

I. Recap of John 2 and Future Events

Last time we were together was not last week, but the time before that. We were still in John 2, and we will probably be there another week after today. I have brought you through that portion of that chapter, looking at different aspects of what was going on there. We know that there is a miracle of turning the water to wine, and there was so much to that that we wanted to really look at and focus on.

It is all built around that concept of the third day. I showed you early in our John 2 study how that third day is a picture of the Church Age, 2,000 years of church history, and then Christ returning on the third day, based on one day where the Lord is 1,000 years. We went through all of those different systems.

I showed you how this story of a wedding here is a picture of the coming wedding of Christ and His bride, the Church, and the wedding supper that follows.

What I did, which is what I always try to do to help you with your Bible, is I put in order for you nine future events, starting with the Rapture and then walking you right up to when eternity actually begins. I put them in the right order and in a consistency for you, nine future events that are going to come to planet Earth in the near future. All of them are related to the third day, or also called the Day of the Lord. We wanted to put them in a proper context and order so you could see how they all tie together.

I get asked many, many times about all of these different events. People know about the events, but most people do not know the order of those events. I figured while I was right there, talking about this, I wanted to put it in order. I never want to just give you half of the information that you need to make your Bible work for you.

This is all built around the story of the miracle of Him turning the water to wine.

II. The Purpose of Miracles

Most of you already know this, but in Christ's earthly ministry, you will find that He does many, many miracles. There is a reason for that. Most people do not understand the reason for that, but it goes all the way back to Exodus 4.

God, if you remember, told Moses to put his hand in his bosom, and then he pulled it out and it was leprous. And then He said, "Put it back in," and when he pulled it out, it was whole again. He told him right there in that chapter that God was going to use miracles, healings, signs, and wonders to establish that the nation of Israel would know that that was truly of God, because nobody can counterfeit that. You just cannot.

Moving forward here, when Christ shows up at the First Coming of Christ, just so you understand this, you are going to find in the book of Matthew, which we have laid out many,

many times, how each chapter basically walks you through Him being defined as the King of the Jews. In Matthew 8 and 9, this is where He begins His miracle ministry. He does that to show the nation of Israel that His credentials as the King of the Jews are legitimate, based on what God told Israel back there with Moses in Exodus 4.

So I want you to know that these miracles have a really important aspect to the nation of Israel. Of course, we know, I might as well just get this out of the way, we know that there are no miracles like that today. There is no healing in the sense of the apostolic healing. God certainly heals, but not in the sense where I can lay hands on you and make you better. Believe me, if I had done that, I had a priest last week, but that does not work. There is no raising people from the dead.

We talked about Thursday night the question about the difference between an apostle and a disciple, and I showed you that there are no apostles today. It was the apostles that were given that power to be able to do that. Of course, those things do not happen anymore. The reason for this is that you are told in the Bible that there are sign gifts, and Israel was told to look for a sign. So that is why He does the miracles, and you need to know that.

Each one of them is a picture of something that deals with Israel's spiritual condition. As we go through John, we will lay them out. We are going to come into them all through John, and we are going to lay them out, and I will give you the complete understanding and breakdown of it so you will be able to get that into your Bible. But in John 2, where we are right now and have been for the last couple of weeks, this is where we find our first one.

III. The Practical Side of Supernatural Living

Then I showed you the practical side of this miracle and how it was God giving the people at that point a little taste of the supernatural wine that was going to be at this wedding in the future. I told you in a practical way that is what God does with you and me. God will give us a little taste of Heaven, the miracles in our lives that He will do, the things that He will do in a spiritual way.

There are no miracles in the sense of if your car is burning oil, lay your hands on the hood and it will quit burning oil. But God will use you and me, if we will allow Him, in a supernatural way and continue to do miracles in your life. One of the greatest miracles is the miracle of the new birth: God saving us.

In your life and your family and things, God will come down and invest in you and do supernatural things, not only for you, but with you, and many times in dealing with other people. The supernatural wine that He gave them is a picture of the supernatural things He will do in our lives.

You remember when Israel, this is back in Exodus 16, the Bible tells us that they are going through the wilderness of sin. That is a great picture of you and me going through life today, because brother, we live in the wilderness of sin. There was nothing that sustained them, and this is a great picture. There was nothing in that wilderness of sin that sustained them. There was no water. There was no food. It was a desert, a dry, arid desert where the temperature is 120 degrees

in a day and goes down to 30 degrees at night. It was just the most hostile environment that somebody could be in. There was nothing there that they could, and yet God sent them into that wilderness to get to the Promised Land.

So what does God do? God comes down and He gets water out of a rock, a type of Christ. What does He do? He brings the manna supernaturally from Heaven and feeds them. I remember one time I figured it up, and I do not remember the exact number, but He fed them for 40 years, and we had probably a million plus people. I figured out how many times, if everybody just ate a pound a day, it was like I do not know how many hundreds of thousands of tons of manna He had to rain down. All supernaturally.

Of course, we know that that manna is a picture of the Word of God, the supernatural food that God gave you and me, and the water out of the rock to sustain you and me in our journey through the wilderness of sin. See how it all works? That manna from Heaven is called angel food. So it was light and fluffy. You go to the store someplace, you can buy an angel food cake, light and fluffy. But then on the other side of that, you can have a devil's food cake, which, do not hold this against me, is my favorite.

It is a thing where everything breaks down in this world around the two forces that are moving through this world: God and the devil. Then I use some examples out of Hebrews 11, fifteen men and women or so that are great examples, and how they got through the tremendous trials and afflictions as they served God. What a picture. They all got through the same way you and I will get through, and that is because God did supernatural things in their lives.

