

A Totally New Order Begins, Part 5

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] Well, we return to 1 Timothy chapter 3 and the last few verses, beginning with verse 14, 1 Timothy chapter 3.

This is a six-part message contained in an ancient hymn. I do not know that I have ever actually heard it sung.

It would be interesting to know what it would be like to hear it. I do not know that there are any recordings of it. We only know from what we read in some ancient sources that the words were actually part of a hymn that was sung at many of the services when the believers got together.

And it began with verse 16, but I want to start reading with verse 14, wherein Paul said, It is all about Jesus Christ, and it says, Here we have these six items.

And today, Today, our focus is going to be on the combination of four and five, proclamation and acceptance.

[2 : 27] And I don't think there is any better way that we can get a handle on that than by going to Acts chapter 9. It is the account of the conversion of who was probably the second most important person ever to have lived on planet Earth.

And I say second most important person because the first most important person is none other than Jesus Christ himself.

The second most important person is the one who succeeded so admirably and gave his life in explaining and defining and proclaiming the person and work of the first most important person, Jesus Christ.

So what we have here is an amazing dynamic duo, the greatest that there could ever be. It is the person of Christ himself, and it is the apostle Paul who spent and was spent in order to make him known.

So if you'll look at Acts chapter 9, we're going to just briefly go through this because it is so critical to the whole setting. We're talking about the conversion of Saul of Tarsus.

[3 : 44] This man could easily have been considered the least likely individual on the planet to ever embrace the person of Christ as his Savior.

He was an avowed enemy of Christ, and he was determined to stamp out all of those fellow countrymen who were Jews who had insisted that Jesus was the Messiah, whereas Saul of Tarsus was saying, no, he wasn't.

You people have been duped. You are a bunch of fools, and you are constituting a threat, a kind of cancer that is beginning to grow on Judaism.

But I'm not going to put up with it. And he went to the chief priests in the synagogues, and he requested of them letters of authorization to go and round up those Jews.

We're talking about the persecution of Jews by Jews to round up those Jews who had earlier escaped from the persecution fires in Jerusalem and headed north over 100 miles to a foreign country called Syria, capital of which was Damascus.

[4 : 53] And when Saul of Tarsus got wind that these people had escaped Jerusalem, fearing that he would capture them and punish them, they took off and left the country.

And Saul of Tarsus got the word and said, so that's where they've gone, huh? All right. And he went and got official permission from the authorities in Jerusalem, constituting a letter of introduction to the authorities of the government in Syria, which was an entirely different government, to round up these people and bring them back in chains to Jerusalem for trial.

And while he was en route, the most dramatic thing that you could ever imagine took place. The ascended Christ, who had ascended to heaven just 10 days after his resurrection, or 40 days, 50 days, actually, 40 days after his resurrection, he had ascended to heaven, and that is where he is at the time he is conversing with the apostle Paul.

And everyone, of course, among the Jews considered Jesus is just simply dead and out of the picture. The disciples came, stole away his body. There was no resurrection, et cetera. And no doubt, no doubt Saul of Tarsus believed that.

And now he's confronted with contrary information because this one who was supposed to have been dead and buried and out of the picture forever is now calling to him by name from heaven.

[6 : 29] Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me? With trembling lips, knocking knees, he says, who are you?

And the answer came back loud and clear. I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. Wow. So the world is in for a change.

And let us begin in verse 8 of chapter 9 for time's sake. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing.

Leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight and neither ate nor drank.

What do you think he was doing? He's in this strange home. This man has obviously been kind enough to take him in.

[7 : 25] And there he is, blind, confused, still in shock, trying to figure out what all happened. Was this a dream?

Was he imagining it? Did it really happen? And I can see Saul of Tarsus replaying this event over and over again. And the men who were with him, we're not told how many there were, but the men who were with him, some were obviously available.

And Saul would ask them, you heard that, didn't you? Well, we heard a noise. We heard a voice. Yes, we heard somebody speaking, saying something from heaven, but we couldn't figure out, we couldn't make out what he was saying.

