

Prophecy and Mystery Contrasted - Mystery 9

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- [0 : 00] I remember the first time I heard that song, it must have been about 1963, 4, 5, somewhere in there. And we were situated at the time with 2348 Troy Road.
- That was the new address of WEEC. And we had been, since it's going on the air, located at the Park Shopping Center. And that was 1135 Bechtel Avenue.
- And about three years, something like that, after the station was on the air, it didn't go on the air until 1962. This is, I'm talking about WEEC, the Christian Station.
- And we had moved to the new location because we'd outgrown the space there and the shopping center and could no longer afford the lease that they were charging as well. And we had a wonderful occasion as I was doing a program one afternoon.
- And Doug Oldham and his father came by the studio. And I was doing a program, I think at the time it was probably called Potpourri.
- [1 : 11] And it was a 30-minute program, five days a week. And I was the assistant manager at the station. And Dale Oldham at the time was the pastor and had been the pastor for many years of the Church of God on Maiden Lane, Maiden Lane Church of God.
- He was pastor there for a number of years. And Doug Oldham was his son. And they just did an a cappella with He Touched Me there in the studios.
- And, of course, the audience loved it. It was a father and son duet. And it wasn't long after that that we had booked Doug Oldham for one of our WEEC picnics.
- Or not picnic, but a banquet. And it was held at the Clark County Fairgrounds. It was all catered. And there were about 1,200 people in attendance. And Doug Oldham was invited to provide the music for the evening.
- And those of you who knew Doug or who had seen him, he was about 5'7", about my height, about 5'7 tall and about 5' wide.
- [2 : 29] And, I mean, he had a girth that wouldn't quit. And everybody was enjoying the banquet and the meal and everything before he came up to sing. And he was sitting up there on the main platform along with a couple of other people who were on the program.
- And when it came time to introduce him, he got up and he waddled over to the microphone.
- And the first thing he said was, 319 pounds. And everybody just cracked up.
- Because they were all sitting there wondering the same thing. I wonder how much that guy weighs. And the first words out of his mouth, 319 pounds. And everybody just broke up in a glorious laughter.
- And I don't mind telling you, the rest of the evening was quite an evening because it was, I think the speaker for the evening that year was Bob Harrington, the chaplain of Bourbon Street. And that was something to behold.
- [3 : 31] And that was quite a time. One of the great evenings of my life that I well remember. So every time I hear that song, he touched me. I think of that duet that Doug sang with his father, Dale, there in our studios many, many years ago.

So we are engaging in a subject that I consider to be so critical that it is something, as I mentioned earlier, that I want to make sure I leave with you by way of an adequate supply for whatever time the Lord gives me to remain here as your pastor.

And it's been a number of years. And people ask me why I don't retire. And my answer is the same.

If I could retire and find something to do that I enjoy more than this, I probably would retire. But I can't imagine enjoying anything more than what I do right here.

So that's just the way it is. And the Lord can put me down any time he wants. And he certainly doesn't need my permission.

[4 : 45] But I enjoy being your pastor and have for the last, well, a bunch. It's coming up before long.

It'll be five decades. So it's been great. And I really appreciate your inquisitive minds and the way you are eager for the truth of God.

In the 9 o'clock session this morning, we shared with you something from the insert. And it was the purpose of the law.

It was July 10. And that and July 12 that is on the flip side of that is something that Marie and I read just this morning as we were having a time together in the scriptures.

And I was so impressed with this and how it ties in with what we're talking about right now with the subjects of prophecy and mystery. That when we got here early this morning, I ran off copies of it.

[5 : 45] And Sharon Kreider was kind enough to stuff all of those for you so you would have them in the bulletin. And it deals with content the likes of which you don't hear a whole lot about, especially in most church circles today.

But we try to make it something here that we make a lot of noise about because it deserves somebody doing that. And that's what we're trying to do. So if you will look at the July 12, we looked at July 10, the purpose of the law, the 9 o'clock hour.

But July 12 is called an indisputable fact. And it relates a subject that is very dear to my heart because it is this content.

It is this kind of subject matter that we're going to be talking about that absolutely turned my life around personally as regards the study of the scriptures.

And the appreciation and understanding of them that increased so much over what it was before that I just really get excited about it. We've talked about the Bible being a book of progressive revelation.

