

Connecting Some Dots

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[0 : 00] Well, in an ongoing response to the questions that you submitted about things that you would like to have considered, we're going to take a couple of different things this morning. I think they're connected.

And the first one is a very familiar passage to all of us. It's found in John's Gospel, Chapter 3, having to do with Nicodemus. So if you would open your Bibles to that portion, we will see our Lord's treatment of the situation regarding this Pharisee, who was not just a Pharisee, but he obviously was well positioned as a teacher among the Pharisees, probably enjoyed some kind of an elevated status in that group.

And we do not know why it was that he came to Jesus by night. All kinds of speculation has been offered regarding that.

Some are of the opinion that because of his reputation and status as a Pharisee, who, by the way, for the most part were anti-Jesus at this time, he didn't want to be seen coming to Jesus during the daytime, so he came at night.

And that's just, again, speculation. We don't know that. Maybe the man had a busy day and that was the only time he could get free. We don't know. But at any rate, it is an evening situation that our Lord is confronted with, and he handles it, of course, in the brilliant fashion that he is accustomed to.

[1 : 33] First thing I want you to note, however, is the unfortunate chapter division that exists between chapters 2 and 3. Bear in mind, if you will, that when the Bible was originally given to us, the original autographs inspired by the Spirit of God, there were no chapters and there were no divisions.

It was just one continuous document, and it was difficult to find certain passages because none of them had an address.

But when you divide it up into chapters and verses, you give the passage an address, so you know exactly where to go. So if you're talking about John 3.16, if all you've got is the whole Gospel of John and all 21 chapters in front of you, and you don't have chapters and divisions, then you have to say, open your Bible to John's Gospel about three or four pages in, and start looking, you know. It would be mighty inconvenient. So there's nothing inspired about chapters and verses. Some of them are well-placed. Some of them are terrible because it breaks up the continuity.

And here is one of those examples. As you look at the conclusion of John's Gospel, chapter 2, we read beginning in verse 23, Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover during the feast, many believed in his name, beholding his signs or his miracles which he was doing.

[3 : 09] And by the way, just let me insert here once again that it was the miracles that Christ performed. That brought more people on board with his message than anything else.

It is true he delivered some wonderful discourses, some treatments that we'll be looking at later, passages that he explained and so on, but nothing grabbed the attention, the admiration, and the confidence of people more than the miracles he performed.

Because as the old adage goes, seeing is believing. And these people had right before their very eyes, clear-cut evidence of miraculous manifestations of the power of God with people who had been lame and crippled for decades, walking normally, blind, seeing, deaf, hearing, undeniable. And a number of people got on board because of that, as you can understand. So we are told that it was because of his signs which he was doing. But Jesus on his part was not entrusting himself to them, for he knew all men.

Quite an asset. He knew all men. He understood exactly how fickle and how changeable people can be. And because he did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man, for he himself knew

what was in man.

[4 : 48] And well, he should. After all, who created them? He did. He was operative in creation in the same way that his father was operative in creation.

He is before all things, and by him all things consist, etc. So he himself knew what was in man. Now, chapter 3 is actually going to begin with what I think is an illustration of the statement saying that Jesus knew what was in man.

And if I could just insert in the white spaces here between the chapters, I would insert the words, for instance. Jesus knew what was in man.

For instance, there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus. This man came to him by night and said to him, Rabbi, which is, of course, a Hebrew designation for teacher, we know that you have come from God as a teacher for or because.

No one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him. And Jesus' answer is completely, seemingly off the mark.

[6 : 08] Because Nicodemus really just gave Jesus a compliment. Told him, we know you must be from God because of the miracles you do.

Jesus didn't say, well, thank you very much. I appreciate your insight. He didn't say that. But in response to what Nicodemus said, Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Well, what does that have to do with what Nicodemus just said? Really nothing. Well, why did Jesus say that? I think if we read a little bit between the lines and understand that this is being given as an illustration, Jesus' mind and ability penetrated that of Nicodemus, and he knew exactly why Nicodemus came to him.

