

Paul - Critical Questions of Chronology

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- [0 : 00] Not a very pleasant passage of scripture, but a very important one nonetheless.
- In your bulletin today, we made the point that not only is what happened in the Bible of tremendous importance, but also very often key to what happened is when it happened.
- Timing is a very, very important thing. There was a popular question that surfaced during the Watergate investigation that some of you cannot remember because you weren't even around then.
- But it was in the 1960s when President Nixon was in the White House and was undergoing a tremendous pressure from the investigation that had begun regarding the Watergate break-in and all the rest.
- And you will recall that the more critical issue wasn't the break-in itself nor the motivation behind it, but what came down to the real critical issue was the cover-up, was the lying about the events that transpired.
- [1 : 25] And a phrase that kept being bandied about over and over again focused upon the President there in the Oval Office, and it went something like this.
- What did President Nixon know, and when did he know it? That became the critical question of investigation into the whole issue.
- What did he know, and when did he know it? Who knew it? Who knew it before him? Now, what I want you to do is think in terms of applying that question to Paul the Apostle.
- What did he know, and when did he know it? And was there anyone who knew it before him? And my pat answer up front is, No, there was no human being who knew it before him.
- But God, of course, had it tucked away in his own omniscient mind from eternity past, precisely what everything Paul knew and was revealed to Paul, what it was all about.
- [2 : 40] But until God revealed it to Paul, nobody else knew. And we are talking about the mystery which has to do with the body of Christ being joined by Jew and Gentile.
- This is spelled out. We'll not take it up again. It's in Ephesians chapter 3, And it is very clear, the mystery of Christ to wit, that Jew and Gentile are comprised in one body, making one new man of that which was previously two.
- The barrier, the middle wall of partition had been broken down. And now, there is neither Greek nor Jew, neither bond nor Gentile, nor male nor female.
- You are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. So, when you apply this question to Paul as to what he knew and when he knew it, it does become strategic as involves all of the New Testament and the proclamation of the gospel of grace.
- When did it begin to be proclaimed? Frequently, the thinking is that as soon as the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ was a reality, they began proclaiming it.
- [3 : 56] Well, that's not exactly correct. Because, at the outset, they did not really understand exactly what the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ accomplished.

They knew that it realized death in the life of a human being and his burial, and his being brought back to life again in a resurrection body.

They understood that. But insofar as the implications of that was concerned, and how it applied to each and every human being who ever lived, that escaped them.

They did not realize the efficacy, the efficiency of the death of Christ, and exactly what it wrought, and how it was designed by God to actually change human lives and regenerate them.

So today, what we are discussing with the gospel of the grace of God actually includes what we might consider a regime change.

[5 : 05] This is a term that is bandied about among nations today, and the international community, and we are discussing things like regime change. Remember, when the United States launched an attack on Iraq, I mean the second time, and went into the city of Baghdad, and you saw on camera, as well as I, the statue of Saddam Hussein being toppled, and the people were cheering as that huge edifice came crashing down, and one of the things it signified was a regime change.

The dictator, Saddam Hussein, was no longer in power. He had been replaced. Now, it wasn't clear, and in fact, it still isn't clear what he has been replaced with, because there are vying factions and interest groups there wanting to pick up the pieces and go on with it.

So, we don't know what the regime has been changed to, but there's no doubt there has been a regime change. Now, really, spiritually speaking, when the gospel of the grace of God is proclaimed, and one embraces that, you not only receive new life in Christ, and the forgiveness of sin, there is a regime change that goes on inside your heart.

Christ is there now. Christ is in you. The confidence, the assurance, the absolute guarantee of future glory.

So, there is a regime change for the dictates of your life. You are now under the authority of a new master. You have been bought with a price.

[7 : 09] Christ owns you, lock, stock, and barrel. Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. Egypt underwent a regime change from Hosni Mubarak being the president and for all practical purposes dictator to the present.

Libya from Muammar Gaddafi as dictator, entrenched there as a ruthless tyrant for decades, was routed out and eventually slain and now there is a different regime in place.

