

Why Christians Differ Doctrinally - Part XXIII.

Conclusion - Q&A;

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[0 : 00] At the beginning of the year, in fact, if I recall correctly, I think it was the first Sunday of the new year, we started what I thought would be a six or eight part series on why Christians differ doctrinally.

And it morphed into a much longer series so that we just essentially concluded it last week. And I don't know how many there are, but probably well over 20 sessions.

And I might add that they are all available on CD, although you'll not find all of them on the table in the back. You will find some of the last probably three or four weeks.

And they are there for your use. And they are, of course, free of charge. Feel free to pick up any of them that are of interest to you. Questions arose over why there are so many different denominations and why it is that Christians, all of whom claim to belong to Christ, to believe in God, to believe in the scriptures, etc.

How in the world do you account for so many different denominations, different positions, different doctrines? How are these things arrived at? And we sought to answer that question.

[1 : 16] I'm sure that we didn't do it as thoroughly as we might have, but I trust that we did it thorough enough to be sufficient. And we explored such subjects as water baptism.

And we pointed out that no matter what position you take regarding water baptism, whether you sprinkle, pour, immerse, or whatever, or dry clean as we do, you are in a minority.

And then we spent a considerable amount of time in John chapter 6 dealing with the issue of a very thorny verse, one of the quotes of our Lord when he said, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

And we pointed out to you how that is the use of figurative language. He was metaphorically speaking, and what he meant was that his flesh represents, and his blood represents that of which you must partake spiritually.

And our Roman Catholic friends take that very literally, and they believe that when the priest consecrates the elements, they become the literal, actual, yes, you heard me correctly, the literal, actual body and blood of Christ, and that you partake of Christ through the mouth, through receiving the elements.

[2 : 42] We are of the opinion that we partake of Christ in a spiritual sense. We do that by faith. It is an act of the will. And we would quote St. Augustine, who made the observation, to believe is to eat and to drink.

And I believe he has caught the sense of it. Christ was in no wise advocating cannibalism. He was simply saying that you must be a partaker of him, so that Christ is in you, and you are in Christ.

That is your salvation. Colossians talks about Christ being in you, the hope or the confidence or the absolute assurance of future glory. And how is Christ in you?

He is in you spiritually. He isn't in you physically. There is a spiritual dimension, and there is a physical dimension. And we tend to become so enamored with the physical because it is so much with us.

Everything physical responds to our five senses, but that which is spiritual does not. The spiritual is engaged only by the mind.

[3 : 55] And we have pointed out to you, and I do so again, that biblical Christianity is a thinking faith. God does not want you to, nor does he ask you, to put your brains on the shelf and to just fly by faith, regardless of what the evidence is.

That is not the Christian position at all. He has given us good and sufficient evidence for exercising faith. So our faith is not built upon nothing.

It is built upon that which has real substance. So there is good and sufficient reason for what we believe. In our last session together, I gave you five particular areas that I think are more responsible than anything else for well-meaning, well-intentioned Christians reaching different conclusions about their doctrine.

And you must recall, we said that virtually everyone claims that their position is based upon scriptures. The only thing that all of these groups have in mind, or have in common, and I'm talking about Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Nazarene, Lutheran, Episcopal, non-denominational, etc.

The only thing that they all have in common is each one believes that they are right, and all the other folks are wrong. But on the other hand, if you don't believe you're right, if I don't believe I'm right in what I'm teaching, I certainly have no business teaching it.

[5 : 34] Now that's no guarantee that everything I teach is right. And I've often told you, I know some of the things that I teach are not true. And someone says, well then why in the world do you teach them?

Well, my answer is, I don't know which ones they are. I don't know where they are. But I'm looking for them. And every now and then I find one. And when I do, I have to go through the embarrassment of reversing myself.

And saying, I know folks, for 25 years I taught you this. That's what I believe in. I don't believe that any longer. But you know I relish the fact that the more important things of the Christian life are the things that God has made most clear in His Word.

And that we can be very thankful for. So, we all have our blind spots. No religious group, no denomination can say that they have a corner on the truth.

And that everything that comes from this pulpit, you can take it to the bank and count on it. That's probably the worst thing you could do. You have got to listen to the teaching of the Word, including my teaching, with a critical, scrutinizing eye.