IV. Keys to Christian Faith from Hebrews 11

We had Bible Institute last Saturday, and we walked, we are in Hebrews 11, and I took the first four men in the book of Hebrews, that is all the farther we really got. I showed them what a beautiful, I gave them four keys to our Christian faith that we have to have to really understand what faith is. That is what Hebrews 11 is all about. It is about faith.

I told them the first guy was Abel. The Bible says that Abel gave a more excellent sacrifice than Cain did. The first thing I told them is the fact that real faith in your life and my life is going to produce you and I giving a more excellent sacrifice for God than the average person.

Then we talked about Enoch, and I told them that Enoch, the Bible says that Enoch walked with God and was not, for God took him. I told him a real life of faith is not to be afraid to walk with God in a world where nobody else does.

Then the third guy was Noah. What a great example he is, and I told them that Noah lived in a world where everything imaginable was wicked, just like today. In fact, the Bible says, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the coming of the Son of Man." It lines it right up with us. I told them, Noah, what an example of faith: never be afraid to work for God when nobody else will. That is an incredible thing.

Then we looked at Abraham, and Abraham was called out to go to a place where nobody had ever went before, and it took faith. I told him, real faith is not just giving God the very best you

have; it is not just walking with God when nobody else is; and it is not just working for God where nobody else will; but it is also wandering for God, going wherever God wants you to go. That is faith.

Boy, if there is ever a day and age that these four things fit into our world today, because God's people do not want to give God the very best. They want to give Him what is left over. They do not want to walk with God; they are afraid to. They are certainly not going to work for God if they are not going to walk for God, and they are certainly not going to wander if you are not going to work and you are not going to walk.

V. Enduring by Seeing the Invisible

One of the key verses in Hebrews 11:27, and we looked at our next guy in that chapter, and that is Moses. Moses is called a friend of God in Exodus 33:11. In fact, the Bible says that Moses spoke to God face to face, like a man speaking to his friend. That had to be the goal for everybody that is saved under the sound of my voice today in your relationship with God.

You know how he got there? Hebrews 11:27 says, "He endured, as seeing him who is invisible." What a verse for us today. The ability to see God in life, in the issues of life, when others cannot see Him. The ability to see, take our pandemic and everything that we are going through politically and everything in America, in the world, the ability to see in the middle of this terrible, terrible, quote-unquote, time, the hand of God is still working. God still has a program.

As far as I know, He did not contact the virus yet. He is still in the middle, and He wants to use everybody who is willing to give the best, everybody who is willing to walk with Him, everybody who is willing to work for Him, and everybody willing to wander for Him, to put you and use you. The way that we do that is we endure by seeing Him who is invisible, by coming to the place in your life and my life where we see things that God is doing that nobody else can see. What a great verse for us today.

VI. God's Vision for Us

It also talked about Abraham. I remember this in Romans 4:17. It talks about another man found in Hebrews 11, the man Abraham. What an example his life is to our life, because in Isaiah 41:8, he too is called a friend to God. I do not know if you know this, but there are only two men in the Bible who are called God's friend.

I am telling you, I am sure there were many, many other people that were His friend, but there is a reason why God does and picks people out and says that. Moses is a great example, so is Abraham, because here again, I do not know of anybody else than these two guys, Moses and Abraham, that if all you had was their lives, you could figure out a lot of things that you needed to do. I do not know of anybody else in the Bible who really on a full-scale blitz shows us what our life really is, other than Abraham.

You realize that he starts out in Genesis 12, and he cannot trust God for anything. He winds up in Genesis 22, trusting God for everything. He earns the coveted title of being God's friend,

"Abraham, my friend," Isaiah 41:8. The great verse in his life, like Moses, is found over there in Romans 4:17.

Romans 4:17

(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

What an incredible principle for all of us: God's ability in your life and my life to call things that are not as though they were. When you take Abraham and Sarah, Abraham, when he had Isaac, who was the promised seed, he was 99 years old. Sarah was 90. I guarantee you, I mean, you have to remember how their friends were shocked when she came back from the doctor at 90 years of age and said, "I am going to have a baby."

You see, the whole, this is it, this is what I am trying to get to you. The whole world saw a 99-year-old man and a 90-year-old woman who were ready for John Knox Village. But God saw the nation of Israel. It says that He quickeneth the dead. What does that mean? It means that their bodies were dead to have children. But God saw the nation of Israel.

You see, and I wish I could get this to you, and I honestly do not know why this is so hard for many of God's people. Maybe you just do not want it, I do not know. But that is the whole key of getting to the place what God sees in you that you cannot see in yourself. People come into this church, and they have some, they have a history of problems. They have some issues. Who does not? We all have baggage that we carry around in life. We have all made bad choices. That is okay.

But many times people will come in, and they are beat up pretty bad. The world did not do them any favors, or they made some bad choices, and now they are struggling with some things. Because of that, they allow that to overwhelm them. Even when they come to church and hear a stupendous message like this one today, they just cannot get past their past. I want to tell you something: if you are never willing to let God move you through your past, you will never have much of a future. You have got to forget those things that are behind.

Because what you have got to do when you show up here and hear a message like this and hear these verses, you have got to realize that God sees something in you. Otherwise, you would not be here today. You certainly do not think it is an accident that you ran into so-and-so, and so-and-so invited you to church, or you saw us here or found out where we were. You certainly do not think that is just an accident, do you? God got you here, like He has got everybody else here, because God saw something in you. The problem is God's people cannot see it themselves.

