews 5.12-14. What has brought this condition about? Is it because our Bibles are being burned and the church persecuted for reading it?

Is it because God is unwilling to lead us further into his truth? Most assuredly not. It is because so many men of God in high places no longer have the single passion to know God's word and to make it known.

They could be as greatly used of God in the teaching of the scriptures as their predecessors were. But they are slothful of hearing. And hence, can present their hearers with little that is of true value. This, in turn, is reflected in the religious masses. They love their Bibles, but not enough to study them diligently and become workmen whom God can approve.

Let us not be numbered among these. Rather, let it be our one great desire to gain a clear understanding of God's word, rightly divided, for his sake, for our own sake, and for the sake of the needy souls about us.

[8 : 51] Now, this ends where Dr. Stamm closed it. I might, my attention was grabbed in that next to the last paragraph.

Not just my attention, but my heart. Because we face a time close by.

I hope I'm wrong. But I think we face a time fairly close by when we may see some of those things happening to the church.

We already see a time when you are being marginalized and pushed aside. And we even see a time when, in the halls of Congress, people actually will say, this person is not fit to sit as a judge because they're a Christian.

Did we ever think, when we were children, that we would see it? But we do. And it isn't stopping very quickly.

[10 : 06] So, what grabbed my heart is, not only must I prepare myself by the diligent study of the word, but I need, if I'm not prepared, it's going to be pretty hard to stand when the times get tough.

So, let us avail ourselves of God's word while we have it easy. Oh, I'm sorry.

If you would, let's ask God's blessing on his teaching this morning.

Father, we thank you for this privilege that we still have, that we can easily gather. We thank you for this reason that we gather, that the church of God gathers together as believers, as brothers and sisters in Christ, to enjoy you, enjoy fellowship around the word and prayer, and to edify one another.

So that we come, not only to enjoy the service, but to actively be a part, whether we really know it or consider it or not, each one has a ministry, one to another.

[11 : 38] And I thank you for that. And I thank you for using cracked clay vessels for your glory. And so we ask, Lord, that this morning, both for those of us who are gathered and for those of us who cannot gather, that your blessing be upon us and your power be upon us.

Empower your word. You send it forth always to accomplish exactly what you have it to do, and it will not fail. Help me to trust you in that.

Strengthen those who are physically unable to be with us and those in our families who are suffering. I pray, Lord, that you encourage them and strengthen them.

And then, Lord, as we gather around your word today, help us to practically apply it throughout the week.

In Jesus' name I ask. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

[12:57] Thank you, Roger. Appreciate that very much. Birthday, Isabella. I am mystified at how girls can become so pretty in just six years.

Her dad would probably say, it's genetic. And even though Roger has more than capably cared for the announcements, there's something that I want to mention that needs some explanation, and it has to do with the handouts for today because there's a little bit of confusion in that there seems to be some duplication, and I want to explain the basis for that.

In the last week's handouts, I gave you a copy of Dr. Albert Moeller's article on pivoting to surrender, a warning for all Christians.

But you only got a portion of that message, and I don't know what happened, but my guess is, and this is just a guess, that when Franklin Graham and the other editors of Decision Magazine got a hold of that, they were not content with what they had published and an expanded article.

In fact, the entirety of the article is included, and it is an open out, and the content of it is really critical. So if you think you got it last week, and you probably did, but you only got a portion of it, I would encourage you to stop by the literature rack and pick up the full thing, and you will appreciate the article.

[14:47] And I just want to say this, and I don't want to, I'm not trying to be overly dramatic, but I guess I am trying to be emphatic. There are some things stirring right now that are extremely ominous, things that as a nation and as a people we have never, ever had to face before and probably never thought we would, but they are upon us and they are increasing and you are going to see a dramatic upsurge in a very short period of time of more and more what cannot be called anything other than societal and spiritual abnormalities.

They are coming and they're going to be a lot thicker and a lot faster, so you need not be surprised. And these articles are talking about the very thing that I'm talking about and if you're wondering, if you're sitting here saying, what's he saying?

