

The Difficult Sayings of Jesus #8

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[0 : 00] This is the kind of subject and content that I really wish I had about a three-hour session for.

But don't you worry, I'll be done under two. Seriously, it's dealing with the subject that is one of those we would call difficult sayings of Jesus.

And there is no question, or at least there ought not to be any question, just from a mere cursory reading as to the formula that is given here.

And if you have not picked up on the idea that this really does seem to conflict with the concept of grace, then you're just not reading the same text that I am.

This is a very definite works-oriented kind of situation. Can you not see that? Isn't that abundantly apparent?

[1 : 02] What must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus said, we'll keep the commandments. That's a very works-oriented thing.

And in my estimation, it is absolutely impossible to understand this difficult saying of Jesus if you fail to take into consideration what I think are very obvious dispensational distinctives that are involved.

I do not think that Jesus was dangling the carrot, if you will, before this young man. I think he was simply just expressing the truth of the situation, which has to do with entrance into or inheriting the kingdom of heaven, which was looked upon then as future, which still is future.

And this young man's question had to do with achieving or gaining a place in that kingdom of heaven.

And by the way, let me just say this at the outset. When he talks about inheriting eternal life, you've got to understand that in the Jewish context in which it was said and what this eternal life situation meant to the Old Testament Jew.

[2 : 24] And let me make this point very clear. Here in Luke, as well as in Matthew and Mark, Jesus is operating under the Old Testament game plan.

The New has not been instituted, and that's very confusing to people because they see Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as being in the New Testament. And they are.

But when Christ came, he functioned under the law of Moses. You've got to understand that. And when he talked about the kingdom of heaven, and this rich young ruler talked about inheriting the kingdom, he was thinking of it as a Jew approached that subject during the Old Testament time.

We today think about heaven as dying and going there and being with the Lord. That's not the way they thought of it at all.

Although in the Old Testament concept, they did very definitely believe in and anticipate the resurrection of the body. Yet they saw believers who died then as going to Sheol or the compartment that is reserved for the departed spirits of the dead.

- [3 : 53] They never thought in terms of dying and going to heaven as we do today. The Jewish concept was that you died and the body was buried.
- You were gathered with your fathers is the expression that is often used. And the spirit goes to Hades or Sheol or the place of the departed dead.
- And from that, they would eventually be released and be able to enter into the kingdom of heaven that God would eventually establish upon the earth.
- And there, those departed souls would be regathered with a resurrected body and continue to dwell and live on in the kingdom of heaven here on earth into eternity.
- That was their concept. And this rich young ruler was asking, what must I do to inherit that? Or to, what must I do to guarantee that I will have a place in the kingdom of heaven?
- [4 : 59] Because those who do not have a place in the kingdom of heaven will be those who are cast out. They are referred to as the goats. And the sheep will be those who are gathered in.
- And this young man was simply asking, what can I do to make sure that I will have a place or a position in the kingdom of heaven when it is established on the earth?
- And Jesus answered about keeping the commandments. And then he dropped this bomb in verse 22.
- One thing you still lack, sell all that you possess, distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me. And then in verse 24, when the young man went away, became sad, was very rich, and refused to comply, Jesus looked at him and said, how hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God.
- And the idea is because they have to forfeit so much, and it's difficult for a wealthy person to part with their wealth. But why should that be the case?
- [6 : 08] Why should they have to part with their wealth? Why did they have to give up everything? Sell everything you have, give the proceeds to the poor, and come and follow me.
- Now, if you don't see a real conflict there between that and simply believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, I just don't know what to tell you.
- This presents a tremendous problem for me. Is this a formula for evangelism? Can you conceive of telling anyone that who is serious about their eternal soul?
- Would you dare tell them, well, just if you've got a house, sell it. You've got a car, sell it. And bring the money and give it to the poor. You're not going to have many takers.
- But this is a very specific requirement. Now, was Jesus just playing head games with this guy because he knew this man being wealthy, he was really clinging to his riches, so he told him Jesus knew his soft spot and he hid it?
- [7 : 32] I cannot believe that. And the reason I can't is because it looks like this is a formula that is given to be repeated for entering or receiving the kingdom of heaven.
- But it isn't one we use today. Now, what's going on here? And as I have said before, so say I now again. There is nothing that will resolve this conflict other than an understanding and an appreciation of this being a different program for a specific people at a specific time, and it is not in vogue today.
- This is the church age. This is the dispensation of the grace of God. When Christ uttered these words to this yet rich young ruler, that was in anticipation of the dispensation of the arrival of the kingdom of heaven on earth.
- But it never got here. It was never established. And I have told you repeatedly, and so say I now again, that there are two criteria for the establishment of the kingdom of heaven come to earth.

