

Evangelizing the Western Mindset - Part 11

by Winkie Pratney

The sermon highlights the accuracy and fulfillment of God's word through the prophecy of Tyre and the unique birth and genealogy of Jesus, demonstrating the inspiration of the Bible.

Duration: 1:01:50

Scripture: Isaiah 53:5

Topics: "Jesus Christ", "Resurrection Power"

Description

This sermon delves into the profound impact of Jesus' death and resurrection, highlighting the unique nature of his sacrifice and the fulfillment of numerous prophecies surrounding his life. It emphasizes the power of Jesus' miracles, the purity of his character, and the immeasurable influence he has had on human history. The sermon concludes with a reflection on the disciples' transformation upon witnessing the empty tomb and the resurrection of Jesus, which solidified their belief in his divinity.

Transcript

I looked in our last session at one of the many prophecies of Scripture, the one concerning Tyre and Sidon, and a question was asked, how many verses in the Bible deal with prophecy? This is a Bible that has been marked according to the four major themes of the Scriptures. And the guy who did this, the same one who marked the personal work as New Testament, says there are four great themes in over 70 subjects in the Scriptures, out of a total of 31,302 verses. In the Bible, 7,670 verses, nearly one verse and four, concern the theme of salvation.

It includes over 1,900 verses on the necessity of holy living, 2,500 verses on the punishment here and now of the wicked, 413 verses on the future punishment of the wicked, 575 verses show God's love for the sinner, and 182 verses which show God is no respecter of persons but who saves all, willing to meet the conditions of salvation. Two other major themes, temporal blessings, the blessings of God, here and now, not some future things we're talking about, of which there are 2,412 verses in the Old Testament and 1,091 in the New Testament, include verses on promises or examples of food or clothing provided, 88 verses recording promises, and 760 verses recording examples of health and healing for the body, which is one verse in 36, have something to do with blessing here and now, on the subject of health and healing. One verse in nine in the Bible concerns blessings here and now.

The next one, the theme of the Holy Spirit, who is mentioned over 400 times in the Bible under 41 different names and titles. One verse in 26 concerns the work of the Holy Spirit, and the simple reason why he's

given so much attention is he is the one who mediates Christ to us. He is the one who actually does the active work in people's lives.

Christ as a man visited here for only 33 odd years, and the Holy Spirit carries out His work. The fourth one, and the one that we mentioned, there are 3,856 verses in prophecy on the Bible in the Old Testament alone, and 1,499 verses in the New Testament. One verse in six in the Scriptures has a more or less important bearing on prophetic subjects.

Now that is an exceptionally high percentage, and not like any other religious book in the world, anywhere. Great chunk. And I mentioned earlier that every prophecy of Jesus' first coming and the events surrounding it, there are seven of a second coming.

So we are actually living in the time in which we will see the greatest fulfillment of prophecy. Yes? I just lost the place. The theme of the Holy Spirit, there are 511 verses, or one verse in 45 in the Old Testament, and 664 verses, or one verse in 12 in the New Testament.

One verse in 26 in the Bible concerns the work of the Holy Spirit. Okay, now I want to give you the statistics on the time, and sight, and prophecy, and just show you the chances of this happening by accident. We mentioned briefly the chances of all the 300 plus prophecies of Jesus coinciding in one person was an astronomical number.

We'll just show you methodology in this other one. I'm taking this from the book Science Speaks. I have here a picture of what is left of the city of Tyre and Sidon.

We could, let me look at that afterwards. But this passage is found in Ezekiel 26, and verses 3 to 5, 7, 12, 14, and 16. It was written in about 590 B.C. Prophecy, therefore, saith the Lord God, I am against thee, O Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causes its waves to come up.

Very interesting prophecy. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre, break down her towers, I will scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be the place for the spreading of an ants.

Thus saith the Lord God, I will bring upon Tyrus and Abagones, a king of Babylon, shall lay thy stones in thy timbers, and thy dust in the midst of thy water, and make thee like the top of a rock. You shall be a place to spread nets on. You shall build no more.

The princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, lay away their robes, put on their broidered garments. They shall clothe themselves with trembling. Now the seven things were to be fulfilled.

First Nabuchadnezzar should take the city of Tyre. Two, other nations are to participate in the fulfillment of this prophecy. Three, the city is to be made flat like the top of a rock.

Four, it is to become a place for spreading of nets. Five, its stones and timbers are to be laid in the sea. Six, other cities are to fear greatly at the fall of Tyre.

Seven, the old city of Tyre shall never be rebuilt. Those are the prophecies in order. Tyre was a city on the northern coast of Palestine inhabited by the Phoenicians, a strong maritime people greatly feared by their enemies.

The king of Tyre was the one who supplied timbers for Solomon in the building of the temple. In 586 BC, Nabuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, laid siege to the city of Tyre. The siege lasted 13 years and when

Nabuchadnezzar took the city in 573 BC, he found the Phoenicians had moved everything of value to an island about one half mile off the coast.

Though the city was taken, Nabuchadnezzar didn't profit anything and the Phoenicians were not conquered. That's the first part of this thing. Nabuchadnezzar could not pursue them to their island position, so he returned to Babylon.

Thus the first item of prophecy was fulfilled, Nabuchadnezzar shall take the city of Tyre. For 241 years, the mainland city of Tyre remained very much as Nabuchadnezzar had left it. Later Alexander the Great started his great conquest.