What's he talking? Be sure you get the articles and it'll be self-explanatory. I cannot go into it in further detail, but it also ties in with one that you received a few weeks ago called Who's in Control? The Need to Reign in Big Tech. What I know about technology, you could put into a teacup and have a lot of space left over, but I know that there are some things brewing that are really, really significant and what is happening in big tech that the tendency is to just ignore is such that our freedoms and our privacies are right on the edge of just going over and you need to understand why and what big tech is all about is information and it is not only who is on the receiving end of the information, but they have the power and the ability to determine just what information it is that you will be given.

And that means you cannot process information that you don't have. You can't make decisions about information that you've never heard.

[17:20] And the information is going to be very selective and very pointed and it's going to be very much leaning in one particular direction and that is in the direction of progressive liberalism that is coming and it is fast and furious.

So please avail yourself of these. Make sure you get this last issue of Im Primus. This is a publication that is distributed to 5,600,000 readers monthly.

So your copy is back there in the literature rack awaiting you and please make sure that you get it and the other items that we have mentioned as well. You will appreciate them and I can promise you they will be very, very enlightening.

Well, we have with us today a young couple, Josh and Mary Story, who've been ministering in university campuses for a number of years now and when we heard the word that they were going to be in the area for a wedding, a family wedding and yesterday it was with great delight, I'm sure, that Rebecca was married and many of you know her from just a wee little thing and here she is all grown up now and she and her sister are both married.

Her mother has gone on to glory but these girls are exceptional young women and you can be sure that both Rachel and Rebecca are contributing mighty ways to the men that they've been attached to.

[19:00] So we pray God's blessing upon them. And Richard has made himself available to us this morning to update us with a few minutes of what's happening in their ministry there and I want him to speak very pointedly to what their particular needs might be.

What did I say? Okay. I knew that. I just wanted to see if you were really paying attention and you were. So anyway, Richard's son, Joshua, is going, you got to love old people.

As the years advance, it only gets worse. So anyhow, Josh, Mary, come up here and have your peace. Thank you for being here. You sure got my dad's attention saying Richard.

Now he's listening. We are Josh and Mary's story. You're next. We're Josh and Mary's story with crew, formerly Campus Crusade for Christ and we are ministering at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

So in case you're wondering why am I wearing an orange shirt? I fit in down there in Knoxville but it looks like I'm ready for Easter Sunday here. So this is my wife, Mary.

[20:15] She's from Finley, Ohio and went to Wittenberg here in Springfield. So we have some connections in this area. Rebecca, my cousin, got married. She's my first cousin so I got married in this church yesterday afternoon.

So we're glad to be here and we just, we haven't been here in probably a year and a half now to update you all and I know we weren't here in 2020 at all. What a weird year and I think we're slowly getting out of it depending on where you live but just wanted to update you guys about what ministry has looked like on the university campus where we're at and just some things we've seen the Lord do even in the last year during a pandemic and so you mentioned Pastor Wiseman this progressive liberalism.

This is, we're right on the college campus, the university where this is prime and so one of the neat things this past year is that we only had to have two Zoom meetings since August.

So meaning we met in person every time except two times and even friends on staff with crew in other parts of Tennessee, Kentucky, all over the place, they've only been on Zoom.

So by the grace of God, the university gave us a room to meet in each week for our kind of our large group Bible study meetings and the university said no student organizations can meet unless worship is involved and we said, well, we're doing that.

[21:52] So that was really neat just to see how the Lord used that but Campus Crusade for Christ, crew, just real short version founded by Bill Bright in the early 1950s, UCLA.

He and his wife said if you can reach the college student today you can reach the world tomorrow for Christ and so God called us both at different times. Mary has worked on campuses in Ohio and Tennessee and we both served in East Asia for different years learning language and working with Asian students and so we're at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and primarily we're on campus each day in small group discipleship and coffee shops and the student union with students, small group Bible studies at night, sometimes in our homes, sometimes in students' apartments and then we have a big weekly meeting that I was referring to where the university gave us this large room where students can come and hear the word.