But I can. The job of every pastor that is worth his salt, the job of every pastor who has people. Now I know most pastors want to be on a throne someplace where you cannot approach them. If you have got a problem, you want to see him, you get some third-stringer out there that that is what he does, because the pastor is so valuable, he does not have time. You have got to go through a secretary to get the pastor. He will not give you his cell phone. Oh, God forbid you to have your pastor's cell phone. You cannot call him direct. You have got to go through Martin

Bormann to get to Hitler. That is the way it worked, and it is a thing where, that is the way it should not work.

Because the job of a pastor is to know the state of his flocks. The job of a pastor is to be one with you, not separated from you, because there is no way a pastor can see in you what God sees from a distance. I watch all of you. I watch you come in. I watch you, and I love you. I love what I see in so many of you, because I see people who really want to do what is right, and many times you are beating yourself up because of something that happened in the past: bad marriage, or this or that, or whatever the case. That should never stop you, not here anyhow.

Your future, if you are here this morning, your future is as bright as God's promises. I see that in you. I think one of the hardest things for me in ministry is to see a young man or a young lady who I know has great potential, to see somebody who I think can really do something for the Lord, and then watch them throw it away. That is hard for me to look at, because I always try to see the best in people. There are always people that all they will do is see the bad in people. I have never focused on the bad. You know why? Because I know how bad I am. I would rather focus on your good; that way, I can feel better about myself. It is a selfish thing.

What I am telling you, the job of a pastor is to look at his people and to see in them what they may not be able to see for themselves, and then have a process, a program. Bring other people in that have come through that process to help them realize everything that God wants them to be and help you in time. Through the ministry of this church, you in time will see all that He has for you, all those things that you cannot see right now, but God sees in you.

VII. Opportunity in Crisis

It is that old process that we talked about over the last couple of weeks of Colossians 2:7. You come into church, you are getting involved in allowing this church to get you rooted in the Word of God. Once we begin to get you rooted, then we will build you up. Once you get rooted and built up, then you get established. It is just a simple three-point process.

Our ability to see the miracles of God in our lives and know that the first miracle God did for all of us was the miracle of the new birth. But why do so many of God's people stop with those miracles there? You want to be able to recognize those, see what God does for you, see and understand that He has got something He wants you to do. But I am telling you right now, you cannot do it your way. Every problem we all have in our lives that did not turn out good is simply something that we did our way. I would think we would learn that after a while.

The things of this world, the government struggles that are only going to get worse, the war and the fear of war, the unrest, civil unrest across this country, the politics, and add to that the pandemic that just keeps reinventing itself in another strain. They never really enter into it. When I look at those things and the things around me, and you know where I am at with that thing, I respect it and I understand it.

Romans 13 for me, obey your government, I get all of that, and I am all on board with that. But I want you to know, to me, all of that stuff is just different levels of opportunity. Open doors to get

people to come in. Many times, as I just said earlier, they come in different ways now. We cannot be what we have. We cannot have a Super Bowl party like we did last year. We cannot do church like we did. We will not have volleyball. We will not have softball. But that does not mean the end of the world is coming, and that does not mean we throw up our hands and quit. That does not mean we hide under the bed with our tail between our legs.

We realize that we are in a time of opportunity. In time, as I said last week, you will learn to thank God, give thanks in all things, because you realize what the will of God really is in your life. Because you have come to the point where you will, as I said in Hebrews 13, you will see those promises. You will embrace those promises. Even though they are far off, you embrace them. By embracing them, you are persuaded of them, and you realize that God is going to use you.

Every one of you, to me personally, and I am nothing compared to God, but to God eternally, to me here in this life, you are invaluable. You have everything. If you are saved, you have everything to be everything God wants you to be. It simply comes down to your relationship with Him, your friendship with Him, that you trust Him, have a better relationship with Him than you do the world and the world system.

Because the Bible says, "Perfect love casts out fear." Neither is He that is in you that is in the world. It simply comes down for all of us in this church, for us to get where we want to go, is to see what nobody else sees. Everybody else just sees the pandemic and is afraid of this and afraid of that, and I do not want to do this, and I cannot get that, and I might get this or that. That is the way the world is looking at it.

We, as God's people, based on Moses and Abraham, we need to see it and see what nobody else sees. We need to realize that we live in the natural, but God has for us the supernatural. I just do not see the pandemic. I see the opportunities that present. That does not mean we are careless and do not follow the rules and do what we have to do. We do. But we endure as seeing Him who is invisible.

All God does for you, the miracles in your life and your family, giving thanks for all things in life, whether it is good or bad.

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

So we live in tremendous times.

VIII. The Cleansing of the Temple

Today I want to show you another great example of this. We are going to move on into John 2, and we are going to look at verses 13 through 17. Yet again, some biblical truth for our growth, our process of being rooted, built up, and established, which is my goal for all of you.

So let us read the text here, John 2. Then we will kind of dissect it a little bit and then split it up, and we will learn some things. Here is what he says:

John 2:13-17

13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

Now there are a couple of things here, but let us ask the Lord's blessing as we get into this, and then we will go on from there.

Now Father, help us today. These are good people here today. Lord, they are here today on this very cold day, Lord, with the snow on the ground. They made the effort to be here today because they want to learn, because this church is important to them, because they know that they are in the process of being rooted and being built up and being established. So help us today. Help me to be clear as I try to lay all this out and give them some direction. Lord, we love you and we thank you for all you do for us. In Jesus' name and sake, we ask it. Amen.