His field of campaign lay to the east, but he feared that the fleet of Tyre might be used against his homeland, so he moved south to take the city of Tyre. In 332 BC, Alexander reached Tyre, but was unable to take the city at once, what we mentioned last time. He captured other coastal cities, took over their fleets, but with his combined fleets he was still unable to take Tyre.

Alexander finally built a causeway from the mainland to the island. In building the causeway, he used all the building materials of old Tyre and that was not enough. He scraped up all of the soil in and around the old city and with it completed the causeway.

After seven months, by a combined attack of land forces marching in over the causeway and the fleets of conquered cities, he took Tyre. Thus items 2, 3, and 5 of the prophecy were fulfilled. Two other nations that had participated in the fulfillment, all the boats from the other cities that he took, 3, the city was to be made flat like the top of a rock, and 5, its stones and timbers were to be laid in the sea.

Other neighboring cities were so frightened by the conquest of Tyre that they opened their gates to Alexander without opposition and fulfilled another item, 6, other cities were to fear greatly the fall of Tyre. Today visitors at the old city of Tyre find it as a very popular place for fishermen. They are spreading their nets on the spot.

Thus prediction 4 has been completely fulfilled. It was to become a place for spreading of nets. The great freshwater springs of Rassalane are at the site of the mainline city of Tyre and no doubt supplied the city with an abundance of freshwater.

These springs are still there and still flow but their water runs into the sea. The flow of these springs was measured by an engineer and found to be about 10 million gallons daily. It is still an excellent site for a city and would have free water enough for a large modern city yet it has never been rebuilt.

Thus item 7 of the prophecy has stood true for more than 2,500 years. The old city of Tyre shall never be rebuilt. They built another Tyre but not there, they built it as far away as possible.

This prophecy by Ezekiel has been fulfilled to the last item. Let us try to evaluate the evidence of inspiration as supplied by the fulfillment of this single prophecy. This is one out of a bunch.

History shows that while many of the cities in the vicinity of Tyre were often captured and recaptured by various forces, Tyre usually withstood these attacks and remained a free city. Tyre and Babylon represented two very different military powers, Tyre a naval and Babylon a land force. Each had left the other strictly alone.

My groups of college students were asked to imagine that Ezekiel was writing from his own human knowledge and give an estimate of the following. Ezekiel had one chance in how many of knowing or being able to predict that Nebuchadnezzar would take the city of Tyre. Since Nebuchadnezzar was conquering many cities and since Tyre was being besieged four years after the prophecy was made, it must have been a reasonable thing to predict.

Nebuchadnezzar might have tried to take Tyre and failed, he might have succeeded or he might have never tried. An estimate in one in three was chosen. Three possibilities.

What chance did Ezekiel have too of knowing that Nebuchadnezzar would in conquering of Tyre not completely fulfill the prophecy of destruction but other nations would later come in and help? The indications at the time of Ezekiel certainly were that when Nebuchadnezzar took a city he was capable of completing the destruction himself so the estimate was placed at one in five. What chance did Ezekiel have of knowing that Tyre would be made flat like the top of a rock after it was conquered? How many cities have been made flat like the top of a rock after being conquered? Side of nearly all ancient cities are marked by mounds of accumulated debris. I do not know of any other city where the ruins have been so completely cleared away so the estimate of one in five hundred was chosen.

What chance did Ezekiel have of knowing that after the city had been completely cleared away it would become a popular place for fishermen? There really no basis on which to make such an estimate however the site was taken merely as a little stretch of coast and considering all sections of coast that size an estimate of one in ten was chosen. What chance did Ezekiel have of knowing that when Tyre was made flat its building material and its dust would be laid in the sea? Since the site was to be cleared the debris had to be disposed of but it would have been far more likely to have been used as material in constructing the buildings of nearby cities so the estimate was given one in ten. What chance was there of other cities opening their gates to the conquer of Tyre without resistance? Estimate one in five.

What is the chance that Tyre after being made flat should never be rebuilt? Nearly all old cities which had great natural advantages were at some time rebuilt. Tyre is an excellent location, has an abundant supply of fresh water, so valuable is this land. The estimate chosen for this part of the prophecy was one in twenty.

Putting them all together the chance of Ezekiel writing this prophecy from his own knowledge and having it all come true is one in three by five by five hundred by ten by ten by five by twenty. This is one in seventy-five million. This can be abbreviated as seven point five times ten to the seven.

If Ezekiel had looked at Tyre in his day and made these seven predictions in human wisdom these estimates meant there is one chance in seventy-five million of their all coming true. But they all came true in the minutest detail and there are others like this, Samaria and Samaria made a heap as a field and the planting of vineyards and Gaza and Ashkelon and Jericho and the Golden Gate, that's another heavy one. In Ezekiel forty-four one to three written again five seventy-four B.C. The gate that will be shut and no man will open it till the Lord returns.

When this prophecy was written the gate road from the Kidron Valley entered through this gate called the Golden Gate. This gate was in use at the time of Christ and is thought to be the gate through which he made his triumphal entry. In A.D. one five four three when the walls of Jerusalem were restored by Sultan Suleiman the road to the Golden Gate was no longer in use.

The Sultan seeing no more use for the gate ordered it closed. Instead of building the wall straight across the place where the gate had been he restored the gate with its arches and ornaments and then walled up the gate's openings themselves. Kaiser Wilhelm planned to take Jerusalem and have the Golden Gate opened for his triumphant entry into the city.

