

# The Difficult Sayings of Jesus #3 - What Everything is all about.

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[ 0 : 00 ] If you are able and willing to pay particularly close attention this morning, I think I can safely promise you that you will be able to connect some dots that you might not have been able to connect before because we are dealing with such a critical issue and we will be seeing the key to it.

But recently we entitled a message, What Everything is All About, and we're really still in that vein because it is providing us with backdrop material as to an explanation for why Jesus Christ said some of the things that he said.

And that really is what this larger series is all about. It is taking the expressions of our Lord Jesus in the Gospels in regard to some very unusual things he said that just seem out of character for him.

When he told his own apostles, Go not in the way of the Gentiles and don't go to the Samaritans, but confine your ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Why in the world would he say something like that that was so obviously exclusive? It appeared that he was focusing on Jews only.

[ 1 : 30 ] And he was. Why? On another occasion, when a Canaanite woman came to him, desperate over the condition of her daughter, and besought him that he would heal his daughter because she was indwelt by a demonic spirit, Jesus answered and said to her, It is not fit for me to take food that has been prepared for the children and give it to dogs.

Jesus said that? Indeed he did. Why in the world would he say something that even sounded crassly rude?

Wasn't Jesus a kind individual? Indeed he was. Why would he say something like that? And then when the rich young ruler came to him and said, What must I do that I may inherit eternal life?

Jesus ended up by telling him to sell everything he had, liquidate all of his assets, give the money to the poor, and come and follow him. And we are told that he went away sad because he had many possessions.

Why in the world would Jesus make that kind of a demand on somebody? Is that what we tell people today when they say, What must I do to inherit eternal life?

[ 2 : 54 ] Sell all of your goods. You have a house, sell it. You have a car, sell it. Bring all the cash here. We'll give it to the poor. And you come and follow Jesus. Why in the world would he say something like that?

It is not possible to understand those enigmatic sayings of Jesus Christ unless you understand the backdrop against which he made them. And when you do, it becomes perfectly clear.

So what we are doing for the time being is simply trying to establish that backdrop. It is the key. Along with that, we want to encourage you once again to take into consideration the rules that were given us by Miles Coverdale.

In my estimation, this is the most important thing that has ever been written apart from the word of God. Miles Coverdale was responsible for giving us the first complete printed English Bible.

And in the year 1535, he also gave us some sterling advice for reading and interpreting the scriptures.

[ 4 : 05 ] And it goes simply like this. It shall greatly help you to understand scripture if thou mark not only what is spoken or written, but of whom and to whom, with what words at what time, where to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goeth before and what followeth after.

Those are priceless words. If it were only possible to get every preacher to implement those in the study and preaching of scripture, I suspect we would have a dramatic turnaround in a lot of areas overnight.

They are very simple rules, but very profound and very, very important. So understanding the setting will explain the seemingly perplexing statements of Jesus and nothing else will explain them.

We are left, apart from understanding the background, we are left to an awkward, cumbersome effort to try and make them fit.

And it's very unsatisfying. And as we try to make them fit, we do so because we don't want Jesus to look bad. And he doesn't look good with those things that he's saying.

[ 5 : 29 ] So we've got to find some way to cover for him. Well, once you understand the background, you don't have to cover for him. It becomes perfectly clear as to why he said what he did, to whom he said it, and when he said it.

And you don't have to squirm and engage in hermeneutical gymnastics to make it fit. Because it does fit.

And when you get to the place of where you have to make it fit, then you've got a problem. I know some of you are old enough to remember a humorous commercial that used to be on television.

It was one of my favorites. I saw it years ago. Now, this goes back so far that some of you young pups won't remember it because, as I recall, it was even with black and white television. And some of the kids right now are saying, what's he talking about?

Well, the scene, and this was a commercial, and the scene was set in a garage. And up on the hoist of this automotive garage was a car.

[ 6 : 33 ] And the mechanic was standing there under the car with it up over his head. And he was peering and looking up at it. And he was a grease monkey looking kind of guy, a little on the portly side, had on a mechanic's cap, was chomping on a cigar that was about two inches long out of the side of his mouth.

And he had with him a hacksaw in one hand and a hammer in the other. And under his arm, he had this big, long tailpipe with a muffler attached to it.

And he was sizing up the underside of that car and looking at it. And if you're at all familiar with the exhaust system of a car, you know there is an exhaust pipe that comes out of the manifold that's attached to the engine.