We are aware and follow on a day-to-day basis what is happening in Syria as Bashar Assad is inflicting his government troops upon those rebels who are trying to bring about a regime change in Syria.

All of these are Arab countries and the change has been referred to as the Arab Spring. You may have heard it called that.

And the reason they have assigned that name to it, the Arab Spring, is because it is like a new birth for each of these nations.

[8 : 26] Just like in the spring of the year when everything becomes new and comes up again, this is what is being experienced in much of the Arab world.

that we are living with on a day-to-day basis by way of television, etc. And, let me make this point here. In all of these cases where there is a regime change, there is one reliable, predictable, dependable, constant always involved and that is this.

mass confusion. Everybody is wondering, what's going on? What's going to happen next? What shape is the government going to take?

What does the future hold? All of these countries remain in turmoil. Even where the United States is with its troops trying to maintain the peace and bring some semblance of order out of it, even in the midst of that, everyone is well aware that these American troops are not going to be there forever.

In fact, we all know that they're coming home probably prematurely and there are debates that will go on and on as to whether they should have ever been sent there in the first place. But that's another story.

[9 : 53] And all I'm saying is there is tremendous confusion that exists when there is a regime change. Enter the book of Acts.

We've got a regime change taking place there spiritually and it is very difficult to keep up with all the players and who did what and what this means and what that means and what is no longer in force and what is new.

There's massive confusion taking place. And as you read the book of Acts, realizing that these events transpired over 30 years, you can read the book of Acts in 30 minutes.

Well, maybe 45 minutes, depending on how fast you read. But these events took place over 30 years and that's got to be taken into consideration. In the Bible, the dispensation or the regime of the law of Moses and the gospel of the anticipated kingdom that was promised under the regime of Israel as the focus is changing to the new revelation from God given to Paul the apostle, formerly Saul of Tarsus.

So you've got a lot of confusion. You've got a lot of people who are the players in this thing who don't understand what's happening. And one of the chiefest players of the whole cast is Peter.

[11 : 30] He could not understand what God was doing when God called him to go to Cornelius. That's why he refused. He was functioning under the old regime.

I'm not supposed to do that. It's forbidden. It's illegal for a man who's a Jew to go into the house of a gentile. All Peter was doing was what he was supposed to be doing.

He wasn't out of line. It was God that was changing the program. And Peter was slow to catch on to it. Peter was slow to catch on to everything.

He was lovable and unpredictable and very outgoing and very always ready to put his foot in his own mouth.

In the midst of all of that, he was a very lovable kind of character. I suspect Peter would be the kind of guy that you just couldn't stay angry with. He was just that kind of a guy. But he was one of the key figures.

[12 : 34] And Paul is another key figure. Peter is on one side of this transition. And Paul is on the other side. And both of them lived, functioned, and operated during both regimes, both dispensations.

That of the kingdom message and the proclamation exclusively limited to Israel, and the proclamation of the apostle Paul to Jew and Gentile alike, making no distinction between them.

Wow. What a formula for confusion. That's exactly what it was. And this I have submitted before, and so say I now again. This is one of the principal reasons for so many disagreements among Christian brethren about church, what it is, how to do church, what's the mission of the church, and all the rest.

All of that comes into play. this is very, very critical. Now, let me tell you what the typical response of the average Christian is to this information today, and I know this because I have shared it with a number.

Why is this so important and critical for understanding today? Who cares? What difference does it make anyway?

[14 : 01] How does knowing this stuff about dispensations and Paul and Peter and what they knew and when they knew it and what they preached and what they didn't preach, how in the world is that going to help me pay next month's mortgage?

I don't care about that stuff. That's ancient history. How is that going to help me afford the price of gasoline today? What's that got to do with anything that really matters?

And this is the typical opinion of a lot of people. In reality, these issues are merely of peripheral importance compared to the big picture.

The house you live in and how much gasoline costs and whether or not you're going to be able to afford your mortgage or whether your house is underwater, all of these things that we fret and worry and stew about in the final analysis are minuscule to the big picture.

