

Prophecy and Mystery Contrasted - Prophecy 30

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[0 : 00] I received an interesting request just a few days ago from one of our online listeners in the Caribbean. Her name is Angela, and she had a rather provocative question about what we had been presenting regarding the kingdom and it being established.

And she raised a hypothetical question, but a very valid one, and that is, is what would have happened if when Jesus was presented as the Messiah of Israel and the nation had embraced him and received him as Messiah, rather than demand his crucifixion, what would have happened then?

And there would have been no redemption and no salvation and no ultimate payment for human sin made by Christ on the cross. What would have been the outcome of that, and how does that all play out?

That's a very thoughtful question, and one that I remember entertaining almost 60 years ago when I was a student at Cedarville College.

It was just Cedarville College then. And some of us young theologues struggled and wrestled with that, and we finally arrived at a conclusion, and I'm confident it's a very valid one.

[1 : 26] I want to share it with you this morning, so let's have a word of prayer, and we'll get underway. Accept our thanks, Father, for this time to share and enjoy together. Thank you for being at the center of it, for the beautiful day, and thank you especially for Father's Day and for what it means to so many families.

We do indeed rejoice and celebrate with our fathers this day, and we thank you most of all for being the ultimate Father that you are. So we look to you for this particular session and whatever information you have for us.

Give us listening ears, hearts, and minds that are willing to obey whatever we understand your will to be. In Christ's name we pray. Amen. I assume that this thing is working. It seems to be.

So anyway, I want to just kind of open. Actually, I hadn't planned to do this this morning, but when the question came in by way of email or actually it was a text.

It was a text from Angela in the Caribbean, and I thought, well, we're trying to kind of wrap this particular issue and subject up anyway, so this might be a good one to do that with.

[2 : 41] And at the same time, we can entertain any comments or questions that you might have in connection with this. But be reminded, if you will, please, this is a series that we began several months ago, and it was with the effort underway to make a careful distinction between prophecy and mystery.

And we gave you a little pamphlet that's still available that distinguishes between prophecy and mystery and how they are to be separated in our Bible study.

Otherwise, if you do not make the division and do not understand the separation, then you're going to have a Bible where you're trying to put everything together and make it fit.

And most of us have come to the conclusion a long time ago that that is impossible. You cannot do that. But once you understand the basic principles of right division, of which the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy about, to be a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

And if you don't do that, the only alternative is wrongly mixing the word of truth, where you try to make things cohere that are not intended to cohere.

[3 : 59] And I've talked with people over the years, and I'm sure you have too, who make statements like this. Well, I try to do everything the Bible says. Well, I admire that attitude and that kind of submission to the authority of Scripture.

But you really can't do that. And if you do do that, you've got to, well, if you're a male, you've got to be circumcised.

You've got to keep the Sabbath. You've got to offer animal sacrifice and all the rest that goes along. Well, no, no, I don't do all that. All right, now tell me, please, why don't you?

Well, I don't believe that stuff is for us today. That was for back then. That was for the Jews. Precisely. You've just divided the Scriptures.

And Paul wrote to the Corinthians, and he told them in that last chapter, last verse, I think, of chapter 10. And he says, giving none offense, giving none offense, which means don't say or do anything that's going to be a stumbling block by giving offense to the Jew, to the Gentile, or to the Church of God.

[5 : 15] There are the three great classes of humanity for the whole globe. And we've pointed out in time past, and you probably even remember the numbers.

The Bible is written, God used Jewish people to write the Scriptures. So far as we know, every one of them, a human penman inspired by the Spirit of God, was Jewish.

Old and New Testament, they were all Jews. And that needs to be kept in mind. And the vast majority of the Bible is to the Jewish people.

And I have likened this to, it's almost as if there are great mailboxes of Revelation.

God sends mail to the Jew. That's just really for the Jew. And he sends mail for the Gentile. That's for everybody else but the Jew.

[6 : 21] And then he has specific mail that he sends to the Church of God, which is believers who are in Christ. So those three categories need to be separated.