I'll just share real quick a student named Travis and Mary will share about a girl that came to know the Lord but there's a guy named Travis who, he was a junior this past year so when I say this past year, the university schedule, we just finished the last week so pray for students because they're taking finals right now and they're super anxious and nervous to keep up their GPAs and scholarships and so Travis came in as a junior and was introduced to our ministry through some sidewalk chalk so we buy children's sidewalk chalk, the big fat chalk that you draw on cement, concrete and we wrote crew, Bible study, Thursday night, 8 p.m., free Apple watch.

So, what do you think he saw? None of the other things. He saw free Apple watch. We try to do a giveaway each semester but we don't want to deceive them and we don't want to trick them. We say, yeah, there's going to be a Bible study, there's going to be all this, worship, you know, but hey, we are giving away an Apple watch.

College students love free food and they love free prizes and the only reason he came to this meeting is he wanted to win the Apple watch. Well, Travis's little, this is a university of 30,000 students, Travis's little sister, Hayden, is a freshman.

[24 : 12] She came to the meeting too. Her name was called to win the Apple watch. She came up and received the prize from me and Mary. We were up front that meeting and her brother, Travis, said, you better give that to me.

You've already got an Apple watch and she ended up giving it to him but that's just a small part of how Travis came to crew. He began to be discipled by one of our staff members, really just rededicated his life.

He's on fire for the Lord and he said, he got up in front of our meeting just this past Thursday night and was crying and in tears. He's a filler. He blushes and he said, had I known about this ministry, I would have come my freshman year.

Now I'm going to be a senior. I'm soaking up every second of it. I love this and love what the Lord's doing in my life and he shared with everyone and so it's really cool that if you see a kid go to college and there's hope even if they're freshman and sophomore year they walk away from the Lord.

The Lord used this in Travis' life. Maybe it was an Apple watch. Maybe it was a trivia night, something we had but Travis, he is strong in the Lord right now and even being sent out this summer, he has given up this summer and he's going on an eight-week mission trip and you would have asked him six months ago, he would have said, no, I need an internship.

[25 : 36] I need to make money, you know, do something else. So that's just a brief story with Travis. Yeah. Thanks, Josh. I think Travis' life, it's just been incredible and such a gift to really watch the Travis we met and the trajectory of his life.

He was living with his girlfriend and I think he knew in his heart it wasn't right but he just was lost and hadn't been in Christian fellowship for two years and so just to be able to, I obviously wasn't there, but to have him sit down with someone and just say, what are you doing?

Like, what are these choices you're making? Sorry, I have a cold. It's just been incredible to see he was really kind of running from the Lord and it's just switched like a 180 and he is giving everything he has to walk with Jesus and he's sharing his faith with skaters at one in the morning, like, just really unexpected things that only God could do.

And then another student that has had a totally, like, changed trajectory of her life is a girl named Katerina. Katerina is a sophomore and she is originally from the Czech Republic.

Her mom is Czech and her dad is American from East Tennessee and she kind of decided when she was in middle school she just wanted to be an atheist. It's what she saw her parents model and she had had a really hard childhood and she just thought, God must not be real because if he was, he wouldn't have let me walk through all these hard things.

[27 : 04] and then fast forward to about a year ago, you know, the world shut down and Katerina is all by herself kind of with her elderly father who's 70 and she just is, she has this abundant time to think.

That's one thing we've really seen is students have had so much time to really think about life and ponder deep things that they may not normally because of just the slowed down nature of life with the last year.

And so, ironically, through Christian rap music, Katerina heard the gospel and became a believer. She realized, God is real and he must have a plan.

Like if, just through the theology of those lyrics, Jesus is King, that was the name of the song specifically that led her to Christ. And I can tell you with absolute certainty, she is 100% a believer. She, when I ask her questions like, I mean, just something simple like, where is Christ in relation to you right now? And she's like, oh, he's in my heart. He's right there. And so, she just knows and she wants to make a difference and again, like the trajectory of her life has completely shifted.

