

Understanding Jesus in the Gospels

Volume 1

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Forward

David Moore II, in his new book, gives insightful understanding to the message of Jesus and its application for us today. Being a student of the Scriptures for many years, David applies biblical wisdom to a subject that is often neglected and little understood. Bringing a unity of understanding that unifies the Old Testament with the New, only by faith can one recognize in the lowly figure of Jesus, the manifestation of God's rule and grace. I highly recommend the teaching ministry and gift of David to the Body of Christ. May he give us many years of insightful truths from God's Word.

Don W. Krow
Director of Discipleship Evangelism International Outreach

Introduction

The Scriptures say to study to show yourself approved, a workman who doesn't need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). This has been my endeavor for most of my life. Through this and the teachers God placed in my life, I understood that Jesus was the central figure of the Bible (John 5:39) and the exact representation of God (Heb. 1:3). But as I would discover one truth about Him—see good from it—then discover a greater truth—and see good from that—there were certain things He said and did that I found myself de-emphasizing or explaining away, because I didn't understand them. One day, I was challenged by Don Krow, who asked me, "What is the Kingdom of God?" I was totally caught off guard! What a question! I answered that I thought it to be a set of principles for the way God operates. Honestly, I had never really focused on it, but immediately, I realized that Jesus talked about it *constantly*. It was *always* on His lips, and it was something I ought to know more about. So, I started this journey, studying and digging this up in the way that seemed good to me. It has been astounding and, oh, what a joy! I want to share with you what I believe God has shared, and is sharing, with me.

My hope is that this will go to people everywhere and help them see Jesus in a way that maybe they haven't and that they might "seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27). These articles will by no means cover all there is to know about Jesus in the Gospels, but I believe that what I bring forth is truth in season and have therefore treated this with my utmost care in order to be as clear as day.

Thank you, Don, for loving me enough to point me to the truth! And thank you to my loving wife, Dwell, for your support, patience, understanding, and insight.

Article 1: Only Two Kingdoms that Matter

To begin, let's examine scriptures in the four Gospel accounts that mention the Kingdom of God—the message Jesus preached—and its purpose. I'll be using the *New King James Version* of the Bible unless otherwise noted. Also, you will see my brackets in the scriptures throughout the articles. They are for the purpose of clarification where it is helpful or needed.

This is one of the things Jesus said at the beginning of His ministry:

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Matthew 4:17b

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

Mark 1:15

The word **“kingdom”** is used in both statements. In Matthew's account, Jesus called it **“the kingdom of heaven,”** and in Mark's account, He called it **“the kingdom of God”**; therefore, they are one and the same thing.

The largest and most prominent sermon Jesus gave when He wasn't primarily correcting, rebuking, answering a question, or teaching in parables is what is popularly called the Sermon on the Mount. Notice that the first few words Jesus spoke have to do with the Kingdom:

And seeing the multitudes, He [Jesus] went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. [2] Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: [3] **“Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”**

Matthew 5:1-3, brackets mine

Then He [Jesus] lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: **“Blessed are you poor, For yours is the kingdom of God.”**

Luke 6:20, brackets mine

To conclude His great sermon, Jesus mentioned the Kingdom of Heaven one more time:

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”

Matthew 7:21

If there is a Kingdom, that means there is a King. But who *is* this King? When Jesus finished His sermon, the reaction of the people is very telling:

And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, [29] for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Matthew 7:28-29

Jesus talked like He was in authority, and He was. He identified Himself as the King of the Kingdom in His conversation with Pilate only hours before His crucifixion:

“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.” [37] Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?” Jesus answered, **“You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”**

John 18:36-37

This was bold of Jesus to confess to Pilate, who was the Roman governor of Judea. Pilate later told Jesus, “Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?” (John 19:10). For Jesus to say He was a king was considered treason, as the Jews said—

“Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.”

John 19:12

Now, after Jesus’ death and resurrection, He spent forty days speaking to His apostles “the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3).

So, get this: Jesus started His ministry talking about the Kingdom of God, ended His earthly life talking about the Kingdom of God, and continued talking about it after He rose from the dead! As I mentioned in my introduction, it was what He constantly talked about!

But Jesus did more than just talk about His Kingdom. A kingdom is known by its exploits—what it stands for and what it opposes—and that’s what I want to examine in this article.

First, Jesus didn’t spend His time setting up an earthly kingdom to overthrow the Romans. He told Pilate that His Kingdom was *not* of this world. However, He *did* say to the multitudes that His Kingdom was **“forcefully advancing”** (Matt. 11:12, *New Living Translation*). How? The Bible says He went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil:

“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.”

