

HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

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Lesson 15 God Speaks in His Son

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Let's open in prayer,

Father, we want to just thank You so much for Your great love for us. And we, every day we can praise You and rejoice for Your new mercies over this day—the sure mercies of David. Your covenant promise is as good as, the heavens continue to run their course, You said, “as night and day rolls on.” So we are confident that You have every intention of fulfilling all Your promises. We think about those people who looked forward to Your Son coming. And He came! And You always keep Your promises, Lord, and we know there are things yet to be fulfilled and we have confidence in those too. So, thank You for all the exceeding great and precious promises that we have even now in Christ. And how we can be partakers of the divine nation and escape all the corruption and junk in this world. So, Lord, we thank You for Your Spirit that You put within us and the work that You are doing. And as we look and continue through Your word looking at the times You spoke, we pray that You would just let us see how You acted in history and how You spoke in history as well; and put it together and have just a larger view, a bigger understanding of Your overall plan through Your word. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

The Gospels
God Speaks in His Son
Matthew - Mark - Luke – John
“In these last days spoken to us by His Son...”

The Gospels. God speaks in His Son. Literally in Hebrews 1:1–3 where it says that God spoke in many ways, in different ways in the past. He spoke by the prophets and all these visions and the ways that God chose to speak, but it says “in these last days He has spoken to us in Son.” Literally that is all it says, “in Son.” We know that it was His Son and in most of your translations you will see *His* in italics because they are identifying the fact that it is not in the original. And what God is emphasizing there is the method by which God speaks. He speaks through Sonship. He offers His Son, the incarnate method, which we will see.

So, we look at Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John today.

God, who at various times in various ways spoke in time
past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days
spoken to us by *His* Son. (Hebrews 1:1-2)

Or it is literally, “in Son.” But we translate it “by His Son” because that is the instrument or the method through which God spoke.

...whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who, being the brightness of *His* glory and express image of His person. (Hebrews 1:2-3)

And that is no doubt why Jesus could say; “If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father” (cf. John 14:9).

The Need

To sum up all that God had *said* before and all that He would *say* in the future.

**Jesus Christ,
God in human flesh,
gave *the ultimate words of God* to us.
He sums up and fulfills the Old Testament
and proclaims what the future holds.**

Now, what is the need at this time? The need is this: to sum up all that God has said before and all that He would say in the future. God is taking all the times He has spoken....What do you call it when you take those MP3s and you just take everything and crunch it down? Yeah, you compress it. You just bring it down into one little small disc. You can take a whole class and you can condense a whole class of 15 or 16 discs and you can put them down on one disc. And that is kind of what God is saying, you know. “I have spoken and I have spoken, and I have spoken. But really what I want to do is take everything I have said and I want to condense it and I have put it into the person of My Son.” And the person and work of Jesus Christ is, you might say, the condensed

version of everything God wants to say past, present and future. And so we see the need here is to sum up everything that God has said.

In 1 Timothy 3:16 it says,

Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, [How mysterious that is.] He was justified in the Spirit, He was seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, received up in glory.

And this is a tremendous mystery. Jesus Christ, God in human flesh, giving the ultimate words of God to us. So He sums up and fulfills the Old Testament and proclaims what the future holds. And He said, "I did not come to destroy. I came to fulfill and to complete everything that has been said and that has been prophesied" (cf. Matthew 5:17). And He will both in His first and His second coming. So that is the need: to sum up everything God has said and to say it in such a way that man cannot miss it, you might say. And so He said it through Sonship, the incarnate method.

So, we see the New Testament, Acts to Revelation, as a development of what Christ spoke in the gospel. He not only summarized the Old Testament, but He initiated the church age by teaching the disciples. In Matthew 16:15 He asked them, "Who do you say that I am?" They are out there where all the temples of the cults of the world were at the fountainhead of the Jordan River. He took them way up there and He took them in the midst of all those temples and all those cults that are there and He said, "Who do you say that I am?" And of course Simon Peter answered, "Well, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus says, "Yes, that is a revelation from My Father. And it is on this rock that I am going to build the church; that I am the Christ, the Son of the living God. I will build the church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it" (cf. Matthew 16:16-18). And so Jesus is the foundation stone of the new thing that He is going to be doing, the church. So He is the complete representation of God.

Now, what is idolatry? Idolatry is trying to represent God in any other way than Jesus. Jesus is the express image of God. He is the “fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9). And when someone tries to represent God in any other way than Jesus Christ—that is idolatry.