Well, Saul got the message, and he would relive it again and replay it again. This went on for 72 hours. The man is in absolute shock.

How can this be? He asked all kinds of questions for which he had no real answers, but he could not deny that it had happened, and over and over again. And then the question is, now what?

[8 : 33] What do I do with this? Where does this go from here? And we read in verse 9, Three days without sight, neither ate nor drank. Now, for there's a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias.

And the Lord said to him, Ananias in a vision, Ananias, he said, Behold, here am I, Lord. And the Lord said to him, Listen, you arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul.

For behold, he is praying. And he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.

And Ananias answered and said, Lord, I've heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to thy saints at Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon thy name.

But the Lord said to him, Go. For he is a chosen instrument of mine to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.

[9 : 57] Those three elements actually constitute everybody. This is an inclusive message, a commission that Paul the apostle has to preach the gospel to everyone.

Notice the breakdown, if you will. To bear my name before the Gentiles. Who are Gentiles? Gentiles. Gentiles are people that make up 99.8% of the population.

They did then. They still do. Gentiles make up 99.8% of the population.

That's just about everybody. Well, who's left? Just two-tenths of 1% is left. And they are Jews. They are those who are referred to as the sons of Israel.

And then, not only Gentiles, but kings. So we're talking about bear his name before all of the commoners and ordinary people.

[11 : 05] And royalty. Those are the two extreme classes of human beings. From the most important to the most important.

To the least important. And to the sons of Israel. So is there anyone for whom Paul the apostle was not called upon to minister to?

Nope. His parish was the world. And how was that contrasted with the twelve? Their parish was Israel.

Twelve apostles to the twelve tribes of Israel. And they were to exclusively limit their message to the Jews.

And it's very important as to why. Because in this particular message, we're going to see a tremendous contrast. And it's very, very important that you understand it. And it is very, very unfortunate that so many people do not understand it.

[12 : 03] And that is, we're talking about two different messages for two different groups of people. The first message is referred to as the gospel or the good news of the kingdom.

And it was exclusively to be delivered to the nation of Israel. No one else. Don't go into the way of the Gentiles.

Confine your ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And a number of reasons. One of which is, they are the only ones in the first place for whom the message is intended.

And secondly, they are the only ones who will even be able to understand it. Because Israel had been selected as the chosen people of God to be the nation, the vehicle, through which the Messiah and Savior of the world would come.

And God raised up this specific nation who are descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And out of Jacob came 12 sons that will constitute the 12 tribes of Israel.

[13 : 13] They are the people who are going to be specially designated to birth the Savior of the world. And that nation, in providing the Savior, is supposed to be the basis for reaching all of the rest of the world.

And that's why Moses is given the information in Exodus chapter 19 that Israel is to be a nation of priests, as opposed to just one tribe being priests.

And they were to be a nation of priests to all the rest of the world. The problem was, Israel as a nation was not interested in being a light to the Gentiles.

And their attitude was pretty much, no, he's our God and you can't have him. We're not going to share him with anyone. Yet at the same time, these same people, the Israelites, were engaged in all kinds of idolatry and illicit worship and all kinds of corruption and everything that went with it.

So when Jesus came on the scene, he came to a thoroughly corrupt nation, but not one that was eager and welcome to receive him and accept him as their Messiah, but a nation that was already turned off toward the truth of God and to the truth that John the Baptist was preaching and to the truth that Jesus was preaching when he arrived on the scene because he did not have the credentials for the Messiah that they were anticipating.

[14 : 48] And as a result, Israel was set aside in their unbelief. And God is turning to a new entity, an entirely different thing that nobody had any imagination for or suspicion at all.

So who is it that God is now turning to? Since Israel as a nation has turned the deaf ear, God is turning to everybody else.

And I mean everybody else. But he still is not going to exclude Israel. And here is where a major problem develops. Because we've got two different programs running side by side, one for Israel, the gospel of the kingdom, another for what we call the church, the body of Christ, which is the gospel of the grace of God.