And it wasn't to compliment him for coming from God. It was because Nicodemus had in his heart and mind what is required to enter the kingdom of God.

That was what was on his mind. That's what Jesus addressed without Nicodemus even bringing it up. Quite remarkable. So it is an illustration of the omniscience of our Lord. And he said, truly, truly, I say unto you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

[7 : 41] Need to stop here for just a moment because this is really, really critical, and it has so much misunderstanding surrounding him. Jesus is operating, functioning under the Old Testament economy.

Fellas, I can't tell you how important it is to understand that. And so many times we are led astray because we say, what are you talking about, Old Testament? This is John's gospel.

This is the New Testament. It is, of course. And it's right where it belongs. It's not out of place. It's right where it belongs. But it is functioning, operating under the Old Testament economy, which has to do with the law, Moses.

The new dispensation that is going to arrive because of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has not begun. Fellas, this is pre-cross content.

Got that? The cross is going to change everything. But what we're talking about here in John 3 is on the other side of the cross.

[9 : 00] So you've got to keep this in an Old Testament context. Nicodemus is not asking, and Jesus is not telling him, this is what you must do to go to heaven.

This is kingdom stuff. Kingdom stuff. He's talking about the kingdom. Now I've got to stop here to explain a little bit what that is. The gospel of the kingdom. The kingdom, the good news of the kingdom, has to do with that which John the Baptist began preaching at the very outset of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

And what was John's message? It was exclusively to Israel, and the message was, repent, change your mind, because the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

What's that mean? Heaven on earth. Yeah. What is the kingdom of heaven? Heaven on earth. We just tend to think, because we want to apply our understanding to it, and we think that Jesus in John the Baptist is talking about going to heaven.

No, he's not talking about that at all. He's talking about bringing heaven to earth. It's a play on words, but it is so critical in what is commonly referred to as the Lord's Prayer.

[10 : 27] Part of it is the prayer for thy kingdom come. For the kingdom to come. Well, come, where is it?

Where is it coming from? It's coming from heaven. The prayer is for thy kingdom to come, thy will, God's will, to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

And I can't tell you what a breakthrough that was for me many, many years ago when that dawned on me. We just automatically think of heaven, the place where departed spirits go, believers go, when they die absent from the body, present with the Lord, and that's heaven.

That's true, but not in the Old Testament. And this is Old Testament stuff, even though it's in the New. That too is a little bit misleading.

But if you understand it, fellas, everything in the Bible connects beautifully with everything in the Bible when you keep it in the place where it is intended to be.

[11:41] That's called rightly dividing the word of truth. So when John the Baptist came on the scene and said, repent, he's talking to the nation of Israel, these are all Jews, and he's telling them the reason you should repent, literally meaning get your house in order, admit your sin, confess your sin, for or because the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

What's that mean? He's not saying this is the kingdom of heaven. He's not saying that. He's saying it is at hand. It is near. We would say it's right around the corner.

We're right on the edge of it. And that is, that kingdom of heaven is going to bring the rule and the reign of God in heaven to earth so that thy will will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The kingdom of heaven, guys, and I understand this is misleading, but the kingdom of heaven is all about earth. What about earth?

The earth is and has been from Genesis 3 in a state of disarray, corruption, confusion, sin, death, disease, all of these things are the result of our first parents who were given dominion.

[13:12] That means the ability to dominate all that God had created. He put everything under their authority. All of the animal kingdom, everything under their authority.

And when they rebelled and believed Satan rather than God, they lost their position, got kicked out of the garden.

And the authority that they had exercised was transferred to whom? To Satan.

Satan. He is referred to by Jesus in Matthew, I'm sorry, in John 12, John 14, and John 16, Jesus called Satan the prince of this world.

And in 2 Corinthians, this is a really important passage, guys, I would recommend you even memorize this. In 2 Corinthians chapter 4, and beginning with verse 4, I think, Paul said, well, if our gospel be hid, if our gospel be veiled, it is veiled to those whose minds have been blinded by Satan so that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God does not shine unto them.