[28 : 17] She was baptized at Christmas and I just can't wait to see what God does with her life because she's sold out. So, it's just a gift to see these students really, in some ways, wandering on their own, wandering aimlessly, I guess eternally speaking, but to kind of have these moments where we intersect life with them and to kind of point them to something eternally significant and true and real and to see it change their lives as it should.

It's eternal news. It's good news. So, we just, we love our job. Thank you for allowing us to do it. Forgive my runny nose, please. Thanks. We stayed in an Airbnb with cats last night.

So, yeah, we went into this school year, this last school year, just not knowing what it was going to look like.

Would this be a year where we just had a lot of prayer meetings? Could we even meet with students? And I feel like we had a few fishes, a few loaves, and God just multiplied that abundantly. And we, you know, when we share in front of you guys, I think sometimes we think, well, what are the best stories we can tell? But really, we had a really good year.

[29 : 32] We're being completely honest. And it was, we saw more freshmen get involved in our ministry than we have any other year just because we were the only group meeting in person. Other guys were, other people were on Zoom.

And so, students need face-to-face contact. They need community. These guys realize they can't be the lone ranger in their dorm alone. They need other men in their life.

You can't walk this Christian life alone. You have to have a community of believers. And so, through that, we saw one-day retreats that we were able to do since we can't do overnight yet.

And just a lot of different things. We had a winter conference and just, it's been a really fruitful year. And we started our Bible studies that we were both leading probably with three people and they just exploded with like 10 each at the end of the year.

And just, God's just shown us a lot of favor, a lot of kindness, just even through the pandemic. So, we just, I know it's been a year and a half. There's so much we could say, but that's just a glimpse of what God's doing on the college campus at the University of Tennessee.

[30 : 37] So, if you come down to the beach or you come to the Smokies, look us up. All of our Ohio friends go right through Knoxville because 75 and I-40 go through. If you need a place to stay, reach out to us.

We really would love that. And thank you, church, for supporting us. Thank you so much. Thank you. Well, thank you, Joshua and Mary.

We appreciate your being here. And we even forgive you for coming in here with colors of University of Tennessee in your shirt. We ought to be able to scrounge up something as scarlet and gray before he leaves.

Okay. White and orange, huh? I have absolutely no doubt that the college campuses today have to be one of the most challenging venues for believers in a ministry because there is so much thinking out there that is contrary to positions that have been embraced for centuries by believers and you're just kind of deposited there in the thick of things that's sometimes very hostile.

But you know, as you were speaking and talking about the pandemic and how it has given you in another sense a great year reminded of what Paul wrote to the Philippians in chapter 1 when he said, I want you to understand something, brethren, and that is that the things that have happened to me and I'm sure what he was talking about was difficult things, hard things, depressing things.

[32 : 31] The things that have happened to me have fallen out, rather, for the furtherance of the gospel. and God is able to work and minister in all kinds of venues and sometimes he accomplishes things where there is great difficulty in areas that you wouldn't expect and they seem to just kind of open up other doors and avenues that you wouldn't have even imagined and that's part of his job description.

He does that and he does it so well and it's obvious that he's alive and well in your ministry there in University of Tennessee and we appreciate your efforts and what you're doing there.

The impact that you can have upon these young lives will only be told in eternity and we would just encourage you to keep on keeping on and keep trusting the Lord and keep giving out the word and leave the results with him.

Thank you again for your presence. We have engaged in a kind of ministry that is kind of issues that are antithetical one to another and by that I'm talking about the distinctions between prophecy and mystery how critical they are and how seldom they are understood by people who are even avid readers of the Bible and I include myself in that because for about the first six or eight years of my life as a believer I was completely foreign or these issues were completely foreign to me and I loved the Bible and as a new Christian was reading it trying to make sense of it understand it and I must admit that there were a lot of things that were confusing to me that I couldn't figure out but the Lord sustained me because even though the things that didn't make sense and I couldn't figure out were offset by the things that didn't make sense that I fully understood and appreciated so much I guess what I'm saying is even the things that I couldn't and didn't understand in the Bible didn't disturb me because of the things I did understand and whereas I didn't realize it but I'd already picked up some of the keys and just didn't know how to put them in that lock and unlock things like this study that we are currently now bringing to you and it has to do with the distinctions between