So, Jesus Himself said in John 1:18, “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” Or more literally, He has “exegeted” Him which is the word from which we get exegesis. That is, we pull it out. Out of Jesus you can pull everything God wants to say. Everything God wants to declare. Jesus is the *Alpha* and the *Omega*. He is the whole alphabet of God. He is the *logos*, from beginning to end. Everything God wants to say He has said in the person and the work of His Son Jesus Christ. So this *exegeomai* He leads up, draws out, or recounts for Himself all that we need to know about God. So the *logos* of God in human flesh, is the Son of God with the glory of God in Him, the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form. And this is the way God intends to speak.

So what does He say? Jesus says, “I did not come to destroy.” He says, “I came to fulfill the law and the prophets. I am fulfilling everything. For surely I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle will be no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled” (cf. Matthew 5:18). He gave us His own word. There is not one jot or tittle of the law that is going to pass away until every bit of it is complete. And usually when they refer to the law they included the prophets and the prophecies.

So whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; [Jesus magnified the law.] But whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. You have heard it said...But I say unto you.... (cf. Matthew 5:19; 21)

And even God said, “This is My Son. Hear ye Him” (cf. Matthew 17:5). And they did and people responded, “Never has man spake like this man.” Because He did say, “You have heard it said...but I say...” (cf. Matthew 5:21-22). Jesus not one time said, “Thus saith the Lord.” Not once. He just said, “I say this”—because He was God. He did not need to say, “Thus saith the Lord.” He was the Lord. Now a few times He did say, “It is written” but He is referring to prophecies that were being fulfilled. But He did not stand up like the prophets. The prophets had to always say, “Thus says the Lord. I am speaking for God.” And if it did not come true, they got stoned. Jesus never even said one time “Thus says the Lord.” Nobody spoke like Him. He just got up and said, “I am God. I am the Lord. You have heard it said, but I say unto you.” And He just spoke it with tremendous authority. And people were amazed because He was the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form.

The Content

**Christ’s teachings
fulfill and clarify the past.**

**Christ’s teachings
are seed thoughts for the Epistles.**

**Christ teachings
give the greatest revelation of God.**

So what is the content? We see the need. But the content is all these seed thoughts that He brings. And they have to do with His person, the great revelation of Himself. “I am He” [that is] “I am the Messiah” (cf. John 4:26). He said, “I am the Bread of life” (cf. John 6:35). “I am the door, the Son of God” (cf. John 10:9). “I am the resurrection and

the life” (cf. John 11:25). “I am the way, the truth and the life” (cf. John 14:6). “Before Abraham was, I am” (cf. John 8:58). “I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20).

And so the content is primarily about: who He is and how He is fulfilling all that God intended. The content is about: Jesus, Himself personally. He is the fulfillment. And that is why He says, “I, I am the way.” And that is *ego eimi*. In the original language it is emphatic. You cannot say anything more emphatic than that. Jesus stood and said, “I” ego, the emphatic form of I and then He said, “I, me, I am. I, I am the way, the truth and the life” or “I, I am the Messiah.” Everything He talked about, whether it was being the bread of the life, or the living water, or the resurrection, the emphasis was always upon Himself as a person. “I am the fulfillment of these things.”

So I do not see how anybody can read the Bible, particularly the New Testament in the original language and come up with this thing, “Jesus never claimed to be God.” I mean, over and over emphatically He was proclaiming, “I am God. And I am the fulfillment of everything God has ever said or ever will say.”

So He is here “in Son” because that is the way God is speaking, in Sonship.

The Seed-Thought Principle:

***“All will know that you are my disciples,
by your love for one another.”***

(John 13:34-35)

***“Love suffers long and is kind,...love bears all
things, believes all things, hopes all things,
endures all things. Love never fails.”***

(1 Corinthians 13:1-7)

So, the example of the seed thoughts of Jesus: He would say something in the gospels, but it would be a seed thought and in the epistles they expound and explain more fully what the seed thoughts were in the gospels. It is about others; it is about God and others. And when the world sees that it is about God and others and not about you, they go, “You are different than us because my life is about me.” And you demonstrate to them that your life is not about you. Your life is about God and other people. And they say, “Oh, maybe God is real. Maybe Jesus is real because we see it.” You are not easily provoked. People cannot irritate you that easily. I am not saying they cannot irritate you, but not easily provoked. You don’t think evil. That is one of the things about the world. The world thinks evil because they are evil and their thoughts are evil. And their mind is set on the flesh and it is enmity against God. But the Christian, when he sees something, he does not immediately think evil of it. That is not the way we think because we have our mind renewed and the spirit of our mind is renewed. And this is the way we related to one another.