Yet, the minuscule is where we tend to live. I call it majoring on the minors and minoring on the majors. We are so given to that because we are such people of the present, the now.

[15 : 19] big picture. The big picture constitutes the gigantic umbrella of all of life and living, of which your mortgage and gas prices are but a tiny, tiny part, comparatively speaking.

thing. But how difficult is it to get people to focus on the big picture? Very difficult. That's why most of them in our population are not in Bible believing churches today.

And many churches that perhaps at one time preached and taught the principles and the values from the Bible no longer do because they are so busy putting out the fires of making the mortgage and the high cost of gasoline and all the rest of it.

They call it ministering to felt needs. Well, I don't think we ought to ignore felt needs because they're legitimate and they're real and God uses people to meet the needs of people.

Felt needs have a reality to them and they need to be addressed. But felt needs are not the ultimate needs. The ultimate has to do with the spiritual.

[16 : 50] And the felt needs and the physical and the temporal, and that which concerns stuff is just fleeting. As we were talking in the Sunday school class this morning, we are creatures of the here and now and this very often dictates the thinking, the lifestyle, and the entire focus of the me and now generation.

History is of no interest to them at all. And the future is even of less interest. We would chide and criticize the drug and alcohol addict for being concerned about nothing but his next fix or his next drink.

But in reality, this is where most of mankind lives in his consideration or lack thereof of the real issues of life.

For most, they are locked in to the here and now with little thought of how they got here or where they are going, both of which are very important.

A mental trashing or ignoring of things historical and things prophetic produces a lifestyle for the present that we can only describe as hysterical.

[18 : 28] That's hysterical, not historical. You would be amazed how many people in our population are living lives of frantic hystericism.

They may not look like it, all lit up with frizzled hair and shaky hands, but within that uncertain heart of theirs, there is a great deal of hysteric.

We are currently living in a hysterical culture, predictably so. It is one where norms and standards, value systems, redefining of right and wrong, utterly harebrained ideas of legitimizing homosexuality and lesbianism, a push for the right of same-sex people to actually marry as husband and wife, single men or homosexuals living as married and given the right to adopt children, the cultural suicide of political correctness and our ever insistent demand for sex, sex, sex, with no attendant consequences, and the right to destroy the unborn baby reality in the event there are those negative consequences.

All these ongoing insanities continue to be the engines driving this present culture. answer. If you have ever wondered to yourself or ask the question, has the whole world gone nuts?

The answer is yes. Much of it has. That which hasn't is on the way. some would say, only the western world.

[20 : 48] Only the western world because the eastern world under Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam are already there.

And they are trying to bring us in tow. And they are succeeding more than they are failing. And the adversary is behind the scene orchestrating the whole nutty mess.

they are now intent as easterners to bring the west along. And if we don't go along, they will gladly eliminate us.

They have said so. And they are doing so in areas where they are predominant right now. So, what does all this have to do with what happened 2,000 years ago in the book of Acts?

The answer is everything. We're still dealing with the same kind of mindset. Nothing has changed. The adversary who is the god of this age, 1 Corinthians 4, still has and is operating his game plan, and the vast majority of people who make up the present culture, both east and west, are duped, anesthetized into his thinking and into his mindset, which is playing right into his hands.

[22 : 40] The book of Acts transitions from pure paganism as reflected by the Gentiles and their polytheism coupled with the Judaism that had been thoroughly corrupted by the Jewish religious establishment.

It transitions, the book of Acts transitions from that to the gospel of the grace of God predicated upon the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ for the sins of the whole world.

This message, this message became the new liberating message for the whole world. But the world loves the old entrenched paganism and the religious legalism so much that they sought to kill and did kill many of those who were proclaiming this new gospel of God's grace, the sinful man.

In other words, the world resisted a regime change and still does. We continue to present the regime change as God's only panacea, that is, God's only cure for a world woefully ill, saddled by its moral and spiritual insanity.

And that's what we're living in the midst of. right now. A suicidal, spiritual, moral insanity. And it is pulling us down, down, down.