[6 : 50] And any faith or belief that will not willingly undergo scrutiny, investigation, and questioning is one from which you should flee in great haste.

So, this morning we are going to open this for Q&A.; I want to make a couple of observations and bring you up to speed as to where we are for the benefit of those who may not have been here last week.

And then we will open it for any comments or questions you have. But be warned in advance, if you don't have questions or comments, I am more than fully prepared to...

So, you've had your warning, alright? There are at least five areas that are more responsible, I feel, than anything else for Christians reaching different doctrinal conclusions.

And each of them is built around a failure. The first one is a failure to make Scripture alone our only rule of faith and practice.

[7 : 56] We must confine ourselves to the Scriptures for its interpretation rather than bringing man-made interpretation to bear upon the text.

And by that, I mean, and I have told you, and we've tried to operate on this basis in the past, that no man, including myself, certainly, is competent or capable or sufficient for interpreting the Word of God.

That is why we are dependent upon the Scriptures interpreting themselves. And when you let them, they will. The Scripture is its own best commentary.

and you will find truths that explain a problem passage or a difficult passage perhaps in the book of Revelation. You may find the answer to it in the book of Daniel or in the book of Genesis because all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and it is all interconnected.

Everything in the Word of God is connected to everything in the Word of God and there is nothing in it that is superfluous. There is nothing in it that is there just to fill up space.

[9 : 12] Therefore, we must limit ourselves to the teaching of Scripture and allow it to interpret itself by comparing Scripture with Scripture. And I could give you numerous examples but that would take us for the rest of the year so we will not do that but I do have them available if anybody is interested.

I can give you some interesting illustrations of that. If you bring in outside sources you immediately contaminate the purity of Scripture.

The writings of men can be helpful beneficial enlightening. I have derived lots and lots of help from the commentaries of godly men most of whom have passed on but you cannot put them on a plane with Scripture.

They are simply the writings the understandings the conclusions of human beings about what the Scriptures say. You see there is that which God says in His Word.

Then there is that which man says God says and that's the one you have to be careful about because that can lead you astray as well as lead you down the right path.

[10 : 27] So you constantly have to evaluate and weigh everything that comes from anybody's pulpit alongside the Word of God. If we allow rabbis or popes or preachers or reformers or whomever to be our source then we are certainly on thin ice we have departed from Scripture.

And then secondly a failure to embrace plenary inspiration and thus elevate certain Scriptures over others is having more authority.

You dare not do that. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. It's God-breathed. That means no part of the Bible is more the Word of God than some other part of the Bible.

But make no mistake about it there are lots of portions of Scripture that are far more exciting enlightening comforting interesting and there are lots of portions of Scripture by comparison that are boring.

If you have trouble going to sleep at night flip open your Bible start reading in Leviticus it puts me out in nothing flat. It's boring but that doesn't mean it isn't the Word of God.

[11 : 58] It is and it is not there just to fill up space. If it is inspired of God it has an importance of its own. God gave an importance to it.

The red letters that you find in Matthew Mark Luke and John are all part of man's contribution. They were not there originally and there is a tendency to say well if it is in red letters that means Jesus said it and that means you really better pay attention because he is the authority.

Let me make one thing very very clear. Christ is behind the writing of the whole of Scripture not just the four Gospels.

All Scripture originates from the divine source so that when you say the Scripture is inspired that is as much as you can say about it and it is all the word of God the epistles that so many unfortunately want to put against the gospel well this is what Jesus said Paul said this over here in Colossians but this is what Jesus said that's all wrong that's all wrong where do you think Paul got what he wrote in Colossians or Galatians or Ephesians who was his source was it his mind of course not it was his vocabulary it was his personality but from what point and what source did what he wrote originate it was from the risen Christ through the abundance of revelations that the risen Christ gave to Paul you see information from

Christ did not cease with the ascension the risen Christ had a great deal of information to reveal that he disclosed to the apostle Paul that he did not reveal to the twelve when he was here on earth and the reason for that is because the game plan had changed and perhaps we'll get to that this morning but perhaps not so a failure to embrace plenary or full inspiration that is all of scripture being inspired of the word of God and a failure to take the literal literally and the figurative figuratively almost always each is established by the context when the plain sense makes good sense seek no other sense there is principle of philosophy that is several hundred years old that is called Occam's razor and the principle of Occam's razor is simply this is that when you are looking to the solution for the solution of a problem you always should give preference to the most simple solution because it is usually the correct one but there is something within our makeup that wants to complicate things and obfuscate things and make it deep dark and mysterious when the plain simple truth is right there on the surface and the most crowning example that