[6 : 53] And we've done a series on that in time past, too. And all that means is that God, over the period of humanity from Genesis 1-1, God has by bits and pieces, a little here and a little there, as the decades, as the centuries, as the millennia rolled by, he was pleased to reveal more and more about himself as humanity made its way through the ages so that those who lived back in Genesis did not have any idea what the people would be learning and knowing about by the time you got the judges.

And the people in Genesis 1-1, and the people in Genesis 1-1, and the people in Genesis 1-1, and the people in Judges would have absolutely no idea what would be revealed when Ezekiel came around. And then when you move into the New Testament, there is a quantum leap, and the information is just explosive.

So what we get is, as you go through the Bible, is one kind of continual update after another. God is revealing more and more and more and more, and we are expected to appropriate what is the latest revelation to gauge our lives by and to dictate our lives by.

Because there's no point in trying to go back and live in Genesis the way those people lived under the circumstances that they, well, who would want to do that? Well, of course, nobody, because we've come so far from Genesis.

Look where we are now. And, you know, some people fault the Bible for this, too. Some people say the Bible is a really out-of-date book. I mean, you don't find any computers in the Bible.

[8 : 44] You don't find any jet planes in the Bible. You don't find any, and on and on they can list all these kind of modern things that have come to pass. And, therefore, the Bible is pretty much irrelevant.

Because it's not up-to-date. It's an old-fashioned book. Well, it is.

But do you know something? You're old-fashioned, too. And what I mean by that is this. Despite your advanced learning and knowledge and technology and ability to tap into this, put a man on the moon and all the rest of it, you in and of yourself are essentially unchanged from the people who lived in the book of Genesis.

And by that I mean all of us as human beings are all cut from the same bolt of cloth. Humanity has not changed one bit.

We still have the same kind of strengths, the same kind of weaknesses, the same kind of fears, the same kind of problems. Nothing has changed. Technology's changed. Modernization has changed.

[9 : 57] We've got this and we've got that. But we haven't changed. And for anyone who thinks that people are really improving and getting better and better all the time, you need to be reminded of one embarrassing statistic.

And that is in the last 100 years. Just 100 years. Just 100 years.

We have found ways to put to death more of our fellow human beings than all of the other millennia of people who lived before combined.

You call that progress? What's going on? What's happening? Well, as the end draws near, we are told that perilous times will come.

And I don't know. I'm not a prophet nor the son of a prophet. Somebody asked me, when are these times coming? I honestly don't know. Can't set a date. But I do know this. We are closer than anybody else has ever been.

[11 : 14] So mankind has not changed one bit. And the Bible was never intended to address modern technology or to make predictions about this or that. Do you know what the Bible is designed to address?

It's the needs, the hungers, the fears of the human being, which has never changed from the time of the fall in Genesis 3.

We are the same. We like to think we're so much more sophisticated. We're so much more modern. We've been able to do this. We've been able to do that. But we are changed.

We're the same. We're the same. And there is only one ingredient that can really make a difference in the very essence of your being.

And that is, should God himself come into your being?

[12 : 17] And you heard me right. I'm talking about the God of the universe, creator, sustainer of heaven and earth, is available to come into your life and completely change you.

And that is what makes a difference. July 12 and this particular issue, I want to just share this with you. And if you will look at it, please.

And by the way, this is taken from Two Minutes with the Bible by Cornelius Stamm. And Mr. Stamm is with the Lord now, but he left behind a tremendous legacy of literature.

And this is one of my favorites. And as we were reading this this morning, I thought, boy, this is so good. I've just got to share this with the folks. Because this is exactly what we're talking about now with the prophecy and mystery thing, this indisputable fact.

And it is just absolutely remarkable what Paul is talking about here. Follow along if you've got your copy before you.

[13 : 22] It's there in your bulletin. It's called An Indisputable Fact. And it says, The theological confusion in the church today is basically the result of her rebellion against the authority of Paul as the divinely appointed apostle for the present dispensation of the grace of God.

At the nine o'clock hour, we were dealing with this Ephesians 3 passage a little bit. And that's quite a statement to make. And yet I am satisfied that it is true.

The authority of Paul as the divinely appointed apostle. Now there is where you need to make a distinction. Because it is the authority of Paul as the divinely appointed apostle.

It isn't the authority of Paul, period. Because Paul would have no more authority than anyone else. It is the divinely appointed Paul the apostle.

The article goes on, On every hand, Paul is referred to merely as one of the apostles. How many apostles did our Lord choose?