[24 : 24] When Paul arrived in Athens, in Acts chapter 17, and we won't go there now perhaps, but we'll get there eventually, he was confronted with statuary idols representing false gods on virtually every street corner.

And he referred to this when he addressed the Athenian philosophers on Mars Hill saying, it is apparent to me that you people are really super religious.

Everywhere I looked, there was a statue to a deity with his name on it. They had multiple gods and goddesses who married and had little gods and goddesses and so on.

And let me remind you, these people engaged in that constituted the intellectual elite of the world at that time.

These were the big thinkers, the brilliant people bowing to these statues, offering sacrifice of different kinds to these statues, even one to the unknown god, scared that they had left out a deity without recognizing they erected a statue like we have a tomb for the unknown soldier because we don't know who the soldier is that's buried in there.

[26 : 01] He isn't given a name. He just represents all of the unknown soldiers and we put him in that tomb. We call it the tomb of the unknown soldiers. Well, the Greeks had a statue, an idol to an unknown god.

So, if there is a god that we missed, that we overlooked, we don't want him ticked at us because it's not a good idea to get the gods teed off on you. So, we'll just call this one to the unknown god.

Whoever you are, sorry we missed you, this is for you. That's the best you can do? That's the intellectual elite of the day?

Well, it was. And Paul says in Romans 1, professing themselves to be wise. Their foolish hearts were darkened.

They became fools. Do you not see a parallel between them and what is frequently put forth today as conventional wisdom?

[27 : 07] God's regime change occurs only in the life of one individual person at a time, not entire nations as regime changes in politics.

This is because of the individual volition, the power to choose that God has granted to each individual. individual personal regeneration or regime change internally through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit is the singular dynamic that God has provided.

It is personal, not institutional, a la Constantine in the fourth century. When Emperor Constantine came to power, the Holy Roman Empire, in the fourth century, tradition tells us that he embraced Christianity.

We do not know to what extent this is true, but by that I mean he claims, Constantine claimed to have seen a vision and the vision was of a cross and the caption over the cross was in this name conquer.

And he took that to be a directive from God and he embraced Christianity. We do not know and will not know, I suspect, until we get to heaven, whether it was a personal thing with him so that he became a regenerated individual.

[28 : 58] I'm not prepared to rule him in or out. I simply don't know. But I do know that he was so profoundly affected by it that he issued an edict and the edict consisted of pretty much the following.

You know how that up to this point in time it has been considered illegal to be a Christian because we consider you an enemy of the state?

Well, from here on, it is going to be illegal not to be a Christian. So you must embrace Christianity or you will be an enemy of the state.

And just like that by fiat. Well, that's not the way people are changed. They just change the laws under which they function and operate. As he well knew because the story goes that he had hundreds and hundreds of priests, pagan priests, pagan priests, lined up to be admitted to the church through water baptism.

And they were baptizing all of these into this new religion. Maybe that explains how and why Christianity got off to such a rocky start. Because Christians are not made by fiat like that.

[30 : 22] Christians are made individually, not institutionally, and not politically. You cannot tell somebody whatever you were before, now you're a Christian.

Oh, no. It just doesn't work that way. It is an internal change that comes about through one's own personal volition. You are given a decider.

You are given the ability to make a choice. And you will be accountable for the choice that you make. But it cannot be something pronounced upon you. And this is one of the major sticking points that many people have regarding religion, free choice, etc.

And they just simply don't understand. For instance, there are those who would deny that you have a volition that is your privilege to use.

This is associated with the freedom of conscience. And this, by the way, is very germane and very critical to where we are as a nation. Because our founding fathers understood this.

[31 : 30] They were men who were coming from a biblical mindset. They understood the principle of volition and the importance of the right to personal conscience.

And that is why they insisted that there be a separation between church and state. And what this means is not what the liberals would have us think it means.

It is not freedom from religion. It is freedom of religion that they sought to establish. And the principle thing that was in their mind in the Bill of Rights and in the freedoms that are set forth there is that they had been living under a state church.

The Church of England had the King of England as its head. And in England there was no separation between church and state.