[14:47] Satan is the god of this age. Fellas, you don't think now, let me insert something here. He is the god of this age, but he is not ultimately the authority.

We know who the authority really is. The best description I can give of Satan is that he has pretty much a free reign on earth, and Satan is just like a mad dog on the end of a chain.

And guess who's holding the other end of the chain? So Satan has free course in a lot of ways, just like he had with Job. But he cannot go any further or do any more than what God is willing to let him do.

And the time is going to come when God will simply yank on Satan's chain, and that's going to be the end of him. We'll see that later on. So what we've got now is a fallen, fallen world.

And how is it characterized? with weakness, sin, and the big one, which is death. That was never an original part.

[16:00] The original part was life. And when God told them that in the day that you eat thereof, you will surely die.

And they died in two ways. when they disobeyed God, they immediately died spiritually. That means their connection with God was severed.

And then the seeds of physical death, in a way that we don't understand, began working in the body of Adam and Eve.

And although God created them to live, now they have a capacity and an ability to die. And die they will.

And that they passed on to the next generation and the next generation and the next generation until it got down to you and me. And we're going to die too. It's the same result. But, when the kingdom of heaven comes to earth, Jesus Christ will be ruling and reigning and he, by virtue of his payment for the sin of humanity, is going to reclaim that which was forfeited to Satan by Adam.

[17 : 21] This is why Jesus is referred to in 1 Corinthians 15 as the last Adam. He is going to succeed where the first Adam failed.

And Christ is going to establish himself as the king of all the earth, earth, exercising dominion that our first parents lost, taking it back from Satan, and the heavens and authority of heaven is going to come to earth, and Christ will establish it.

So, the planet earth is going to be restored, refreshed, fixed, and it's going to survive in that state for 1,000 years.

That's referred to as the millennial reign of Christ. So, when John the Baptist began preaching the kingdom of heaven was at hand, that's what everybody was thinking.

And, fellas, it is, in my estimation, really remarkable that as you read through the gospels in particular, and it's also in the rest of the New Testament also, you find the phrase, kingdom of heaven, kingdom of heaven, kingdom of heaven, so many times.

[18 : 35] Not one time, not once, is it ever defined. Not once does any of the writers ever say, now, what is meant by the kingdom of heaven is thus and so and thus and so.

Never once. Why? Why do you suppose it was never meant something that important is never really defined and spelled out? Why? The answer is, well, let me ask you a question.

if in looking out the window, I tell you, it is pouring down rain. What are you going to take from that? What do you think that means? Is anybody going to question that? Is anybody going to say, well, he says it's pouring down rain, but I suspect rather the sun is really shining bright, but no, no.

I'm not going to say it's pouring down rain. Now, fellas, what I mean by that is there are clouds overhead that have released their content, and it is now coming down on the ground, and we are getting rain from above.

[19 : 52] There's no need to explain it, because everybody knows what that means when I say it's raining outside. You know exactly what that means. I don't think there was a Jew in all the land of Israel when the kingdom of heaven was mentioned that they didn't know what that meant.

This was the thing that Israel longed for, looked for, prayed for, waited for, and do you know how long they waited for?

4,000 years. Rated 4,000 years. If you go back, to Genesis 3, there we find the record of the fall, and as a result of the fall, God is addressing Satan, Adam, and Eve.

And to Satan, he says, who in the form of that serpent in Genesis 3, he says, the seed of the woman. What's that mean?

the seed. It means the offspring. It means the baby. The baby of the woman.

[21 : 06] Who's the woman? Eve. Now, some are of the opinion, and I can't really dispute this, that many thought and believed, and who knows, maybe Eve, maybe Adam believed it also, that their firstborn son would be the seed of the woman, because he would be the seed of a woman, but God is not saying just any seed of the woman, but this will be a special seed of the woman, and we know the first seed of the woman was, who was it?

Yeah, first seed of the woman was Cain. They would call him Cain. He was the first. Well, he doesn't look like an antidote to the problem.

Actually, he's going to be a complicator of the problem, and you know what's going on with Cain and Abel, but nobody had any idea, and it isn't revealed, that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent.