[14 : 33] Anybody? Yeah, 12. An even dozen. 12. And when he called them, and you can find it in Matthew chapter 10, and there are other places as well, but Matthew 10 is the first one you come to in the New Testament, we are told that Jesus called these 12 unto him, and he gave them something that none of them had.

He gave them special authority. That means a special ability that none of them possessed on their own. And he said, What I want you to do, fellows, is go in teams of two, all throughout the land of Israel.

Don't go outside of Israel. Confine yourselves. Don't go to the Gentiles. Don't go to the Samaritans.

Confine yourselves to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Them exclusively you are to go to. And as you go, you are to preach to them, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

And the reason it was, is because the king was on the scene. And he said, I want you to preach the message, and perform the miracles that I have.

[15 : 54] He gave them ability to cast out demons, to heal the sick, to all kinds of diseases like that. And these really caused quite a stir, just like Jesus himself did.

And I just cannot imagine a scene like that. But the scriptures make it quite clear. In fact, it was the miracles that Jesus did, and gave his disciples the ability to do, that constituted his calling card.

That was his authentication. That was how he vindicated his claims. He backed them up. He backed up the idea that he was the king, he was the Messiah, by the miracles that he performed.

And you remember when Nicodemus came to him in John 3 at night. And Nicodemus was a man of substance and position.

And he came to Jesus by night, and he requested an audience with him. And as he addressed Jesus, he said, we know that you have to be a man come from God.

[16 : 59] And the way we know that is because nobody can do the miracles that you have done unless God is with him. And Nicodemus was sold on who Jesus claimed to be, the Messiah of Israel.

And you'll recall that it was after his crucifixion when the limp, pale body of Jesus hung on that cross.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. He had been placed on the cross at nine o'clock in the morning. And the earth underwent a period of darkness and earthquake from noon to 3 p.m.

And when Jesus uttered those words, into thy hands I commit my spirit, and he bowed his head and gave up the spirit. And about an hour later, Nicodemus, same guy who came to Jesus by night in John 3, got together with another Pharisee by the name of Joseph of Arimathea.

And Joseph of Arimathea had just purchased real estate to carve out a tomb for his own burial and for that of his family.

[18 : 27] And it was a brand new tomb in which no body had ever yet been placed. And together, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea went into the presence of Pontius Pilate, the Roman curator, who was the one that gave the execution order for Jesus.

And the text says that they begged the body of Jesus. And Pilate was quite amazed that Jesus that Jesus was dead already.

And he probably turned to an assistant and said, he's already dead? Because it was not unusual for men to be on a cross of execution for three or four days before they expire.

If you can imagine the incredible agony that would be inflicted upon the human body. But Jesus had already undergone severe treatment even before he was placed on the cross.

And after three hours he died. And Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who came to him by night, went and requested the body. They took the body down and because the Sabbath was rapidly approaching and when sunset set in, the Jews couldn't do any kind of work.

[19 : 47] So they had to hurriedly prepare the body as best they could and they took it to Joseph's own personal tomb. And someone said, when Jesus died, he didn't even have his own tomb in which to be buried.

He was placed in a borrowed tomb. But that was all right because he wasn't going to need it for long. I love that. Wasn't going to need it for long.

So, we've got a situation where Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, having become convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, now they've got a dead Messiah on their hands.

That's no way for a Messiah to be. And by the way, the word Messiah means the anointed one, the chosen one, the selected one. Who selected him?

Who anointed him? His father. God the Father anointed the Son and sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. And now, he's dead.

[20 : 53] But we know what's going to happen three days later. And as they go about preaching this resurrection, that too is going to be a hard sell. Do you know who the first people were to deny the resurrection?

It was the apostles. Yeah. It was the apostles. When the women came back, they were all excited and they were just beside themselves. They were just really wired because they saw the Lord.

He was alive. And they tell this to the apostles and I can just see these men. Men, huh? Ladies. Men. I can just see these men looking at each other.

Get a load of this. They saw the Lord. He's alive. Oh, yeah. Right. Sure. And the text says, and their words seemed to them as idle tales.

They were probably thinking, well, you know how it is with women. They get real excited and they get emotional about things, you know. But we guys who are so strong and have it all together, we can see through all of that.