IX. John's Structure and Israel's Corruption

Now there are a couple of things here you want to get down in your Bible. As we come through John, we might as well break it down chapter by chapter, and you can get this book under your belt.

The first thing I want you to see, it says in John 2:13 that the Passover was at hand. You will remember I told you when we started the book of John that the whole book of John is built around four Passovers. You will find one in John 2:13, one in John 5:1, one in John 6:4, and then one in John 13:1. This is built around four Passovers, where Christ becomes the Passover Lamb on the fourth one. This forms for us an excellent tracking system. I love when the Bible gives me a natural process to track things.

1. I do not have to come up with it on my own.
2. It is always much better than what I would come up with on my own, and I just love it.

We have through the book of John a natural tracking system built around the four Passovers, with Christ Himself becoming the Passover Lamb at the last one.

You will remember the book of John was written first of all, and I told you this in John 20:31, we know that the theme of the Gospel of John is to get men saved. We know that. That is why Christ

is portrayed as the Son of God, and you have a lot of great things in there that we hitchhike off of when we try to win somebody to Christ. So the first thing I want you to see is the fact that this book is built around four Passovers, and we will deal with these as we come through, and I will show you as we move through the book.

The second thing is our study is found in John 2:14 and 16. Jesus goes down to the temple, and He sees, and this is very important now that you get this, when He goes down to the temple, He sees the real issue with God's people. We as Christians in churches today, we have a lot of fluff. We have a lot of smoke and mirrors. A lot of churches have a lot of things that cover up what is really going on, because people want to be entertained today more than they want to be preached to.

For a pastor who is part of the world, they had a system, it is easy to build a big church today when you make it into a Super Bowl halftime party, because everybody likes that. You are going to see that as He goes into this temple, He tells us firsthand, not getting it through somebody else, we see it by Him going into that church temple Himself, what the problem is with God's people: a total and complete breakdown of what God intended Israel's worship and relationship with God to be. Complete collapse.

He gets angry with what He sees. The Bible tells us that He makes a scourge, that is a little whip. He drives them out of the house of God, and it is called that in Ezra 1:2-5, the temple, the house of God. He drives them out, and Jesus Himself defines what He is seeing. He calls these guys making the house of God in John 2:16 a house of merchandise. Then He says in Matthew 21:13, He calls it a den of thieves.

Here is the issue. A long time ago, before Jesus ever showed up, the priesthood had long been corrupted. The nation of Israel went into their 400 years captivity because of their throwing God out of everything that He did. The priesthood now has been corrupted, as has the whole religious system of the nation of Israel. The leaders, the religious leaders, have aligned themselves with Rome, the world system. They have got a nice little thing going for them there.

They have basically turned the house of God into a money-making false system that pretends from the outside. This is why in Matthew 23, when you come down through that great chapter, you have eight woes that Jesus says about the religious constituency of the nation of Israel, which we are dealing with right here. One of the things that He says is that on the outside you look like a whited sepulcher. You are clean, you look beautiful, but on the inside you are full of dead men's bones. That is Israel's condition here. That is the temple. That is the house of God.

They have turned the house of God into a money-making false system that pretends to be God's work. You would look at it from the outside, everybody dressed right, everybody is doing the right things and saying the right things. But as 2 Timothy 3:5 tells us, they had a form of godliness but denied the power thereof. This phony religious system, it worked fine. Business as usual, every Sabbath, every day in the marketplace for years and years and years, it worked just fine, and everybody was okay with it until the day Jesus went to church. When He showed up, truth came that Sabbath day.

He loses His temper, but not only does He lose His temper, but He unleashes His temper on it. I have got to stop here and tell you this. If you have got any other Bible other than the King James Bible, over in Matthew 5:22, your King James Bible says, "He that is angry without a cause is guilty of judgment," or whatever it is. In all your new Bibles in Matthew 5:22, it says, "He that is guilty," it takes out "without a cause." So all the liberal scholars make Jesus Christ a guilty sinner because they take out "without a cause," and He got angry here, so they use that as the fact that He broke the law. See how it works?

Now it says, "He that is angry without a cause," and He had a cause. Not only did He lose His temper, but He unleashed it on them. They are selling the animals for sacrifice, which the animals need to be used for sacrifice according to Leviticus 1-10. But they are selling them inside the temple at a great profit, and the whole system has become all about money. Anybody see any similarities here? The whole religious system now had degenerated to the fact of the leaders making as much money off the people as they could, and actually giving them nothing spiritually back. Sound familiar?

So He makes Himself a whip. The Bible calls it a scourge. He runs them out and overturns the tables. You know that must have been an event to be there to see. Today, in all these pictures of Jesus that the Catholic Church puts out and most of the neo-evangelical idiots, they always show Jesus like some little wimp. He has got little arms about the size of toothpicks, and He is lowly Jesus. Hey, it took a man to go in there and do this. This is Jesus' version of Buford Pusser walking tall. He took His club in there and kicked over the tables.

Just so you know that everything comes from the Bible, we get the phrase, we use it all the time, "He turned the tables on me." Comes out of here, see? That is what He did, turned the tables on them. Oh, that must have been some time. I have got to be honest with you, I have always enjoyed this story because I understand the repetitive nature of history.

This is the spiritual condition of God's people, listen to me now, this is the spiritual condition of God's people at the First Coming of Christ in the house of God, in their temple, their body. Once you understand that history always repeats itself, and once you find that the First Coming of Christ, you will also find that the Second Coming of Christ. You will also know that this is the spiritual condition of God's people today, right before the Second Coming, in the church, the house of God, and in their temples, their bodies.