Apparently the Kaiser thought he could tamper with prophecy and forcibly violate it. It looks as if this gate were just waiting for the return of Christ when it could be reopened and constitute his main entrance to the city. The gate is beside the site of the temple but Kaiser never made it to Jerusalem.

Poor chap. What is the probability this gate should continue to exist at the present time and it should be closed? Estimate? One in a thousand. So prophecy after prophecy after prophecy is done like this in detail, detail, detail.

Now we come, however, to the great focus of the Scriptures. Not these things, interesting as they may be, but the whole of the Bible has one single theme and that is the author of the Scriptures. Last night in a discussion with some unsaved people, a guy said to me, you know, who needs a book? I mean, what use is a book? It's just a, you know, why do you need a book? And I said to him, well, it's not really a lot of use unless you know the author of it.

You see, if I want to get around London, there's two ways. Jim can give me a map, and it's nice to have a map. But what's even better if he says, look, I'll take you.

See, I'd rather have a guide than just a map. A map and a guide really makes it. We're talking not here about the map alone, which is great, but the person who wrote it.

It's great to have the author himself show you around. Now, we're going to look briefly then at the life of the prime focus of the Scripture. I want to pull these through in seven areas.

I'll give them to you really fast. I love the humor of God in Luke 3, 1-2. It gives a whole list of heavy-duty leaders in their time.

You know, it talks about so-and-so was the head of this, and so-and-so was the head of that, and this guy was the religious leader, and he was the political leader, and this one was this, and this was that. And then it says at the end, the word of the Lord came to John the Baptist. I love it.

It's just, not always do the leaders of the world know what's really going on in the world. Came to John the Baptist who was head of nobody and nothing. When we look at Christ, He is absolutely unique among all who have ever lived.

His birth is unique. Nobody was ever born like Jesus. He is unprecedented and unparalleled in history.

He is the first and only baby without a human father. Scripture says, Isaiah 7, 17, A virgin shall conceive and be with child, and you shall call His name Emmanuel, which means God is with us. Jeremiah 31, 22, key verse, The Lord has created a new thing in the earth.

A woman shall produce a man. Now, it's not birth a man, but produce a man. Nothing wonderful about a woman having a baby.

I mean, that's marvelous, but it happens all the time. But this thing, there's a special word, Cause to come about or make a man is a birth that is unique, that is not a normal, ordinary birth. And then we have in

Isaiah 9, 6, Unto us a child is born, that's a humanity.

Unto us a son is given, divinity. And the government shall be on his shoulder, His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, The Mighty God, Father of Eternity, The Prince of Peace. The genealogy of Jesus, the genealogies given that we mentioned in our last thing very briefly, in Matthew and Luke, they're studied because they have both been puzzling and rewarding when you get digging into them.

In Genesis 3, 15, we have an interesting phrase, The seed of woman, not the seed of man. The seed of man is understandable, but the seed of woman, it's a very unusual kind of phrase to use. Biology refers to the seed of man.

In Matthew's careful account, he lists 39 begats. Begat, begat, begat, he begat, he begat, begat. And then he conspicuously stops to note, Joseph, this is Matthew 1, 16, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who was called the Christ.

The begat stopped, and it shifts, and a different phrase is used, of whom was born. Now what's interesting is that Mary, Mary is his mother, but Joseph is not his father. They did in New Zealand, we don't have any religious broadcasting, so to speak, in television or in radio, and similar I suppose to Britain in many ways, but we have to get our Christian stuff on secular channels.

One friend of mine put together a thing called Radio Jerusalem. It was run about Christmas time, and it was done like War of the Worlds. It was done like the Orson Welles radio program, and they figured out what the weather would be like.

They got the weather right down, prophecy of course, and they just had a regular rock format station that was interrupted by news bulletins, and it was Christmas time, as he was talking about. He said, oh, the weather is fine here in Radio Jerusalem, and then they, you know, music was playing, and they'd say, we interrupt this bulletin, a light has been seen in this evening, it seems to be moving, attracted, and it doesn't seem to be a plane or a helicopter, it seems to be some kind of astral body, and it's moving. And they do this thing all the way until it finally builds up.

This light has stopped over a city, and it's shining down, and all the teams of reporters are trying to find out what's so heavy about this city, and finally they interview this guy, and it's Joseph. They say, we understand, sir, that you have a son that has been born, and there's a rumor going around that this one is going to be the real king of the universe. And Joseph talks very briefly, and then right at the end, that's the way it closes, by the way, he says, he's not my son.

And that's the way it finishes. Close, but... When we see, there's an interesting scripture, and it's found in Jeremiah 22, and verse 24 to 30. And in this passage, there's a curse given on the descendants of Canaia, and I've got them there, Canaia.

Canaia's descendants, none of them, none of Canaia's descendants could sit on David's throne, or fulfill the covenant. And that Canaia is the Josias of Matthew 1.11. So this, Matthew's genealogy, is an account of Joseph's genealogy. It is an account of that.

You see, when you go back into the thing, if Joseph had really been Jesus' true father, then Jesus could not have been the fulfillment of prophecy. He would have been a descendant from a man who was not allowed to sit on David's throne. See that? He could not have been the promised Messiah.

And it's in Matthew that that's put. This Josias is that Canaia. So, if Joseph had really been Jesus' father, no way.

Now, in Mary's account, an account of Mary's genealogy, and she's his real mother, though Joseph isn't his real father, in Luke 1.30-33, we have Mary's line traced back, and when you hit that, you have this phrase. Earlier, "...the Lord God shall give him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever." Mary is in David's line. She is a direct descendant from David.