- [22 : 06] And you just kind of have to cut them some slack, you know, and just dismiss because after all, they're women. Don't you ladies love this? Yeah, right.
- Well, they were the first ones to deny it. But it was true. And for six weeks, for six weeks, this resurrected Messiah is going to travel throughout the land of Israel.
- I don't know who all he's going to see, but we're told that he appeared to Peter first and he appeared to the other apostles and he had fish for breakfast on the seashore of Galilee with him.
- And Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15 that he was seen of above 500 brethren at one time.
- We're not told where that was or who they were, but Paul said there were 500 at one time. And now, there is a gospel to preach that provides eternal life for those who believe in this resurrected Messiah.
- [23 : 21] and when this started being preached early on in the book of Acts, when Peter preaches it on Pentecost, 3,000 believed and were saved.
- And then he follows up that message in chapter 3 in the same place with the man who was born lame from his mother's womb over 40 years of age and now he's walking and jumping and leaping.
- And they've got this message to proclaim that silver and gold have we none. They told this poor lame man that held up his cup for them to put something in it. They said, silver and gold have we none, but such as we have give we unto you in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.
- Rise up and walk. And Peter reached down and grabbed that guy by the hand and yanked on him. And he came up and stood on two strong legs he had never stood on in his entire life.
- Wow. You think that didn't gather a crowd? This guy who was begging there in Acts 3 had dibs on that begging spot. It was right there at the temple and he situated himself.
- [24 : 37] Relatives would carry him in. Couldn't walk, they'd carry him in. Put him down and he would sit there and beg all day long. Everybody knew him. He was a regular public fixture. And now here he is jumping around.
- All because Jesus had risen from the dead. Absolutely amazing. How are you going to sell that? How are you going to proclaim that?
- And when the apostles start telling this and start preaching, those who are opposed to it, who were the same ones who were responsible for his being executed and handed over to Pilate, they still see this message about the resurrection.
- And by the way, did they believe it? Of course not. What was the standard party line among the Jewish establishment? His disciples came at night, stole away the body while the guards were sleeping.
- There isn't any resurrection. There never was a resurrection. It's all a hoax. And that's what they believed. And when Peter is preaching that in Acts chapter 2, him by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you with wicked hands have slain the Lord of glory, but God raised him from the dead.
- [25 : 56] They didn't believe that. Now it's true that the 3,000 did, but the religious establishment, the shakers and movers, they rejected it. Now they see a supposedly resurrected Jesus still being some kind of competition for them.
- So we've got to silence this. We've got to shut these people up. You know, you know the problem is the ignorant masses out there, the common people, the hoi polloi, they're just a bunch of dummies.
- They don't know anything. They'll buy this resurrection garbage hook, line, and sinker. And we can't protect them. We can't educate them enough to keep them from doing it.

So what we've got to do is shut up the source. So they call in Peter and the apostles. And this is all in Acts chapter three, beginning chapter four.

And they say, listen, we know there's nothing to this. And if you guys don't stop preaching this stuff about Jesus and the resurrection, there's going to be serious consequences.

[27 : 02] They warned them and threatened them and said, now go on, get out of here. These are the chief priests, Pharisees, shakers, movers, Sanhedrin, Hoi Palloi, all of these people.

And Peter said, well, with all due respect, sir, we recognize that you are the authority here, but we cannot help but speak that which we know.

And they departed from their presence. We get into chapter five, the very next chapter in Book of Acts. This time, they're called on the carpet again.

And this time, it won't be a warning, it'll be a flogging. They will physically beat them. And when they turn them loose, convinced that this will shut them up, they'll stop preaching this now, then they went back to their place of residence and they prayed and they thanked God that they were counted worthy to suffer shame and punishment for their blessed Messiah.

They hadn't learned a thing. You see, when you know what you know and you know that you know, nobody's going to talk you out of it and nobody's going to threaten you out of it.

[28 : 24] This is the stuff that martyrs are made of. This is the stuff that has caused thousands of people over the years to give their lives for this cause because of what they know and because of who they know.

They just would not be silenced. And you know, eventually it did cost them their life and eventually it's going to cost the Apostle Paul his life too. Let's continue on with this, if we may.

July 12, the indisputable fact. In Galatians 1 and 2, the Apostle throws down the certificate of his apostleship as it were to those who questioned it in his day.

He opens his argument with the declaration, I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

For I, Paul, neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. I got this straight from him.

[29 : 31] Now, here is where there is a major problem. And I am convinced it has plagued Christendom from the first century to the present.