prophecy and mystery when we talk about prophecy we are not limiting ourselves but we are focusing primarily upon the nation of Israel and the Jewish people and the covenant that God entered into with them and the fact that he made them a very special peculiar people out of all the nations of the earth had a special relationship to them that he didn't have with anybody else I'm reminded that Amos put this this way in his little prophecy he said quoting the Lord he said you only Israel you only have I known of all the nations in the earth well God knew all the nations in the earth there were none of them that were hidden from him but he said regarding Israel you are the only one that I have known in the way that I know you it's a peculiar thing it's a special thing matter of fact for lack of a better term and use of a better illustration in fact one that scripture gives itself [36 : 05] God likens his relationship and his connection to the state of Israel as a marriage and in numerous places he points out that I took the role of a husband to you and I espoused you to be as a bride and a wife and your role was to be the same as my role in that we were both to be faithful to each other but you have played the harlot I haven't gone after any other nations I haven't courted any other nations I haven't entered into a contract or a covenant with any other nations but I have with you and the deal was when this whole thing started back in Exodus chapter 13 when this whole thing started was I was to be your God exclusively you were to be my people exclusively

I was to look out for you you were to obey my laws and you agreed to that but you've played the harlot you've gone after other gods foreign entities foreign idols that the pagans around you were worshipping and serving and God said if you don't come back to me repent of your sin and come back to me I'm going to punish you I'm going to discipline you and they did for a while and then when new generations arrive on the scene guess what same old problem and if you don't come back to me and God would raise up prophets and send the prophets to them and deliver the message that judgment is coming if you do not return to me and they did and the cycle went on and it went on and it went on and finally finally in what appeared to be 70 A.D not even 2,000 years ago 70 A.D

God said alright no more I've disciplined you I've taken you to the woodshed you've returned you fall back into idolatry and sin you come back and the cycle is repeated this time it's going to be a lot more severe and if you want to get an expression an explanation of that severity you need to read at your leisure Romans chapter 9 10 and 11 and it explains the connection that God has with Israel and what is happening in this present day and what is happening is God has taken this disobedient nation brought them under severe discipline by allowing pagans worse than them to come in and completely destroy Jerusalem burn the city enslave many of the Jews murder many of the Jews carry them off to captivity many of them they took all the way back to Rome paraded them in chains through the streets of Rome along with the items of furniture that they took from the Jewish temple and had a big celebration in Rome because Rome was the power on earth to contend with at the time and Israel as a nation has been decimated the temple destroyed burned

Roman soldiers came in with big pry bars and put the pry bars to those stones and pried the stones one on top off of another so that they could get the gold that had melted as a result of the fire and the gold had melted and settled down in the cracks of the stones and they pried open those stones and this is in fulfillment to what Jesus said 40 years earlier he said the time is coming this is in Matthew chapter 24 when the Jews were there and Jesus was talking about going to Jerusalem and what was going to happen and they called him over and they said they said master look at these stones and these stones were huge weighed several tons each some of these stones were larger than the outline of that window and two and three feet thick each stone weighed several tons and they were admiring the stone work and the fact that they were laid out as they were and they were just so taken with him they called Jesus over and they said look at these stones isn't this magnificent and our Lord said the time is coming when not one of these stones will be left upon another but all will be thrown down