And we apply Miles Coverdale in doing so. You know, he gave us the first complete printed English Bible in 1535, before the King James was even produced. And he gave us the rules for interpreting it, how that it shall greatly help you to interpret Scripture, if thou mark not only what is spoken, but of whom and to whom, with what words, at what time, and considering what goes before and what comes after the context and all of that good stuff.

So that's what we've been trying to do, is to make this distinction. And the principal thing in the Bible has to do with, and this is the biggest of the big pictures, and that is the theme of redemption.

If you think of it in terms of John Milton's simple outline, it'll help you to understand the whole scope of humanity. And his outline is paradise.

That's the first two chapters of Genesis. And paradise is described by God himself of all that he had made, and his conclusion was, it was very good.

[7 : 52] That's paradise. And you get into chapter 3, and the temptation of Satan, and the fall and disobedience of Adam and Eve, and you've got paradise lost.

Paradise forfeited. And what was forfeited was dominion. We are told in Genesis 1, 2, when God created Adam and Eve, he gave them dominion.

The word is related to the word dominate. It means he put them in charge of the whole planet. They were the boss. And God even used Adam to name the animals.

And that probably doesn't register too much with people, but you need to understand that there is a connection between authority and naming something.

And what I mean by that is not only did, and by the way, we don't even know what the language was that was used by Adam, but the principle is that those in the Bible who gave names, assigned names to those, was a demonstration of their exercising or having control or dominion over that which was named.

[9 : 29] So when Adam named the animals, he in effect was acknowledging and taking dominion and control over the animals. They were under his jurisdiction.

Now we see that, I don't want to get too far afield here, but it's all related, and this is important, because when, in the biblical context and in the Jewish context, this naming business is really, really quite important.

Remember when Abram starts out, and that's his name in the beginning. Remember Abram, A-B-R-A-M? It got changed, didn't it?

Well, we look at that and we say, oh, what's the big deal about that? A lot of big deal about that. Abram became Abraham, and in the changing of his name, he was brought into a new relationship with God, whereby God was his controller, his dominator, if you will.

And Abram became Abraham and was operating under that new name. And then later on, we're going to find the man, Jacob, who is a grandson of Abraham, and God's going to change his name.

[10 : 53] What's he going to change it to? Israel. Yes. Jacob will become Israel. And that indicates a new relation.

This was at the Brook Jabbok, where Jacob wrestled with the angel, and the angel was a pre-incarnate Christ, I believe. And he changed his name from Jacob to Israel.

And this is a common thing, but it's common only to the east or to the mid-east. And remember when the three Hebrew children were taken into captivity by the Babylonians?

Matter of fact, I don't even remember their original Hebrew names, but the king of Babylon recruited these young men to serve in his court.

They were Jewish. This is the result of the Babylonians coming in and destroying Israel and carrying them away into the 70-year captivity, the Babylonian captivity.

[11 : 49] And the king put them in his court because he recognized them as being especially bright. And he thought, hmm, I can use these guys. And he did.

And one of them was Daniel. Remember that? And Nebuchadnezzar changed their names. I don't remember what their Hebrew names were, but you remember their names as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Those are not Jewish names. Those are Babylonian names. And the Babylonians changed their names. In a sense, it was kind of like a re-education thing to get them thinking in terms of Babylonian values, et cetera, and ways and things.

And they all became very prominent in the Babylonian court. So this business of name-changing is very important. And when Adam named the animals, he was actually exercising a kind of dominion or control over them.

And to everything else on the globe was under their authority. And then, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they forfeited their God-given position and they, in effect, handed it over to the one who deceived them.

[13 : 15] And it became Satan's dominion. It still is. It still is.

This is why Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4 that if our gospel be hid, it is hid to those who are lost, whose minds, that means thinking abilities, whose minds are blinded by the God of this age.

And that's Satan. So the world is operating with blinded minds and that keeps them from seeing things as they really are. And in the temptation, in Matthew, we were reading about this just this morning, I think it was, that Satan tempted the Lord and he was there for 40 days.

He was hungry and he said, if you're really the Son of God, you must be famished. And if you are the Son of God, you ought to be able to do anything. Why don't you just turn these stones into bread and satisfy your hunger?

And he said, it is written, man shall not live by bread alone, which means that Jesus was being sustained by something other than food for his body.