We do not rejoice in lawlessness or iniquity. We rejoice in truth. We bear everything. I mean, you can put so much weight on the shoulder of a true Christian. They can bear it

because Christ is in them and He bore the weight of the sin of the world. And when people come to you for counseling and want to know, and want to share and confess their sins and everything else, it is like, yeah, you can bear it. You can bear one another's burdens. You can care because you have Christ in you and it proves it. You believe all things. You hope all things. You endure all things. Your love never fails.

And so Jesus says in a seed thought, "They will know you are Christians by your love." But in 1 Corinthians 13 and the epistles, they expound and explain more fully what the seed thoughts were in the gospels. And that is the relationship between the gospels and the epistles.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

And that is what is confirmed in Philippians 2:6-11.

Jesus Christ, who being in the form of God did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself that likeness of man, but went to the point of death. And coming in the likeness of men, and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross [or the death of the cross]. Therefore, God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above every name. Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. (cf. Philippians 2:6-11)

That is a fuller explanation in Philippians 2 of John 1:14. He really tells you what the glory is. The fullness of grace and truth is found in Philippians 2. Because there is a seed thought in the gospels and there is always a fuller explanation of it in the epistles.

The Method

**At this point in the history of redemption,
God doesn't speak through a man;
He becomes a Man to demonstrate and
speak the truth to man.**

This is called the Incarnation.

***Theo-anthropos*
(God/Man)**

Now look at the method. You know, at this point in the history of redemption, God does not speak through a man like He did through the prophets, through the kings, through others, through Abraham, through Moses. But now God actually becomes a man to demonstrate and speak the truth to man. This is called incarnation. He is the God-Man, the *Theanthropos*. And so that is the method He has chosen, to become man, to become flesh.

And this is the, you know, missionary method. That is what it has to do with us. It is our model for missions. If you are going to be a missionary—and you are a missionary—you are an ambassador of God in this world, preaching reconciliation and begging people to be reconciled to God because they can. And the method that God has chosen to work through is the same method, in a sense, that He chose in the gospels when He brought His Son. He says, in the epistles, “You are going to be living epistles.” That is the method. And so we are known and read just like Jesus was known and read and He revealed the Father, now you are known and read and you reveal Jesus. And so that is the method by which God wants people to know Jesus Christ is by my life and your life. That is a pretty

big responsibility to know that people will know Christ by the life that I live. It really brings you into a close relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

And again, that is why it is so important that in the church, or any institution that is called by the name of Jesus Christ that does something public in the name of Jesus Christ, they have to behave in a certain way. And that is why the pastoral epistles were largely written. He says, “I have written these things so that you will know how to behave in the household of God” (1 Timothy 3:15). He says, “I want you guys to know how to act if you are going to call yourselves Christians. There is a certain way and a certain demonstration that has to be made in the church because you are living epistles.” And so that is the method, the incarnational method.

The Method Applied Today

The Missionary Model

***We are “Living Epistles”
known and read by all men!***

Now what is the response that God expects? Well, obviously, in terms of Jesus Christ, when He spoke in Son, who fulfilled everything in Himself, the response is you come to Jesus for salvation. “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life and it is they that bear witness to Me, yet you refuse to come to Me that you may have life” (cf. John 5:39). You have to come to Jesus to have life. That is the

response God expects. Come to Jesus. To know God and possess eternal life, you must receive and follow Him. John 1:12-13 says,

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right [or the power, the ability] to become sons of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

So, the response God expects when He brings His Son is that He be received and that people come to Jesus.

The Response Required

We must come to Jesus Christ for salvation.

***“But to as many as received Him,
He gave the right to become sons of God,
to those who believe in His name: who were
born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh,
nor of the will of man, but born of God.”***

(John 1:12-13).

Now, that response requires continuing in His Word. It says in John 8:31, “If you abide in My word and My word abides in you then you are My disciples indeed.” It is a proof that you have come to Jesus. How do you know if somebody has come to Jesus? They continually abide in the Word of God. If they don’t continually abide in the Word of God, they did not come to Jesus. They might have come to a religion. They might have come to a church. They might have come to a tradition. They might have come to something, but they did not come to Jesus. When you come to Jesus it is evident because you are

born by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God that lives and abides forever, and you abide in that Word and it is proof that you came to Jesus.

And secondly, the major proof besides that is that you love as He loved. “A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you” (John 13:34). So basically that is how you know if someone has come to Jesus. They stay in the Word of God and they love the way Jesus loved, by not loving their life to the point of death, living for God and living for others. And so we can really know. And those are simple things.