Acts 10:38

John wrote that Jesus came to *destroy* the works of the devil:

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

1 John 3:8b

What did Jesus do to destroy the works of the devil? The next few passages say that one of the ways He did it was by healing people:

And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. [12] But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, “**Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.**” [13] And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God... [16] “**So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound – think of it – for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?**”

Luke 13:11-13 and 16

Then one was brought to Him [Jesus] who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. [23] And all the multitudes were amazed and said, “Could this be the Son of David?” [24] Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, “This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.” [25] But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: “**Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. [26] If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?**”

Matthew 12:22-26, brackets mine

Jesus identified Satan as a king as well. Keep reading. He said—

“**And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. [28] But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.**”

Matthew 12:27-28

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. [24] Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick

people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.

Matthew 4:23-24

Why did Jesus spend the little time that He had doing these things? The obvious answer is because that is what mattered! One of the most important things I can tell you, or anyone, is that ultimately, there are only two kingdoms that matter in life.

After Jesus revealed that Satan is a king (Matt. 12:26), Luke's account adds that He said **"He who is not with Me is against Me"** (Luke 11:23), meaning that everyone, and I would even say everything, falls under the rule of one of two kingdoms: the Kingdom of God or the kingdom of Satan.

So, Jesus spent His time preaching and advancing His Kingdom by attacking the other kingdom and its king, Satan.

Now, it's clear from the scriptures we've read that the war between these two kings was beyond the limitations of mortal man. As mere humans, we couldn't hope to compete in this league. Therefore, whoever was the stronger of these two kings would be the ultimate ruler of the Earth! But the two kings are not even close to being equal. One is far greater than the other. From the scriptures we've read, there can be no doubt that it was Jesus, who showed repeatedly that He is stronger than the devil. He made that clear with this illustration after He healed the man who was demon possessed:

"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. [22] But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils."

Luke 11:21-22

Here are some similar passages, where the devil is referred to as the ruler of this world:

"Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out."

John 12:31

"I [Jesus] will not talk with you much more, for the prince (evil genius, ruler) of the world is coming. And he has no claim on Me. [He has nothing in common with Me; there is nothing in Me that belongs to him, and he has no power over Me.]"

John 14:30, Amplified Bible, brackets mine

"And when He [the Holy Spirit] has come, He will convict the world... [11] of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."

John 16:8a and 11, brackets mine

Jesus said these things after He had already encountered and defeated the devil on numerous occasions. What need was there for a future encounter? The answer is that healing the sick and casting out demons only dealt with *symptoms* of the devil's real power. His *real* power was death because of sin. Therefore, the only way Jesus could defeat the devil decisively was for Him to conquer death and pay for man's sins! Read on:

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He [Jesus] Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, [15] and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage... [17] Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Hebrews 2:14-15 and 17, brackets mine

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He [Jesus] has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, [14] having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. [15] Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Colossians 2:13-15, brackets mine

Jesus' utter victory over the devil was through His death, burial, and resurrection. He alone is King of all! He is the King of kings!

What does it say about a person who can overcome death in and of their own power? It means they can overcome anything, for what could be greater than defeating death? Nothing! There is no feat anyone can name that would be greater than this. But for whom did Jesus do this? Well, first and foremost, He did it for God. Read what He said:

"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him [the Father] who sent Me."

John 6:38, brackets mine

"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. [4] I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do."

John 17:3-4

Second, based on the scriptures we've read, what Jesus did was for everyone. Look what He said:

“Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Matthew 20:28

“I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.”

Luke 4:43

Here is a great example where Jesus healed all who were following Him:

And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all.

Matthew 12:15b

Jesus preached to people! He healed people! He conquered death for people! So, what did these things *mean* to the people of His day? What did He *expect* them to conclude about Him? These are important questions and will be examined in the next article.

Article 2: The Greatest of All Signs

In the previous article, I explained that it was Jesus' displays of power and authority that showed He was the stronger between Him and Satan. Then I ended by sharing that everything Jesus did for God was for people. It will be important, then, in this article to examine what this meant to the people of Jesus' day and the way many of them reacted. This will provide further insight into why Jesus did what He did.

As I shared in the previous article, Jesus talked like He was in authority, like He could tell people what to do, in other words (Matt. 7:28-29). He didn't pull any punches or act like He didn't have the right to speak into anybody's life. Oftentimes, He didn't even act like He needed to earn people's trust. He was the King. When He spoke, when He preached the Kingdom of God, it was a *decree*.

In the Old Testament, a king's decree was absolute. Even *he* couldn't change it once it was given:

"You yourselves write a decree concerning the Jews, as you please, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; for whatever is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring no one can revoke."