The church was the state. The state was the church. And the clergy who filled the pulpits in Great Britain on a Sunday were on the payroll of the British government.

[32 : 49] They received their check, their income from the government. And when our founding fathers drafted our constitution, they wanted nothing to do with a state that was under the authority or domination of a church.

Not any church. They were opposed to their being established in the United States, an official American church. There is no such thing.

There isn't supposed to be. We don't want one. We want a separation between church and state so that the state cannot dictate to the church.

And the church cannot dictate to the state. That's precisely what happened during the Middle Ages when Rome ruled the world and the Roman Catholic Church was in the driver's seat.

They actually had kings and emperors under their authority. And by virtue of their crowning the king, that symbolized that their authority was above that of the king.

[33 : 54] That was the religious domination of the political system. And you can also have the political system dominate the religious system. All our founding fathers were fighting for was a separation so that neither can dominate the other.

That's the way it's supposed to be. And that respects the freedom of conscience. And all that means is this. You and I as individuals have been endowed by our creator with an ability to make choices.

you can choose the right, you can choose the wrong. It is up to you. Most of us know what right and wrong is.

And we have the ability to make a decision either way. Someone has said, you have the right to make any decision you want. You do not have a right to determine the consequences.

You can make the decision, but you can't determine the consequences. So choose well. this means that when someone is confronted with the gospel of Jesus Christ and the plan of salvation is laid out to them, they have the power and the right among men.

[35 : 19] God doesn't say that they have the right, but they have the right among men to make the wrong choice. Many do. Many do.

And there are those attendant consequences. So, Christianity and traditional Americanism and our traditional way of life and our constitutional prerogatives recognizes the right of conscience.

You have a right not to be a Christian. You can worship the moon if you want to. People may consider you crazy, but you're at liberty to do that.

You can worship a stick in the mud if you want to. That's your right. That's your privilege. You can do that if you want. Not many people will line up behind you, but if that's what you want to do, you can.

But under other provision, for instance, under Islam, you do not have freedom of conscience. Billy Graham has gone all over the world preaching the gospel.

[36 : 36] He's been in Iron Curtain. We don't even use that term anymore, do we? He's been in former Iron Curtain countries. He's been all over the world. But there's one country he's never been in, and that is any country where Islam predominates.

Billy Graham has never preached the gospel in Saudi Arabia. He's never preached the gospel in Egypt. He's never preached the gospel in Iran.

Why? Because those are Islamic controlled government nations, and they will not allow free discourse of religion in their country.

religion. And if you were to go there as a missionary, in the first place, you would never be admitted to the country as a missionary. You would be flatly rejected.

And this has resulted in a number of people who have a heart for Islamic people and want to reach them with the gospel, and they go in undercover. They go in as a teacher, as a scientist, as some other specialists, offering their services to a relatively third-world country, so they can be incommunicado.

[38 : 03] They can be an underground agent, if you will, for the gospel. And they do so at the risk of their life, and many have been found out and have been expelled.

I remember a couple who went into, it wasn't the Sudan, it was Algiers, into Algiers.

They had been there, had been there for about seven years teaching English in the schools, and one day, one of the students came up to this woman teacher, this American woman teacher, and asked her if she might be able to locate for her a New Testament in the Arabic language.

The teacher was thrilled that the student even requested it, wrote back to the United States to her mission organization, asking if they could supply them with an Arabic New Testament, and they sent her one, and she gave it to the student.

Just gave it to her, fulfilled the request, and eventually it was found out, and the missionary couple was expelled from the country, just because they gave a New Testament that was requested, not forced upon, but requested.

[39 : 33] That is the denial of freedom of conscience. They will not allow Christianity to be presented, and my estimation is, they're scared to death of the gospel, because they know it has qualities and appeals that Islam does not have.

Do you realize there is no provision for the forgiveness of sins in Islam? Because there is no substitutionary death of a sacrifice who paid for those sins.