And that comes down to a catalytic converter that's supposed to take a lot of the noxious elements out of the exhaust. And then there's another pipe from the catalytic converter that goes over to the muffler.

And that's supposed to quiet the sound of the car. And then there is the tailpipe that comes out of the muffler and extends out to the rear of the car and is usually visible if you look up under the bumper.

- [ 7 : 44 ] So altogether, it's a long involved paraphernalia. And no two cars have any of that alike. Because they have to fit around the crankcase and they have to fit around the transmission.
- And they go in curves and squiggles and turns. And no two cars are alike. So this guy is standing here with this pipe and looking at that stuff. We've got the hammer in one hand, the hacksaw in the other.
- And this nervous owner of the car looks up under there and looks at the pipe and all of the stuff that this guy's under his arm. And he says, it doesn't look like that's going to fit up there.
- And the guy said, I'll make it fit. And this owner of the car gets this nervous look on his brow and his jaw drops, you know.
- Well, the ending could not possibly be happy. Anytime you have to take a situation like that and make it fit, you see. And, of course, the commercial was for a muffler repair shop that has all of the right parts and the right educated mechanics.
- [ 9 : 06 ] And they don't have to make anything fit. They just have all the stuff that fits right and the people who know how to do it. Well, we've got the same kind of situation when it comes to the scriptures and trying to make things fit.
- If you have to push, pull, twist, cajole, move around to make it fit, you've got a problem. Because if the word of God comes from God, it is coherent.
- And it is cohesive and coherent. It holds together. It does fit. You don't have to make it fit. You just have to understand what belongs where, to whom, when, how, what.
- And when you do, voila, makes perfect sense. So, one of the first things about seeing how things fit in scripture is to understand the historical backdrop.
- Now, I'm going to say something that I know is not going to sound right to a number of people. But before you reject it out of hand, I want you to give it very serious thought.
- [ 10 : 20 ] I am convinced that it is right. I wasn't always convinced, but I have been for the last 35 years, that it is right. So, let me run it by you.
- There is a huge, unwarranted assumption that with the arrival of Jesus in Bethlehem and the beginning of the New Testament, a dramatic change has taken place.
- With the Old Testament being profoundly Jewish, now this New Testament becomes profoundly Christian. Beginning with Matthew.
- Now that Jesus the Savior is on the scene, even though he is yet a baby, everything is changed. Right?
- No. Well, let me qualify that. Yes and no. What I mean is, it's true.
- [ 11 : 30 ] The basis for enormous change is on the scene with the birth of Christ. Yet, in reality, nothing had actually changed at all.
- The strictly Jewish motif, already recognized throughout the Old Testament, remains firmly in place throughout the four Gospels and well into the book of Acts, which picks up chronologically where the Gospels leave off.
- I am saying there is a flow. There is a continuity. There is not a disruption. There is a continuation.
- What causes people to see and to think that there is a disruption is the Old Testament, here, laid aside.
- Laws, rules, regulations, profits, sacrifices, all that stuff. That's Jewish. But now, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, that's the New Testament.

[ 12 : 45 ] That's Christian. No, it isn't. It isn't even close. But, so many Christians insist on Christianizing it because, after all, it is the New Testament.

And that's Christian. Well, as I've said, it is an unwarranted assumption. It's one that is very easy to make.

I know because I made it for several years before I saw what I'm going to share with you now. And when I did, it was an aha moment.

I walked around for about three months with a flattened forehead. Why didn't I see that? How could I miss that? It is so obvious.

And when you do, it just becomes sublime. It's just beautiful. Oh, it was there all the time. You mean I can actually understand this? You mean I can really appreciate the Bible and see how things come together?

[ 13 : 56 ] And really start to understand it? Yes. Oh, my. What a revelation. It was just incredible. Let me tell you, I've never gotten over it.

And whenever I have an opportunity like this, I relish it to simply pass it on. So, let me explain what I'm talking about. With Christ on the scene. And with what we call the canonically correct.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They belong in the New Testament just where they are. But theologically, doctrinally, they belong to the Old Testament.

But how can you say that? Because Christ is already here. Yes, but it isn't until the end of the Gospels and the end of Christ's earthly ministry that the real basis for a dramatic change is put into place.

And that is with his death, burial, and resurrection. That's not at the front end of the Gospels. It's at the end of the Gospels. And that, too, has to be kept in mind.