[14 : 37] And then he went on to say, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. So we have spiritual food as well as physical food. And then he took him up to a high mountain and he showed him, and I don't understand how this works, you know, in reality, but he showed him the kingdoms of the world, et cetera.

And he said, all these things will I give to you. And then he made a very interesting statement. And I think even though he's given to lying, I think he was telling the truth.

He said, for all these things I will give you, for they have been given unto me. Who gave them to him? Adam gave them to him.

Adam forfeited them. And when Jesus came on the scene in, remember, in John 12, 14, and 16, Jesus referred to Satan as the prince of this world.

Now, that really shouldn't surprise us all that much because you do realize, do you not, that we live in a world that has gone awry? The world's a mess, let's face it, and it's always been a mess.

[16 : 01] From Genesis 3 on, it has fallen into a completely different state than the one in which God originally created it to be. And if you want to look at that chart in the back there that's on the wall and just walk through that, you can walk through the centuries, actually you can walk through the millennia, and you'll see a number of commonalities all the way through that as the centuries roll by, and every one of them was a bloody century.

The whole earth is engulfed in violence and conflict and bloodshed and war and deception and death. That's been the story.

So, what we are saying now about this kingdom, the paradise that needs to be, the paradise that was in the beginning, and the paradise that was lost, and the paradise that will be regained.

That is synonymous with the kingdom of heaven coming to earth. When everything is going to be restored to paradise.

So, what we've got from Genesis to Revelation is an unfolding of the drama of redemption.

[17 : 25] That's the whole book. That's everything. It begins with creation, creation lost, and creation restored. And as you look at the last chapters of the book of Revelation, which is the end of the redemptive story, everything is beautiful.

Everything has been fixed. All the ruined has been repaired. It's been fixed. And there will be no more tears, no more death, no more sorrow, no more separation.

That will have been paradise regained. And that's what John the Baptist came preaching. That's what God promised to the nation of Israel way back when.

And that's why they were looking for year after year, century after century. Who was it and what was it that the Jewish people were taught to look forward to and to anticipate?

Yeshua! Hamashiach! The Messiah! Everything! They put, listen, we use an expression, they put all their eggs in that basket.

[18 : 37] They really did. Were they wrong in doing so? Nope! They were right. What it is all about is Yeshua, Jesus, as the Redeemer.

Because you can't have redemption without a Redeemer. And that's what he came to do. So, he was presented and he presented himself and John the Baptist presented him as early as Matthew 3.

And then in John's Gospel, chapter 1, John the Baptist tells us that the reason, he says, the reason I have come baptizing is that I might introduce him to Israel.

How about introduce him to the world? Nope! Introduce him to Israel. Limited to Israel? Yep! Limited to Israel.

Introduced to Israel. And when the twelve are called to go and proclaim the Gospel, they are told, limit yourself to Israel. And the reason this is so critical, I really hope you get this because this is so important.

[19 : 55] Israel, the nation, and the Jewish people in particular, are absolutely critical. They are key. they are key to the realization and fulfillment of the plan and program of God.

That puts the Jewish people and the Jewish nation in an incredibly strategic position. And I'm satisfied that probably most Jews don't even realize that.

They know that they've got some kind of a special relationship with God. They know they're supposed to be the chosen people, and they are. But what I've been sharing with you, this business about the kingdom, is lost on most Jews today.

The Orthodox who are really committed to their Old Testament scriptures because they don't accept our New Testament anyway, but they understand something about this. They understand the importance of Messiah. They understand the importance about the kingdom and all the rest of it.

And they also understand that Israel is key. And this, by the way, opens up another subject. If Israel is so critical why have they had such a hard way to go?

[21 : 12] Why hasn't God done a better job looking out for his people? Six million murdered in the Holocaust? And they're his chosen people?

Good grief. If that's how God allows his chosen people to be treated, what about the unchosen? See what I'm saying? And here is a very, very important point.

Who was it that messed this whole thing up in the beginning? Satan. Satan. And it actually even started before Eden. Remember? It started with Lucifer.

It began before human beings were created. So what we've got is an incredible angelic conflict that has taken place, and Israel is smack dab in the middle of it.