That in and of itself is enough to confuse just about everybody. And frankly, it confuses a great deal of Christians. And as a result, we've got a divided Christianity because of this very issue that we are discussing now.

And it is because of this distinction that is made and the failure to see the difference between the two, that Christendom is divided between Catholics and Protestants and Presbyterians and Methodists and Nazarene and you name it on down the line.

[16 : 20] So as a result, there is great division in this thing called Christendom. And each one has their differences and they are persuaded that their particular doctrine is that which is correct and everybody else is wrong.

So that's where we are today. And by the way, you need to understand, and this is very, very important. But 500 years ago, most of the groups that I just mentioned didn't even exist.

There were no Presbyterians. There was no Church of God. There were no Methodists. None of these even existed as denominations or as groups that we see that are on the scene today, all under the name of Christianity.

Of course, there was Roman Catholic, which is the parent organization out of which Martin Luther came, and eventually Lutheranism was established as well as the Anglican Church and so on.

So this is where we are, and this is what has happened, and this is why it happened, and this is why we have so much division in Christendom today. So with Paul, Saul of Tarsus, who's going to become Paul the Apostle, with him on the scene, and an entirely new commission, it was one that incorporated Gentiles.

[17 : 38] Now, you and me as a Gentile, we have no appreciation at all of how that was going to impact the Jews of that day.

Because if there was anything that Jews separated, that they claimed really separated themselves from all of the rest of the world, it was the peculiarities of their religion, which was monotheism, one God and one God only, and so on.

And all the rest, their diet, their clothing, everything about them, separated them from everybody else in the world. And now, there is a message on the scene that is very controversial, and is going to be flat-out rejected by those whom God originally raised up to be the light to the Gentiles, and that is the Jews, because God is now saying through the Apostle Paul, you know all of those distinctions that were made and established for the Jews to be a peculiar people?

They were to have just one God as opposed to many gods. They were to have a special diet. They were to have a special day of worship. They had a long list of things that separated them from everybody else in the world.

And now, the Apostle Paul is coming along and is giving a message that says, none of that matters anymore. The response, of course, on the part of all of those who had been observing it, namely all of Judaism, is, what?

[19 : 22] You're crazy. What are you talking about that doesn't matter? What are you saying? What are you saying? Circumcision is nothing. Why? Away with that man.

It is not fit that he should live. And there was a group of Jews, I think there was some 30 of them, on one occasion that took a vow before God and before each other that they would not eat or drink until they had seen this man's blood run cold.

That's how deep their hatred and animosity was toward this new message. And it is something that is found only in the book of Acts, incorporated in this 30-year period of history, that is very, very dramatic and so strategic.

The first century, the first century, beginning with AD 1 to 30 AD and the crucifixion and the establishment of what we're going to be looking at here in the book of Acts is just absolutely mind-blowing, monumental.

In fact, it is so controversial and so difficult, apparently, for many to understand or accept that it remains a key issue separating believers today.

[20 : 44] Anyway, I know many of you get the magazine Israel My Glory. You have it delivered to your home and I've got copies of it. And there are copies of two articles that are very key and very germane to what we're talking about.

They're in the literature rack and they were placed there just yesterday because I put them there. And they have to do with this very issue that we're talking about. And it is very, very important.

So I hope you will get them as you exit. If you go out the back way, make sure you get there in the first top two on the left. Make sure that you get a copy of each of them because they are so critical to what we are talking about.

Now, the first thing I want you to do while we're here in Acts chapter 9 is come over, if you would, please, to chapter...

Well, let's just turn the page. I want you to just look at a couple of things here. Look in verse 19, Paul took food and was strengthened. And for several days he was with his disciples who were at Damascus.

[21 : 47] Now, these are the same people that he came to arrest. That's interesting. And now he is with them, worshiping with them, who were at Damascus. And immediately, immediately, he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues.