Thirdly, they take up their cross. “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23). So it is part of our ritual. Every day we decide to die. We just say, “Okay, it is not about me. I am going to die today and I want to do God’s will not my will.” And that is a daily battle because just because I did God’s will yesterday does not mean I am going to do God’s will today. Because I might get up and decide I do not feel like doing God’s will today. I would really like to do my will for a change. And we take the attitude of the world: “You deserve a break today.” But you don’t. The best thing is just to get up and die.

And then fourthly, you will bear fruit. “By this My Father is gloried that you bear much fruit, so will you be My disciples;” or really, “You will prove to be My disciples by the fruit you bear” (John 15:8).

And then fifthly, it means putting Christ above every relationship. “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:26). So you know if a person has really come to Christ because there is nothing between him and Christ. It cannot be your country, cannot be your homeland, cannot be your family, cannot be your pedigree, cannot be any relationship on earth. You have come to Christ, you belong totally to Him. He can do whatever He wants with you. And you have put Him above every relationship

on this earth. And then you continually count the cost. “So likewise whoever of you who does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:33).

So that was the response God expected and still expects. When you come to Jesus, it is not just kind of a cursory “Oh yeah, I heard the name of Jesus somewhere. It sounded good to me and I accepted. I came to Jesus. Because I heard that if you come to Jesus, you know, like things will work out really great in your life. So I came to Jesus.” That is not coming to Jesus. He explains here what coming to Jesus is. And Jesus never hid the cost of discipleship. It is tremendous.

I was talking with Wes Bentley yesterday. I went and had lunch with him because he is getting ready to build a training center out here for radical extreme missions. You know, we were trying to come up with a curricula so that you could come here for two semesters, then you could do your last two semesters at the missions training center. And it will be radical missions training both spiritually and physically. I mean, it is going to be involved in real physical stuff too because it is for people who want to go out into remote areas of Africa. And just as I was seeing some of the pictures and things that took place recently over there, you realize, man, the cost of discipleship there is real. It is not like here at all. We are not challenged much here. Most of the discipleship here, you have to incur on your own or at your own expense. You have to decide, I am going to do it.

Over there it is like you are put in a situation where it is just going to happen to you. And sometimes that is the best thing for you because “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak,” isn’t it? And so you find that out. You will take people who are right here who have willing spirits. Like you, you probably have a very willing spirit, but sometimes your flesh is just so weak, you do not end up affecting the cost of discipleship. But when you are taken and you are put over in some other place where you do not have a choice, then all of a sudden it comes out. And they go, “oh yeah, the spirit really was willing.” And now we see because the flesh has been destroyed and they did not have an option. You know, we see the spirit shining forth and that is the way it is over there.

But the Lord makes clear, the cost of discipleship. That is the response that He expects.

So, let's look at it again. The need is to sum up all that is in His Son or to sum everything up in His Son. That is what the need was and that is what God did. Everything He ever said or wanted to say, He summed up in Jesus when He spoke in the gospels.

The content is "I am He." You know, "I am," whatever He mentioned. With everything, "I am the answer. I am the life. I am the resurrection. I am just everything." There is nothing that He is not. He is the content.

The method is God incarnate. Sonship. What was Jesus' favorite title?—"The Son of Man." Over and over and over again he was called the "Son of Man." The Son of Man because He was God's answer for man; He was the true Son. The method was Sonship, God incarnate. The response is: receive Him and He defines that response.

So, this is the fifth time God has spoken. The sixth time God speaks is in the epistles. And then the last time God speaks is in the Revelation. So, what I want to do is I have got some further things to talk about concerning the relationship between the spiritual and the literal kingdom. The spiritual view says He abandoned all national aspects and He was not offering that to them. That He only came to offer the same spiritual salvation that He offered us. That He did not come to offer any national or political aspects of the kingdom.

The literal view is more that, yes, Jesus did come and offer the same theocratic kingdom that was prophesied, you know, by the prophets. And that is exactly what He was offering to them, but they rejected Him. And that is what we want to discuss and talk about, are these different aspects of the kingdom.

Now obviously, what Jesus did offer was spiritual, wasn't it? Because He did say, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). So even He said that to Nicodemus. So there was a spiritual aspect to what Jesus was offering there. But then, I mean, that is required in the new covenant in Jeremiah anyway. So that does

not mean that the whole thing was totally spiritual. We were already seeing in Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's prophecy that this had to happen.

The ethical aspect of what He offered would be found where, in what particular lesson that Jesus gave? It would be the Sermon on the Mount, right? He is showing the requirements and how you are to live in the kingdom as He gave the Sermon on the Mount.

We see the social, you know, aspect of it because of His miracles, His healings. I mean, He healed a lot of sick and needy people. He did supernatural things. He preached largely to what group, the rich or the poor?—largely to the poor. So we do see some social aspects of what Jesus came and offered at that time.