And this is a principal reason, although probably the Jews don't even believe this, wouldn't accept it, but I'm satisfied that it's true because the Bible teaches it unequivocally. And that is, this is a principal reason why the Jewish nation has a great big bullseye printed on them, and the adversary, Satan, has been hurling his arrows at Israel from the time God called Abraham.

[22 : 32] They are a marked people, and what they're marked for by Satan is they are marked for destruction, complete annihilation. Now, in addition to the arrogance and the ignorance of Gentiles in persecuting the Jewish people for centuries, on top of that, and even more dominant than that, is the ill effects that Satan is trying to impose upon the nation of Israel.

And, as we pointed out to you, in the tribulation period, he will succeed, he's going to take up where Hitler left off, and he will succeed in eliminating two thirds of the Jewish people, and we're talking about a lot more than what were killed in the Holocaust.

So, this kingdom thing is something that Israel and the Jewish people have looked for and longed for forever. And, you remember, when Jesus was preparing to go into Jerusalem for the last time, and I've shared this with you before, I think it's Luke 19, where the text says, and as they were nearing Jerusalem, and this was Palm Sunday, crucifixion, just days away, as they were nearing Jerusalem, Jesus gave this particular parable, and it was about the absent landowner, and it says the reason he gave that parable was because they were nearing Jerusalem, and the apostles thought that the kingdom of heaven was going to be set up when Jesus got to Jerusalem.

And we all know, nothing like that happened. It was the crucifixion. Then after the resurrection, and after 40 days with the disciples, almost six weeks, on the Mount of Olives, in the book of Acts, chapter one, the ascension is going to occur, and they don't know that.

They don't know that Jesus is going to be leaving them bodily from the ascension, and when they get together there, he's got all the apostles there, minus Judas, but probably of the 12, there'd be 11 there because Judas is gone, and Matthias hasn't been chosen yet.

[25 : 10] And they ask Jesus that penetrating question that the Jew could never get out of his mind. now that you didn't establish the kingdom when you got there on Palm Sunday, then you were crucified, then you were raised from the dead, now you've been with us for six weeks, and they ask that penetrating question in verse eight, and that is, wilt thou at this time, now, restore the kingdom to Israel?

Israel. And what are they talking about? They're talking about Israel. Will you restore it to Israel? What happened to the kingdom?

In 586 B.C., they're back to the Babylonians again, remember that? 600 years earlier, we're talking about, Zedekiah was the king of Judah, and he was the last king.

The royal line of descendants from David the king ended with Zedekiah. He was the last one. And Israel, from that time, had never had a monarchy or a king.

All they had had was national bullies come in from other countries and subject the people by way of, first, it was the Babylonians, then it was the Medes and the Persians, then it was the Greeks, and then it was the Romans.

[26 : 39] In succession, all of those different entities put Israel under their feet in subjection. And Israel was always taking orders from somebody else, not their government, not their high priests, but from some foreigners that came in and occupied their land until other foreigners came in and defeated those foreigners, and then they would be ruled over by a new group foreigners.

But Israel was always in the dust, and their kingship and their monarchy, long gone. So, they asked that legitimate question in Acts chapter 1, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?

Israel. Israel. And the reason Israel is so key is because they are going to be the world leaders for all the rest of the nations.

nations. They are in God's special plan. This is why Satan hates them so much.

This is why so much has been orchestrated against the Jew by persecution. Satan is behind it. He's behind a lot of it. But people are able to do that on their own because of our own human stupidity.

[28 : 07] we treat people that we don't think are deserving of decent treatment or fair treatment. We persecute them and this is what's been going on.

So, this conflict, it rages on. We are in the midst of what we could call a cosmic conflict. We don't know to what degree angelic beings are involved in it, but we know they are the principalities and they are our powers.

And Paul said, this is significant when Paul said, our struggle, our fight, our ongoing battle as believers is really, it's not against flesh and blood.

It's not against other human entities, which we tend to think it is, but it is really, in essence, it is against principalities and powers and wickedness and evil in high places.