[ 15 : 13 ] So, we find in Jesus a Jewish Messiah who came to the Jewish people in fulfillment of a promise that God made to the Jewish people.

He didn't make this promise to the Egyptians. Didn't make it to the Assyrians. Didn't make it to anybody else. He made it to the seed of Abraham. These are Jews.

Someone says, Is Grace Bible Church a Jew-loving church? Well, I hope so. Because if we're not, first thing you'll have to do is replace your pastor.

I won't be here. But not only are we a Jew-loving church, we are a Gentile-loving church, too.

And the rationale for that is very simple. If God loves both Jews and Gentiles, how can you not? How can you possibly not?

[ 16 : 20 ] While Jesus Christ, in his death, burial, and resurrection, provided the basis for people to become a Christian, he himself was not.

In his deity, Jesus was God. In his humanity, Jesus was a Jew, and always will be.

He is of the seed of Adam through Mary, his mother. But he was also of the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And of the fourth son of Jacob, who was Judah, the father of the royal tribe.

And Christ was born of the tribe of Judah. Consequently, as I've told you before, Jesus Christ was not qualified to be a Christian. Because a Christian is someone who has come to grips with the reality of his sin.

And has cast himself and his case upon the finished work of Christ for salvation from our sin. So Christ is completely disqualified from anything Christian because he was sinless and in no need of that.

[ 17 : 45 ] This all mightily contributes to the backdrop of which we have been speaking. Now, follow me closely, if you will, please. Despite 400 years passing between Malachi, closing out the Old Testament, writing the last book in the Old Testament, Malachi, and some say he was the only Italian prophet, Malachi, but we'll call him Malachi, closing out the Old Testament and the writers of the Gospel, 400 years separate the closing of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New.

Approximately four centuries in between. It's called the intertestamental period. And during that time, there was no inspired, written revelation from God.

The Jewish people as a nation were pretty much in limbo during that intertestamental period. During that time, and this is so very important.

This is the crux of it. This is, get this and you get most of it, okay? During this 400 years, sometimes called the 400 silent years or the four silent centuries of God when he was not speaking to his people through any of the prophets.

During those 400 years, everything Jewish that was involved with all of the Old Testament continued right on for those four centuries.

[ 19 : 28 ] Judaism didn't cease to exist. Jews didn't cease to exist. Everything continued right on. Granted, it was a time of considerable turmoil in Israel.

But on the other hand, when has Israel not been in turmoil? They are a people of turmoil. They have lived in turmoil almost from their inception, even from their beginning.

They began in turmoil with deliverance out of Egypt. And it has continued on. All that was Jewish in the Old Testament remained firmly in place.

And Jesus acknowledged that in every way. We are told in Galatians 4 that in the fullness of time, God sent his son, born of a woman, born under the law.

To redeem them that were under the law. Under what law? Under the law of Moses. As a son of Israel. Christ came unto his own, we're told in John 1, and his own, these are his people, the Jewish people, his own received him not.

[ 20 : 42 ] And remember the conversation he had with the woman at the well? And he told this lady, and this too doesn't sound very accommodating from the lips of Jesus.

He told this poor ignorant woman, pagan woman, Samaritan woman at the well, there at Jacob's well, you don't know what you're worshiping.

You know not what you worship. For salvation is of the Jews. Doesn't that sound kind of arrogant? Salvation is of the Jews?

Well, it's true. You understand that? Salvation is of the Jews. And why is everybody trying to kill these people?

Why did Hitler try to kill these people? Well, to make a long story short, why did people kill Christ when he was the very essence of salvation and the very deliverance of it?

[ 21 : 47 ] Do you not understand that man has always been committed to doing what is not in his own best interests? That has gone on from time immemorial.

We do really stupid things that are to our own hurt and then look for someone else to blame. Jesus, as a Jew, fit the Jewish mold perfectly.

He was circumcised on the eighth day, according to the law. He was presented before the Lord in the Jewish temple by his parents in Jewish Jerusalem when he was only six weeks of age.

He kept the Jewish Sabbath and he ate kosher Jewish food. He regularly went to the Jewish synagogue and he maintained all things Jewish.

Jesus did not arrive and begin all things new at his birth, nor at his baptism, nor at his teaching or miracles.