Then we see the ecclesiastical aspect of the kingdom because He went in and He ran the money changers out of the temple and said, "Hey, I am in charge of this temple. You get out of here. This temple was for a purpose and the purpose was for prayer. And it was prayer for all nations so that they could come and fellowship with God here." And so we see there was an ecclesiastical aspect to what He had to say. "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations" (Mark 11:17).

And there was a political aspect. We see that clearly, obviously in Matthew 25 when He is sitting a throne of His glory and judging the nations of the earth.

And there is a physical aspect, obviously, because it was real blind men that saw, real lame men that walked and real withered hands that were stretched forth. You know real deaf people that heard, real lepers that were cleansed. You know real wind that was calmed and real storms that were spoken to. So we see this real physical aspect of when He came.

So He says in Luke 1:31-33,

Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son and you shall call His name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David. And He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever. And of His kingdom there shall be no end.

Now, that is what is being announced in Luke 1 before the birth of Jesus. And just that, you know, is that *Magnificat*, that hymn of Mary that continues there.

And Simeon, what was Simeon waiting for in Luke 2:25? He was waiting for the consolation of Israel. That is what he was waiting for and Christ came and acknowledged that.

Anna, what was Anna waiting for, the prophetess? What did she look for in Luke 2:38? She was looking for the redemption in Jerusalem. That is why she was there. She was waiting for the Messiah to bring redemption to the Jews. She was looking for redemption in Jerusalem, the city of the great king.

The wise men were looking for whom?—Matthew 2:2, “He that was born King of the Jews.”

So, I mean, we see as He is coming, there is a coming to the nation Israel. And when He is announced by John the Baptist, it is: “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” And his baptism, John’s baptism was a ritual of cleansing, a water cleansing. And they confessed their sins, but they confessed their sins in anticipation of what?—water cleansing, confession of sins, to get ready for the Messiah, “Receive your Messiah.” And that is what John was heralding. You guys ought to get ritually cleansed. And you ought to confess your sins. And you ought to prepare the way because your Messiah that has been promised prophetically is getting ready to show up. And you as a nation should be doing this.

Christ Himself began to announce this in Matthew 4:12. He said that the kingdom was at hand. “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17).

And He sent them out. When He sent the seventy out, what did He say in Luke 10:9? “Say unto them the kingdom of God has come nigh unto you.” The kingdom is near. “Blessed are your eyes which see the things that ye see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which you see and they did not see them; and to hear those things which you hear, and they did not hear them” (Luke 10:23-24). But He says, “The kingdom is at hand.” In other words, if the King is here, the kingdom can be offered to them. The kingdom is at hand. It is imminent. It is so close, but in their hearts it was so far away. But Jesus was still there offering this kingdom.

But why did He limit it? And this has always been puzzling to some extent, right? When you read in Matthew 10:5–7 we read: “And these twelve Jesus sent forth. And He commanded them saying, ‘Go not into the way of the Gentiles.’” He said, “I don’t want to see you guys witnessing to any Gentiles and into any city of the Samaritans. Don’t enter it.” He said, “I do not want to catch you up around Samaria. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach saying: ‘the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’” And He says in chapter 15 verse 24, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

So this is the contingency, you might say. Jesus is offering a message, but He is first only offering it to a certain group. And that is to the Jews. He said, “Don’t go to Gentiles. Don’t go to Samaria. Only go to Jews, because it is to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

Well, the message is confirmed. He says, “Art Thou He that should come or do we look for another?” They were wanting to know, “Are You the guy or are we going to have to look for somebody else?” He said, “Well, go back to while John was in prison and look at what you see. I mean, you hear these reports. There is evidence that the kingdom has

come because lame people are walking and deaf people are hearing. There is all kinds of things going on; the dead are even raised up. I mean, come on, John, don't you think that the king is here?" (cf. Matthew 11:3-5). So these are manifestations and evidences that the true King was here.

And even He said in Matthew 12:28, "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God then the kingdom of God is come unto you." It is here because it is manifested. And these are real miracles. They are not the lying wonders of the antichrist, but real miracles of the true King were taking place. And He says, "That is proof that the kingdom is here and is being offered to you."

And it was spiritual, in the spiritual realm because He cast out devils. He had authority over the spiritual realm. It was true in the natural realm. He could raise people up from the dead. He could speak to storms and winds and, you know, just remove any kind of physical problem whatsoever. And so the kingdom itself, through the prophets, was designed in such a way to show that the curse would be removed from mankind both spiritually and naturally; both spiritually and physically. And that is, no doubt, partly why we pray: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Because we understand how great the kingdom is; but Jesus had the right to the kingdom. The prophets had made that clear.