There are two things that must take place. And the first is the death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah.

[9 : 06] That has to take place before the kingdom of heaven can be established on earth, because that kingdom involves the reversal of the Adamic curse that was imposed upon all of humanity that caused our world to come crashing down, that is responsible for the mess the world is in today.

It all began with man exercising his volition in a negative way toward God. The disobedience of our first parents brought everything crumbling down.

And we're living with the consequences of it. Now that has already been fulfilled. And I want you to turn over quickly, if you will, please, to Acts chapter 3.

We've got a lot of material to cover, but I want to do it, if at all possible, in one setting, because I just don't want to have to continue it to the next.

It's too easy to forget in between. In Acts chapter 3, and if you will look at verse 17, we're just jumping in the middle of the story here.

[10 : 22] This has to do with the man that Peter and John were instrumental in healing at the gate beautiful. And this guy had been lame from his mother's womb and had never walked a day in his life.

And now he is walking and leaping and jumping up and down. And everybody there knows this guy. And they've seen him planted there for years. And now he's walking and jumping and leaping and rejoicing.

And everybody's big crowd is gathering around and they all want to know, what's going on? How did you do that? And in verse 17, Peter says, Now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance just as your rulers did also.

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

In other words, Peter is saying, God has done his part. He has fulfilled what he promised.

[11 : 28] He promised a Messiah who would die for the sins of the world. God delivered. That's over and done with. That's the message of verse 18.

He has thus fulfilled. That his Christ should suffer, he has thus fulfilled. What remains to be done? I told you there are two things that are absolutely essential before the kingdom of heaven can be established on earth.

This was the first one. It's done. Death, burial, and resurrection. Over with. Accomplished fact. And by this time, Christ had already ascended.

What remains? Peter says, item number two, verse 19. Repent therefore, and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

What does that mean? That's another term for the millennial kingdom. The time of refreshing. The time of restitution.

[12 : 37] The time of making all things the way they're supposed to be. Two things have to happen before that will take place. One is the death of the Messiah for sin.

That provides God with the legal judicial basis for reversing the curse. Because sin has been paid for. And the holiness of God remains intact.

And the second thing is, the repentance. The changing of the national mind of the nation of Israel. That's what Peter is here demanding.

God has done his part. Now your part is to respond to what God has done. What say you now about Jesus, the Messiah?

What's your position now? And their answer is in chapter four when Peter and John are arrested by the authorities.

[13 : 49] So Israel nationally the leadership that stood in the crowd before Pilate and said, we will not have this man to rule over us.

Crucify him. Now, these representatives of Israel are saying essentially the same thing. Peter says, repent, change your mind.

And they're saying, nothing doing. when you repent and change your mind, you have to admit you have been wrong.

And that's probably the hardest thing any human being has to do. Admit that you've been wrong. Makes you look bad. Makes you feel bad.

But it's only because you are bad. And when you repent, you acknowledge it. You admit it. Israel nationally would not do that.

[14 : 53] Oh, there were several Jews who did. There were many who did. But the vast majority that represented the national leadership and the main body of Israel still did not.

they maintain a mode of rejection. Now, this, believe it or not, really ties in with the rich young ruler thing and what we have been looking at.