Now, we don't know how many synagogues there were, but Damascus was a big city. In fact, ancient Damascus in Syria is the oldest continuing existing city in the world.

And it is still in continuation today. It's the capital of Syria. And they have had a hot and cold relationship with Israel over the centuries.

And in fact, they still do today. So this is really significant. Multiple synagogues. We don't know how many. And he said, he is the son of God.

And all those hearing him continued to be amazed and were saying, wait a minute. Is this not he? Wait a minute. It's not in the text. Okay. Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priest?

[23 : 06] But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Messiah.

This is such a hot-button issue. I mean, this was the issue of the first century. The identity of Jesus of Nazareth.

And so far as Jews are concerned today, it still is. Listen, you don't fool with these people.

They're out for blood. And they know if they are able to capture and kill this man, there won't be any charges filed.

There won't be any accountability. There won't be any jail time. They aren't going to be prosecuted for it. They know that. And they see themselves as being heroes of Judaism because they are going to eliminate this man who earlier said that these people were a cancer growing on Judaism.

[24 : 40] Now he's part of the cancer. And we're still going to cut it out and we're going to cut him out. Put him to death. But his disciples took him by night, led him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a large basket.

And when he had come to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples. Now you've got to remember, the distance from Syria, Damascus, Syria, down to Jerusalem where Paul is now, is over 100 miles.

And you didn't cover that in a day and a half. This was a long journey. So now he's down in Jerusalem. And they've heard tales about Saul of Tarsus and his conversion. And some of them, I'm sure, were saying, oh, that's a bunch of baloney.

You don't believe that. Surely you don't believe that. That's fake news. There's no way in the world that Saul of Tarsus could have gone over to the other side. But they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.

Barnabas took him, brought him to the apostles, described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road and how he had talked to him. And how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus.

[25 : 51] And he was with them, moving about freely in Jerusalem. Remember now, this is the same place where he was the head honcho in rounding up these people and putting them in prison, men and women.

Speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord. And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews. That means the Grecian Jews or those with the Grecian background.

But they were attempting to put him to death. Long story short, Saul had become a very hot item.

He had a giant bullseye painted on his back. And all of his so-called former friends were eager to do away with him.

When the brethren learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea, that's on the coast, and sent him away to Tarsus.

[26 : 50] Where's that? That's his hometown. That's in Cilicia. And it, too, is several miles removed from where they are.

In fact, you have to get over to the coast and go up through the water and go and so on and get over into Asia Minor to get to Tarsus. So they're sending him home. We're saying, Saul, we've got to get you out of town.

Boy, they're after you. And they're not going to stop until you're dead. So they put him on the ship and they send him home for some R&R.; He goes to Tarsus.

And he's going to be there for quite some time. What he is doing in Tarsus, we're not told. Scriptures are completely silent about that.

I cannot imagine his not continuing his evangelistic zeal just as he had before. So if you will look at Acts chapter 13, if we'll come over just a couple of pages to Acts chapter 13.

[27 : 53] Now, as the chapter opens, here's what you need to keep in mind. Acts 13 begins Paul's first missionary journey.

And it is so critical that you understand this. It was about 15 years after the Damascus Road experience.

That's really significant. I remember how shocked I was to find that out as a relatively new Christian because I thought it was maybe six months or a year or something like that.

But it was 15 years since he was converted on the Damascus Road. And now he is being commissioned as a missionary. In verse 1, we read, There were at Antioch in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, and it names them.

And it says in verse 2, While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

[28 : 59] And remember earlier we read in chapter 9 how he was called to be a minister to the sons of Israel and to kings, to royalty, and to Gentiles.

And now this is being fulfilled in a really major way. And we read that they had fasted, prayed, laid hands on them, sent them away, and they went by the Holy Spirit down to Seleucia.

From there they sailed to Cyprus and so on. And in verse 14, Verse 14 of the same chapter we read, Going on from Perga, They arrived at Pisidian Antioch.

Antioch. Now that's a little confusing because the Antioch that is in verse 1 of chapter 13 is in Syria. And it's going to become the headquarters of Christianity, if you will.