Now, was it a real offer? I think so. I think He made a genuine offer to them but it was contingent upon them. And this is where we get into that whole thing of unconditional and conditional covenants. Can an unconditional covenant have a contingency within it? That there will come a point when people obey and do what they are supposed to that the thing will actually happen. Yeah, it can. God is going to see that this covenant is fulfilled. It is eternal. It will happen. But we do not see the full manifestation and results of that thing until certain people do what they are supposed to do. And so Jesus comes and I believe He made a real offer to the Jews and went to them first and said, "I am the guy. I am what was prophesied. I am He. That is what the gospels are about. I am. I am Him. I am God in the flesh. I am Messiah. I am the door. I am everything." And they rejected it.

But does that mean that the offer was not real? I think the offer was real. Because He says, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But it depended on their attitude and their response to Him.

Now, we even see that in the Communion, don't we?—at the Lord's Supper, at the very last supper when He was there. He took the first cup. He took the second cup. And at the third cup He instituted something brand new. Because He said, “This is the cup where I stretch out My hands.” And He went to the cross. And He said, “I will not drink the fourth cup until I come back again. I won't drink the fourth cup until I drink it new in My Father's kingdom” (cf. Luke 22:18). In other words, until you say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” He says, “I will not be here and drink this cup with the nation Israel until they get their attitude right and they change their attitude and start saying, ‘Blessed is the Messiah, who is Jesus Christ our Savior and our Lord.’”

Now, I believe that day will come. There are a lot of people that don't. They say, “Well, that day will never come. That is not going to happen. You guys are wacko. That is just all spiritually fulfilled and that will never happen literally and truly.” Well, I do not believe that. I believe that it will happen literally and truly. I think that is the whole purpose for why He did not drink the fourth cup and said, “I am not drinking the fruit of the vine again until I come back,” is because there is a day when the new covenant of Jeremiah 31 will be effected and the nation will come to Him. Hence, Romans 9–11 and what takes place there. But what is going on in the meantime, obviously, is a bit different.

Now, Jesus even said in Matthew 11 about John the Baptist. He says, “If you are willing to receive him, this is Elijah that is come to you.” Pretty amazing!

Turn in your Bibles to Acts 3 and just look at what was preached here in Acts 3, beginning in verse 19. I mean, do you think this is a real *bona fide* offer? Do you think this was offered in good faith? You know, and if the nation would have repented—because they were not and they did not—but still in Acts 3:19 he says, “Repent,

therefore.” He is talking about their ignorance. He said, “I know you acted in ignorance,” in verse 17. You know, just like their rulers did in the past. He said, “You guys have been acting ignorantly forever.”

But the things that God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that is, Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 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. (cf. Acts 3:18-20)

Now Jesus just left! He had just come, was rejected, He died on the cross, rose, ascended. And then Peter gets up and says, “Hey, repent and receive Jesus. Repent so God can send Jesus back to you, the Messiah.

... Whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things; which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. Moses said, ‘The Lord God shall raise up for you a prophet like me [just like Moses] from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed and everything He says to you. (cf. Acts 3:21-22)

Now, did they give heed in everything He said to them? No. But even Moses says, “Ye shall. You shall give heed to everything this guy says, the prophet that is raised up like me” (cf. Deuteronomy 18:18). That is Jesus. Well, they did not give heed to Him then. Do you think Moses was a liar? No. So, it is going to have to happen in the future for Moses to be true. It must happen or either Moses did not know what he was talking about. There is going to come a day when they will give heed to everything the Messiah says. That is future.

And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people; and likewise, all the prophets who have spoken from Samuel and his successors and onward also announce these days. It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham: And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. For you first God raised up His servant and sent him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways. (cf. Acts 3:23-26)

Of course, you know, he did not get much further in his sermon than that because they had started going nuts again.

But Romans 3:3 makes it clear. Does national unfaithfulness on the part of Israel mean that God cannot fulfill His covenant promise? No. He can still do it in the future. And some people think that minimizes the cross. That if God came and made a real offer to Israel that it would minimize the cross. But I do not think so, because that was all part of God's design.

But God's design is based on what? And here we get into the discussion again. What is God's divine design based on?—foreknowledge. God knows everything, doesn't He? This is the predeterminate council of God. He knows ahead of time. We cannot relate to that, that God can know the end from the beginning and that God can plan something out and still leave us a choice in the middle of it. We tend to go, "Well, my goodness sakes alive! If God planned all this stuff out from beginning to end and this is the way it is going to happen, and He knew it was going to happen, then isn't that necessity? Doesn't that mean that this has to happen this way because God has already predetermined that this is going to be the end result right here." But He did it on the basis of foreknowledge. It does not take away your personal responsibility to do right, or your personal

responsibility to make the right choice. It just means God knew what choice you were going to make long before you ever made the thing.