And it all has to do with an inadequate view of the inspiration of Scripture. And that's a biggie because Scripture provides the basis for our authority for everything.

And the question is, is what Paul revealed in his epistles to be believed and acted upon as all the rest of Scripture?

or is it somehow deserving of being suspect? I, myself, over the years have talked to different ones about this, and some of them even preachers.

And I've heard statements like this, well, yeah, but that's just Paul. Now, wait a minute. are you willing to say the same about, well, that's just Moses?

[30 : 48] Or that's just Nehemiah? Listen, this is the watershed issue as far as authority is concerned.

This book is the Word of God or it isn't. You cannot have it both ways. And you cannot pick and choose what parts you like or what parts inspire you or what parts turn you on.

It is all. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. And love is profitable for different things, but it's profitable for correction, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, all of these things, so that we may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

In other words, it's saying that the Bible and its contents is designed to provide you with everything you need to know and be and do.

It's all right there in that book. And that's marvelous. That's incredible. That's wonderful. That gives us something to go on. But at the same time, it is an unfolding revelation that keeps having added to it new information that wasn't known before so that what you've got back in Genesis is radically different from what you've got in the book of Judges or in Isaiah or some of the prophets, which is radically different from what you're going to get in the Gospel of John or in the letters of Paul because there is a progression.

[32 : 21] Things are moving. The doctrine doesn't hold still. It develops. And if you miss that, you've missed a lot. And I'm speaking from experience because I missed it.

Missed it for several years. It's one of the greatest regrets of my life that I didn't plug into this sooner. But anyway, Paul has a ministry to perform that is radically different from what the twelve are.

Paul, when Jesus called the twelve in Matthew 10, gave them authority, he said, don't go to the Gentiles, don't go to the Samaritans, don't go anywhere except to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Now, why was that? Why was that? Didn't God care about anybody else? Were the Jews the only one he was interested in? Of course not. Jesus came to the Jews.

He came unto his own, John 1, and his own received him not. He came unto the Jews, but he came for everybody.

[33 : 34] And the Jew was to be a light to the Gentiles, to all the other nations. Not only that, but it was through the Jews.

And one tribe of the Jews, which would be the tribe of Judah, through which the Messiah would come.

Judah, one of the sons of Jacob, was born about 1,800 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

And it was Judah that would be the royal tribe. That's the line through which royalty would come. David the king was of the tribe of Judah.

And Jesus, who would be born a thousand years after David the king, was of the tribe of Judah. And it was the Jewish people through whom God was going to redeem the whole world.

[34 : 45] Israel, those twelve tribes, constituted the vehicle through which the Messiah would come. One of those tribes, Judah. And it is Israel that is going to be the principal nation that will be the lead nation, the spearhead nation for bringing all the rest of the world into the camp of God.

They are strategic. This is why they are referred to as the chosen people. Chosen for what? Chosen to be the vehicle of worldwide redemption.

The Jew has a very, very special place to occupy. And do you know something? Most of them today don't even realize it. They know that there's something different about being a Jew because a lot of them have paid a terrible price by way of persecution in different parts of the world just because they're a Jew.

But they are the vehicle through which the Messiah is to come. It is through this tiny insignificant nation, comparatively speaking, so far as population is concerned.

They're a bunch of nobodies. But they are the key nation in all the earth. And they will be one day able to fulfill that role in a way that their forefathers didn't.

[36 : 10] Let's go on. Paul says, this gospel was preached to me as not after man, neither received it of man, neither was I taught it by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Now, where did the twelve get their information? Where did they get their revelation? Well, they got it from Christ also. But he told them and made it very clear, don't go to anyone but the Jews.

Now, what we've got here is a radical departure because this man who is a Jew is raised up of God and called by Jesus after he ascended to heaven.

He's going to speak to him on the Damascus road and he is going to call this man singular, not twelve, but singular to be the apostle to the Gentiles.

Now, I'm at a loss for this. Do the math on this. Here's this tiny, insignificant nation that comprises two-tenths of one percent of the world's population back then and today and they get twelve apostles.

[37 : 21] Twelve! And here is this man, Saul of Tarsus, raised up to be the apostle to everybody else, all the rest of the world.

Just one? Well, he's going to have help, he's going to have Silas, he's going to have Barnabas, he's going to have Timothy, he's going to have Dr. Lou, he's going to have others, but he alone is designated the apostle to the Gentiles.