And it will be there, Antioch, Syria, where Paul, where the text says that they were called Christians first at Antioch.

[30 : 03] And it was that Antioch. So what we read in verse 14 going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch. That's just another city with the same name, but in a completely different location.

And we've got all kinds. How many Springfields are there anyway? Springfield, Illinois. Springfield, Ohio. Springfield, Massachusetts. Well, there are multiple Antiochs too. So they went into the Sabbath in the Pisidian Antioch on the Sabbath day, went into the synagogue and sat down.

And after the reading of the law, which is part of the tradition, part of the official service that was conducted, the law and the prophets, the synagogue officials, sent to them saying, brethren, and they don't have a clue who this is.

These synagogue officials, they don't know that this is Paul the Apostle, also known as Saul of Tarsus formerly.

They see them as just two fellow Jews who are strangers in town to whom they wanted to extend a courtesy to speak.

[31 : 12] If you've got something to say to the brethren, please feel free to do so. You have the floor. And Paul and Barnabas are saying, thank you very much. We do have something to say. And everybody's listening because they are automatically of interest because they're strangers.

They're from far away and everybody wants to know where they're from and what they've done and all the rest of it. So everybody is very alert. And we are told, Paul stood up, motioning with his hand, he said, Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen.

The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt. And with an uplifted arm, he led them out from it.

Now, what is all of this? This is all historical background. He is relating stuff to these people in this congregation there in the synagogue that they already know.

They cut their teeth on this stuff. They learned this from the time they were a child. And they're sitting there as Paul is recounting their history. They're sitting there looking at each other, nodding.

[32 : 17] Yes, yes, we know. We know. We've read that. Yes, we've heard that in the synagogue. And they were very familiar with what they were saying. And then when he comes down in this same chapter, And he is talking about someone that they have only heard about remotely.

And in verse 26, he begins saying, Brethren, sons of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us the word of this salvation, this deliverance is sent out.

For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, recognizing neither him, that is, Jesus, nor the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning him.

And though they found no ground for putting him to death, they asked Pilate that he be executed. And when they had carried out all that was written concerning him, they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb.

But God raised him from the dead. And that's when you can see all of these people there in the synagogue, turning their head and looking at each other and saying, Did you hear what he said?

[33 : 39] Remember, they are many, many miles removed from where these events took place. And all they've gotten is bits and pieces of information. But now they're hearing something from a firsthand source.

And they're all ears. We're told that verse 33, God has fulfilled this promise to our children, in that he raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my son, today I have begotten thee.

Yeah, you know, I've read that. I've heard that a number of times. Never did understand what that meant. Doesn't make any sense.

Who's talking and who's he talking about? What is it? If you've got a new American standard, you'll see that it is in large print, indicating that this is a quote from the Old Testament.

And when he quotes from the Old Testament, of course, the new didn't even exist at this time. Their ears really perk up because they're hearing something they're familiar with. And as for the fact that he raised him up from the dead, no more to decay, he has spoken in this way, I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.

[35 : 03] Therefore, he also says in another Psalm, Thou wilt not allow thy holy one to undergo decay. This is found in Psalm 16. But what in the world does that mean?

Who wrote that Psalm? David wrote it. David the king, he wrote it. When did he write it? He wrote it a thousand years earlier.

Well, who was David talking about? They scratch their head and say, Well, I don't know. It doesn't make any sense. David, the psalmist said, Thou wilt not allow thy holy one to undergo decay.

Do you know what that sounds like? It sounds like, it sounds like David is saying that he is, he himself is the holy one and that God, you will not allow me to undergo decay.

What does that mean? That means when you die and you're buried, your body decomposes.

[36 : 24] it decays. It decays. It's corrupt. You're dead. You're food for worms. David is saying that God is not going to allow that happen to happen to him.

Well, read on. verse 36, David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, which is a euphemism in the Bible for he died.