So through Mary, his true mother, he has the royal right, biological right, to rule as the promised king of Israel. It's a cool thing, even in the weird little things. That stuff is stuck in there.

And only two groups of people, and one ignorant, and two unbelieving, ever called him the son of Joseph. Luke points out Jesus was, as it was supposed, Joseph's son. And that phrase is an interesting phrase.

It is a legal phrase that refers to custom or legal standing, as was supposed. It's a legal phrase. And that means he would be called a true son and accepted as such in legal standing if one of two things were true.

If number one, the stepson was named by the father. In other words, if the father who had adopted this child named him, then he, in legal custom, would be called his son and be accepted as such. Or secondly, if he adopted his stepfather's trade, he would also be recognized as a legal son.

And the angel told Joseph, you will call his name Jesus, and he became a carpenter. And in both legal ways, was a true legal son of Joseph, but not a biological son. So the whole, the dovetailing of this thing is incredible.

Joseph's father in Matthew is Jacob. The Heli in Luke 3.23 is Mary's dad, Joseph's father-in-law, not Joseph's dad. Genetic law states in every individual we find all the characteristics of the two progenitors.

From Mary, true humanity, all the way back to Adam. From God, his father, true deity, all the way back to eternity. So nobody was ever born like Jesus.

Secondly, his wisdom. Nobody ever spoke like Jesus. Peter Abelard, I think the purpose and cause of the Incarnation was that God might illuminate the world by his wisdom and excite it to the love of himself.

Pascal, a great French thinker, Jesus Christ said great things simply as though he had not thought them great, yet so clearly we see easily what he thought of them. This clearness joined to simplicity is wonderful. The best thing I ever learned about preaching and writing was in an English class, and a guy said to me, there are three stages of great thinking in writing.

The first is when you have great thoughts and big thoughts and big words. The second, no, the first thought is when you have little thoughts and little words. The second is when you have big thoughts and big words, but you never really make it in writing and speaking until you have big ideas and little words.

And Jesus' statements are so off the cuff. They're never sort of calculated. They're just statements like that, and they're simple and they're mind-blowing, and it just goes like that.

Sometimes people go, boy, that was profound. By that they mean, I don't know what in the world he was talking about. But that's not like Jesus.

He knows very well what he's talking about. And here is Philip Schaft. Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon.

Without science and learning, he shed more light on things human and divine than all the philosophers and scholars combined. Without the eloquence of schools, he spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet. Without writing, a single line, the only time Jesus ever wrote was in the dirt, and we don't even know what it was.

Maybe telephone numbers of the people with the rocks. He set more pens in motion and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussion, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times. If you were watching choruses, you know, and hymns being sung, have you ever thought how many hymns and choruses have been written? It's just mind-boggling.

I go back, you know, 21 years of being a Christian and think how many hymns and choruses I know. Have you ever tried to write them out? Talk about songs of praise, you'd have encyclopedias of praise. That's just the ones you know.

Here is a statement from Scripture. People were astonished at his doctrine. This is the impact of Jesus' words.

For he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. When the disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed. They were astonished at his doctrine, for his word was with power.

The common people heard him gladly, and never man spoke like this man. Then when they sent out, they said, arrest him, bring him back here. Temple police sent him out.

They all went out to collect him. They came back later without him. And they said, where is he? He said, I've never heard anybody speak like that.

They said, that wasn't a question, where is he? He blew them away just talking. The Sermon on the Mount, the parables, the Lord's Prayer, the Great Commandments, the Prodigal Son, the Lost Sheep, the Good Samaritan, the Pharisee, and the Publican, any of these would do honor to any book in the world. The power and simplicity of the highest genius without equal arrival.

Did early Christians of taste and education compose these and ascribe them to a mythical Christ? Could not do it. And from where came this wisdom of Jesus was some peasant carpenter? He said, heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall never pass away. Just said it like that.

The words I speak to you, they're spirit and life. If any man will do his will, he shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God, whose service shall be ashamed of me, and my words of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he comes in his own glory and in the Father's and of the holy angels, and so on. Now, the influence then of Christ's thought on world history is just an astonishing thing.

And Bale said, it is apparent his influence on the thought of the human race has been immense. It has guided and governed the highest form of intellectual energy for more than a thousand years after the meeting of the Council of Nicaea early in the fourth century. It is hardly possible to mention the name of a single man of great speculative power in Europe, North Africa, or Western Asia who was not a Christian theologian also.

Great poets, great painters, great orators, and great architects did homage to the supremacy of Christ. It was confessed that he stood alone and in him man had found God. Now, purity.

Not just wise, but pure. Nobody ever lived like Jesus. Catherine Booth said, Imagine the holiest and best who ever tried their worth putting forth such assumptions and how they would sound.

Imagine Moses who talked with God in the burning bush, or Isaiah, or Daniel, or John, the beloved. Suppose they'd stood up and said, I am from above, you are from beneath. I am not of this world.

If you believe not that I am here, you shall die in your sins. I mean, it's laughable just to think of them saying it. But he said it.

He just said it. Boom, like that. Nobody ever lived like him.

Again, last time we were talking, one of the questions was, you tell me a Christian of status. Was it status or rank or something? I think a guy was asking, do you know any Christians who are high up in the ranks of money? I think he was talking about. I was thinking Christians of status.

What is a Christian of status? And I was trying to think, does he want a Billy Graham? Does he want a Pope or something? You pick. The most holy religious person. Can you imagine Mother Teresa saying, I am not of this world.