I can imagine those apostles looked at each other and said what is he talking about because then the temple hadn't even been finished they were still working on it and he says it's all going to come crashing down well that's what happened in 70 AD and when the Jews were taken out of Jerusalem the Romans even changed the name of the city and they called it Capalatina Latin for capital and no Jew was allowed to enter Jerusalem under penalty of death the Jewish nation as such became defunct and remain defunct out of business as a nation no longer existing as a country until 1948 almost 2000 years had passed and all the while what was the Jew doing there were millions of them worldwide what was the Jew doing they were moving from here to there they were moving

from

[42 : 48] Russia do you know in about the last 30 years there have been millions millions of Jews given permission that they were never granted before to exit Russia to leave Russia and come to the land of Israel this is the only nation on the face of the earth to have been out of existence and ever to be reborn as a nation only one on record after 2000 years and all that says to me is God is planning to stir up things again with the covenant people that he set aside 2000 years ago and it will not be long perhaps in our lifetime when Israel as a nation is going to be brought back on board front and center in a much greater way even than they are now but in the meanwhile during those 2000 years where Israel has been defunct and the Jew the Jew has been classified throughout the world do you know what the nickname is that's been given to the Jew it's called the wandering

Jew wandering Jew why are they wandering force of habit because they made themselves persona non grata here for whatever reason and the authorities would begin persecuting them and they would uproot them and move them out and they would go wherever they could find refuge they would go settle down start their life all over again and in another 20 30 40 years the pressure would be on there and they would be submitted to pogroms and I'm sure many of you have seen Fiddler on the Roof that's a perfect illustration of what happened when they had to uproot and get out of the town move someplace else where are we going we don't know we've just got to leave here and they were called the wandering Jew they've been submitted to all kinds of persecution many times by those who profess to be

Christians Roman Catholicism was at the forefront of Jewish persecution during the Spanish Inquisition when as a Jew you had to agree to convert from Judaism to Roman Catholicism and be baptized into the Catholic Church and if you will not do that said King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella if you will not do that you must leave the country and you will leave your wealth behind that was 1492 a familiar date isn't it in Spain and the Jew has been on the lamb ever since they've been persecuted here and there and yon and there's even pockets of persecution here in the United States sometimes against the Jewish people and they are often charged with deicide you know homicide is when you kill a human but deicide is when you kill

God and that's what many of the Jews were charged with I'm not going to go into the litany now but I have listed at least 10 different entities all of whom were responsible for the death of Jesus Christ and you were one of them you may be thinking now well what do you what's he talking about I didn't have anything to do with that yes you did yes you did we all did because Jesus Christ was delivered for our offenses yours and mine many people don't know that don't understand that probably don't believe that but it's true because we all had a part in the crucifixion and the death of

Jesus Christ along with numerous others so what has happened in the meanwhile during this 2000 year period when Israel has been set aside as God's favorite people something absolutely unthinkable has happened to fill to fill that void if you will of a relationship with God because here God had this special covenant relationship with the nation of Israel but now that's set aside it is set aside temporarily and I'm not going to belabor the point except to say that this is where we of our particular persuasion of biblical understanding this is where we depart with most of Christendom because most of Christendom thinks that the Jewish nation and people have been set aside permanently that there is thus no future for Israel at all we are of the opinion that Israel has been set aside but only temporarily and that he is going to once again fulfill his promise and his obligation to Israel he will call them back to himself and this time it will be with a lasting permanent kind of repentance it will be glorious and Israel will be reestablished as a nation in the meanwhile something completely unthinkable unheard of unimagined unplanned and unprophesied is taking place and it includes

[49 : 03] Israel only in so far as individuals are concerned but it doesn't include Israel as a nation because whereas God was dealing with Israel as a nation he is now dealing not with a nation but with individuals one at a time individual single people and it is a whole new program that God has brought on force in force and has provided it through a completely different message a message that just a message that sounds too good to be true but it is true and this message is look Israel was just one of many contributors to the death of Jesus Christ and there were all of these others who were co-conspirators if you will knowingly or unknowingly who also must accept some of the responsibility for the death of

Christ so what God has done is something that is utterly utterly remarkable like we were saying earlier in connection with what Josh was bringing about times of difficulty can also bring about new

kinds of opportunity and as Paul wrote to the Philippians the things that have happened to me have rather fallen out into the furtherance of the gospel well something happened something happened that was unspeakably horrible unjust uncalled for inexcusable and as wretched and as terrible as it was it provided a vehicle for something incredibly wonderful that will stick to your spiritual ribs throughout all eternity how in the world could anything good come out of the unjust unmerciful brutal death of Jesus