[15 : 12] I can give of this has divided Christendom has been the subject of bitter debates and it continues and that is taking literally what was intended to be taken literally and the best example I can think of is probably also the most important example because virtually everything hinges on this in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth you've got what he created on day one what he created on day two what he created on day three oh but those weren't those weren't 24 hour days yes they were and if you take the plain sense at face value that's the conclusion and it is also the basis for the establishment of the seven day week and it is that throughout the world and always has been if you read

Genesis one and just take it at face value we've got a seven day creation I am confident that's the way it was intended oh but science has proved now wait a minute we are enormously indebted to science science is not our enemy science is our friend but there is a very important and peculiar distinction that exists between the biblical revelation and science and it is this science by its very nature do you not understand is a work in progress do you not understand that the jury is always out when it comes to science do you not understand that science is constantly changing and shifting and sometimes embarrassingly reversing itself why because science means the very word comes from the

Latin science which means to know or to discover and there is so much we don't know we are learning and we have probably learned more in the last 50 years than we have in the 1500 years preceding that it is amazing and we have all benefited from that knowledge in so many ways but you've got to understand science is not the last word because it is always investigating continuing moving on changing adapting that's the nature of science you call that learning and the only way science can be the absolute authority is if you are convinced that guess what as of right now we know everything there is to know if you can say that scientifically then science is the final word but we all know

I was talking with a gentleman just this morning who has been undergoing some treatment for precancerous lesions removed from his face it's rather common you know President Reagan had them removed several people have it's not unusual at all but what's the cause of that and I was talking to this gentleman and I asked him about his exposure to the elements during childhood and growing up oh yeah worked outside all the time lots of sun sports lots of sun the work that I pursued lots of sun got lots of sun now we know that over exposure to the ultra violent rays of the sun over a period of time puts you in great risk of skin cancer oh well we always knew that no we didn't he didn't know it as a child growing up he never been warned by a dermatologist such a thing as sunscreen didn't even exist then and now we have all kinds of sophisticated creams and ointments that you put on don't be in the sun any longer than thus and so and what happened well science has moved on has made some discoveries that we didn't know years ago

I remember seeing a special on TV involving the life and story of Joseph Lister may not but he was a pioneer in his field and here is a man who was literally brought to tears because he could not get his doctor colleagues to wash their hands when they were treating women who were delivering babies and they had an enormous percentage of women dying from complications in childbirth due to infection which could be eliminated simply by physicians attending them washing their hands they would go with unwashed hands from one patient to another now today that would probably get you fired in any hospital worth its salt but that was that was the best that science had to offer then so science is constantly changing but forever oh lord thy word is settled in heaven with the scriptures the jury isn't out the jury is already in and the verdict has been favorable for the word of god so i am not going to belabor this point anymore other than to say that i believe in a seven day creation and our lord quoted from genesis a number of times and in the beginning have you not read that in the beginning he made them male and female do you realize that jesus in the gospels is recognizing the primacy and the origin of adam and eve as historical figures and yet i dare say many today say well those weren't real people they were just representative well i just take the scriptures at face value and i have made clear to you that where the scriptures are to be interpreted figuratively and not intended to be taken literally the context usually makes that quite clear but the genesis record ought to stand with all serious minded believers and the integrity of jesus christ is connected with it because if he believed the genesis account but it was not to be taken as he took it then he himself was fooled and didn't realize that it was really zillions and zillions of years or he really knew better but he played along with it and thus added to the deception and in neither case would he be adequate as a messiah or savior so and then there is a failure to interpret

[23 : 12] Israel as Israel and the church as the church and that of course is a very very important distinction one that some seem intent on confounding and in the scriptures we find these two entities that are intended to remain separate because they are separate entities both of them have a strategic place to play in the plan and program of God but they are distinct entities and neither one becomes the other Israel is Israel as a church and the church is the church as primarily comprised of Gentiles the last one I gave you was a failure to heed the advice of Miles Coverdale and Miles Coverdale is one of my favorite people he gave us the very first complete printed