Not talking about eight hours a night variety sleep. He died. And David was laid among his fathers and underwent decay.

But he whom God raised did not undergo decay. Who's he talking about?

He's talking about David's greater son who is a direct bloodline descendant of David who will be born a thousand years later.

[37 : 53] This is Jesus, the Messiah. I can just see these Jews sitting there in the synagogue looking at each other. What?

What? What is? Could that be? Do you hear what he's saying? and somebody's saying, you know, I never did understand that, what that means.

Could this be right? Is that what that means? Yeah. We know where David, the king, was buried. We know where his tomb is.

You can visit it. His bones still lie there. So he couldn't have been but if David wasn't talking about himself, who was he talking about?

That's the whole point. He was talking about his descendant. He's talking about David's greater son.

[38 : 53] Remember on Palm Sunday when he rode into town on the back of that donkey? What were the people shouting? Hosanna! Hosanna to the son of David.

David. They recognized that Jesus was a direct bloodline descendant of David the king. David the king started the Davidic dynasty so that every single individual that sat on the throne of David after he died was a direct descendant of his.

And when it came to Jesus of Nazareth, he too was a direct descendant and the line stopped. There are no further descendants.

The Davidic dynasty ended with David's greater son Jesus. David, verse 36, laid among his fathers, underwent decay, decay.

But he whom God raised did not undergo decay. And I tell you, I can just visualize these old Jewish guys there with their long beards and their paraphernalia and all of their Sunday go-to-meet-and-close.

[40 : 17] I can just visualize the little light bulbs in their minds starting to come on. Things were starting to fall into place.

Did you get that? Could that be David's son, Jesus, Nazareth, Messiah, crucified, raised from the dead?

Do you suppose? Could that be? And some are saying, no, no, no, that's not what it means. But it really fits.

Stop and think about it. It makes sense. And they were starting arguing about this among themselves. and someone has said, whenever you get three Jews together, you've got at least four opinions.

And they had opinions here. And it's very controversial. This thing is electric. It is stirring up this whole community. Let's read on. Let's read on. Therefore, verse 38, therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.

[41 : 31] Now, I've got to stop right here and say something that's really, really important because it's really, really important and that is this. You, as a human being, have no greater need in the universe than to be forgiven of your sin.

Not the water you drink and not the food you eat is more important than that because that is the only thing that can bring you into a right relationship with the God of heaven, forgiveness of sin.

And it means to forgive me. The word in the Greek is and it means to dismiss or to send away.

It is as if a judge is sitting on the bench and he's hearing the case and he pronounces the accused not guilty and he says, you are dismissed.

You are free to go. it means to send away, to dismiss. What has God done with our sin? They are forgiven.

[43 : 02] They are cast behind his back. They are buried in the depths of the deepest sea. They are sought for and not found. All of these are descriptions of what God has done with our sins. sins.

And the reason he has done that with our sins is because Jesus Christ paid for every single sin, every human being ever committed throughout all history, including the billions who have died in the past and the billions who are alive today and the billions who will be here in the future.

Jesus Christ paid the penalty sufficient to cancel the sin debt of all of those billions and billions of people. And he could do that only because of who he was.

That's the only reason. He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us so that we might be made or become the righteousness of God in him.

This is the most amazing thing that has ever been proclaimed. And we give it a name.

[44 : 28] We call it the gospel. We call it the good news. But you know, that's just the name that is worn so thin that I think it just kind of just goes over people's heads and they just don't get it.

They don't plug into it. What we are talking about is the most important thing that can ever occur in a human being's life.

I don't care who you are, where you are, what your language, what your color, what your position in life, what your destiny, none of that matters compared to this.

This is everything. This is everything. And it is made available to you as an absolute gift. gift. gift. gift. gift. gift.