Christ on the cross you mean to tell me something good came out of that sure did what came out of that was an opportunity for you as an individual to enjoy the forgiveness of God and the placing of yourself in a position with God that makes you totally acceptable to him solely on the basis of something you believe are you serious you mean to tell me that the wretched unspeakably horrible crucifixion of Christ the death that he died it's just we can't we can't put our brains to that we can't understand the pain and the suffering and all we can think about is tragedy tragedy unjust wrong cruel wicked evil and it was all of those things and for something good to come out of that because something not only good but inexpressibly wonderful came out of that because it was in that death that

Jesus died on the cross that God accepted as a payment and balancing the account for every human being that ever lived Jesus paid it all for every single person as in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself do you realize what this means this means that a member of the triune Godhead was actually willing to be incarnated in flesh as a human being and come down to this earth and go to the cross and die and here is the key not simply as a man but as a God man you get that it would not have sufficed just as a man but in his humanity in his being

Emmanuel God with us in his humanity he represented the whole human race and this is why Paul in his Corinthian epistle refers to Jesus in chapter 15 as the last Adam the last Adam what did the first Adam do the first Adam brought everything into wreck and ruination and it's because of what the first Adam did that you're going to die and so am I and so are all the rest of us because it was Adam's disobedience that resulted in his death and the Lord told him in the day that you partake of you will surely die well they didn't even know what death was but they found out and that's passed on to their progeny and the greatest evidence that all of us are under that curse yes even the nice people we're all under that curse is the fact that we're all going to die physically but provision has been made for us because of that payment that Jesus made whereby he squared the books he balanced the books of heaven so that

[56 : 05] God could look at humanity and say the price the penalty that my son paid as the son of God and the son of man is sufficient I accept it it is sufficient to pay for to buy the redemption of the entire human race and the only thing that is necessary for that to be activated is for the volition of those humans for whom he died what does that mean it means you have a volition the word volition is related to the word volunteer and it has to do with your freedom it has to do with your ability to make decisions and choices you have the power of choice in a lot of areas a lot of ways just as you have the power of choice as to whom you will marry you have the power of choice as to whether or not you will become a recipient of the penalty that Christ paid on your behalf whether you are willing to recognize and be grateful for someone else paying a penalty that you deserve to pay so that you could go free to you can see this is why it's called good news there's never been good news like this good news with the

Jew and Judaism there was the animal sacrifices that had to be repeated over and over and over again and really God didn't get any kicks from those animals being sacrificed God didn't get any benefit from that it was all done as an act of obedience to equip and to teach and to train the nation of Israel about the principle of sacrifice this is where it all started and the sacrifice has to do with the innocent paying the price of the guilty when they don't owe it but they pay it for those who do owe it that is marvelous it's wonderful it's called grace grace means God does something for you that you do not deserve but he does it for you anyway because he loves you that's

Calvary love that's God so loved the world that he gave and this great transaction this event this seminal event that happened nearly 2000 years ago that took place in the span of three hours from 12 noon to 3 o'clock in the afternoon during which time the son of God was in some way horrible to try to explain and put into words some way disrupted dismantled in the trinity I have no idea how that came about so that it was as if it was as if Jesus as the eternal son of God was no longer in the company of the trinity he was on the outside and he cried out my God by God why have you

forsaken me some think that

Jesus was just delirious he wasn't delirious he had his full capacities about him he knew full well what he was saying and in his humanity he was acknowledging and recognizing that his father had abandoned him we look at that and we say well what's such a big deal about that he only abandoned him for three hours and in three days later he's going to get him back anyway what's the big deal about that and the big deal about that is we bring our puny humanity to an issue like this and we try to reduce it to terms and areas that we can understand and we don't even come close for the father and the son to have been separated by way seconds would be immeasurable if you were deity will we let

God be God this incredible act this this was the most significant three hours in the history of the universe from 12 noon to 3 o'clock in the afternoon and what happened there was he who knew no sin was being made sin taking the place of a sinner for us so that so that this is the stunner so that 2nd Corinthians 5 so that we can be made the righteousness of God in him think of that do you understand what that's saying it's saying that when you are in Christ God views you as possessing the very righteousness of