And while we are here, still in the book of Acts, I want you to come back just to chapter 2 and note a couple of things here that I think are very, very significant.

Acts 2, and this is the day of Pentecost, which is commonly referred to as the birthday of the church, which concept I reject because nowhere does the scripture say that this is the beginning of the church.

It's just that man has said that and tradition has insisted upon it and it is embedded in our Christianity and everywhere you go in virtually every denomination that you visit, they all say the same thing.

[16 : 06] Pentecost is the birthday of the church and it is no such thing. The church did not begin until much later. The principal thing that makes the church, the body of Christ, what it is, is the inclusion of Jew and Gentile in one body making one new man.

Middle wall of partition being broken down. That's the principal dynamic that makes the church what it is. it is Jew and Gentile together. But in the early chapters of Acts, we have only a Jewish constituency to deal with and it isn't until you get all the way up to Acts chapter 10 that the first Gentile comes to faith in Jesus as the Messiah and he is questioned.

He is not well received by the Jewish religious establishment simply because he is not a Jew. And Peter was called on the carpet for even having anything to do with him.

That all too as well ties in. But I want you to look now at this and we will just be as brief as we can. Well, the day of Pentecost had come.

They were all together in one place. And this was ten days after Jesus told them to tarry in Jerusalem. Pentecost gets its name from the number 50.

[17 : 35] And the P-E-N-T-E means five. And we use it in our military building. The Pentagon is a five-sided building.

You've seen pictures of it. Pentecost means literally 50. And it is 50 days after Passover. Passover. And Jesus was here on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights and then for 10 days longer.

He told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they were in power. And that would be the 50th day, the day of Pentecost. The day of Pentecost would have been the day of Pentecost if the Holy Spirit had never come because it was on the Jewish calendar and it came the same time every year.

So it's a predictable thing. But this day of Pentecost was going to be really different. And we read, There came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind.

It filled the whole house where they were sitting. There appeared to them tongues as fire distributing themselves. They rested on each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

[18 : 44] Why were they speaking in other tongues? Read on. This is literally speaking in other languages and many times the Bible uses the word tongues as a synonym for language.

Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together and were bewildered because they were each hearing one, each one hearing them speak in his own language.

And they were amazed and marveled saying, Why are not all these who are speaking Galileans? Well, they were. Because the twelve that Peter chose were all from Galilee.

They were all boys from up north. And they even had a Galilean accent that the little maiden picked up on when Peter spoke. Jesus was being tried before Caiaphas and she said, I, you're one of his followers, I recognize your accent, you're from up north, you're a Galilean, you're a follower of Jesus, I am not, I don't know what you're talking about, Peter said.

All of these fellows were from Galilee up north, except one, Judas Iscariot. He was not a northerner, he was a southerner, and maybe that's another reason he didn't fit in, I don't know.

[20 : 11] But how is it we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? Where are these people from? You can get a map of the biblical times around the Mediterranean Ocean and you can spot these places.

They are from Parthia and Media and Elam, they are residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, from Phrygia and Pamphylia, they are from Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and they were visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes.

But the thing you've got to know is they're all Jews. All of them are Jews. They are Jews because this is a Jewish holiday, a Jewish feast day prescribed in the law of Moses.

They are Jews because they are in Jerusalem and they are in and at the Jewish temple. They are all Jews, all of them. They are Jews that speak different languages because the Jews had been scattered all over the Mediterranean world, generations earlier.

And then they meet locals and they start families and they have babies and they raise new generations and they keep their Judaism intact. They keep their religion but they adopt the language where they're living.

[21 : 38] And many of them can't speak Hebrew and they can't speak Aramaic but they're still Jews. So because they are Jews they make this pilgrimage and they come to Jerusalem to fulfill the law of Moses and to present themselves before the Lord at any one of the three feast days of the year whether it's Pentecost or Passover or Tabernacles.

One of those three. And this just happens to be Pentecost. And there is a huge influx of Jews that come into the country every time there is a Jewish feast.