And these are angelic beings. I don't understand how they conduct their business. I don't understand how they engage in combat. I do know that there is an ongoing struggle that is taking place within the angelic community between the fallen angels and the unfallen angels.

[29 : 22] And Michael, who is the assigned angel for the perpetuity of Israel, talks about being confronted in the book of Daniel.

And he says, I plan to come to you, Daniel, with this information earlier, but the prince of Persia, which is modern day Iran, but he's talking about hundreds of years ago, he said, the prince of Persia withstood me.

And what kind of combat or conflict is it that angels enter into? I have no idea because they're spirit beings that's completely out of my realm to understand. But there is, just as there is a conflict going on on the earth between humans, there is a conflict going on in the heavenlies between the angelic sphere in ways that we don't understand or appreciate, but we are assured that it is taking place.

And do you know what the prize is? Planet earth. And do you know who has the prize now? Satan does.

You do understand that this world's in a real mess, don't you? That confusion and chaos reigns just virtually everywhere?

[30 : 37] Well, he's got his fingerprints all over everything. And I don't understand how he works, but I know that he does, and I know he works through deception, and he's called the deceiver.

So this kingdom thing, this is not only the big picture. this is the biggest picture there is. It is the theme of redemption in process coming to a conclusion, and it is described in the last couple of chapters of the book of Revelation.

So we know how it's going to end. We know how it's going to end. Like someone said, a rather new Christian convert came to know the Lord, and he got really excited, and he was reading his Bible, and he said, and you know what?

He said, the fellow who led me to the Lord told me that the Bible is actually a story. It's a story of humanity. And I got to reading, and I was reading about halfway through the Old Testament, and I couldn't stand it any longer.

And I turned back to the back of the book, which you're not supposed to do when you're reading a story. story. And he said, I couldn't resist, and I read the last part of the book, and we win.

[31 : 59] Yeah, and we win. That's the way it's going to turn out. But in the meanwhile, we're in this conflict. So, back to the original question. when Jesus was presented as the Messiah of Israel, accepted only by his apostles, the twelve who signed on with him, and I'm sure it was accepted by many, many more, thousands more, because they were present at his healing.

Some of them were recipients of his healings. They were there when he fed the 5,000. And these were people who had signed on, who believed Jesus to be the Messiah, and they were following him.

But they constituted a small minority in connection with the whole of the nation, and especially in connection with the shakers and movers, the ones who really made the decisions in Israel.

So, instead of accepting him, they rejected him. And the question that was posed is, what would have happened if Israel would have said, yes, we accept, you know, Nicodemus, Nicodemus, in John 3, told Jesus, we know that you have to be a man come from God because nobody can do these miracles that you do unless God is with him.

So, Nicodemus, I'm confident, signed on and accepted Jesus as the Messiah. And who was the other fellow? Anybody remember? Remember? The guy with the barbed tomb?

[33 : 33] Joseph of Arimathea. Remember that? Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, after the crucifixion, they went in to Pilate's headquarters, and the text says, and I love this, it doesn't take a whole lot to be a blessing to me, but this was a blessing.

It says that Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, went boldly, boldly into Pontius Pilate and demanded the body.

And Pilate was kind of struck because he was convinced that Jesus wouldn't be dead already. I mean, after all, Jesus was only on the cross for six hours.

Nine o'clock in the morning to three o'clock in the afternoon. Six hours. He was dead. And if there was any question, that Roman spear in the side from which came out water and blood would have settled any doubt.

And Pilate asked one of his guards, they want the body, he's dead? Is he dead already? No. Well, they beat him half to death before he ever went to the cross and had tremendous blood loss.

[34 : 54] And the guard said, yeah, yeah, he's dead. They didn't even break his legs like they broke the legs of the others because Jesus was already dead. And Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, they must have been two out of the Sanhedrin, if they were indeed on the Sanhedrin because it consisted of 70 men and the high priest was the chairman of it.

They believed that he was the Messiah. And, well, anyway. What do you think?

What if they had accepted him? What we have, and let me just spell this out because this is, to me, this is the key to the whole thing.

It is clearly predicted in scripture and in no place so clearly as it is in Isaiah 53 where we have a graphic description of the crucifixion. And you can read it about his man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and we hid our faces from him and wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, all that.