Now, the serpent is going to have his way in that the serpent, we're told this in Genesis 3.15, that the serpent is going to strike the seed of the woman on the heel, and that describes the inflicting wound.

But it is a far cry from the crushing of the head, and that's what the seed of the woman is going to do, is going to crush the head of the serpent.

[22 : 57] And the serpent there is personified as none other than Satan, the evil one himself. So we have a lesser temporal blow being administered by the adversary to this seed of the woman, but he is going to respond with a mortal crushing blow to the head of the serpent.

And that will be the demise of Satan that we'll be seeing later on. What, Joe? And we have a foretelling of that too also in Judges, in the Count of Deborah when she was a judge, that a woman killed the military leader in the head, put a spike right through his head.

Drove a spike through his, drove a tent spike through his skull. That's foretelling what was to come. Yeah, her name was Jael. She was quite a lady. Yep, quite a lady. So, so what we've got guys is,

is the promise.

This is called, this is called the initial messianic promise. And it's given that name because it refers to the Messiah, Yeshua Hamashiach, the Messiah who is going to come.

And this idea, this concept, this promise, that's what it is. It's a prophetic promise that God gave to humanity that Satan is going to have his rule and his reign, but it will be temporal and he will be confronted with one who will take care of him.

[24 : 35] And nobody, but nobody, could ever have imagined that it would be 4,000 years before it was fulfilled.

Israel. So as you move through the Old Testament, you see everything, and I do mean everything, is about Israel. Everything is about the Jew.

And I mean everything. The only time Gentiles enter into the picture is involving their paganism and their being off the mark.

Israel, with the worship of the one true God, the only people really connected with God, and all the rest of them, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, all the rest of these guys, the Canaanites and everything, they're all into false worship.

And only Israel was plugged in to the one true God, and they suffered from repeated moral failures for which God disciplined them. them. And there are so many instances of that.

[25 : 42] So we've got a great conflict that is taking place. And fellas, you need to understand that from the time of Genesis 3 on, and the promise of the Messiah, what do you think every Jewish woman dreamed of being the mother of the Messiah?

That would be the absolute ultimate. And every time a Jewish woman married and was pregnant, the thought, the possibility was that she might be the bearer of the Messiah.

But of course, we know that that Messiah is going to come about through an entirely different way because it will not be by the impregnation of the male sperm donor into the womb of the woman that will produce the child.

This seed will have originated from God. The power of the highest shall overshadow you, Mary, and that holy thing that shall be born of thee will be the Son of God.

So this seed is going to have an entirely, this is not going to be Joseph's seed. Joseph will be the adopted father of Jesus, not the biological father.

[27 : 11] And Mary will be providing the humanity of Jesus, the seed from God, the power of the highest that will overshadow will cause that holy thing in her to begin growing, and what will be the result will be the individual who is so unique, there is nothing else like him in the world.

He is the God man, Emmanuel, God with us. He is the word that became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, John says.

this is the wedding in a way we do not understand, and I cannot explain. I would if I could, but I can't. This is the wedding of humanity and deity in one person called the theanthropic union.

The the is our word from which we get the word theology, and thropic is our word from anthropology, anthropos, it's God, man, blended together in one being.

And none of us here understand that, including yours truly. He is utterly, totally unique. Fellas, this is why Jesus was able to do what he did, because he wasn't one of us.

[28 : 49] who gave his life for us. In his deity, he represented the father. In his humanity, he represented man.

So we've got a blending of deity and humanity together. This is the most incredible person who ever lived or ever will live.

He is the God man. God was in Christ. reconciling the world unto himself.

And as committed unto us the message of reconciliation. Marvelous thing. So, when this Messiah comes, after having waited 4,000 years, when this Messiah comes, think of it as this.

He is God's fix-it man. that's what he is. He's going to come, he's going to fix a broken planet, and broken lives, and broken everything.

[29 : 57] This planet, we call earth, beautiful as it is in many respects, has an ugliness about it, a fallenness about it.