[45 : 46] So what did you make of this? Can you think of anything? can you think of anything that is superior to this that in the fullness of time God sent forth his son made of a woman made under the law to redeem them that were under the law he who knew no sin but God demonstrated his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us but somehow somehow in our jaded world and culture it just seems to be yeah okay so what's on television it's just not absorbed the impact of it the importance of it it's just reduced to wordage that often doesn't really connect at all because we are so distracted and otherworldly and thinking of things that are relatively unimportant that occupy our mind and we just don't get it all I want to do

I mean all I want to do is whatever I can to enable people to get it because when you get it it'll change your life from the inside out it changes it changes your interests it changes your focus it changes your identity it changes your agenda it changes your destiny it changes everything so if anyone be in Christ he's a new creation old things have passed away behold all things have become new there's absolutely nothing nothing there is nothing in the universe that compares with this truth little wonder that Paul said I determined

I just made up my mind to declare nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified because that's the only thing that really matters that's the only thing that changes everything that's the heart and mind of God brought down to this earth that's the whole shebang that's it that's everything that's everything my wife and before who had any information from God that was really something that you could kind of put your teeth into and go with and how how did it work out well it didn't work out very well do you know what it was it was it was the law it was the law of Moses and it was given exclusively to the children of Israel the law of Moses consisting generally called the Pentateuch it's Genesis

Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy those five books of Moses the Pentateuch was given to Israel wasn't given to the Babylonians wasn't given to the Assyrians wasn't given to the Chaldeans wasn't given to anyone just the children of Israel and they failed it miserably and God made all kinds of provision within the law for them to recuperate to recover from their failures and what was their failure well their failures was their human nature provided which was sin it was selfishness and self-centeredness and it consisted of idolatry and it consisted of murder and it consisted of all kinds of lying and cheating and everything that all of us human beings are capable of so God not only gave them a law but it was a law that they couldn't keep for what the law could not do in that it was weak weak through the flesh it was weak because of the people whom the law was given they were weak they were unable to keep the law there wasn't anything wrong with the law that's just the problem there wasn't anything wrong with the law what was wrong was the people to whom the law was given so there was one miserable failure after another so what's God going to do well the soul that sinneth it shall surely die so when they sin just wipe them out and God could have done that and he would have been justified in doing so but he didn't so he made a he made a way for them to survive and that is listen folks

I can't just overlook this I can't just dismiss it I know some of you are thinking well God is a gracious God and he just loves to forgive and that's true but I'll tell you what I've got to deal with is this thing in my nature called justice it's called righteousness and I can't brush it aside I just can't do that it's impossible it's contrary to my character so I'm going to have to provide some other way for you to survive without sully my character and righteousness without my just saying oh well you know boys will be boys and just forgive and forget they're weak and they don't know what they're doing and they're stupid and I just can't do that especially after I've given you the information so what I'm going to do I'm going I'm going to provide a temporary solution for you and it will be a substitute and something's got something's got to pay the price for this sin how about innocent animals what guilt do they have they don't have any guilt at all they're innocent so we've got innocent animals being sacrificed to pay for the sins of guilty humans yeah that's what we've got and that's what Israel dealt with and in Jeremiah in Jeremiah 31 after centuries of failure under the Mosaic law that God gave them that they repeatedly broke it is as if God says well this is this is not working

[53 : 06] Israel have you have you come to grips with this have you seen your shortcomings have you seen your miserable failures have you seen your inability to measure up have you seen idolatry and all the rest of it so now okay I'll tell you what I'm going to do now you know the covenant that you made with Moses I'm going to set that aside you failed it miserably at every turn of the way so I'm just I trust that you've learned that that you've come to grips with that that your experimentation with the Mosaic law has been a miserable flop so what I'm going to do is the days are coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Judah and the house of Israel not like the covenant which I made before which my which your fathers broke but this covenant will be a new covenant and I will put my words and my law into your heart and it will be the basis for my being able to accept you and the animal sacrifice thing will no longer be sufficient but