You know, if you believe not that I am she, you shall die in your sins. I mean, have I been so long with you and yet you have not known me? He that has seen me hath seen the Father. His character supported these assumptions, Catherine Booth said.

For over 1,800 years, the best of the human race has accepted them without being shocked by them. If he be not divine, how come that the greatest of human intellects, the sincerest of human souls, the most aroused and quickened of human consciences have ventured thereupon this divine word and seen nothing contradictory between his claims and the actual character he sustained in the world. And I love the thing Harry Rimmer does.

Harry Rimmer says this. Jesus was born a Jew. He lived a Jewish life under Jewish laws in a Jewish land.

Yet to the end of his days, he offered no sacrifice for sin. No other person who lived in the circle of Moses' law could ever say he need offer no sacrifice for sin. He admonished his disciples, when you pray, say, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

But he never prayed for forgiveness. He owed no debt, spiritual, moral, or physical. He taught the necessity of regeneration.

The Twelve, his mother Mary, all the loyal band of men and women who followed him, needed redemption except himself. Perfection, the single word that describes him. There is no other word which would suit a descriptive statement of the humanity of Christ.

We use the word perfect with all its common connotations in accordance with your understanding of that term. Perfection is so rare that no man as perfect as is accepted today is axiomatic, but Jesus was. Matter of fact, was it Ingersoll, that great skeptic, who despite his attack on Christ and everything else, refused to say that he was God? He said, I must, I'm forced to confess that Jesus is perfect.

And the simplest little jump of logic is that he was perfect and didn't lie. So he was who he said. And here is Wilbur Smith's 15 million minutes of life on this earth in the midst of a wicked and corrupt generation.

Every thought, every deed, every purpose, every work, privately and publicly, from the time he opened his baby eyes till he died on the cross, were all approved of God. Never once did our Lord have to confess any sin for he had no sin. You can't find anybody like that.

It may not impress somebody in an Eastern thought form that Jesus rose from the dead. You know? But it sure impresses them that they live like that. The holiest of men.

And not even come in a scratch like that. His friends said he was without sin. He committed no sin, Peter said.

Neither was guile found in his lips. 1 Peter 2.22. John said, and you know, he's manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin. 1 John 3.5. Pilate, his enemy, said it.

Pilate said, I find no fault in this man. What evil has he done? Luke 22.4.22. I am innocent of the blood of this just person. Matthew 27.24. The thief dying beside him on the cross said, this man has done nothing wrong.

Luke 23.47. The chief priests and the council sought for witnessing of Jesus to put him to death, and they found none. Mark 14.55. And Jesus himself said of his father, I always do the things that are pleasing to him. John 8.29. And then to the leaders who challenged him, he said this.

John 8.46. Which of you convinces me of sin? Now what a statement. Search and look through the great religions and religious leaders of the world. None of them could say this.

None of them would have dared. But Jesus did. Absolutely holy, perfect, and sinless life.

He could forgive sins because he himself never sinned. God in the flesh. Now we come to power.

This is a tremendous take from George MacDonald. The miracles of Jesus were as far as normal works wrought small and swift that we might see them. Remember that thing I gave you in our last session about God's control over time and prophecy is a simple thing for him? Now think in terms of God's control over time and the miraculous.

It is no miracle for water to turn into wine. Grapes do it every year. It just takes them a year.

But for water to turn into wine instantly means an acceleration of time. Something that's spread out here that just goes phew. You can, if a person gets his ear cut off, you can stick it back up there with sticky tape and, you know, put a couple of stitches in and eventually, given the fact that it doesn't get infected, it may grow even back on.

It may take six months or so. But to have an ear that's just been hacked off and pick it up and just stick it on and there it is, it's fine again, is a time compression thing. I think Jesus, when he walked the earth, drawing on his father's power, could do things.

And I love that his father's normal works wrought small and swift that we might know them. Forty-nine miracles surround the life of Jesus, major miracles, from his birth to his ascension. Seven show his power over demons.

Many the healing of sickness, including palsy, fever, deafness, blindness, hemorrhage and leprosy. All the big ones, the big C's of their day. Okay? He even raised three people from the dead.

A widow's son in Luke 7, 11-16. Jairus' daughter, Mark 5, 22-24. And Lazarus, who had been dead four days, John 11.

Then he did it himself. He wrought miracles of deliverance and judgment. He supplied food and drink by means of miracle.

The miracle surrounded him his whole life. At his birth, his baptism, transfiguration, prayer, death, resurrection and ascension. The scripture says, Many the people believed on him and said, When Christ comes, will he do more miracles than those which this man has done.

And he did this without show, without ostentation and without fanfare. Now how would we do it today? We'd get close up. This is how we'd do it if we were Jesus.

This is called Malcolm Muggeridge, the fourth temptation. We'd go, okay, now I want you to see this. This is called the working of miracles.

Let's get a close-up on these eyes here. Now you'll notice as I lay my hands on... Let's get a real close-up of these. We want to see these scarred corneas here, okay? Now watch as I... This is something you guys are going to have to learn.

You know, that's why we would do it. Up close... Okay, now this one here is called the word of knowledge. See that? Here's why Jesus does it.

It's just... It's almost offhand. You know? Master, who did sin, this man or his parents? And he was born blind. Waiting for Jesus to say, oh, it was his parents.

Fine, fine, thank you. You know, we had a theological problem with that. Jesus goes, neither this man's sin nor his parents but that the works of God might be manifest.