In it is sowed the seeds of death, and destruction, and ruination, and corruption, and everything that is wrong with this world. This is, this place, this world can be hazardous to your health, you know.

It is in a state of fallenness, but when the Messiah comes, when the Messiah comes, he's going to fix the planet.

He's going to restore it to what it ought to have been. I hadn't planned to go here, but we've got to look at just a moment. In Acts chapter 3, this is a real key passage.

This is after Pentecost, and this is remarkable. In Acts 3, this is in connection with Peter's second sermon after he healed the lame man from his mother's womb.

[31 : 02] And Peter's delivering his message, and everybody is stunned. They're trying to figure out what's happened. How is it this guy, and some of these people who witnessed this were men who carried this guy physically.

They carried him every day to his favorite begging spot in the temple, and deposited him there on the blanket, and he would sit there all day long with his hand out, and his cup would say, alms, alms for the poor, and people would drop money, and Peter and John came by as they're coming to the temple, and they walk up to this guy, and he looks up at him, and he expects to receive some, he expects Peter to drop a coin in the cup, and Peter says, silver, and gold have I none, but such as I have give I unto thee.

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk, and he reached down and grabbed that guy in the hand, and yanked on him, and the guy came up, and he stood on two legs, and he is stunned, he stands there with his eyes wide open, his mouth wide open, he looks at his legs, he has never stood on those legs in his life.

He was born lame from his mother's womb, and everybody is gathering around because they all know this guy, he was a daily fixture there, they all know him, and the crowd is beginning to build, and everybody is saying, whoa, what's going on here, what happened, isn't that old so-and-so that, well, how is he, he can't walk, what's he doing, no, that's not him, that's somebody, no, that's him, and they say, and he says, I'm the guy, I'm the guy, I'm the, and Peter, the crowd builds, and Peter's got an audience, and he walks over, and he starts to deliver a message that is a continuation of the message he delivered in chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost, and he says, verse 17, verse, well, let's look at 16, on the basis of faith in his name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know, and the faith which comes through him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all, and now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance just as your rulers did also, but the things which

God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets that his Christ, his Messiah, should suffer, he has thus fulfilled, suffered, suffered.

[33 : 30] Remember on the road to Emmaus after the resurrection? They didn't know it was Jesus, and he said, ought not to Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?

Jesus came to suffer, came to die. He came to die. That was his purpose for coming. You got that? If you don't get that, you don't get anything.

That's everything. When he knew that his time was drawing near, he said, what's my response? Knowing that the cross was right ahead, knowing that the cross was right ahead, he said, what shall I say?

Save me from this hour? But for this hour, came I into the world. So this is the first of two things that have to be accomplished before the kingdom of heaven will come to earth.

And he says, the first thing has been fulfilled, that his Christ should suffer, he has thus fulfilled. How so?

[34 : 39] The cross. What happened on the cross was that Jesus Christ, because, guys, only because of who he was, that he could do what he did.

And only he could do it because he was the only one. There was none other. Everyone else is tainted with sin. This one, born of the virgin, without sin, made him the only acceptable sacrifice for humanity on the face of the earth.

And that's why he came. So, of the two things that have to be accomplished before the kingdom of heaven will come to earth, the first has already been done.

Look at it. That his Christ should suffer, he has thus fulfilled. Now, it's another way of what Peter is saying is, okay, folks, I want you to know something.

God has done his part. Jesus has done his part. Now, Israel, you need to know the ball is in your court.

[35 : 45] What are you going to do? And he's going on with the message, repent, therefore. And the therefore, of course, is in conclusion with what has just gone before. It is a summation of it.

He has thus fulfilled. So then, where do we go from here? You are to repent. You are to change your mind. What are they to change their mind about? Who Jesus was. Who Jesus was. He was your Messiah. Change their mind. Change their mind about who Jesus of Nazareth really was. And the text goes on to say, repent, return, that your sins may be wiped away in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

What's that? That's the refreshing of the planet. He goes on to say, and that he may send Jesus the Christ appointed for you.