English Bible in 1535 along with this advice for reading and studying it 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 Miles Coverdale 1535 copies of this were made available to you and if you don't follow Miles Coverdale's rules and you just interpret the scriptures and read the scriptures like a lot of even well meaning Christians do you may well come up with something like I call it a parable not rightly divided once upon a time a man went down from

Jericho to Jerusalem and he fell among thieves and thorns grew up and choked the man and he went on and didn't have any money and he met the queen of Sheba she gave that man a thousand talents of silver and a hundred changes of raiment and while he was driving along under a big tree his hair got caught on a limb he hung there many days and many nights and the ravens and one night while he was hanging there asleep his wife Delilah came along and cut his hair off and he dropped and fell on stony ground then it began to rain and it rained for forty days and forty nights he hid himself in a cave and a man went out on the highway and by way and compelled him to come out and he came out and went to Jerusalem then he saw Queen Jezebel sitting high upon a windowsill and she laughed at him and he said fling her down out of there boys and they flung her down and he said fling her down again and they flung her down again fling her down again and they flung her down again seventy times seven they flung her down and the fragments they picked up thereof were twelve baskets full now whose wife will she be in the judgment with apologies to

Matthew Mark Luke Moses Elijah Solomon and the book of Judges that's not rightly dividing the word of truth that is well I'm not sure what you would call that but wow what an exercise so I have said enough and I'm going to allow you ample time for Q&A; now after I put my ears in and I'll be glad to entertain any questions or comments you may have anyone we've got a microphone okay Roger in the back Terry has a question or comment I know you said that we are supposed to read the Bible and read it literally and take it face value how do you know that what you're reading is really what you're reading example you said in

Genesis God created the world in seven days you take a day to be 24 hours this morning in Sunday school we learned that seven weeks and 62 weeks was actually 490 years so unless you're a Bible scholar and really know how to read the Greek or Hebrew how do you know that what you're reading a week is a year etc you don't have to be a Bible scholar and nine times out of ten the context will make it very clear as to whether it's to be taken figuratively or literally the context is king that's exactly what Miles Coverdale was saying considering what goeth before and what followeth and sometimes it is the near context and sometimes it is the remote context to just give you a quick example of that thinking of one that's really quite obvious in

[28 : 48] Matthew chapter 13 and the parables that Christ is giving and this is the parable of the sower the seeds and the soil and he talks about the different kind of ground on which it came and then if you look at verse 18 now as you go through the first 15 or 16 verses he just lays out the parable and gives it not all the parables are defined this obviously but then in verse 18 Jesus said hear then the parable of the sower and what he means is I'm going to explain to you the elements of the parable because he's talking about the seed and the sower etc and he says when anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it the evil one comes and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart this is the one on whom the seed was sown beside the road so you know that's who he was talking about and verse 20 and the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy now here is a very obvious example we've got a telling them exactly what it means and not all of the scripture is that clear but in many instances whether it is to be taken literally or figuratively is revealed right there within the context and there's an old saying that goes like this when the plain sense makes good sense seek no other sense but as

I mentioned the Bible is filled with figurative language figurative language adds color it adds emphasis it adds variety to the language that otherwise would be lacking if it were all just straightforward no figurative language and the illustration I gave you I think is still valid if you want to read something that is completely devoid of any figurative language go home and get out of the drawer any insurance policy that you've got in there whether it's fire home auto or whatever you read that insurance it's the most boring thing you've ever read there's no figurative language in it everything is very literal spelled out but when you come to great literature like we have in the scriptures and like we have in Shakespeare and like we have in other things not to equate that with the Bible but great examples of literature employ large amounts of figurative language it is colorful and yet all figurative language is based upon and necessarily of the literal because if you don't understand what a literal is you can't understand the figurative because all figurative language is based upon the literal other comments or questions anyone

Keith and then Dave here he's got a mic it it would seem that in the scriptures that God often times leaves traps for people who don't want to believe meaning he speaks of himself the temple being torn down and rebuilt in three days he was speaking of himself even in today and evolution and so forth there are so many things that monkeys kind of look like us and act like us and you you can find many and I've often wanted to compile the list where I see things in reading the Bible and I've never done it where you have to be wanting to believe it to understand it if you don't want to you can justify your disbelief and be logical that's true very true scarily true yeah and and it's it's interesting to look at it that way and then you realize people are very assure of their philosophies because they look logical yeah now the one thing that that I had an atheist