They are fulfilling their obligation. Yet they have a language barrier. They can't communicate with a lot of the other people. They can only communicate with the crowd that they came with.

So it became essential if all of these people are to get the message that they be able to understand the message in their own language.

That's the drama of the tongue speaking. It was an intensely practical thing. How are you going to communicate what needs to be said to all of these people who can't speak the language?

[22 : 53] It was a very practical thing. And all the Spirit of God did in effect was he reversed what he did at the Tower of Babel.

When everybody began speaking the same language and God simply said this has gone far enough. I'm going to confound your tongues, your languages, so you won't be able to communicate among yourselves and you'll all sift out and sort yourselves out and find who speak in common languages and you'll all go off into various areas with them.

And that's the basis of chapter 10 and the Table of Nations at the Tower of Babel. And God scattered them and the language groups went in different directions all over the place and that's where they still are today and that's where they were here in Acts chapter 2 only now they're coming home.

And now they're bringing their foreign language with them but they're hearing miracle of miracles. They're hearing their own foreign language that they left back home being spoken here in Jerusalem and they understand.

They get the message. And it is terribly terribly unfortunate that so many assign this tongue speaking as some kind of a spiritual phenomena and if you are spiritual enough and you love God enough you'll be able to speak in languages that you've never learned.

[24 : 27] It's just sad sad misunderstanding of this whole thing. This served a very very practical purpose. So they are asking when they hear this dynamic language being spoken and speaking of the mighty deeds of God and of course they centered around the person of Christ, death, burial and resurrection and they continued in amazement and great perplexity saying one to another what does this mean?

We would say what is this? What's going on here? What's happening? Can somebody explain this? I mean this was a phenomena that nobody had ever experienced before and they didn't know how to react to it.

This is incredible. What's happening anyway? And someone spoke up and said these people have just had too much to drink.

That's all. They're just babbling. there. And notice Peter. This is that same backward cowardly spineless guy who denied three times even knew Jesus.

But this is a new Peter. This is a new Peter. This is a Peter who has in mind the resurrected Lord.

[25 : 54] And he knows what he knows. And Peter taking his stand with the eleven raised his voice started raised his voice so as to speak and be heard over all the others who were speaking.

And eventually his voice dominated and they quieted down and started listening to them. Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem let this be known unto you and give heed to my words.

These men are not drunk as you suppose. It's only nine o'clock in the morning. This is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel.

And I want you to notice and I'm not trying to be facetious Peter is not saying this is the birthday of the church. He's saying what you are witnessing here, what you are experiencing is the fulfillment of a prophecy that God gave through Joel.

And here's the essence of it. It shall be in the last days, God says, that I will pour forth of my spirit upon all mankind, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams, even upon my bond slaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of my spirit, and they shall prophesy, and I will grant wonders in the sky above, and signs on the earth beneath, blood and fire and vapor of smoke, the sun shall be turned into darkness, the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come, and it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

[27 : 43] Did all of these things get fulfilled then? No! No! Why not? They didn't all get fulfilled then for the same reason that the kingdom that was promised didn't start then.

It was short-circuited. It was postponed. It was getting underway.

This was the very earliest beginning. These are noises of the coming of the kingdom of heaven to earth in its very infantile form.

They were getting ready. But it wasn't going to happen. Why not? Because item two, Israel being on board, never occurred.

Still hasn't. Where is the kingdom? dangling. Postponed. Waiting. Never started.

[28 : 59] This was a movement in that direction. And it began with understanding the price for the redemption of humanity has been paid.

Israel, we are waiting for your response. Will you nationally embrace Jesus as your Messiah? Because if you will, look at what will happen.

If you will, God will see to it that Christ returns. And that's over in chapter 3. chapter 3, and we've read verse 19, Repent therefore and return that your sins may be wiped away in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Jesus the Christ appointed for you.