- [ 23 : 02 ] What he did was he continued all things Jewish. This was not the beginning of a new order.
- It was the continuation of the old order. These statements that I am making are so simple. And at the same time, they are so profound. And each one of them is a key that unlocks another puzzle in the Bible.
- If you will only hear it. Our problem is we get so locked into tradition and from the stuff that we heard that we put confidence in years ago and we never question it.
- Well, it's time to question it. And I can assure you that God does not mind in the least being questioned. Because when you question, you have to study.
- [ 24 : 11 ] And we are committed to the study and understanding of the word of God. Because you cannot use and you cannot benefit from what you do not understand.
- So many people are deprived of so much richness that they could enjoy from the scriptures if they only had a few of these keys.
- And so many say, I just get so overwhelmed with the Bible. It's so confusing. It's so big. It's a thick book, you know. And it was written a long time ago and they use words that I don't understand and I can't comprehend and I just kind of just lay it aside and let it collect dust on the coffee table like most everybody else does.
- And they have no idea what they're depriving themselves from. Life can be so much richer. And the enjoyment of everything God has provided can be so much fuller.
- If you understand the plan and program of God and what it is all about. And this is principally what we're talking about. What everything is all about is connected with what we're talking about right now.
- [ 25 : 23 ] No, that is not an exaggeration. It is not an overstatement. This is what everything is all about. It all focuses on this one person. And the ripple goes out from him.
- To the seed of Abraham. The Jew. And then from the Jew. To all the rest of the world. But it has to begin.
- With the Jew. Why? Because that's. Who God promised the program to.
- Genesis 12. Abraham. Insignificant. Seemingly insignificant. Tiny little piece of real estate. That has absorbed probably more blood per square inch than any place on the face of the earth.
- And that's where the action really is. That's what it's all going to come down to. What everything is all about.
- [ 26 : 29 ] Is wrapped up in this person. And what this person came to provide. Now. Let us move on. Because I want to take you quickly. To Matthew's Gospel.
- Chapter 3. And we'll see here. Right at the beginning. Of the canonical New Testament. Matthew chapter 3. Jesus continued.
- What was going on. With that present order. However. Rumbings. Follow me now. Rumbings were occurring. A change.
- Of some kind. Was beginning to take shape. But it was not a change. From Jewish to Christian. It was a change. That remained. Within.
- The confines of Judaism. It is true. There was a new wind blowing. But it was a Jewish wind. And it was for Jews.
- [ 27 : 28 ] And that's why Jesus said. Don't go to the Gentiles. Don't go to the Samaritans. Confine yourself. To the lost sheep of the house of Israel. That was the strategy.

And when you understand this backdrop. You'll see. It was the only reasonable strategy. It was a predictable strategy. Of course that's what he said. That's what he meant. Because that. Fit.

The program. That he was in process. Of implementing. That is so important. A new wind is blowing.

And it begins. With the first cousin. Of Jesus. Whose name. Was John.

Man sent from God. Whose name was John. Now in those days. And this is right after. This is right after. The account that is given.

[ 28 : 27 ] Regarding the birth of Jesus. And we have. Several years. Lapsing between. Verse 23. Of chapter 2.

In Matthew. And the opening. Of chapter 3. And that chapter begins with. Now in those days. John the Baptist came.

Preaching in the wilderness of Judea. Saying. Repent. For the kingdom of heaven. Is at hand. And then.

John says. For this. Is the one. Referred to. By Isaiah. The prophet. Who was he? He was a Jewish prophet. To whom was he sent?

To the Jewish people. And. John. Of course. Is Jewish. And he. Is quoting. What Isaiah said. Make ready. The way.

[ 29 : 21 ] Of the Lord. Make. His. Paths straight. Do you know how we would translate that into today's vernacular? Roll out the red carpet. Make ready.

A highway for our God. Smooth the paths. Because. He's going to be coming. And he deserves. A nice. Level place. Upon which. To walk. This was the message to Israel.

The one. Who has been promised to you. By God. Four. Thousand years ago. That you thought never would come. Well he's here now.

John's saying. He is here now. Behold. The Lamb of God. That takes away the sin of the world. And when Jesus was baptized of John. It must have been electrifying.

Dove descended from heaven. And. Landed. On Jesus. Signifying. The presence of the Spirit of God. And this. Booming voice.

[ 30 : 23 ] A voice like nobody had ever heard before. Was heralded out of heaven with. This. Is my beloved son.