It's just like God to do things in the opposite way that we would. You know what I would do? I would reverse that. I would give Israel, tiny little Israel, I'd give them this one apostle and give all the rest of the world twelve apostles, or maybe twenty-four, or whatever, but I wouldn't do it that way.

And yet the Lord says his ways are not our ways, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways. God has his own rationale, and it often clashes with ours, but his is never wrong.

So we've got this one man, and he is insisting here that the gospel which was preached to me is not after man, neither received out of man. You know, I don't recall anywhere where any of the twelve ever said anything like that.

[38 : 47] Can you? Question. There is nothing at all in scripture to indicate that the twelve apostles ever had to struggle or fight for their authority as apostles.

I do not find any place where they were questioned as to their authority. other than, of course, the scribes and the Pharisees and arguing about the Sabbath and stuff like that.

But here is this man, Paul, formerly Saul of Tarsus, formerly a Christ hater, number one Christ hater.

And of all people, the risen Christ chooses chooses him? Are you serious? Him?

Yeah. And he revealed himself to him, and it took Paul, it took Saul of Tarsus three days and three nights to get over it because he was in shock and he was blinded, and he finally came to the conclusion it was real.

[40 : 08] That really was Jesus. He really is alive. He really did call me. Can you believe it? I've been so wrong.

I cheered them on as they stoned Stephen to death. I mocked them over the idea of the resurrection, and here he appeared to me, and it was him.

And I would deny it if I could, but I can't, it's impossible. And he argued with that for three days and three nights, and he replayed it and replayed it and replayed it and asked himself, was it real?

Was I dreaming? And finally it dawned on him that it was all so very true and there was nothing that was going to change it. And he had to come to the place when he said, all right, I'm in.

And boy, was he ever. Now his energy and his ambition that was so opposed to Christ has been turned around a 180 and he is now preaching the faith he once sought to destroy.

[41 : 28] You know something? I don't know that there is a greater evidence of regeneration like a changed life. It all depends on who you are and where you are in your life as to what kind of a change there might be.

And I remember for some it might be very slight. I recall walking into a Sunday school class many years ago in another church and it was made up of very small young children about ages four and five and six.

And they were all singing this song that seemed a little out of character for them because it went something like, years years I spent in vanity and pride caring not my Lord was crucified didn't quite seem to fit.

You know, at that young precious tender age some of them may very well have had a personal relationship with Christ and if it did it changed their life too but it didn't have all that much to change because they hadn't been around that long.

But for those of us who have been around maybe like Saul of Tarsus who probably was in his 40s at the time early 40s the change was revolutionary and he would later write from personal experience and say if any man be in Christ he is a new creature old things have passed away behold all things are become new he was speaking from personal experience nobody ever had the dramatic turnaround that he did have you had a dramatic turnaround have you at some point in your life come to faith in Christ and noticed that things were really different you look the same you talk the same maybe you lost some certain words in your vocabulary but by and large people couldn't tell but you knew you were somehow different on the inside and you couldn't really explain it to your satisfaction you just knew that something had happened inside the Bible calls this regeneration you've been re you've you've been re-geneed you know genes that stuff were made of the genes and chromosomes when you are regenerated they're made new they're updated they're updated they're changed and when someone comes to faith in Jesus Christ it will never be the same for the rest of their life oh they're not going to be perfect I remember talking to someone years ago and I asked him about receiving Christ as their savior and coming into new life and and they said well I would I'd really like to do that but

[44 : 29] I wouldn't want to make a mess of things I said what do you mean they said well I'm just being honest with you now but I just know me well enough to know I don't think I could hold out I don't think I could be the kind of person that Christians are supposed to be so I would rather not take that plunge than to be a hypocrite and make a mess of it on down the road and I labored to explain to them and I don't know that I ever succeeded but I labored to explain to them that when Jesus Christ comes into your life he not only provides forgiveness and salvation and eternal life but he also provides you with a new ability a new energy a new capacity that too is part of salvation and no he doesn't expect you to live the rest of your life as as a as a perfect individual I remember reading an interesting article of all things it was about