What? God would send Jesus? Well, he was just here. he just left 10 days ago. Right, Peter said, and if you as a nation will embrace this Jesus as your Messiah, he will return, and the rest of what Joel prophesied will continue right on and be fulfilled, just as the first part was.

They didn't do that. What was their answer? They laid hands on Peter and James and John, put him in prison, locked him up. What did that do?

[30 : 42] That shut down Israel's response. These people were the leaders of Israel, the Sadducees. They were the religious establishment of Israel.

They were the shakers and movers. They called all the shots. Israel didn't have a separation of church and state. Church was the state. Judaism was the state.

The state was Judaism. Of course, they were under Roman rule, but still they had their own religion and their own response to it. So, everything regarding the kingdom that was promised is put on hold.

Now, to give you an indication of how they were moving in that direction and anticipating that, look again at chapter 2 of Acts.

This is all just so critical and all, well, let me see, what am I looking for here? all right, let's go to Acts 2 and 38, a very familiar passage.

[31 : 56] When they said, when Peter preached this message on Pentecost and they said, what can we do? Peter says, first thing you need to do is repent. In other words, you have opposed Jesus Christ, you have opposed John the Baptist, you would not submit to John's baptism, you would not submit to the authority of Jesus, you would not accept him as the Messiah, you need to change your mind because you've been wrong.

You have been flat out wrong all along. You need to change your mind. And that's what repent is. It means change your mind. Repent means you admit you have been wrong about something.

Could be anything. Could be anything. But in this case, you've been wrong about Jesus Christ. Who he is, why he came, what he did, and why it matters. You've been wrong about all of that.

You need to change your mind. And when you do that, you repent. And if you repent, if you have a real change of mind, you know what you also have?

You also have a change of heart. Otherwise, it's just superficial. If you have a change of heart, that really involves your inner attitude.

[33 : 06] gratitude. And if you really have embraced Jesus as your Messiah, you will have no problem being baptized in his name.

You will be eager to do so. This is the baptism of John. It's the only baptism they knew. They had earlier rejected John's baptism.

baptism. We saw in Luke's Gospel where the Pharisees and the Sadducees rejected the counsel of God against themselves, not being baptized by John.

Why didn't they let John baptize them? Because they didn't believe what John was saying. They didn't accept his message. So they certainly weren't going to be baptized by him. And the same way with Jesus.

They weren't going to be baptized in his name unless they had come on board and embraced him as their Messiah. And Peter said, if you've done that, repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

[34 : 17] Is that the formula for today? No. No. But it was then. And it was right then. This is all in anticipation of that which John came to announce.

The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Jesus said the same thing. And they are looking forward to that kingdom being established because that is God's panacea to everything.

That is the restructuring of the whole planet. Everything gets fixed. Death dies. Disease dies. Crime dies. All of those things are put out when that glorious kingdom comes.

things are baptized. And then he says the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off and as many as the Lord our God shall call to himself. And we read in verse 41 so then those who had received his word now those who rejected it I'm sure weren't baptized but those who received his word were baptized and this is John's baptism the baptism they had earlier rejected.

And there were added that day about 3,000 souls. That's quite remarkable. And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles teaching and to fellowship and to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

[35 : 46] And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe. Well I guess. I guess this was an electrifying place to be.

I mean this was exciting a thrill a minute kind of thing. These people were on the edge of their seat wondering what is going to happen next. This is incredible. We don't know what's taking place here.

This is surely a visitation of God. And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

And would you look at verse 44. What are we going to do with this? And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common.

What does that mean? The next verse says they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all as anyone might have need.

[36 : 52] do you want to do that? Why not?

Maybe it's just because you're too selfish. Maybe it's just because you think your possessions are your own. Maybe it's because you don't care about the poor.

why don't we do this? You know there are numerous cults that have sprung up across America over the last couple of hundred years that tried to practice this.

You get a charismatic leader up front and he actually sells people a bill of goods on this and you know something? Looks like you've got a real case here. I mean here it is in the Bible black and white. What else do you want?

this is what they did. How do you know this isn't what we're supposed to be doing? How do you know it isn't just spiritual stubbornness or selfishness that keeps us from doing this?