I was dealing with and by the way has come to the Lord that we're dealing with the various ways of evolution and then along comes Big Bang and I would talk to him and I said I'm not accepting the Big Bang as how it happened just an accident that blew everything apart and they're still getting further apart from each other however as a theory between that and creation it has moved a trillion years closer to what creation is like God spoke and it happened and you see this happening and reinforcing really this antiquated and out of date thing that we believe when we believe the scriptures are being proved with every dig of the ecologist you know they're digging and finding things that prove what the scriptures have said all along yeah yeah thank you

I appreciate your comment and along with that I'd just like to say this especially for the benefit of any young people probably one of the most common things you will hear out there that is also terribly terribly untrue but it is bought across the board by millions of people including millions of Christians and that is this well the Bible and creation etc that's all faith but science has proved that the earth is zillions and zillions of years old and you can take your choice you can either go with science and the facts or you can go with faith and the Bible you'd be surprised how many Christians buy that and it is complete nonsense don't let anybody tell you that and I also like to add that that those of the evolutionary bent in our schools and universities and everything they unquestionably have the upper hand

[35 : 56] I mean the deck is stacked and they hold most of the cards no doubt about that I'd be the first to admit that but every now and then every now and then you read a refreshing testimony of a thoroughgoing evolutionist who may have even written textbooks regarding some of it and he starts seeing the holes in the party line and he knows that it just won't fly and many of them many top name leading scientists I'm talking about PhDs not from podunk you but PhDs from Harvard and Yale and all of the Ivy schools many of them have long since discarded evolution as being scientifically untenable it just doesn't add up this does not mean that they have embraced creationism or Christianity it just means that they no longer can buy the evolutionary hypothesis and they reject it and you ask them where they are and they say

I'm undecided I don't know but I know what it isn't it isn't evolution it just won't it just won't work Dave you had a comment Dave Campbell up here I just wanted to say probably one of the most important things to think about I'm just paraphrasing but we should study to show thyself approved workmen as we study the Bible I think that's Timothy I believe that's the only way you're going to get everything out of the book that you need to is really get in it and study it in a dispensational filter if you go at it with the dispensational filter it makes so much more sense and the more you study the more you realize it is set up for our benefit and edification yeah thank you thank you other comments or questions if you think

I'm going to let you go 13 minutes early you're mistaken okay Betty up here in front I'm just saving you from preaching too long this is probably silly but in Matthew 23 where Jesus is speaking to the multitude and to his disciples he says be not ye called rabbi for one is your master even Christ and all your brethren and call no man your father upon the earth for one is your father who is in heaven now every so often I come in a social situation in contact with a priest and it's hard for me to call him father do

I have any basis in this scripture for that or you certainly do you have no business calling him father okay thank you just find out what his first name is hey Harry John Marv whatever it may be what what Christ is talking about here is is escalating someone to a position of authority over you and he's saying you have only one and it is no earthly man he isn't saying this has nothing to do with biological fathers that you call your father father that brought you into the world or that sired you we're not talking about that it is an issue of authority it is an issue of obeisance and you do not put yourself under the authority of any other man like that and of the Roman Catholic Church they are very very dependent upon that authority posture of the of the priest and he is very key very essential to their whole system operating as it does they're very dependent upon that so

I don't know what the Reims Due version of Roman Catholic Bible I don't know what kind of footnote it might have to explain something like that but I'm sure they have a way around it you can check it for yourself I'm sure there are copies of it in the library good question yes Ron right back here to go along with what Dave was talking about in 2 Timothy 2 15 being a workman and you mentioned this morning comparing scripture to scripture and Les Felwick is so good at this where he sees something in the Old Testament and he had taken clearly through the New Testament to find out scripture that compares to scripture and this is where certain bible study helps are just immeasurably helpful like I I t can't imagine what I would do without my concordance bible dictionary and helps like that that have been put together over the last hundred years they are just incredibly helpful compare scripture with scripture and scripture interpret scripture anyone else alright I want to give you a real quick rundown then for the ten minutes that we have left of what I consider to be one of the very most important issues when it comes to understanding scripture and I've already alluded to it the distinction between Jew and Gentile and that is this and this is very very important when John the Baptist came on the scene heaven had been silent there had been no word from God for any prophet or any writer of scripture to record for 400 years the Old Testament had closed out 400 years earlier and nothing was happening in the nation of Israel by way of any kind of divine revelation and then all of a sudden out of nowhere we have a solitary figure arriving on the scene who was miraculously conceived of a mother who was beyond the years of childbearing and the father who was convinced he was beyond the years of siring a child and their names were