Now, wait a minute. When Peter says this in verse 20, where was Jesus? He's back in heaven. When did he go? Acts 1.

[36 : 51] He's already there. And what Peter is saying is, listen, God has done his part. Now, Israel, if you will do your part, God will send him back again.

But hey, he'd only been gone 10 days. Was it 10 days? Yeah. From Acts chapter 1. That's where he ascended. And it was just 10 more days to Pentecost. And this is right after Pentecost. He had just returned to heaven. And Peter is saying, God will send him back. And he will finish what he began. So, whom heaven must receive, verse 21, until the period of restoration of all things.

What's that? That's the healing of the planet. The fixing of everything. That's the reestablishing. That is returning the planet to its original state before the fall.

[37 : 50] That is the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from ancient time. That's the time of refreshing and the period of restoration.

So, let us go back, if we may, to chapter 3 of John's Gospel. And when Nicodemus comes to him and tells him that he recognizes that Jesus is from God so no one could do the miracles that he's doing, Jesus answered and said, Truly I truly say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

And, fellas, I want to really emphasize this because this is kind of like a punchline here. He is not saying to Nicodemus, if you want to go to heaven, this is what you have to do. But this is exactly the way that most interpret that.

And what is the truth that is being extracted from it is that bottom line is it will be necessary to have added to yourself something that you already have.

And what you already have is physical life. What you need in addition to that is spiritual life.

[39 : 13] You have physical life on the outside that simply allows you to walk and talk and live and function in this world. But you can be, and if you are not born again, you are spiritually dead on the inside while you are alive physically on the outside and most people don't even know it.

That's what the new birth is all about. It is the spiritual birth on the inside. When you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, God didn't do one thing to your physical body.

He didn't add any hair. He didn't fix any problems physically. I'm still five, six and a half shrinking. Nothing of that's changed. But when Jesus Christ regenerates you on the inside, He takes the immaterial, the non-physical part of your being, which is the human spirit, and He quickens it. He makes it alive so you are no longer dead on the inside. You are alive on the inside in a way that you have never been before.

[40 : 44] And when the time comes for your physical death, that immaterial spirit that is in you departs.

Nobody sees it leave because it's immaterial. This leads a lot of people to believe it doesn't exist. But fellas, the Bible assures us the interior, immaterial part of your being is just as real as the exterior.

But it is not physical. And the idea for a lot of people is if you can't see it, touch it, taste it, measure it, weigh it, it doesn't exist.

But it does exist. And when Jesus was on the cross, of the seven last sayings that He uttered, one of them was, Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.

And the text says, He bowed His head and gave up the spirit. And this is exactly what James is talking about in chapter 2 when he makes that classic statement that the body without the spirit is dead.

[42 : 09] And fellas, just a concept that occurred to me and I never much thought of it this way but it's absolutely true. Just think of this. There's no such thing as dead people.

Think of that. There are no dead people. There are a lot of dead bodies but not dead people because you are more than your body.

Your body is just the outward manifestation of who and what you are and allows us to identify each other based on our appearance and physical characteristics but nobody's ever seen your spirit.

And if you can't see it, measure it, touch it, taste it, whatever, it doesn't exist. That's the idea that many have. But I assure you it is just as real as the immaterial part.

When God created Adam in Genesis 2, we're told that He created him from the dust of the earth.

[43 : 14] And fellas, chemists, Christian chemists, pointed out that it is not a coincidence that all of the chemical properties that make up your body are in the earth, are in the dust of the earth.

We're talking about iron, copper, magnesium, all of these things. You are an absolutely amazing compilation of minerals that are put together with God's DNA organizing the whole thing into the structure we call the human body.

Every one of us is an absolute miracle on two legs walking around and we don't even know it. And all of the elements that are in your body are in the ground.

So we, well, why wouldn't they be? Adam was formed from the dust of the earth and the text says God breathed into his nostrils.

Sounds like, almost sounds like artificial resuscitation, doesn't it? He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

[44 : 33] And Adam became a living soul. And that leads us to believe, at least, leads me to believe that is, it is your material body plus your immaterial spirit combined make the soul.

which means you are, you do not have a soul, you are a soul. And you are a soul of two components, a material and an immaterial, a physical and a non-physical.