[37 : 52] And maybe if we practice this if you all sold your property brought the money here give it to Marv. Give it to Marv. I will see to it that those who have need will get the money.

And not only that but listen I've got chapter and verse for it don't tell me. Well don't I? This is the way well-intentioned well-meaning people get caught up in something and their heart is big and their intentions are good and they really want the blessing of God and they see this as an act of faith and if you step out on this God will honor and he will do all of these things that he did for them.

Now if you're just not spiritual enough to do that then you're just going to have to settle for what you got. I tell you a real case could be made for this. You let a charismatic persuasive speaker have a text like this with a group of people who really honestly sincerely want to serve the Lord and want to be in the center of God's will and he can manipulate those people wrap them around his little finger and he's got chapter and verse to back it up and boy they are gung-ho and ready to go and the next thing they know they are broke and impoverished and disillusioned and where did Marv go?

Nobody knows. He disappeared. Disappeared with all your money. Boy. What's the answer?

The answer is understanding the progressive nature of revelation. The answer is in rightly dividing the word of truth. The answer is in seeing that programs instituted by God are subject to change depending on the response of man and what's happening.

[40 : 05] And if you don't take that into consideration you are in for a hodgepodge of confusion and misunderstanding and disillusionment and no wonder people say I read the Bible I can't make head or tail out of it.

It just doesn't make sense and it seems to be contradictory and on on. Well let's look at the rest of this text. All those who believed were together and had all things in common and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all as anyone might have need.

I think President Obama would really like this text. this is spreading the wealth around. I'm serious it is. This is a form of communism here.

It is a compassionate communism. And one of the central tenets of Karl Marx's communism is from everyone according to his ability to everyone according to his need.

So in a pure communist state there are no billionaires and there are no millionaires. And the beauty of it is there's no poverty.

[41 : 18] You've got just one great big gigantic middle class where nobody's wealthy and nobody's poor. Now is that so bad?

Well that's what a pure communism is. And on paper theoretically and philosophically you cannot find anything that is more appealing than Marxist communism.

It really sounds good on paper. It is ideal. It is compassionate. It eliminates the very rich and it eliminates the very poor and it makes everybody equal.

They have all things in common. So why was the Soviet Union dubbed as a grand 70 year experiment that ended as a colossal failure?

The best answer is communism fails to take into consideration just one thing. that's the nature of the human being.

[42 : 35] Because you see when you don't allow for the nature of the human being and you see man as having evolved then you see him en route to being something better than he is so man in their view is perfectible and all this generation needs is more education and more employment and more enlightenment and we will arrive at that.

But when you take a biblical point of view you don't see man as evolving you see man as devolving. He started out up here and suffered a great fall down here and this we call the fall of humanity.

So it's just the opposite. that's why it won't work. And it isn't working for Fidel Castro either. It won't work any place else.

Now real real real die hard socialist and we've got them today they are in our leading universities drawing six figure salaries that you are paying.

And their position is the only reason communism failed in Russia is because they just didn't do it right. The right people were in charge. But if they were it would have worked.

[44 : 06] And they still say the same thing and they are still filling the minds of the young people that we send to them and pay them with our tuition dollars. They are still filled and there are thousands thousands of these admitted.

I'm not accusing them of being Marxist professors. They admit to being Marxist professors and are proud of it. And this is the garbage they are spewing out.

And our kids come out of college with their brains filled with this stuff and they hit the corporations and make decisions and they make them on the basis of the stuff that they learn. And it's all wrong.

Do you see why we're in the mess we're in? This is how we got there. Meanwhile, the Christian church per se has been slumbered into complete ignorance and inactivity.

We are helping the enemy to destroy us. We are helping them to destroy us. That wasn't my message.

[45 : 15] language. But I just want you to note that verse 45. And if you would come over please to chapter 13 I've got a strange Bible here this morning.