I must work the works of him that sent me. And while it is day and night cometh, no man can work. Boom! And he gives them new eyes and on he goes.

Just like that. It's offhand. It's not... It's no big deal.

It's just God. You know? It's just... All the miracles of Jesus are a mirror of his character, full of love and mercy, upholding his Father's glory and meeting his creation's need. They are as far removed from the apocryphal tricks of magicians and occult adepts as light is from darkness.

Remember John the Baptist, the one we started this apologetic series with? Are you he that should come, or do we look for another? Go, said Jesus, and show John the things you hear and see. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. Even the enemies of Jesus could not deny that he did miracles.

When they examined the man that Jesus had healed of being born blind, there was a division among them. This man is not of God, one said, because he doesn't keep the Sabbath day. Others said, how can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? It really bothered people.

What do you say of him that opened your eyes? they asked the blind man. Is this your son who was born blind? They questioned his parents. How then does he see? Since the world began, it was not heard that any man open the eyes of one that was born blind.

He said, if this man were not of God, he couldn't do anything. Having nothing intelligent to say, they said it anyway. You are all together born and sinners, what do you teach us? And they cast him out.

I think that healing of the blind man is one of the most beautiful miracles. First, how he did it. He put clay in his eyes.

You might imagine what the American or the British Medical Society would say if you had a guy that was putting clay in people's eye sockets and then tell him go and wash in the pool. The only other time that God ever touched clay in the record of the Scriptures is when he made man and he first fashioned him. You might have a creation miracle.

The guy might not have had any eyeballs. He took the clay and he put it in his eyes and then he said go wash. And I think it's so beautiful that when he's back and then everybody's gone now, all his accusers and he's cast out of the temple and nobody in the religious world wants him and he's just sitting there happy that he can see things and then Jesus comes up to him.

And that is so beautiful. Yeah. You've got to look at that 9. I've just got to read it to you.

It'll make you weep to look at it. John 9 verse 35. When Jesus heard they'd cast him out and he'd found him, he said, Do you believe I'm the Son of God? And he said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe in him? And Jesus said to him, You have both seen him and it is he that talks with you.

You've got new eyes. Now look. What a... And of course he said, Lord, I believe in him.

He worshipped him. I do just reading it. The life of Jesus is a life filled with miracles.

The embarrassing thing is they continue because he's the same yesterday, today and forever. As a matter of fact, many of the missionaries to other countries, T.L. Osborne found this in his early ministry in debating with Muslims in the marketplace. He wore himself out.

And then finally came back, watched the servant of God rebuke a spirit from a little girl and see her blind and speak. Either she was blind or she couldn't speak or something and he saw her eyes opened or speak. And then from that, he restudied the scriptures, went back and the first confrontation he had was in this big debate.

He said, Look, Jesus is not alive. He can't do anything today. And they had a crippled guy.

And he said, Come on, you didats. Call on Allah if you know him and ask him to heal this one of his servants. Nothing happened.

He said, Well, I call on Jesus, the living God. Boom, and the guy got up and walked. And that was it.

Instant apologetic. Now we come to his life. Call it immeasurable influence.

The New Testament is clear on anything it is this. Jesus Christ was truly God as well as truly man. He was not a God or related to God or identified with God in some ethical or moral sense.

Records overwhelmingly affirm his express image of the invisible God, full attributes of deity resident in him, fully equal to God his Father. And there's a whole bunch of statements in scripture. It declares that he created all things.

He governs the universe. He forgives sins. He'll judge the world.

He upholds all things. He inspired the prophets. He sends out ambassadors.

He's called the King, the Door, the Bread of Life, the Good Shepherd, the Vine, the Light of the World, and the Way, the Truth, and the Life. There's descriptions of Jesus, the altogether lovely, the bright Morning Star, Chief Cornerstone, Rose of Sharon, Great Physician, Rock of Ages, Desire of all Nations, Wisdom and Power of God, the Author and Finisher of our faith, the Alpha and Omega. Galbiforce wrote a pretty chorus.

He's the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. He's behind me. He's before me.

He's always my friend. Jesus is my source and my goal. He's where you're going and He's where you're coming from.

I mean, He just covers the basis. First and the last, the beginning and the end. Here is a famous quote, but in case you've never heard it, it's well worth it.

Here is a man, it's called One Solitary Life. Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, a child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village.

He worked in a carpenter shop until he was 30, and then for three years he was an itinerant preacher. He never owned a home. We'll say four now.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family.

He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a big city. He never traveled 200 miles from the place where he was born.

He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself. While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him.

His friends ran away. One of them denied him. He was turned over to his enemies.

He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying, his executors gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth, his coat.

When he was dead, he was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend. Nineteen long centuries have come and gone, and today he's the centerpiece of the human race and the leader of the column of progress. I'm far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built, all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned put together have not affected the life of man upon this life.

The earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life. And Joseph Parker, there are other men who do not come to worship Christ but simply come to speculate upon Him. The patronage they offer the Son of God.

It makes me sad to hear how they damn Him with faint praise. What I dread among you is not that you will destroy Christ but that you will patronize Him. Jesus is nothing to me if He's not the Savior of the world.

You will know what Jesus Christ is most and best when you're in greatest need of such services He can offer. No man can entertain an opinion of indifference concerning Jesus. If he's considered the subject at all, he must worship Christ or crucify Him.