In whom I am well pleased. That was nothing more. Than heaven's confirmation. That he had sent this one. Whom John. Was baptizing.

Electrifying. And when he says repent. That means. You people need to get your act together. There's only one thing to repent from. Ever. In any context.

There's only one thing that requires repentance. And it's the same thing every time. And that is the discovery that you're wrong. Wrong. When you come to grips.

With the discovery. That you're wrong. You have to have. Some basis. For concluding that you're wrong. And more often than not.

[ 31 : 22 ] What that is. Is. You hear. Truth. And information. That contradicts. What you have considered to be right. And now you know.

You were wrong. Nothing. Nothing. What are you going to do about it? Nothing. This is what I've always believed.

And this is what I'm going to die believing. Well. You don't have any hope for somebody like that. Just brush them aside. And look for somebody who's serious. Because you can't deal with people like that.

But when you hear truth. And God reveals it to you to be true. You need to repent. You need to change.

Your. Mind. That is an act of the will. It has nothing to do. With your emotion. Except. As guilt.

[ 32 : 19 ] May set in. Which is an emotional response. To having violated. A known standard. And sometimes guilt. Can prod us.

Into repentance. Or changing our mind. So what John. Is saying here. To his Jewish audience. And by the way. These are all Jews. And what John.

Is saying to them. As a Jewish people. As a nation. Is. You people. Really need to get your act together. Because you are wrong. Before God. And you know it.

And you've persecuted. Prophets in the time past. You have gone your own way. You have engaged in idolatry. God carried you off to Babylon. For 70 years in captivity.

And now look at you. You've allowed your faith. To become corrupt. You've. Abused the law of Moses. You've looked for loopholes. You've done everything you can.

[ 33 : 16 ] To maintain the letter of the law. While you completely ignore. The spirit of the law. You people are just dead wrong. You know that. And one by one.

These people in this audience. Started hanging their head. And saying to themselves. You know what. The man's right.

He's right. We've been playing these games long enough. It's time to get right with God. It's time to put away the phoniness.

And the shallowness. And the hypocrisy. Count on me John. I'm on board. Where do I sign up?

John says. Come right over here. And let me. Baptize you. And do you know what that signified? That signified.

[ 34 : 20 ] That signified. An act. Of purification. It meant. That those. Who submitted themselves. To John's baptism.

Were serious. They weren't playing games. And not everybody got on board. You know. Only a minority did.

There were great throngs. That came out to hear John. But that doesn't mean. They all enlisted. In fact.

Dr. Luke tells us. That the scribes. And the Pharisees. And this was the religious establishment. These were the religious big shots.

It says that. They. Rejected. The counsel of God. Against. Themselves. Haven't I told you. That we always find ways.

[ 35 : 19 ] To do stupid things. To our own hurt. That's exactly. What they did. They rejected. The counsel of God. Against. Themselves. Not. Being. Baptized.

Of John. It would look at John. Say. Well. He doesn't look like. Much of a prophet to me. Where is this guy from. Anyway. And why has he got. Such a strange diet. Locusts.

And wild honey. Come on. Give me a break. This guy can't be serious. Don't try to tell me that God sent somebody like this. He's a flake. They peeled off.

They wouldn't have anything to do with him. Matter of fact. Some of them were instrumental. In John. Eventually being arrested. By Herod. And Herodias did her little dance.

And was rewarded. With the head. Of John the Baptist. On a charger. Peter.

[ 36 : 15 ] So John is saying. The kingdom. Of heaven. Is at hand. And this. Was. Electrifying.



And let me tell you. Why it was. Baptism. Was nothing new. To the Jewish people. They practiced it.

Day in. And day out. But who practiced it. The priests. When the priest. Would go into the temple. To conduct any kind of a service.

To offer ritual sacrifice. Or whatever it might be. Whatever kind of an offering it was. The priest always had to go through. This cleansing ritual. Whereby. He.

Would. Wash. Himself. Sometimes this is translated. Baptismos. Hebrews talks about. Washings. In the plural. These priests.

[ 37 : 12 ] Were not simply. Baptized. They were baptized. And baptized. And re-baptized. And re-baptized. And re-baptized. And every time they went. To conduct the service. They had to go through.

The ritual. Ceremonial cleansing. That was standard fare. For the priests. And in that classic passage. In Exodus chapter 19.

In verse 6. God is saying. To the children of Israel. Through Moses. That one of these days. I am going to make you. A kingdom.