It's still in English but it's not one that I'm used to. Well, in chapter 13, I'm sorry, chapter 4 and verse 13, as they observed, this is the ruling establishment, as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, and they were.

Peter and John were just a couple of grunts, a couple of fishermen, uneducated and untrained. But, look at the great compliment that is made.

They were marveling and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus. What an incredible compliment. These guys talk just like he did.

They've been with him. And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply.

[46 : 48] Because they couldn't. They had no comeback. But when they had ordered them to go outside of the council, dismiss them, so that they could talk about this privately, they began to confer with one another, saying, what shall we do with these men?

what are we going to do with these guys? We're between a rock and a hard place here. What are we going to do with these guys? And this is just so damning that follows and so hypocritical.

Look at this. for the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem and we cannot deny it.

I wouldn't be surprised if one of them said, and we cannot deny it. Dammit! We would deny it if we could. But we can't deny it because everybody knows the truth of this.

Do you see what a position this puts these people in? The gross, crass gall of these people to look at an event that is so obvious, apparent, and undeniable and still you want to deny it.

[48 : 18] You want to find a way to discount it. And we can't. Boy, I wish we had an argument against this. I wish we could explain this thing away, but we can't.

You know, sometimes everybody has an ability to put spin on a thing, take a bad thing and make it look good, or take a good thing and make it look bad. Spin, spin, spin.

We've got spinsters in Washington that do it for a living. They're experts at it. This is what they specialize in. It's just spinning. You see them on the news 24-7.

Spinning, spinning, spinning. And both parties do it. Liberals do it. Conservatives do it. Everybody does it. It's taking something that makes you look bad and putting it in a light so that you don't look quite so bad.

Or taking the opposition and something good they did and find a way to diss it. But in order that it not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to any man in this name.

[49 : 34] We cannot refute their message. We cannot deny what they said, but let's try to shut them up and keep it from being any worse. Now I want you to come over to chapter 4 because this all ties in.

In verse 32, the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and one soul, and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them.

What is this? This is a continuation of what we read in chapter 2. This is just more people coming on board and more people doing it. And I'm sure there were probably some people who said, hey, you don't want to connect with that group.

Don't get involved with those people over there. Those Jesus people over there, you get involved with them, they'll expect you to sell everything you got and bring their money to them. You don't want to buy into that.

I'm sure there was probably some of that going on. But there were others who were impressed by it. And this is sacrificing. I mean, these people are for real. people over the world.

[50 : 43] And all things were common property to them. And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And abundant grace was upon them.

And look at verse 34. Doesn't this prove that it works? For there was not a needy person among them. Think of that. Not a needy person among them.

for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them. And bring the proceeds of the sales and lay them at the apostles' feet.

And they would be distributed to each as any had need. Why are they doing this? Do they just get emotionally caught up in the moment and they've taken leave of their senses?

No. No. They are thinking in terms of kingdom living. And the kingdom is coming and we are helping. We are contributing.

[51 : 43] We are getting this thing on the road. And Christ is going to return shortly and it's going to be wonderful. Except it never happened.

The whole thing gets short-circuited. And when you read on the sharing among believers, very shortly, they're put in prison.

The opposition gets cranked up. The heat is on. And the word goes out that anyone who signs on with this group is putting themselves at great jeopardy.

And the religious authorities are going to come down on you. And boy, you are going to be sorry. And the whole program is stymied, brought to a sudden halt.

Chapter 5, we have the incident of Ananias and Sapphira. Do you know what that is? That too is nothing more than an incipient manifestation of the kingdom of heaven come to earth because of the lying of Ananias and Sapphira about the money that they got from the property?

[53 : 05] We are told by Isaiah that when unrighteousness breaks out or rebellion breaks out during the kingdom of heaven, it is going to be dealt with and judged summarily and on the spot.

It will be put down right away. Christ will be ruling with a rod of iron. And when Ananias and Sapphira lied about this, Peter called them on the carpet and said, did you sell this property for so much?