They do not even recognize that. they do not even recognize the fallenness of humanity, much that they don't recognize. So, therefore, they feel that they are well within their rights to deny the freedom of conscience, and they say, your conscience must be bound to Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet, and that is it.

Nothing else is permitted. And if you propagate something else, or believe something else, you do so at your own peril. This is serious business, folks. We have not yet seen the real wrath of Islam unleashed upon those whom they regard as infidels.

We have not yet seen that. Oh, we've seen pockets, we've seen people beheaded, all in the name of their religion. And if there's anyone to whom freedom of conscience was denied, it was people like that.

[41 : 08] Daniel Perlman was a Jew. He has no right to be a Jew. Jews don't even have a right to exist.

A Jew doesn't have the right to draw his next breath of air. Let him convert to Islam or off with his head.

God. And they mean it. That's the denial of freedom of conscience. Here in the Western world, under the United States, we have this glorious gospel of the freedom that comes with the grace of God, and we proclaim it, and we tell people, this is what you ought to believe.

This is what God has provided. This is the only possible way to heaven. This is the only panacea that God has provided, and I appeal to you, I implore you, to make this decision, all the while I admit you have a right not to.

You can refuse. You can reject. And I won't kill you, and I won't persecute you, and I won't put you in jail, and I won't ridicule you or make fun of you.

[42 : 32] I will be saddened that you do not own my Savior, but that's your choice. That is freedom of conscience. Someone has put it this way.

I may not agree with what you believe or what you say, but I am willing to die to defend your right to believe it or say it.

that is the old fashioned American freedom. That's what the blood of our boys has been shed at Iwo Jima and Tarawa.

That's what it was all about. That's what it was all about. And you know something? Little by little, we are losing more and more of that mentality.

Little by little, we are buying more and more into the multiculturalism, into the political correctness, into the religious, what shall I say, the legitimizing of all religions and all lifestyles and all ideas, things, because all absolutes and those things formerly identified as right and wrong have gone right out the window.

[44 : 08] And right is what you want to make it, and wrong is what you want to make it, and nobody has the right to impose their views upon you. That's where we are.

you must understand that all I am saying about this culture and what is going on at the present is vitally connected with what we're talking about in a 2,000 year old book called The Acts of the Apostles.

What was preached and when it was preached and the consequences therefrom. This is all connected. This is all part of, they say, this all belongs to the big enchilada. It all is in the mix.

Everything is connected. Well, questions or comments? Next week, I will give you the message that I intended to bring this morning.

Barbara. Hold on. Yeah, here comes the mic. Hold on. Since the people in Saudi Arabia are not allowed to worship our Lord, does that mean they're not going to go to heaven?

[45 : 27] Yeah. Next question. Thank you. Well, you know, this sounds so narrow and bigoted and all the rest of it, but we have got to associate this with the gospel of Christ and with the price that Christ paid.

Way in the back, Scott, there's a Lynette has a question or comment. I'm sorry, Dad, but I'm going to have to disagree with you.

Well, this is the first time in all your life that my daughter ever disagreed is. You are your mother's daughter. Go ahead. In Saudi Arabia, they would still be able to become Christians.

It's their own will. They can still decide what they want to decide. Even though we can't go preach to them, we've said before and you've preached that everyone knows in their heart that there is a God.

If they want to know Him, He'll come to them. And I think they would still have, maybe not the desire, or maybe some of them would, but they would still have the ability to become a believer.

[46 : 42] You're absolutely right. You're absolutely right. We don't have any disagreement. Even though it's not legal. No. And they just wouldn't tell anybody. Well, absolutely. I appreciate that. Yeah. We're not in disagreement at all.

You know, let me give you an example of the severity of this. This is Saudi Arabia. And by the way, the nation of Saudi Arabia is considered to be an ally.

They're considered to be a friend. I would trust them about as far as, and you know something? They wouldn't trust us any further either. It's a mutual thing.

In Saudi Arabia, there is in Riyadh a large military installation. And it is perimeterized. That is, there is a boundary.