Constantine Emperor Constantine Emperor Constantine this was the man who this is the man who not only issued an edict in the year 315 okay 1700 years ago he issued an edict that declared his what shall I call it it was a it was more than a state it was a huge geographical area over which he was the emperor and he declared it no longer illegal to be a Christian and now it's illegal not to be so they had a whole bunch of pagan priests who worship their false gods lined up to be water baptized into the Christian faith and they asked Constantine himself if he was prepared to be baptized and he declined and he declined and guess what the rationale for it was he had been convinced by being by being told by those who didn't know better themselves that when you are water baptized you wash away your sins and isn't that expression used in scripture arise wash away yes it is and that needs some explanation but I'm not going to stop there now but anyway Constantine declined being baptized because he was afraid that after he was baptized and had all his sins washed away that he was afraid that he might sin again and that would undo everything well I would have news for Constantine he would sin again no question about that but he had he was on the receiving end of erroneous teaching and he actually believed that once your sins were washed away with baptism then you can enter heaven freely fully forgiven even if however he would have arrests away with baptism in walt

The scriptures teach, back to this sheep, the scriptures teach beyond the shadow of a doubt that Paul's apostleship and message were absolutely unique and separate from that of the twelve or of any who had preceded him.

This is what Christendom as a whole has refused to accept. Still does. Still does. This is the principal reason why there is so much division in what is called Christianity.

Is it any wonder then that they confuse God's prophesied kingdom program with the mystery committed to Paul for us in this present dispensation? That is, they try to marry the prophetic thing and the mystery thing and they won't mix.

[49 : 03] They clash. And the reason they clash is because they're supposed to clash. Each one is for a different time and a different people and a different place.

And when you try to make them fit together, confusion is going to reign. Is it any wonder then that they confuse God's prophesied kingdom program with the mystery committed to Paul for us in this present dispensation?

And that present dispensation is where we are right now. The scriptures emphasize not only the apostles constant use of the first person pronoun I, me, my, but the unique character of his apostleship and message.

Ignore this fact and confusion must inevitably result, accept it, and a hundred seeming contradictions in scripture disappear. This is a problem that has plagued the cause of Christ for 2,000 years.

Do you know, do you know why, going back 2,000 years, why the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Church are such opposite ends on so many issues?

[50 : 18] This will become apparent later on. But I assure you, it is because in the very early ages and stages of the development of the Roman Catholic Church, there was a great deal of adherence to the apostle Peter.

Well, listen, Peter was legitimate. There's no question about it. But Peter was one of the 12. Peter was used of God to give information to Cornelius, who was a Gentile, and that really started things.

And Peter was the one that had the keys of the kingdom given to him when Christ said he would build his church. But you know something? That church has never been built yet. Jesus said, and on this confession that Peter made, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, I will build my church.

But do you know he hasn't built it yet? Now, you may think that the Protestant Church of Christianity is that church. But no, no.

That is a church, but it's not that church. That's the church of Ephesians 3. That's the body church. But it's not the church that Jesus was talking about when he said, on this rock I will build my church.

[51 : 37] That's to come. That would be the remnant church. That would be tribulation church. So it hasn't been built yet. And yet, that is the message.

That is the message that Peter had, that Peter was given by Christ. And Peter preached it on Acts 2. But that kingdom, whole kingdom concept in which that church is going to be built, never came to pass.

Still hasn't. The kingdom of which Matthew is speaking, Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, never happened.

You don't think for a moment, do you, that the will of God in heaven is being done on earth as it is in heaven? There isn't anybody here that believes that, is there?

I hope not. That church doesn't exist yet. Still hasn't. But it's going to. And this is that upon which the Roman Catholic Church have placed their leadership and their confidence, and they have designated Peter as the first pope.

[52 : 44] Now, what's wrong with this picture? I'll tell you what's wrong with it. The Roman Catholic Church has based its theology and its practice on a reality that was passe.

What is this new reality? It is the gospel of the grace of God. And when you look at the epistles of Peter and James and John and Hebrews tucked away in the back of your Bible, including the Revelation, do you know what they all have in common?

Very pronounced, intense Jewishness. Jewishness. Jewishness. What are they doing with Jewishness in the New Testament?

That's exactly where they're supposed to be. And the emphasis is on things Jewish. Written to the 12 tribes scattered abroad.

That's Jewish. All of it's Jewish. The book of the Revelation is as Jewish as it can be. And there are so many quotes in it from the Old Testament. What is it supposed to be built on?

[54 : 05] It's supposed to be built on the updated information. And I want you to turn to two or three references real quick and then we'll have to dismiss. And the first one is in Romans chapter 2.