It's a perfect picture and is referred to as a messianic chapter. And what we have is all of these scriptures pointing to the crucifixion of Christ.

[36 : 21] And Psalm, I'm trying to think of what Psalm it is now. Pardon? Yeah, thank you.

Thank you, John. Psalm 22 also is a pretty vivid description of crucifixion. And how can we have a Savior who is prophesied hundreds of years earlier to die from crucifixion and Israel accepting him as their Messiah?

There wouldn't have been any crucifixion. Do you see a problem here? Sure there's a problem here. So I've gotten just a couple of sentences, what we worked out many years ago and it's satisfied me ever since, but I'd like to know what your take is on it before we do that.

Anybody got any thoughts about this? John, in the back. After you have read the whole totality of the scripture, it's kind of silly to think that it would be any different.

I'm sorry, repeat that? After you read the whole totality of scripture that Christ is going to die and he's going to go away and then come back, to think any different is kind of silly in my opinion.

[37 : 43] Okay. because you already know what the Lord planned. Okay. You know what he planned. Other thoughts anybody?

Yes, Chris? I believe God knew some missions. He knew that. He knew that. Yeah. Yeah. Didn't he have to know? Of course he knew.

Now, here's the question. Because prophecy records that, spells it out, what's going to happen, rejected of men, acquainted with sorrows, and so on.

Because the scriptures point that out, here is the key question. Were those who carried it out under a divine compulsion to do so, so that they had no alternative?

no. No. Because here I think, here I think is the key. Prophetic revelation, prophetic revelation does not involve coercion of principles involved.

[38 : 59] It only reveals their predicted actions. It does not orchestrate or compel them. Judas is spoken of in one of the Psalms about he who broke bread with me has lifted up his heel against me and so on.

And it even talks about him buying a field with the money that was received from his betrayal and for 30 pieces of silver he was sold. Do you think for one moment that Judas could plead on judgment day?

Yeah, I betrayed him. I handed him over and I did so for filthy lucre 30 pieces of silver. Actually, I didn't have any choice because I was pre-programmed to do that.

The scriptures recorded that that's what I was going to do and I was locked in. I had to do that. No, you didn't. No, you didn't. Predicting what is going to happen does not mean the one who predicts it is going to make it happen.

It just means they know what's going to happen. doesn't mean they caused it. Doesn't mean they were instrumental in it. So there is no possibility of Judas or anybody else copping a plea.

[40 : 15] They are fully responsible and accountable. Judas was accountable. The Sanhedrin was accountable for crucifying him. Everybody has to assume their own responsibility.

And merely the scriptures pointing out what was going to happen. God isn't saying I'm predicting through Isaiah and through Jeremiah and through Ezekiel and through Daniel.

I'm predicting that these things are going to happen and I know they're going to happen because I'm going to make them happen. Doesn't say that and doesn't mean that. It just means I know this is what is going to take place.

And if God is omniscient which means all-knowing doesn't he have to know that? Isn't that part of a job description? Absolutely.

It is and Chris touched on that. Any other thoughts or comments? Our time's almost gone. Yes, Marvis. It's kind of like we know Kamala Harris is going to end up being president.

[41 : 14] We knew it two years ago. had anything to do with that. Well, you've departed a little bit now from scripture.

I've heard about reading into white spaces, but John? Okay, John the Baptist was preaching repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Yep. So he knew that Jesus was going to be the king in the kingdom, but he also said, behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

Yeah. So did he know both or did he? I'm sorry, I cannot answer that. That has been a puzzlement to me too.

I don't know. I do know, and the scriptures make it quite clear, that after John introduced Jesus, he even gave his blessing on some of his disciples, that is John's disciples, leaving him and following Jesus.

[42 : 27] And some of John's disciples came to him and said, you've got some competition going on here, you know. Don't you feel bad that these disciples that you've been teaching and training, that they've abandoned you and they're following Jesus.

Doesn't that upset you? And John said, I baptize you with water, but he who comes after me will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

And John said, and I am not worthy to unloose the thong of his sandals. And he also said, he, meaning Jesus, he must increase and I must decrease.