Well, no wonder He calls it the manifold wisdom of God. So, He foresees the choices that are going to be made. That is Paul's argument in Romans. He says this: "Listen, they stumbled and fell." But how did they stumble and fall? What does he say is the reason? What is the instrument of their stumbling and their falling? They stumbled and fell through what?—unbelief. They stumbled and they fell through unbelief.

But is that, was that unbelief a necessity? Did God insist that they have unbelief? Was it God that made them have unbelief? No. He did not insist on it. It was not a necessity that they did not believe. They did not believe of their own free choice. But He allowed them, just like He allowed the choice for those people that received Him, as much as He allowed the choice for those people that rejected Him. And so God allowed it to happen. God's ways are past finding out because He knows the end from the beginning. And it is just beyond our capacity to think that way.

But He still lays the whole responsibility on them. He says, "They stumbled and fell because of—it was not My fault." God says in Romans, "Hey, not My fault. I am a righteous God. They did stumble and fall, but it is not My fault. They stumbled and fell because of their unbelief." It is their fault and their responsibility that they stumbled and fell.

Did that ever happen before in the Old Testament? Did God know something was going to happen before and still offered them something but knowing they were going to fail in it? Yeah. What about at *Kadesh-barnea*? When He said, "Come on, guys. You are right at the edge of the land. Why don't you go on in?" He offered the land to them and said, "Here is the land." Was that a real offer? Do you think that if that first generation had had faith and believed they would have gone into the land? I believe they would have. But did they? No. Why didn't they? He says, "Because of their unbelief."

But then he writes about this next generation that went in because they had faith and Joshua led them in. And Joshua was prophesied to be a type of Christ, et cetera, et cetera. And you could go, “Well, wait a minute. Does that mean that the first group had to fail so that the second group could be led in through Joshua and be fulfilling prophecy?” No. It just means that God knew what was going to happen long before it ever did happen. But it does not mean that God made them choose to have unbelief.

And so the same thing is happening here, I believe, with Israel. When Jesus comes in the gospels and He is manifest as the Messiah, I think He made a real good faith offer to the nation. And if they would have received it, He would have brought in the kingdom. But they did not receive it. He knew from the eternal past that was the choice they would make. But it is not His fault that they made that choice. Just because He knew it, does not mean it is His fault. They are responsible for their own decision there. So it is a pretty amazing thing. Their unbelief kept them out just like Hebrews 3 and 4 keeps telling us. You know, there still remains a rest to the people of God.

So the battle continues on between the spiritual and the literal kingdom. That is just the way it is.

There are basically three major movements in the book of Matthew. The first movement is the presentation of the King. The second movement is the opposition to the King. And the third movement is the final rejection of the King. And the first ten chapters of Matthew, He is presented as the King to them. Then chapter 11 down to chapter 16 there is just opposition against Him. And then finally from the rest of the book on, they are pretty much rejecting the King. And that is why He moved on to parables and talking to them in those parables because they rejected Him. And He did not do it until then. But in spite of that, He still went to His passion. He wanted to obey God and He wanted to save them and I think He has done that through the blood of His cross.

So when was the offer that He made to them set aside? When did that take place? I think in Matthew 12 is when it took place. Jesus had said so many times, “I have come in My

Father's name but you will not receive Me" (John 5:43). And "I am the Son of David but you won't receive Me." But look at Matthew 12:14 what happened there. In 12:14–15 it says, "They held council against Him [That is, the religious leaders] and they held council that they might destroy Him."

And so when that took place, what is Jesus' response? Well first of all, it says, "When Jesus knew it," right, in verse 15? He knew about it. He knew they were counseling as a nation to destroy Him. And what did Jesus do? It says there in verse 15, "Jesus withdrew Himself from them." A sad day! That is when things really began to change. He had been presented to them. He understood clearly now that they were rejecting Him as a nation. And from that moment on, Jesus began to withdraw Himself from them, in chapter 12.

And what begins in Matthew 13?—the parables, the kingdom parables. He begins to talk to them in parables and what are the parables about? They are about what happens from the time of His rejection by them as a nation until the time of the fulfillment when they finally receive Him. And you can trace the parables. And they line up with the seven churches also. There is a parallel there between the seven churches in Revelation and the seven parables.