This is, this is, boy, this is stellar stuff. Romans chapter 2 and verse 16. And boy, did he have a hard time selling it.

And you know something? He still does. Romans 2 and verse 16. The apostle wrote, On the day when, according to, what?

My gospel? What is that? My gospel? God will judge the secrets of men through Jesus Christ.

According to my gospel? What was it that made it Paul's gospel? He didn't think it up.

[55 : 11] He didn't invent it. The risen Christ revealed to him this new material whereby one who places their faith and trust in Jesus Christ is accepted by God, forgiven by God, given eternal life solely on the basis of believing.

That's what made this Paul's gospel. It's called justification by faith.

And the early church, the early church, which was the Roman Catholic Church, did not go with this gospel.

They went with the gospel that Peter and the twelve preached. It was the gospel of the kingdom. They embraced that. They preached that. They brought paraphernalia, even items from the priesthood of the Jews, over into the Roman Catholic Church.

And they went with that. And it went on that way for 1,500 years until an obscure monk by the name of Martin Luther was reading the book of Romans and discovered that the just shall live by faith.

[56 : 42] What is this? How did we miss this? The just shall live by faith. What about the indulgences? What about all of the paraphernalia that Rome has established?

All of the hoops through which people must jump in order to be. And even then, there's no security. There's no stability. There's no assurance. Even then.

What is this thing? And the apostle Paul came to life. 1,500 years later.

With the gospel of the grace of God. Justification. By faith. And I want to close with this. Well, there's two more references. I won't turn to them now, but we'll look at them later.

16, 25 of Romans and 1 Timothy 1, 16. Same phrase. According to my gospel. Each time. And what he's saying. And this is so important.

[57 : 45] This is so important. What he is saying is he is making a distinction between the good news that he is preaching as opposed to the good news that had been preached before. What was preached before?

Repent and be baptized. Repent and be baptized. That was the gospel in the book of Acts. That was what Peter preached. That was what the 12 preached. Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

That's the message that's passé. Paul wasn't preaching that. He was preaching the gospel of the grace of God. And it was a hard sell. People were not buying it.

And you know something? They still aren't. They still aren't. And the whole church is impoverished because of it. This gospel is so liberating.

So incredible. So incomparable. Think of it this way. It was God doing the very most he could do in the giving of his son.

[58 : 50] So that he could require from you the very least that you could do. Which was just believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's why it's called good news. There are no hoops for you to jump through. There was a cross to be hung upon.

And that's where Jesus was. And that's what he paid for. To make this gospel available to you.

And the only question I want to leave you with is have you appropriated this? Have you taken this truth to yourself? Have you embraced this Jesus who paid for your sin?

Have you believed on him? Invited him into your life? Would you pray with me please? Father, there is so much that needs to be said about this glorious, glorious gospel.

[59 : 51] Time fails us to even make a dent in it. It is so rich and so full and so free and so forgiving. We just cannot get over it.

We are so glad for that sweet day when we came to faith and realized the Lord Jesus paid the penalty for our sins in full. And Father, if there is anyone here today, boy or girl, man or woman, young or old, who's never really seriously looked at themselves and their deficiency before you, we pray that in this moment, you as only the Spirit of God can, will inform them, convict them, convince them of their sin and of their waywardness and of their rebellion and of their self-centeredness.

And they may be willing to look to Jesus Christ who wants to forgive them for all of that. Our prayer is that anyone here today searching, wondering, looking for answers, may be willing to right now open their heart and say, Lord Jesus, I admit that I'm just like everybody else.

I too am a sinner just like everybody else. And I believe that it's because of sin that you died and paid the penalty for it.

And I want what you paid for put to my account. I simply want to believe in you as my substitute and my Lord and Savior.

[61 : 31] Thank you for dying on that cross for me. Lord Jesus, I just want to give myself to you. And I want to thank you for your forgiveness.

And I want to live the life that you want me to live. And I thank you for enabling me to do it. And dear friend, if that's the pry of your heart, God will seal it to your heart.

And I advise you to tell somebody about it so that they can encourage you as well. Thank you, Father, for this time to share together and for this incredible message.

2,000 years ago, mankind has still never gotten over it. And we never do want to get over it because it's just too wonderful for words. Thank you for time we have shared and spent together.

Send us forth from this place now, we pray. Rejoicing in the wonderful gospel of our Lord Jesus. His name, amen.