And you got to remember too, that this is to some degree a family problem because John and Jesus were second cousins. You know that? John was the child of Zacharias and Elizabeth, remember?

And Jesus was the child of Mary and his adopted father, Joseph, and Mary and Elizabeth and Elizabeth were first cousins.

[43 : 32] And that made John and Jesus second cousins. And John had introduced him as the Messiah of Israel, therefore am I come baptizing that I might introduce him to Israel, he said.

And that was Jesus' official introduction. And remember, the text makes it clear that John, John the baptizer, was six months older than Jesus, his second cousin.

And I lost my train of thought, so what's that got to do with anything? Oh, yeah, John started his ministry as far as we can determine.

John probably started his ministry because you see, Zacharias and Elizabeth were both Levites. They were from the priestly tribe. And that, of course, meant their son, John the Baptist, was a Levite also.

And the priest was inducted into the priesthood at the age of 30. So, John had probably been baptizing and preaching in the wilderness for about six months from the time he was inducted as a priest.

[44 : 51] He had been preaching and starting to draw these crowds and then Jesus came along, and I'm theorizing now, probably six months later, and guess who else just turned 30?

Jesus, six months younger than John. So, Jesus is also baptized, introduced to Israel, and he's also entering the priesthood at the age of 30, just like John the Baptist did.

But John the Baptist entered the Aaronic priesthood, and Jesus entered the priesthood of Melchizedek, which is a beautiful thing, but that's a different subject.

I've got to stop because we only got a couple minutes left. You got other questions or comments? Marvis and then John. My question is a little bit off here, but I'm thinking about the Jews, their whole thought process is the kingdom on earth.

Yes. So, are they thinking that the kingdom on earth is forever, and therefore none of them will die, and that's what they call heaven, like we think of heaven?

[46 : 07] Well, the Jewish concept, especially in the Old Testament, and this is something, by the way, this is another instance of rightly dividing the word of truth.

Today, our confidence and our hope is absent from the body, present with the Lord. Depart and be with Christ, which is far better, Paul talks about.

That is not an Old Testament concept at all. That is a concept that became vital only after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, because in the Old Testament, the Jew never had thoughts of, never had thoughts of, all through the Old Testament, of dying and going to heaven and being with God.

Their thing was Sheol, the place of the departed dead. It was a grave. You go there, and by the way, a theory, that's all I can call it, is a theory of Hades, because we know that Hades is not hell.

Hell does not now even exist. So nobody is in hell. But I think there's a lot of people in Hades.

[47 : 28] Hades. And in Revelation 19 and 20, we read that in the final judgment that death and Hades give up the dead that is in them, and they stand before God at the great white throne judgment.

That's Revelation 19. And those who are in Hades, as far as I can determine, and I'm not ready to die on this hill because there are too many unanswered questions about it.

But hell is not now existent, but it will exist then. And we are told in the final analysis that there will be those who will be cast into what is called hell.

And the text says that it was prepared, that God prepared for the devil and his angels. So that will be their final doom, and that's Revelation 20, and it's a pretty grim picture too.

So Hades has been released, as far as I can determine, there are no believers in Hades because when Christ ascended, before he ascended, he was the first one to ascend, first one from the dead, and he led captivity captive, and I think he literally emptied the place, and that believers now are with the Lord in heaven, and I don't know exactly in what form, maybe it's disembodied states, I don't know, but I know the time is coming when our spirit and our body will be reunited, and Paul says it will be like a glorious body like that of Christ in Philippians 2, and it will be a wonderful thing, so we've got to trade in all of these arthritic joints and everything for something far better.

[49 : 29] All right, well, our time is gone, but were we clear enough on that concept about what if Jesus had been accepted, everybody with us on that?

Okay, well, Angela said that when this is posted, she'll be able to hear it on the computer, so thank you all for being a part of it, and for any of you dads, and even if you're not a dad, if you're just a male, and by the way, I'm speaking as an old-fashioned guy now, if you are a male, you probably know it, given all the craziness that's going on now, and anyway, these devotionals are for you, and there's a whole stack of them out there, so make sure you avail yourself of it now.

Okay, thank you.