Of priests. You're all going to be priests. The whole kit and caboodle. Of Israel. You're all going to be priests. Jesus. But when he said that.

Who were the priests? Just the Levites. Nobody else. You had to be a descendant from Aaron. You had to be. A Levite.

[ 38 : 07 ] In order to be. A priest. Jesus. Was not a Levite. He was from the tribe. He was from the tribe. Of Judah.

It is evident. That our Lord sprang out of Judah. The writer of Hebrews tells us. And yet Jesus was a priest. Christ. But not. Of the order of Aaron. He was a priest.

After the order of Melchizedek. And there were only two people. In that priesthood. Melchizedek and Jesus. That's a different subject. And I dare not go astray. But. This concept.

Of priesthood. So captivated. Israel. Because. And please hear me. This is really important. Because.

Every Jew. Knew. That the time was coming. When God was going to make the whole nation of Israel.

[ 39 : 07 ] A priestly nation. But up until this time. No Israelite. Had ever been baptized for service. Except a Levite. He was the priest. And when John starts baptizing. All of these people. Who were they?

They were all Jews. But they were from every tribe imaginable. They saw this. As the fulfillment. Of what God promised. Thousands of years earlier.

Through Moses. That we are all. Going to be priests. And now John is saying. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. And the time has come. For Israel.

To be a priestly nation. So come. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. The Messiah is around the corner. The kingdom is about to arrive. To arrive. Get on board.

[ 40 : 07 ] And boy. They came out of the woodwork. And it was incredible. This was a get ready message. For Israel. They were excited.

They were saying. This is it. This is it. God's going to do it. It is now. Get ready. Everybody. Prepare yourself. The Messiah is coming. And when he comes.

He's going to bring in. The kingdom of God. And that's going to fix everything. Well. It didn't happen.

Crucified. Dead. Buried.

Resurrected. And right before. He ascended to heaven. Forty days after the resurrection.

[ 41 : 09 ] The disciples were standing with him on the Mount of Olives. And one of them turned to Jesus and said. Lord.

Is it at this time. That you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel. Now. We thought you were going to do it before the crucifixion.

But it didn't happen. Now. That you've been resurrected from the dead. Are you going to do it now? Is this it? And Jesus said.

It is not for you to know the times or the seasons. Which the father hath placed. In his own hand. Where is that?

That kingdom. It doesn't exist. It has never been realized. Israel is still waiting.

[ 42 : 12 ] And you know the irony of it. Most Jews today. Don't even know. What they're waiting for. Most of them don't. Most Jews don't know any more.

About their Old Testament. Than what Christians know about the New. Which is not much. And they too. Like many Christians. Are sorely deprived.

Of much that they could have. And be enjoying. And anticipating. Now this kingdom business. Is. I wish. I wish.

I had another hour. But. Relax. I'm not going to take it. But. But. I feel. But. This is.

And yet. And. I feel that I must. But. I know. I'm leaving you. At a critical juncture. And yet.

[ 43 : 08 ] The clock says. I have no choice. So. I just want to say. Two weeks from today. We will pick up. Where we have left off. And we will be able to.

Specifically. Identify. This kingdom. And explain. Why it hasn't come. And when it will. And of what it will consist.

And do you see why I say. What these messages are about. Is what everything. Is all about. Because this is. What it's all about. And compared to what we are talking about.

Everything else. Is trivial by comparison. This is. The big picture. And. Jesus Christ. Is right.

In the center of it. And our father. We are thankful. For what you are pleased to reveal. And thank you. That. Even though. Took us a long time.

[ 44 : 08 ] To see this. The truth. Has been there. All along. And yet. We are so prone. To reading these things.

And trying to understand them. Against an inadequate. Backdrop. That we all have. And it leads us. To wrong conclusions. How grateful. We are. For breakthroughs.

That you provide us. For men. For men. Whom you have raised up. Who have been able. To see these things. And point them out to us. And enable us to benefit from them.

Father. If there is one here. This morning. Who is searching. For the real. Reason. For living. Real answers. To life.

We pray. That by your spirit. You will penetrate. Their hearts and minds. And cause them. To realize. That everything. Is wrapped up. In the person. Of your beloved son.

[ 45 : 04 ] And that Jesus. Is who we claim to be. Nothing in the world. Matters. More than being rightly. Related. To him. We pray in his name. Amen.