I have often wondered late at night, walking the dog, when I cannot sleep at night, I have often wondered, what would happen if Jesus Christ went to most churches this morning on Sunday morning? Because this is exactly what happened to God's people back then, it has happened today. They lost their perspective, they lost their position, and they certainly lost their purpose. Revelation 3:20 clearly tells us that in the Laodicean church, Jesus Christ is outside the church, knocking on the door, trying to get back in.

Very frankly, the Christ of the Bible, if you just stop and think about it, if what we are saying is true and what the Bible is saying is true, if Jesus showed up at 95, 99, I do not care, most churches today, He would not be welcome. He would be a troublemaker, just like He was here. The system was fixed. The system was flowing. Money was coming in. Everybody was making a

profit. Everybody was having a great time, completely forsaking everything in the Old Testament law. In fact, they have changed the law. You will see that as we get a little farther on into the New Testament.

He would be a troublemaker with the pastors, the theologians, and the Bible teachers today, just as He was to the scribes and the Pharisees and the high priest and the religious leaders of His day.

My buddy Wes, who passed away last week, Wes was a great guy. This was his church. I met Wes years and years ago when I went down to Tyler, Texas, to preach at David Bruner's church down there and met Wes. Wes had been following a website. I remember Wes told me that he had no church down there that he could go to. He says, "And I tried them all." He says, "Every time somebody would say something, and I would raise my hand to ask them where they got that, or was that true, or why they did this and do that, they got mad at me. A couple of them asked me not to come back."

But all he asked was the things that Jesus would ask. Do you think Jesus would sit through the church service of most churches today and listen to it and not raise His hand? Well, that would be on the nice side. He might just go out in the apple orchard and kind of whip off and come back in and overturn your tables.

You see, if He went to the neo-evangelical churches today, He would raise His hand and He would say, "Why are we not teaching doctrine? Does not the Bible say that the first thing is doctrine?" And they would say, "You need to leave." If He went to most Baptist churches today, once He got through the song service and the music service and He heard the preaching, He would raise His hand and He would say, "Why are you preaching out of that Bible? That is not my Bible. Did you read John 1:1?" They would ask Him to leave.

If He went to the average charismatic church, and He would go gibber-jabber in tongues and have their healing things, He would raise His hand and He would say, "If you are supposed to be following me, why are you speaking in tongues? I am Jesus. I never spoke in tongues." He would be asked to leave.

As I said, everything went fine. I mean, everything went fine for years, for months, until truth showed up. You know what I have learned in the ministry, what will make enemies with some of God's people? Certainly with the world, but forget the world. I mean, I understand that, but you know what really makes it odd with God's people? You will have a situation go on, go on, go on, or a situation happens that you have to deal with, and everything is fine until you bring truth into it. Once the Bible comes in, you are going to find out what side people are on. They hated Him, and they finally killed Him, and they would do the same thing today.

So He is not coming as the Son of Man, the Jesus, the carpenter's son, the lowly man from Galilee. He is coming to kick over the tables of the whole world system. Today, if He did come to most churches, He would overturn some tables.

I do not know if you have ever seen this, but you know what God's controversy, I mean, the Bible defines it all for us. In Hosea 4:1-2, God tells us what the controversy is. He says:

Hosea 4:1-2

1 Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

2 By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.

He says three things.

3. Because there is no truth. They got rid of truth.
4. There was no mercy.
5. No knowledge of God on the land.

That is Israel's condition at the First Coming of Christ, and I will just say it again, that is the church's position and condition at the Second Coming of Christ. There is no truth. Once truth is gone, then mercy is gone. Once mercy is gone, then the knowledge of God goes.

You listen to me out there, do yourself a favor. Go back to church next Sunday, this Wednesday, wherever you go, and pull your pastor aside. Try to get him before he runs out the side door, and just ask him, "Pastor, what is the number one goal of Christianity today?" Most likely, 99.0% of the time, he will say, "Winning the lost." Wrong answer. The number one job of a church today is not winning the lost. The number one job of a church today is to preach truth. If you looked over there in the controversy He had in the three things, what was the first thing that He had a controversy over? No truth. Mercy was second. That is showing people how to be saved. Preaching the truth is always the number one goal in Christianity, as it was with the nation of Israel.

X. The Two Purges and Christ's Establishment

Now the third thing I want you to see here, when He goes in and He upsets the tables and He throws everybody out, when He purges the house of God, and let me just say to you, and we can begin to get into the practical side of this, do not ever kid yourself for a moment that God does not purge churches today.

He says in John 2:16, "Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." To the Bible student who pays attention with what he reads and compares scripture with scripture, you should see something interesting here. Because He does a purging of the house of God two times in His three-and-a-half-year ministry. He does it here in John 2, and He does it three and a half years later in Matthew 21:13.

John 2 will be the start of His ministry, and Matthew 21 will be the end of His ministry. I heard a guy preach one time in a Bible conference that I was preaching at, and he preached this message, and I thought about it at the time. That was some pretty good insight. He said he was preaching to pastors, it was a pastors' conference, and he used this passage and he said, "You know what, Jesus purges churches. If this is a model of us for something, of Jesus going down and purging

out this Old Testament temple, a picture of our church," he said, "maybe it just ought to be that every three and a half years every church needs a good purging."

I thought about it at that particular point in time, and I thought to myself, "Wow." Then he said this, he says, "You know what, you pastors, every time you preach, now I know you preach nice stuff and soft stuff and all that, but I am telling you, any pastor worth his salt, when he gets into his message, he is going to kick over some tables." A table in the Bible is a picture of fellowship, and some of God's people today are fellowshiping at the wrong table. So a pastor when he preaches, based on this guy, he preached the fact that when a pastor gets in the pulpit, he should kick over some tables.