When there is earnestness in inquiring, the criticism that earnestness ends in homage or in crucifixion. My friend Mario Morello once went into a radical-dominated university. He was to speak outside.

There was going to be a night meeting. He grabbed a megaphone and he said, Your greatest enemy is Jesus Christ. You're going to have to do something about Him.

Tonight I'll tell you one of the two alternatives you can do. That night he had 2,000 radicals pack into this building to find out what to do with Jesus. And that was wild because he's out the back asking God what he should talk about.

He said, Oh God, what have I got into? So all these guys, this is in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and they're all brown power people and Che Guevara type. This is the 60s. The Lord says to him, Speak on the woman at the well.

He goes, What? The woman at the well? Is she who is out there? Those kind of people I can't talk about. The Lord said, Just go out and speak on the woman at the well. So he went out and he said, He started talking.

He said, Jesus climbed this, that, and the other thing, and somehow he's got to be dealt with because he's going to be the greatest obstacle to you doing your own thing. And everybody's going, Yeah, yeah. And then he stopped and he said, But if you knew the gift of God and who it was that says to you, Come.

You would come and He would give you a well of water that springs up forever. And power of God fell on the thing. The place got really quiet.

And one guy got up. He gave an invitation. One guy got up and went to the front, and it was a 40-something-year-old guy.

And then all the other Spanish students that had invited him were sitting in the front, and they went white with sheets of paper. The Chicano glory. He said, Do you know who that guy is? He said, No, he is the leader of the radical movement in this university.

And about 500 or 600 others came to join him in the front. The power of God. Jesus is nothing.

You can't patronize him and say he's sort of a nice person. That's C.S. Lewis' famous liar, legend, lunatic thing. Oh, Lord of glory.

Okay, last one. Well, we'll do one more. Here's the key one.

Focus of everything in the Christian faith. Here's death and resurrection. Nobody ever died like Jesus.

Millions of people have died, of course. Hundreds of thousands have been executed. Scores of thousands died of crucifixion.

Roman crucifixion. None of those things made Jesus' death unique. Nobody ever died like Jesus because he died when he did not deserve to die, and no one else in history had to like him.

Like no one else in history, he didn't have to die. He said, I lay down my life. Now, this may shock you, but I don't think Jesus was killed by people.

I think he laid his own life down. He didn't have his life taken from him. He gave it up.

And the way he gave it up, I think, is one of the most powerful things. Something he just sort of willed himself to die. You know, there was some... He sort of willed himself to die, and I think there's something heavier than that.

He said in John 10, 17-18, No man takes it from me, but I lay it down myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. Jesus would not have died from old age of sickness or weakness like any human being.

He had a perfect body, perfect health, and he knew no sin. He died like any sufferer of a crucifixion could have died, but his death was utterly unlike any other, for this was a death for the sins of the world. Now, he told them he was going to die.

They didn't believe it. They had not watched what was happening. I think of it like a great reel of history unraveling before them.

And I've mentioned some of the prophecies of Christ. There were 29 prophecies of his trial, his death, and his burial over five centuries in the fulfillment of Christ's death. He would be betrayed by a friend.

They're all literally fulfilled within 24 hours. That whole spectrum came together, and within three days the rest of the ones came together. He was betrayed by a friend.

Psalms 41:9, 55:12-14, Matthew 10, and so on. He was sold for 30 pieces of silver, which were thrown down in God's house for a potter's field. He was forsaken by his disciples, accused by false witnesses, dumbfounded before his accusers.

He was wounded and bruised, hit and spit on, mocked, fell under the cross. They pierced his hands and his feet. He was crucified with a transgressor.

Now, when I went to university, I had a Jewish lab partner, a guy that was with me in chemistry classes. And we used to have some neat discussions around lunchtime and stuff. His name was Stephen, and he was an Orthodox Jew.

You know, they used to go to camps, and they'd teach on the book of Esther, and everybody would cheer when the bad guy got it and stuff. He was a neat guy. But as Stephen and I talked, he'd never read the New Testament.

You know, he said, well, that's a Christian book, and I don't believe it. But he'd known a lot of the stories, the old. And one time, just talking with Stephen, I opened the book of Isaiah, and I began to read a description there of the suffering servant who had believed a report.

You know, he's despised and rejected a man. And I read this out, and I said, Stephen, when do you think that is taken from? He said, well, I don't know. I don't read the New Testament.

I said, well, who do you think that's a description of? He said, well, it's obviously of Jesus. But I don't read that book. I've never read it, and I don't intend to.

I said, Stephen, this is not from the New Testament. This is from the book of Isaiah. And he said, no way.

I said, you read it for yourself? And it shocked him. And then I waited for about a month, and then I read him Psalm 22, a little bit of that. And I said, what do you think that describes? He said, well, you know, the crucifixion of Jesus.

And I said, and that's from Psalms. And it freaked him out again. As a matter of fact, a teacher I had in Bible college, he was the only non-Jewish person in the Harvard class on Hebrew, and everybody else was Jewish, did his study papers on Isaiah and presented it to a class totally of Jewish people.

And it was so powerful that there was great conviction in the class. It is easy to, looking through all these five centuries of prophecy, all focusing down to miss the point. These things all focused in on one thing, a death of a person.

And here is the bottom line. It was not the Roman nails that killed Christ. It was not the way, crucifixion, it was actually invented by the Persians and refined by the Romans.

But the way you die, most of you know they nail you up there, it's just to hold you there. But the position in which you're held, you must push up with your feet in order to breathe. So it's the constant pushing that keeps you alive.