[42 : 58] Zacharias and Elizabeth and the baby that was miraculously conceived by them was John the baptizer John came on the scene with a very dynamic peculiar message and his message was this repent which means change your mind change your attitude attitude because you people are really messed up spiritually you are engaged in sinful behavior and activities and you'd better get your act together and I'll tell you why because the one for whom we have been waiting for thousands of years is about to come on the scene and you need to get ready to meet him prepare ye the way of the Lord the Messiah that God promised four thousand years ago to our mother

Eve God is about to make good on his promise and not long after that John looked down the road and saw his cousin Jesus of Nazareth coming down the road and he identified him by saying behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world when John said the kingdom of heaven is at hand Jesus picked up the same message the kingdom of heaven is at hand what does that mean it is a term that is hotly debated in theological circles even to this day and has been for the last couple of hundred years what does that mean the kingdom of heaven is at hand we find that phrase in what is commonly referred to as the Lord's Prayer our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven that prayer tells us the essence of the kingdom of heaven there was a prayer and a concern for it to come which indicates that it was not there they're not praying for something they already have

Jesus didn't say the kingdom of heaven is here and neither did John they said the kingdom of heaven is at hand it is close by it is on the threshold the kingdom of heaven is the rule and reign that is in heaven come to earth and if you have not discovered it this isn't it we are not in such a kingdom now but it does get confusing because there is a sense in which we are in such a kingdom now what do I mean the Bible uses the word kingdom of heaven in three different ways and the kingdom in three different ways and you've got to understand which is and by the way how do you understand which kingdom the scriptures are talking about context context context it's always king there is a kingdom that scripture refers to and is found in the

Psalms where the psalmist said thy kingdom oh lord is forever that simply means the sphere of the rule and reign of god which is over everything at all times never has it ever been excluded from anything that is a kingdom of god there is no place that has not been included in that kingdom that is the universal kingdom of god or the kingdom of heaven it there has never been a time when it didn't exist and there will never be a time when it does not exist because it simply means the sphere or realm over which god rules well what has ever been excluded from that nothing then there is a second sense in which the kingdom is used and that is a spiritual kingdom and this is what gets confusing and I can understand the confusion of this because Paul tells us in Colossians that when you come to faith in Jesus

Christ you are transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear son that is a spiritual kingdom and you receive Jesus Christ as your personal savior as an act of your will and when you do you are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ you are placed in union with Christ and you become a member of that spiritual kingdom the Bible refers to both of those kingdoms however the vast majority of times that the Bible uses the term kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God it refers to the third type of the kingdom and that is the mediatorial kingdom or the messianic kingdom the kingdom that has to do with the long awaited promised messiah finally coming to the earth and establishing his earthly kingdom where he rules and reigns in

[49 : 05] Jerusalem and he will rule over the entire world that will be realized at the second coming that is the messianic kingdom and when John the Baptist and Jesus both said the kingdom of heaven is at hand they were thinking in terms of the nation and state of Israel because here's what happened when Israel was defeated by the Babylonians they took the one who was then the king of Israel his name was Zedekiah Zedekiah was a direct descendant of David the king he was a member of the Davidic dynasty of the house of David Zechariah sat on the throne of David when the Babylonians defeated them and they took

Zedekiah prisoner they murdered all of his male heirs before his eyes made him witness their execution and then they put out Zedekiah's eyes and led him away into captivity blind he was the last king of Israel the last one who was legitimately the king because the king had to be a direct descendant of David and he had to be from the tribe of Judah so with Zedekiah the line ended Israel's kingdom was over the Babylonians saw to that and when the Babylonians were defeated by the Medes and the Persians and allowed the Israelites to return to their land after the captivity under Nehemiah and so on they still never had a king that sat on the throne of Israel when Jesus