Despite that, if you notice this, and here it comes, this is what the Bibles do not get. In John 2, at the beginning of the ministry, He says, "You have made my Father's house a house of merchandise." At the end of the three and a half years, in Matthew 21, same scenario, He says, "You have made my house." It went from "my Father's house," three and a half years later, now it is "His house." Obviously, one of the great confirmings of the deity of Christ that He is God, but there is something else here.

During this three and a half years, He is come to the nation of Israel to reveal Himself as the Son of God, and through everything that He has done, He has followed the exact same process that I try to put you through. He got rooted. Then He got built up. By the time He comes at the end of His ministry before the crucifixion, when He comes in there, He says, "My house," you know why? Because now He has established Himself as the Son of God.

XI. The Hour of Christ's Ministry

Now watch this. In John 2, you will find another great lesson that ties into the whole work that Christ is doing and why He says "my Father's house," and then He says "my house." He is moving through that three and a half years, going to a point. He has established Himself as the Son of God to Israel.

Then He says this phrase and statement in John 2:4, when He says to His mother, "What have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." That "my Father's house" and "my house" and everything that He is doing in that three and a half years is based on an hour in His life that is coming. "Mine hour has not yet come." Five times He says that in the Gospels.

He says it in Luke 2:49. He says it in John 7:30. He says it in John 8:28. He says it in Luke 22:53. And here we are, John 2:4. Now this will be a reference, this hour, to Him finishing the work that He started when He came at the First Coming of Christ, the work that God sent Him to do.

Hence, in Luke 2:49, He says when they lost Him for a couple of days and they found Him, and they said, "Where are you at?" He says, "I was about my Father's business." He said in John 5:17, John 10:37, and John 6:38, that He came to do the work of the Father. That work that He did is pointed and focused to the final hour. All through those Gospels, He says, "Mine hour has not yet come. Mine hour has not yet come. My hour has not yet come," but it finally came.

That hour that He finished the work will be His work on the cross, the finished work of Christ. That is why when He is being crucified in John 19:30, He said, "It is finished." What was finished? The work. You see, Christ came to die. Most people do not see this. When He was born in the manger, He is wrapped in swaddling clothes. Those are grave clothes.

Did you ever notice how that in Mark 15, you have an order of the crucifixion and how particular He is of the hours? He says in Mark 15:1 that the crucifixion starts in the morning. That will be six o'clock in the morning. In Mark 15:25, He says, then it moved to the third hour. In Mark 15:33-34, He moved to the sixth and the ninth hour. When He dies on the cross, it is the even, the twelfth hour. He does everything He does. He actually manages all of the events in His earthly ministry up against that hour. When you find Him in His earthly ministry, everything He does, He is looking toward the hour that He is telling people has not come yet, and Him establishing Himself as the Son of God, very God Himself.

So He says in John 2, "my Father's house," and then three and a half years later, once He has been established and He has purged the church twice now, "my house," because He is coming to that hour.

XII. The Eleventh Hour and Our Work

Okay. Time for my apologies. I am sorry to have to do this. But here it comes again. You should just stop right now, and nobody's toes are stepped on. Everybody can go watch your game this afternoon without heartburn or indigestion. But no, not me. Somebody says, "Bob, you ought to be more like Jesus." You are right. I am. I should. So I am going to be more like Jesus. Allow me to kick over some tables.

Here is the spiritual application. If you would like me to pray again so you can sneak out, I would be glad to do that. This would be a good time to have lack of bladder control and have to go to the restroom. This would be a great time to pretend like you get a phone call that your dog just threw up on the carpet and you have got to get home. Nobody will ask how your dog called on the cell phone to tell you that; that is between you and your dog.

Have you ever noticed? I know I am weird. I know I am. I look at things in the Bible, and sometimes they just overwhelm me. I was putting this stuff together here last week, and sometimes I just have to sit with God or show me, so I have to sit out and take a break. It just overwhelms me.

Have you ever noticed when I laid out the different ways you determine the times and the seasons a couple of weeks back? In Matthew 20, I showed you that one of them was an hour system. Remember that?

Matthew 20:1-8

1 For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

3 And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

4 And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

So we started from six o'clock in the morning to six o'clock, twelve hours. When even was come, the Lord of the vineyard said unto his steward, the Holy Spirit of God, "Call the laborers and give them their hire, beginning the last unto the first."

Now this story will cover our third day system. This is a twelve-hour day that spans 33 A.D., because it is a picture of the Church Age. So it starts in 33 A.D. in the morning and then goes all the way up to the twelfth hour, the Lord coming back, which would be six o'clock in the evening.

Now let us see the Church Age here and how you and I fit into this. Remember His whole ministry, He worked toward an hour. I want you to keep that in your mind. That hour was to finish the work that God had given Him to do. Keep that in your mind.

Now the man who was a householder here, just so we can put this in your Bible, that will be God the Father. He is the householder of the house of God, in this case in our study in John 2, the nation of Israel. The steward here in Matthew 20:8, as I have already told you, will be the Holy Spirit of God. The workers going into the vineyard, the laborers for these twelve-hour day, will be you and me.

Now let us get a good biblical formula. We know that this is the third day. We know that Christ comes back in the third day, so we have got 2,000 years here. We have got the first day, the second day, and then Christ comes back the third day. So the Church Age is those first two days, which is 2,000 years. We know that we are dealing with approximately 2,000 years in the Church Age, and we know we have got a twelve-hour day.