That's why they had what they called the crucifragium, which was a board. And when they wanted to take pity on the person, it's only going to take a strong man three or four days to die on a cross, depending on how long he could push. But you couldn't sleep, you couldn't rest because you couldn't breathe.

So the Romans would come and they would break the legs of the person that they wanted to finish off and you couldn't breathe. But it wasn't the... I've seen medical descriptions of what happens. As you move, it's like bolts of fire go up and down.

You try to move with the nails through your wrists and your feet. There's a thirst, your tongue swells up. Terrible, terrible thirst.

It was not those things. When Pilate checked, he marveled that he was already dead. It was a spear thrust into his dear dead side that told the final truth.

Jesus died from a broken heart. That's how he died. Now here's what I believe is the way Jesus died.

There on the cross, the scripture says, he became sin for us and you know sin. Into that... Have you ever looked into a baby's eyes? That complete white slate that's there, an unwritten thing, and wished that all kids and you could stay just like that? Can you imagine a man of 33 years that looked like that when he looked into his eyes? No sin. No sin at all.

And then in one moment, the sin of the entire world loaded onto that. Have you ever looked at a baby and thought, wouldn't it be a horrible thing if this baby was raped? What would happen to that little life if it just got dumped, what is out there in the streets? What's happening to so many children across the world? In one moment, he took the sin of the world and it literally broke his heart. He died of a broken heart.

It wasn't nails, it wasn't a spear. The spear just showed his heart had been ruptured. It came out blood and water.

There'd just been a wound there. Josh McDowell points about there'd only be a little bit of bleeding. Most of the bleeding would be internal.

But when the heart muscle ruptures, there's up to 500cc of fluid that's released into the chest cavity. And when you put an avenue in there, it spurts out. It's not there normally.

Jesus died of a broken heart. It was your sin, my sin, that killed Jesus. Took it on him.

Deliberate choice. The innocent for the guilty. He didn't die saying, I am finished.

He said, it is finished. And they thought to themselves, it's over. Cut off in his prime, exed out like an embarrassing entry in life's ledger, hung up to die, pulled down and buried.

But that was not the end. He'd made disturbing statements all along. But who could believe things like, destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.

Good God around the tomb, very big rock to discourage the casual and some last minute cleaning up operations around town that ought to take care of any possible legends. And that big, what they did is they put it, the rock was on a sliding thing like this, this big rock. I think they calculated it must have been between one and a half to two tons to cover a space that size.

And they had like a wedge up here, see, and you pull the wedge out and the thing rolls down and seals the thing up. You know, one person can set it, it takes a lot more than that to put it back up. They put a Roman guard around the thing.

These guys, Dow points out that the guard that was on his thing were trained Romans. Each one was trained to defend six square foot of ground. And that when you had that group of soldiers, they could, they were living fighting machines.

They had four weapons on them. They would never give up anything they were assigned to do because a Roman that gave up a prisoner or lost something he was to guard, his own clothes were stripped from him, he was set on fire by his own clothes, and then he was tortured to death. But first they would take his family and execute them one by one in front of his eyes, then poke his eyes out, then finish him off.

And it was so scary to be, these Romans could not be bribed. That's why I remember the jailer, when Paul and Silas looked like everybody was going to split, he was going to grab a sword and fall on them. He didn't, he'd rather kill himself than go through what the Romans did if he lost a prisoner.

They put a guard there. They put a seal on. They did all of that stuff and made sure that he was dead all right.

When they put him there, he wasn't swooning. He was finished. He was dead.

It was all over. The disciples were afraid. They ran away.

They locked the doors. They were scared out of their minds. They forgot everything he said.

And then an early morning earthquake, light, three days from the cross, and a stone that just went like this. Two and a half tons of stone. It's hard to sneak a stone open and pinch a swooning body out.

And what do you do with the Romans? None of the disciples dared believe the woman's incoherent story. He was dead. He was really dead.

They saw him with their own eyes, buried, wound in pounds of spices. And they go into the tomb. Finally, half, they're not really believing it.

And what they see there totally changes them. Not even the miracle of Jesus rising from the dead. It's the church.

What happened to the disciples? That the final crunch comes in. And I love Peter Marshall's Mr. Jones, Meet the Master. The grave clothes lay like a shrivel, cracked shell of a cocoon.

That's what he saw. Peter comes in, he sees his headpiece in a separate place, wrapped, and all of this, with all the weight of the spices, all sunk. The scripture says, one of them came in and he saw.

But he used a different word for the second one. He saw. One just came in and he saw the fact.

But the second one came in and he saw and he understood. What he saw was that. Shriveled, cracked shell of a cocoon left behind when a Martha's emerged and hoisted her bright sails in the sunshine.

More accurately, like a glove from which the hand had been removed, the fingers of which still retained the shape of a hand. In that manner, the grave cloths were lying, collapsed a little, slightly deflated, because they were between the rolls of bandage, a considerable weight of spices. But there lay the linen cloth that had been wound round the body of Christ.

It was when they saw that that the disciples believed. Jesus said he would be crucified and the third day would rise from the dead. No founder of any world religion would dare make a claim like that.

Jesus did. They crucified him and three days later he rose from the dead. It is one thing to say that you are God.

It is another matter to demonstrate it. This is a fact that made heroes out of cowards, that shook Jerusalem, that sent the gospel burning like light through the world and turned it upside down. Only a crook, a fool or God would make the kind of claims Jesus did.

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