Christ was born the word went out and you recall the wise men they are called astrologers which is a bad translation they were not astrologers but they were more akin to astronomers and they saw I don't understand the complexities of the star but they knew what they were looking at and they knew that this star that they saw that they followed all the way from Persia we are talking several hundred miles to Bethlehem well they came to Jerusalem and when they came to Jerusalem they went to headquarters in Jerusalem they went to the palace and who was the king his name was Herod well I thought you said that Israel didn't have a king Israel had a king but they did not have a legitimate king they had a king that was placed on the throne and given the title king by

Rome and the Jews hated Herod and they knew he wasn't entitled to that throne they knew he wasn't a legitimate king and they just grated under him and when they went to the palace and they were given an audience with the king they said we have come to seek the king of the Jews for we have seen his star in the east and Herod's mouth dropped what you're looking for the king of the Jews well what am I a potted plant he was the king of the Jews and he was also very very paranoid so much so that he had murdered his own sons because he feared that they were conspiring to take over his throne which brought about the saying among the common people you're safer to be Herod's dog than Herod's son and when they said they saw that star listen that is so loaded because they said we have come to what to worship him what worship him you may bring gifts and presents to a newborn king but you don't come to worship him who do you worship you worship deity who was this

Messiah going to be he was not only going to be the king of Israel he was going to be the son of God and they knew it and I am convinced in my heart of hearts that these were not a bunch of pagan astronomers these were Jews they were Jews who were left in Persia from the Babylonian captivity and had been taken over by the Medes and the Persians and they were still there because not all of them came back many of them stayed in the land and they occupied high positions of privilege and study and they knew the implications of this one who was to be born the king of the Jews and that's nothing more than another way of saying we are looking for the Messiah and we have seen his star and we've come to worship him because he's worthy of worship and the thought in their mind and in everybody else's mind is you cannot have a kingdom until you have a king and now he has been born thirty years would pass and at the age of thirty he was officially introduced to

[55 : 07] Israel which is also the age at which a priest enters the priesthood and Jesus Christ was all three he was prophet priest and king the only human being in whom all three offices were invested no one else ever had that honor he's the only one prophet priest and king all reside in him and the thinking of the kingdom of heaven is at hand was that the kingdom of Israel that was destroyed with the Babylonian invasion that has never been restored and never been repaired he's going to do it he's going to fix it he's going to drive these Romans out and establish himself as the king of Israel and the king of the earth that's the one we're getting ready for that's what they meant when they said the kingdom of heaven is at hand it is payback time and the kingdom long held in abeyance is going to come back into focus and you all know why it did not materialize because of the rejection of the nation of their very own king so the kingdom was set aside in judicial blindness and unbelief and

God has turned to an entirely different entity that has nothing to do with that particular program it's a whole new program all together and it's called the church which is the body of Christ it's a glorious thing and if you put these things together it will make portions of the Bible just fall into place and fit like a hand in a glove in a way that it never did before and I'm not finished but I quit may we stand please father we think of these things we meditate upon them we try to get our minds around them and comprehend them as best we can and yet we know we know that there's a great deal that escapes us but we are so thankful for what you let us learn and what you allow us to retain and we thank you for the comfort that it brings and for the manner in which we see your hand all throughout this marvelous book and we see your stamp upon every page with accuracy and integrity and the comfort and enlightenment that you built into it we should there be anyone in our midst today who does not know the joy and peace of sins forgiven may they contemplate their lot without your forgiveness forgiveness and lay themselves in their case at the foot of the cross where that forgiveness was provided and say

Lord Jesus there's so much that I don't understand but I know this I know I'm not acceptable to you because you're holy and I'm not and I want to be and I want you to put the righteousness of Christ to my account because I want to put my faith and my trust in this wonderful Savior this paragon of all virtue through all time thank you for sending him to do for me what I couldn't do for myself dear friends if you made that your prayer let someone else know so that they can encourage you thank you father for the time that we have shared together thank you for what we trust has been a stimulating time to cause some to think upon things perhaps that they haven't thought of before dismiss us now we pray with your blessing in Christ's name amen