And both are real. Our problem is we are limited in our appreciation and expression of the immaterial because we are so locked in to the physical.

What we can see and touch and taste and feel, we say, boy, now this is real. This is real. But how can I call something real when I can't see it, can't feel it, can't weigh it?

it can't be real. Oh, but it is real. It is that very thing that God breathed into the nostrils of Adam and Adam became a living soul, complete.

[46 : 11] And when we die physically, that immaterial part of our body leaves and goes to be with the Lord, absent from the body, present with the Lord. But, and this is what I was getting at back when I started, that is something that did not exist in Old Testament times.

You will not find anywhere in Scripture in the Old Testament where anyone was anticipating dying physically and going to heaven.

You know where they're going? Going to Sheol. Sheol. S-H-E-O-L. Sheol. That is the Hebrew word for the grave.

Going to the grave. That is where everyone went prior to death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. And Jesus is going to be known as the first fruits of them that slept.

[47 : 20] What does that mean? When it talks about them that slept, it's not talking about eight hours a night. No, no, he's not talking about that. He's talking about those who died.

They are those who sleep. When Jesus said, Lazarus, our friend, sleepeth, he actually meant Lazarus is dead. And they thought, oh, well, if he's sleeping, that's it. No, no, you don't understand. Lazarus is dead.

Lazarus is dead. So, the sleep, Jesus is the first fruits of them to sleep. What's that mean? The first fruits is a biblical expression, and it always has to do with whatever it is that has been planted, whether it's a tree, or a shrub, or whatever it is, it's going to grow and mature, and there will be fruit. If you plant an apple tree, there's going to be fruit on that apple tree, and some of the buds, or if it's a grain or whatever it is, is going to be the first to ripen and ready to pick.

All of it won't be, but there will be a certain section, maybe it got more water, maybe it got more sunshine, maybe it got more whatever, but it grew ahead of the rest of it, and it is called the first fruits.

[48 : 49] It is an indication that there is going to be a full harvest that will follow. If you don't get any first fruits, you're not going to get anything to come after it.

The first fruits is a kind of indication that there's going to be a whole lot more following it, but this is the first fruits out. Jesus is referred to as the first fruits of those who slept.

That is, he was the first one out of all that had died to be resurrected. That in everything, he might have the preeminence.

He is first in that. Jesus is first in everything, really. That is, he is the first fruits. So, in the Old Testament, when they passed away, and I'm going to give you some speculation now, I'm not ready to take this to the bank, but I suspect that it's probably as good as anything else that's out there, and that has to do that in the Old Testament, when someone died, if they were a believer, and there weren't all that many, by the way, from my understanding, because there was so much paganism and everything in the Old Testament, all of the false religions, etc., but when someone died, he went to Sheol, and Sheol is the place of the departed, it's also referred to as the place of the dead, and it is in all likelihood what our Lord is referring to in Luke 16, with his teaching about the rich man and Lazarus, and he is talking there about

Hades, and sometimes some translations render it hell, and by the way, guys, just let me insert this as an aside, that hell, what we think of as hell, does not now exist, nor is there any need for it, nor is there anybody in hell, but there's going to be, and what does exist is Hades, and I don't want to get too ahead of myself because the food is here now, but anyway, let me just stick something in here, in Revelation 20, John the Revelator talks about and death and Hades will give up the dead, which are in them, Hades is right now filled with people who are unregenerate, who are there in Hades, a la Luke 16, and we'll look at this next week, we don't have time to go into it now, but it is a compartment where

[51 : 48] Jesus said there is a great gulf fixed between where Lazarus was and where paradise, yeah, and where the rich man who died was, and there are two compartments to that, and we'll look at what happens there in our next session, and I've got to terminate this now, not because I want to, but because our stomachs demand, our physical person, our physical person needs attention, and our spiritual person has gotten all it's going to get for the moment, so enjoy your breakfast in the day, head, and thank you guys for being here.