[62:17] Jesus Christ that makes you totally acceptable to God just because you are in him of course you still have your flaws and foibles of course you're far from perfect of course you still have the ability to sin and do ugly stupid things because becoming a Christian doesn't mean that you never sin anymore it just means that you don't have to but you can still choose to you can still use your volition and when you come to faith in Jesus Christ God stamps you as his and it is an inviolate stamp you belong to him because Jesus paid for you with his own life and you have before God a position an official position of absolute righteousness righteousness even though practically all of us are far from that far from that some of us are farther from it than others but none of us is completely righteous yet it is the standing that counts not the state your state is one thing your standing is another your state has to do with your behavior your standing has to do with what

Jesus did on your behalf and it is the most remarkable incredible amazing thing that ever happened and it's called the gospel of the grace of God have you partaken of that have you used your will and your volition to do business with God based on what Jesus Christ did for you and let me tell you dear friend there is nothing else that matters nothing what your station in life is how much money you have what your IQ is what your future is what your potential is none of those things matter compared to this and I would just say that this is the counterpart of prophecy this is mystery that we're talking about and by mystery it means something that was never revealed before and by never being revealed before you can read through the

Old Testament and you will not find this thing prophesied at all because as Paul said when he wrote to the Ephesians in chapter 3 this thing this thing called the grace of God was never before this mystery was never before explained predicted prophesied promised it just it was as if it didn't even exist and the only place it did God and he kept it secret to himself for thousands of years and then one day in conjunction with Israel as a nation being set aside in their contractual involvement God is doing a whole new thing utterly unexpected and it is called the church which is the body of Christ we have in a sense taken the place of Israel but only temporarily and the time is coming when this church this body of

Christ made up of well I can't even name all the denomination it's made up of Presbyterians it's made up of Methodists it's made up of brethren it's made up of church of God it's made up of Roman Catholics it's made up it's made up anybody and everybody who has put their personal faith and trust in Jesus Christ regardless of their denomination or religious handle because this is a personal thing and those who are in that are members of the spiritual body of Christ and Christ is the head and all that matters and I mean all that matters is that you be a part of that because that's where your destiny is that's where your salvation is that's where your eternal life is that's where your forgiveness is that's where everything is that matters and all I want to do is make sure you have the opportunity and the understanding to make that decision would you bow your head right now our father this subject the grace of

God is just so utterly overwhelming we don't have any way to put it into words and once again we know we have not begun to do justice to this incredible theme if it were not set forth in scripture we would not believe it we would be we would be like the Greek who regards it as foolishness or we would be like the Jew who sees it as a stumbling block but we trust that you would be pleased to even now open eyes and allow those who are here now in this moment to really do business with

you and dear friend if we are talking about something that perhaps you've never understood before but maybe now maybe now you understand something about it do you understand enough about it to know that apart from you are lost you are undone you are without hope and without God in this world but

[68 : 10] Jesus died to change all that and if you will right now in the quietness of your own heart and mind say Lord Jesus I understand some things now that I didn't understand before I want to understand more but now I know I need to make a decision and all I know is I want Jesus to be my savior I want to put my trust and my confidence in him I want to thank him for dying on that cross I can't begin to understand that but I'm so glad and grateful that he did and with all my questions and doubts and fears I know that I have needs I can't meet and I know that Jesus is the answer because you said he is and I want to put my trust in him I want Christ to come into my life and take over this life and make me what he wants me to be and

I want to be willing every step of the way thank you for making that incredible sacrifice for me father we trust that anyone who may have made that decision whether here in our auditorium or listening by way of electronics that you will seal their decision to their heart and give them the evidence that you have entered their lives and you have made them a new creature in Christ for which they have great cause for rejoicing thank you for those that we will see one day in heaven because of a decision made here on earth in Christ's wonderful name amen thank you for being with us this morning you are dismissed have a blessed day yeah so have thought happened it said he they did not um but it and