But listen to what He says; listen to Jesus' heart. And I am just trying to establish this one fact. Did Jesus make a real offer to the nation Israel? Matthew 23:37-39.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and
stones them that are sent unto thee. How often I would have
gathered thy children together.

It is like, "I wanted to do it over and over. I wanted to gather you together."

Even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and
you would not. Behold, your house is left unto you
desolate. For I say to you, you shall not see Me henceforth

until you say, [I mean, you will see Me, but it is not going to happen until you say this] ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.’

Jesus is broken. His heart is ripped apart right now. But He says, “There will be a blessed day. There will come a day.”

In Luke 19:42-44 He says,

If thou hast known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace....

If you had just known what was being offered to you and what could have happened, and the peace that could have taken place. In other words, that sounds like a real offer to me. He is emphatic. He is emotional about it.

But now they are just hidden from your eyes. For the day shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast out a trench about thee and compass thee, and keep thee in on every side and shall lay thee even with the ground and thy children within thee. And they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. (Luke 19:42-44)

Now just because they did not know does not mean He did not make a real offer. He did. And they are going to be trodden down of the Gentiles until, He says in verse 24 of Luke 21, “until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” That is the result.

Why? Because Matthew 21:42-43 says,

The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing. It is marvelous in our eyes. Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruit thereof.

And we know the gospel of the kingdom will be preached again. And there will come a time that, no doubt, they will respond. Jesus looked forward to it and He wanted to see that blessing there. So, you know, there was a real King. He came and He made an offer of a real kingdom. It was rejected by them and then He turned to the Gentiles. And I think He is going to make that offer again.

Well, what do we do in the present time? You know, in our time? Well, Jesus summed it up in one summary statement. He said, "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13 KJV). And that is what you do. And you receive power to be witnesses. "Just witness for Me."

Instead, we get all caught up on the specific dates and aspects of when the Lord is coming and if it is this, that, and another thing. And we get all, kind of extreme about it all. When in reality it is easy to see, like the parable of the fig tree that we are getting closer and closer to the end time. But the point is, He says: "Don't be so focused on the times specifically themselves, but receive the power of the Holy Spirit and go take the gospel around the world" (cf. Acts 1:6-8). And so, any time you see some other little thing happening in terms of a prophecy fulfilled, or it looks like the world scene is getting closer to maybe setting the stage for the Lord to return, what that should do for you is not so you can write a book and debate Christians about the exact aspects of that. He says, "Comfort one another with these words" (1 Timothy 4:18). And then get excited. Let it motivate you to take the gospel out.

And it is like we don't seem to have the right response to the things concerning the kingdom and the last days and what is going to take place. O to God that we would! When you see more things happening—I do see them. But what it should do for me is the

same thing it did for Daniel when he saw the end of the captivity. He got down and began to pray and seek God and just desire passionately that God's will be done. We already know what God's will is for our present time. It is to take the gospel to every ethnic, every tribe, and every people. And when we see these things happening, it should just spur us on and say, man, there may be less time than we think. Let's get the gospel out to more people.

It is sort of like—because part of Jesus' coming will be judgment, but it is like if you knew—if you were in some public building or even here at the Bible college as we are in this building. And we know that in thirty minutes, there is a bomb set in this building that terrorists have set. It is going to go off in thirty minutes. There is not a thing you can do to trick it or stop it. This whole building is just going up in thirty minutes. And the time starts ticking down. Well, you know, you try to warn people to get out of the building, but there are a few people left in the building. And it gets down to you got ten minutes left. What would love do with the last ten minutes? Knowing that there are still some people over in classroom D. Wouldn't you run over there as fast as you possibly could and say, "Hey, come on, guys. There's just ten minutes. We have got to get out of range here. Let's go on the other side of campus." That is what you would do if you understood clearly what was going on.

And that is all Jesus was saying. As the time ticks down, He says, "You guys don't need to know so much about the times and the seasons. You just need to see the big thing and know as time ticks down, you should be more excited about the fact that the Holy Spirit is coming upon you to make you a witness in all the world."

But He did make a real offer to them and He is going to send Jesus there.

Let's pray,

Lord, we do pause and we thank You that, you know, when we see things happening in these last days, what it really

tells us is that time is just getting shorter and shorter. The opportunity to take the gospel out, to tell people about Your great love, and how right now it is all just, it is free. I mean, it is so free. You have done everything for us and all we have to do is receive the work that You have done through Your Son Jesus Christ. And we know You are making that offer to the world now, regardless of who they are. Lord, then please show us how we can better prepare, we can better train here, to go out and take the gospel to the whole world. Because we know it is Your will and Your passion and Your desire, Lord. So do that work in us. Make us living epistles for Your glory. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

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