Now I was no math genius, but I still have my calculator. I divide twelve-hour day into the year 2,000 years. You know what I get? I get 166.67 years for every hour in this story. That is pretty simple.

So if the morning is 33 A.D., which obviously it is from our study, then in Matthew 20:3, we move up to the third hour. Using our formula of 166.67 years per hour, that would bring us up to 500 A.D., beginning in the Dark Ages. In Matthew 20:5, it says the sixth hour, that would bring us, using our formula, up to 1,000 A.D. And then also in Matthew 20:5, the ninth hour, that

would bring us up to approximately 1,500 A.D., the start of the Reformation. All of this time, He is sending laborers into this vineyard through a twelve-hour day.

Then He says in Matthew 20:6, the eleventh hour workers go in. That would put us around 1840-1845 someplace, where the last shift of workers go in. Then in Matthew 20:8, the even comes, and it is all over, the Lord comes back.

Have you ever noticed that the hours here are the exact same hours that were listed in the crucifixion when Christ finished His work? The last story back there that I read you in Mark 15 started in the morning, then it went to the third hour, then it went to the sixth and the ninth hour, and then it went to even. His work was the same as what my work should be, except here He put in the eleventh hour, because the eleventh hour shows us, you and me who understand the Bible and the Laodicean church period, understands where the urgency for us is.

Now here is what I want you to see. When Christ came, He came to do the work of His Father, and that work was based on the hour that He did it. "Mine hour has not yet come." That hour was to finish the work He had undertaken, and He understood completely that that hour concept was into the work of His ministry.

Now you and I are up against the same hour system.

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

The Church Age is 2,000 years, even in the morning, the morning to even, six to six, twelve hours, and each of us will have our own hour to do the work that God has called us to do.

Just as Christ focused everything He had on the hour to finish the work, you and I, eleventh-hour Christians, should be focused on everything we have on the hour God has given us to do His work. We went in, each of us, we went in in the last shift that started around 1840. We now are in 2021, and in the final minutes of our hour as far as God is concerned. Actually, we are overdue if you know Daniel 2. I sure hope we get paid time and a half for that overtime.

Ladies and gentlemen, I understand that you get so caught up, and you lose your perspective, you lose everything that God has for you, but I want to tell you on the authority of the Word of God and the hour system, we are at the most crucial time of our work in our lives, our families, and our churches.

This is why I always say that every child of God down through history, with the Bible that you have, the right Bible, he should have been able to know exactly where he was in relationship to the Second Coming of Christ and his hour in relation now, so he could finish the work that God called him, because Christ had an hour He was up against, every Christian in church history had his hour he is up against, and you and I have our hour up against, the eleventh one.

Because our hour has come, and we need to finish the work God started with us, in us, just like Christ did.

I talked to a businessman not long ago, and he was looking for some good help, and I told him, I said, he asked me, he said, "You know, it is really hard to find help today. Nobody wants to work today." He says, "Nobody is dependable, nobody will show up. I have hired guys, and they worked one day and they never came back because they think the work is too hard." He said, "I pay people good." But he says, "Nobody wants to work today," and I thought to myself, "You know what, that is so true of God's people today too. Nobody wants to work their hour shift today.

We are all on vacation. We are using our saved up days off, and God's people today are just like the guy this guy was dealing with: they are not dependable. They will not show up for work. They are lazy. You go all across the city, go down to the plaza or go anywhere. They are moving into Raytown and moving into, you know, you see men and women on the street corners, and they all have signs: "Help please. Need food. Need money."

I actually saw one about a month and a half ago, he said, "Need new food and we will take drugs." I wanted to give that guy something. He was the most honest one I met. I did not have any drugs. Holding up a sign, "I am destitute, out of work, need help," oh yeah, "and God bless." I have sat there delighting at what I am saying, "Need help, out of work, need money," and then talking to somebody on their cell phone. Really? Light up a cigarette. Really? Here is what a pack of cigarettes cost now. What are they now? Four or five dollars a pack? I am looking now at who knows, because I am going to nail you. Coming over to your table. Just a minute. What? I work at Pre-Chips, they are like seven, eight dollars a pack. Seven, eight dollars a pack?

A guy told me one time that he actually felt sorry for these people. Now if you do not figure it out that it is not a scam, now you can actually watch them change shifts. A guy told me one time he offered 50 of them, a bunch of them, a job, and give them work, and none of them would take it. None of them wanted to work. Because it was easier to sit on a street corner, and they make out better just taking handouts from people than having to go to work and work a nine to five.

I remember when he told me that, I thought to myself, "You know what, I have got, all my life I have seen God's people that way, they will not work either, and they will come to church every Sunday just to get the handout." Better get your Bible off that one, we will kick that one over here in just a second.

To me, this church myself has been willing and will continue to be built and to do the work in the hour that God has given us. We want to be the church of the open door, not the church of the closed door. I want people that are rooted, I want people that are built up, I want people that are grounded and established. I am telling you, when a pastor gets up to preach, we all have the wrong tables in our lives, and they need to kick over the table. Some people will stay, some people will leave, but it is about the truth.

When I get to the job of the seed of Christ, I have one goal for myself, and I will have plenty to give an account for, and I am not even looking for anything, but I have one goal for myself, and I might add it is my goal for you. I cannot make your goals for you, but in my mind, to try to help you. That will be the first thing I say. When I stand before the Lord and I take that shield, that

sword, and I sheathe that sword, and I stand there before Him, the first thing out of my mouth I want it to be, "It is finished."