I still need some way to balance the books for your sin so I'm going to do it myself that's exactly what he did he who knew no sin was made sin for us so that we might be made the righteousness of God in him the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory so all of those animal sacrifices served to condition the thinking of humanity that sacrifice was needed and that's why Jesus came to be that sacrifice and if what the scriptures say is true and certainly nobody's ever disproved him and Jesus is that Messiah and he is that sacrifice and my dear friend there is nothing in the entire world that is more important than your relationship and your connection to that Savior because it is in his person that your salvation and eternal life really lies and nowhere else it's not in who you are or what you did it's what Jesus did and you putting your faith and your trust in him as your sacrifice and when you do

God forgives God cleanses God pardons simply because Jesus balanced the moral scales of the universe and you are a recipient of God's grace through what Jesus Christ did for you this is Paul's message to preach and this is what he preached he preached that salvation was a free gift of God and the Jewish constituency at the time said away with this man it is not fit that he should live do you hear what he's saying he's teaching against the law of Moses they had it all wrong then they have it all wrong today but you know not only do the Jews have it all wrong today so do most non-Jews they have it all wrong too so while we are while we are preaching this content be reminded it is 2,000 years old and it has never lost its power or its ability when one puts faith and trust in Jesus Christ

God hears you God receives you God cleanses you God pardons you God makes you his child God gives you a new destiny everything is due all that matters is that you have done that this is why Paul said I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified why do you say that Paul because that's the only thing that matters that's the only thing that matters and we are now in our culture and in this western world entering into a new kind of phase where the gospel of Jesus Christ as has been the case for so many years has simply been kind of admired and kind of tolerated but we are now finding that our world and our culture is being less and less tolerant and you as a believer in Christ mark my word mark my word

I'm not a prophet and I don't claim to be but I can see the writing on the wall and the answer to that is we are going to become more and more and more persona non grata our churches and our meetings are going to be looked upon as a problem and an obstacle to be dealt with and more and more Christians are going to be going underground and not letting it be all that well known that they have a relationship with Jesus Christ because there will be more and more time goes on a greater price to pay it's coming you can count on it haven't you noticed it within the last two or three years it's going to intensify but do you know that ought not to surprise us because we know Paul said when he wrote to Timothy in the last days evil men shall wax worse and worse that doesn't mean we're going to get better and better it means what it says evil men are going to wax worse and worse the screws are tightening and they're going to get tighter and the time is coming and it's not going to be very far off when those who name the name of Christ will be asked to take a stand and it's going to cost you to do that some people and it's already cost some it's cost some their jobs it's cost some their position it's going to cost a lot more as time goes on but I'll tell you what you cannot find in the universe a cause that is greater to give your life to than this cause it either is everything or it is nothing what we are talking about is the very word and program and plan of God or it is something to just be dismissed as religious gobbledygook which is the way a lot of people look at it it's time for each of us to make up our minds so let's pray

[60 : 31] Father we've talked about things that we don't know a whole lot about not nearly as much as we would like to but the scriptures are clear enough that we can respond with our will by saying Lord don't know what is coming in the future or how all of this is going to play out but I just want you to know you can count me in I'm with you don't know what that's going to portend don't know how it's going to play out but I know that as long as Jesus Christ is my Savior and by my side there isn't anything that I can't stand against or stand for more important than what this is and the truth that it contains pray right now that hearts and minds will be focused upon the reality of the scriptures and the truth the message if there's anyone here that has never made that decision we pray the spirit of God will tenderly speak to them even now and cause them to know that you love them with such an incredible amazing love that if they knew and understood how much you love them they would flee to you in a heartbeat and our prayer is simply that they may have gained sufficient understanding even now to know that you love them and gave yourself for them and now they want to give themselves to you in return that is our prayer for each and every one anybody here who has not made that decision may you give them the grace to do so right now by saying

Lord Jesus there's still a lot about this that I don't understand but I know enough to know that Jesus died to be my savior and I want to put my faith and trust in him whatever the future holds I want to be on your side and I want you to know that you can count on me thank you Lord Jesus for doing what you did I'll never be able to repay you but I'm going to make every effort to make a contribution however I can in Christ's name amen you are dismissed and happy new year you