Oh yeah, that's what we got for it. And they lied. They could have told the truth. They could have said, yeah, we sold the property for \$50,000, but we decided to keep \$25,000 for ourselves.

There wouldn't have been a thing wrong with that. There wouldn't have been a thing wrong with it. That was their money. But they said, oh yeah, we sold for that and we gave all the money.

And you know what Peter said? Drop dead. And he did. You talk about summary execution.

[54 : 10] Peter, you have not lied unto men, you've lied unto God. And God is going to judge you. And Peter, Ananias fell over dead.

And his wife came in. And she didn't know what had happened. God. And Peter says, Peter gave her an opportunity to tell the truth.

And he said, Sapphira, did you did you sell the land for so much? Yes, yes, for so much. And we gave it all. Sapphira, drop dead.

Now, I don't know that Peter said those words, but that was the effect. She didn't even know what had happened with her husband.

And now she's joined him wherever they were. that's the way it's going to be in that kingdom age. These situations are going to be dealt with on the spot.

[55 : 11] That's what it means by Christ ruling and reign. But listen, this isn't the kingdom, is it? Never really was installed.

Christ never really did come back and rule and reign on the throne of David. And the whole idea of the kingdom is aborted.

It all stops. Why? Because item number two never came along. And God is absolutely committed in his integrity to the use of the nation of Israel to be the catalyst for the bringing in of the kingdom.

And the time will come when they will agree. They don't now. They didn't then. But they will. Meanwhile, we've got an entirely different situation.

And it is not part and parcel of this. And by the way, you see how this ties in? Or do you not? With the rich young ruler? Sell everything you have.

[56 : 25] Give your money to the poor. Come find. What is that? That's kingdom talk. That's what Christ was anticipating. That's what he was teaching them to anticipate.

And Peter's response was, Peter said, well, you told this rich young ruler to sell everything he's got and give the money to the poor? Peter says, we did that.

We did that. We dissolved our business. We sold our boats. Sold our nets. And we threw our lot in with you. And we're following with you.

What, what, what's, what's the payoff going to be of this? What are we going to realize from this? Jesus said, you who have followed me in the regeneration, that's another way of saying in the kingdom setting, when the son of man comes into his glorious kingdom, you also shall sit upon the twelve thrones of Israel, judging the twelve tribes.

That's going to be your payoff. Well, there are no twelve tribes judging anybody now, and there are no twelve thrones, and there is no throne of David in Jerusalem. All of that has been put on hold, and God is doing an entirely different thing now, because of the disobedience and the recalcitrant spirit of Israel.

[57 : 53] He has set them aside in their unbelief. He's saying, all right, have it your way. You're out of action. And he sets Israel aside, and he turns to a lone individual, a solitary person, who had a terrible hatred for Jesus and everyone who followed him.

Israel. And he picked him to start a whole new thing. And his name is Saul of Tarsus.

Wow. Has God cast away his people whom he foreknew? God forbid. He has not cast away the Jew, and the church has not taken the place of Israel.

the church is an entirely different program functioning under the auspices of the grace of God, not under do this, do that, do that.

Very legalistic. And it's legalistic because it was for Israel, and Israel was under the law of Moses. And with the law of Moses, the first covenant, it is do, do, do, do, do.

[59 : 13] And you cannot deny it. It's all through the Old Testament. This do, and thou shalt live. And you come under the new covenant, and it is not do, do, do, do.

It is done. Done. Done. Wow. What a contrast. What an incredible contrast.

To me, this is the only way that makes sense. this is the only thing that explains the difficult sayings of Jesus.

Pray with me, would you? Father, we recognize that there is so much that has been omitted that could be included that would even shed further light.

But we simply pray that you might be pleased to take what has been offered and use it to stimulate these dear folk to further study and further investigation of the great plan and program that you have designed for us and the distinctions that exist between them.

[60 : 23] Thank you for being the omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent God that you are. If there's anything about you that we could change, we wouldn't.

Bless your holy name, in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.