I want the first thing out of my mouth to be the last thing that came out of Christ's mouth, that He finished the work, and I do not care what shape I get there, I just want to finish my hour, the work God called me to, in my hour.

Boy, if you do not understand that in Christianity today, we are eleventh-hour Christians, and we are at the end right before, I mean, literally the last grains of sand are falling through God's hourglass. Eleventh-hour Christianity.

I have told you this before, in Chicago, Illinois, we have what we call the Doomsday Clock. It was put out and established and maintained by the atomic scientists of the University of Chicago, not a Christian thing, it is an unsaved worldly thing. They have in 1947, once the nuclear age came into being, they started what was called a Doomsday Clock at the beginning of the Cold War that depicts that the end of the world will happen at 12 o'clock. It has only got one hand on it, and it moves around, and they look at the world events, and everybody knows that something disastrous is coming. The unsaved world in the University of Chicago, they have got a clock. They all add to it and believe that at 12 o'clock, it is going to be over.

As we speak, the eleventh-hour concept has all been through the Bible. Matthew 20 in the Old Testament, the nation of Israel through history. In Matthew 20, you have a 12-hour day. In Exodus 12, the death angel came through at midnight. In Matthew 25, there are 10 virgins, 5 are wise and 5 are foolish, and the 5 are wise, the Lord comes at midnight. You cannot get around it, folks. All you have to do is look at the world around you.

Jesus said, "Mine hour is not yet come." His hour was to finish the work, and we in the Church Age are up against a 12-hour day, and we are the last shift of the eleventh hour before that clock gets to 12. Right now in Chicago, on that Doomsday Clock, it is 2 minutes to 12.

XIII. Historical Markers of the Eleventh Hour

We know all too well the events that God used to lead up to Israel becoming a nation in 1948. You remember now, the last workers go in around 1840, and we are in the last, that is the eleventh hour, the twelfth hour, He is coming back, and we are in the final seconds of that thing.

So we would go back and we would look in the 1890s, as I have taught you many, many times, the beginning of the Zionist movement, the re-establishing of a mindset toward the nation of Israel to help them. Then World War I came along, and we have talked about how the five great powers of Europe were all defeated. One of them, and were broken up, one of them was the Ottoman Turks.

All this deals with the eleventh hour, because it was in 1917 where the Turks got kicked out, and General Allenby, who was a British general, went in and kicked the Turks out of Jerusalem. Now England has control of Jerusalem. Lord Allenby entered Jerusalem, and then that led to what was going to be the Balfour Declaration. The Balfour Declaration was put out by Lord Balfour that

was going to give the land back to the Jew, which this is where the eleventh hour really kicked in and started to move for the last minutes.

Because Lord Allenby, General Allenby, entered Jerusalem 11 months to the day of the signing of the Balfour Declaration. He entered December 11th, 1917. Eleven months later, the Balfour Declaration was signed and began the end of the times of the Gentiles and led to Israel becoming a nation in 1948. Here it comes, it was signed on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, November 11th, 1918. It gets better.

Over in Isaiah 31:5, it says, "As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; and also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it." God, the eagle over Israel in Deuteronomy 32. When Lord Allenby went in, British planes flew over. A whole squadron flew over Jerusalem and terrified the Ottoman Turks so greatly that they left the city and bolted out of that city ahead of the troops, and there was no fight, there was no real battle. British planes flew over Jerusalem and scared the Arabs and scattered them.

That RAF squadron was the 14th Aero Squadron of the RAF, and on the side of every plane was their motto: "I spread my wings and keep my promises." Ha ha, and you think, "Oh, that is an accident." That is where the eleventh final hour really kicked in, and in 1948, when Israel declares herself to be a nation, she did it on May 15, 1948, at midnight of the 14th, at the end of the eleventh hour.

XIV. Our Eleventh Hour Work

Just as Christ had His hour, and just as Israel had their eleventh hour, you and I have the privilege to make our stand in the eleventh hour of God's Church Age. We are the last workers to go in. We are it. We are all God is counting on to hold that line.

I look around at Christianity, and I am thinking, if God is depending on the church today to hold the line, we are in trouble. That is why it is so vital that every child of God, every man, every woman, every family understands. Yeah, I know the Super Bowl is this afternoon, and I know we all want to win, and I know it is going to be a great time. There is nothing wrong with that. But do not lose sight that He began a good work in you, and He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

We, every one of us, have the privilege in the final seconds of the eleventh hour to hold the line and take our stand. Right now, the world's clock, from the world looking at the end of the world as we know it and the destruction of it, is at 2 minutes to 12.

His work on the cross was His hour. My work because of the cross, my hour. This is not about in history what time you went to work. This is about an eleventh-hour Christianity where we are on the job. Do we realize, in spite of all the stupid things that are going on around us, do not get sidetracked by them? Do not get pulled off your perception, your purpose, your position because of that.

Notice that just as Christ, His whole ministry was up against His hour for the work of God to be finished. He began that good work in you, and we are up against our hour. We have to finish the

job, we have to do the work. When I get there, all I want to say, "It is finished. I fought a good fight, it is finished." That is all I want for myself, and that is all I try to do to help you get to that point in your life.

Some of you will, some of you will not. Some of you will not follow any of this, and like I said, the tables get turned up, and the world turns them up, and God turns them up, and He purges the church. Some of God's people will stay and pick up the mantle and do the job, other ones will head off, and the Lord knows where they are at and what they are doing, it does not matter. They are not part of the work anyhow.

All that matters is who in His eleventh hour stands shoulder to shoulder. Hold the line, get the job done. We will hold up there, enjoy the rest of the day.