I mean, here is where the U.S. military installation begins, and here's where it ends. And it is on Saudi soil, with Saudi permission. They ask us to be there, because they like Uncle Sam being available in case some of their neighbors get a little frisky, you know, like Saddam Hussein did with, what am I thinking, Kuwait, you know, years ago.

[47 : 57] And we have, of course, on this military installation, thousands of U.S. troops. And we have chaplains.

And there are Catholic and Protestant and Jewish chaplains. Well, I don't know about, I wouldn't say Jewish.

There may be Jewish, but if there are, they're probably in communicable. anyway, my point is this. On that military installation, on what is accepted and understood as being the military base, where the military personnel are, etc., the Christian, the Catholic and the Protestant chaplains are not allowed to wear their military symbol of their office on their collar, which is a cross about an inch high on their lapel.

And that identifies them as being a chaplain. They are not permitted to wear it. Even though no Saudi citizen necessarily would even have to be exposed to it because this is in the military complex, the U.S.

military. This is how rigid they are. And, of course, there are no Bibles permitted out in public. You cannot go out and buy a Bible. You cannot receive a Bible anywhere.

[49 : 31] And this is in one of the, what we would, I'd use the word friendly, cautiously, one of the friendly Arab nations. It's, that's just, it's very, very rigorous, very rigorous.

Any other questions or comments? Way in the back, John. John. John. John. I think the question actually is, is God big enough to deal with people individually, wherever they are?

That's a good way of putting it. And he is. So, you know, even though they may not hear the gospel as we preach it, he still deals with them individually.

You know, a phenomenal thing is happening. I don't know what to make of this, but I keep hearing reports of it. And I, like I said, I don't know what to make of it.

I am not prepared to denounce it as bogus. All I can say is, I just don't know. It sure makes me wonder. And that is, we keep hearing reported incidents from Muslims that they had a vision or an encounter with Jesus Christ and he revealed to him, to them, that he is the way, the truth, and the life.

[51 : 07] And they have put their trust in him. Now, I don't know anybody here in the Western world. Well, there may be some people who claim, you know, people can make all kinds of claims and you can't, you can't verify them and you can't deny them.

You just shrug your shoulders and say, I don't know. I find that hard to believe. And yet, these reports keep streaming in from Muslim communities that they have converted to Christianity but they are not noising that abroad.

That could cost you your life. It is one of the responsibilities of a Muslim to put to death any Muslim who embraces any other religion other than Islam.

These are called honor killings. If you have a son or daughter who was born and reared into the Islamic faith and at the age of 15, 18, 30, whatever, they embrace Jesus Christ as their savior and they become a Christian.

If you are living in a Muslim country, you not only have the right, you have the responsibility to kill them, your own child, to kill them for apostasy.

[52 : 36] And that is considered an honor killing. It would be a difficult thing for a parent to do, but doing so would only prove that you love Allah more than you love your children.

And you are intent on being obedient to Allah. And he requires you to put to death those who apostatize. Now that is Islam straight up.

That's right out of the Quran. Incredible. And these people are making gains in leaps and bounds throughout the world.

There are more Muslims in the United States of America than there are Methodists. If there's another question or comment, we'll take it.

Otherwise, we'll dismiss. Anybody? Anybody? Would you stand, please? Father, we are so grateful that we have a gospel which we need not be ashamed, for it and it alone is the power of God through faith unto salvation, and nothing else can accomplish what that gospel can accomplish.

[53 : 58] we recognize in this message this morning, in the text that has been read, that the world is engulfed in a spiritual darkness.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became as fools. We pray that you will enable us to remember that we at one time lived in that spiritual darkness, even as they.

And that those whom we are discussing this morning, whether they are Islamic or Jewish or Gentile, whatever they may be, outside of Christ, they are not the enemy.

They are captives of the enemy, even as we once were. We cannot begin to thank you enough for such a liberating gospel that brings about a regime change within the heart and mind of everyone who embraces it.

Our prayer for each and every person here is that they may know that peace and joy and incredible forgiveness that comes from having trusted Jesus Christ as their substitute.

[55 : 18] We bless you for such a wonderful Savior, and we pray in his name. Amen.