Esther 8:8

Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that it is the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

Daniel 6:15

These, of course, were earthly kings. They were shadows—imperfect representations—of the true King. Consider the power of these kings' decrees. Now consider the King of kings. *Much* weightier, *much* heavier. How unchangeable are the decrees of the Heavenly King?

Now, the people understood that if Jesus' message was really decrees from God, then He ought to display a miraculous sign to bear witness of, or verify, it. Jesus also understood this, saying—

"If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true."

John 5:31

However, when Jesus said **"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life"** (John 8:12) and the Pharisees told Him **"You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true"** (John 8:13), look at His reply:

"Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true."

John 8:14

What!? How could Jesus say that? It seems like a contradiction. But read on, as He explained:

“For I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. [15] You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. [16] And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me. [17] It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. [18] I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.”

John 8:14-18

So, Jesus said He could bear witness of Himself because the Father also bore witness of Him. How? Let's go back to John 5 again, where Jesus said—

“There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. [33] You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. [34] Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. [35] He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. [36] But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.”

John 5:32-36

The Father bore witness of Jesus through the miraculous works Jesus did. The Pharisees should have realized this.

Jesus didn't *want* people to believe Him if He didn't do His Father's works, as He said—

“If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; [38] but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.”

John 10:37-38

Jesus was saying He had displayed enough signs to verify His message.

Let's look at an example from early in Jesus' ministry. This was right after He had cast a demon out of a person:

Then they [the people in the synagogue] were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.”

Mark 1:27, brackets mine

Notice that these people immediately attributed the authority Jesus displayed to His doctrine. This should have been enough for them to conclude where His doctrine came from and who He was. But later, there were still some who asked Him, “‘Who are You?’ And Jesus said to them [the Jews], ‘**Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning**’” (John 8:25, brackets mine). At one point, after He rebuked a storm and raging sea, even His *disciples* weren’t sure who He was, saying—

“Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”

Matthew 8:27

Unbelievable.

One time, Jesus fed 5,000 people, not including women and children, with five loaves of bread and two fish. How’s *that* for a sign! Then “those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, ‘This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world’ [15] Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.” (John 6:14-15). These same people found Him the next day and said, “Rabbi, when did You come here?” (John 6:25). But Jesus knew what they were really seeking. He replied, “**Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled**” (John 6:26). I get a funny picture of these “sincere” people with fish stuck in their teeth and their hands on their bellies. Look what Jesus went on to say and what happened next:

“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.” [28] Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” [29] Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

John 6:27-29

But that wasn’t what they wanted to hear, so they asked—

“What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?”

John 6:30

Come on!

Did these people really need *another* sign in order to believe Him? And if He didn’t show them one, would they really dismiss Him as just a philosopher or teacher, no better than anyone else who had good ideas? These people should have known better. What happened to their faith from the day before? A sign like the one they saw

should have satisfied more than just their stomachs. But when Jesus told them He came from Heaven, they said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” (John 6:42). They were probably still spewing bread chunks when they said this, not realizing they had eaten the very proof they were looking for.

You see, when Jesus worked miracles, whether it was multiplying food or demonstrating authority over sickness and demons, that put His message in a whole other category. It was a sign that meant there are absolutes, that there is such a thing as truth. It meant that He, in fact, is the messenger of that truth—the Christ—sent from God! That is exactly what Jesus expected people to conclude. But He found that instead of believing in Him, they asked for more. They didn’t realize that they were acting just like the devil when he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread” (Matt. 4:3). The devil is called “the tempter” in this verse and Jesus didn’t give in to him, so when people acted like this, He didn’t give in to them either. He wasn’t pleased:

Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him. **[12a]** He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, “**Why does this generation seek a sign?**”

Mark 8:11-12a

Sometime before this, in Luke 11:16, the scribes and Pharisees tested Jesus by asking for a sign. Matthew’s account of this says that He answered by first telling them, “**An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah**” (Matt. 12:39). He wouldn’t jump through their hoops, but He *did* have a sign He would show them. Read His explanation:

“For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

Matthew 12:40

To be in the heart of the Earth meant to be dead and buried. But since Jesus said He would only be there three days and three nights, that meant He didn’t *stay* dead and buried. Therefore, Jesus said that the sign He would show them would be His victory over death! Jesus made it even clearer one time when He made a whip of cords and went through the temple driving out those who had made God’s house a house of merchandise. The Jews asked Him for a sign to verify it:

Jesus answered and said to them, “**Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**” **[20]** Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?” **[21]** But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

John 2:19-21

When Jesus talked about being lifted up, He was talking about being lifted up on the cross—His death. He was saying that when they killed Him, then they would know that He was the Christ. Read here:

Then Jesus said to them [the Jews], **“When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He [the Christ].”**

John 8:28a, brackets mine

Jesus said He would draw all people to Himself if He was lifted up:

“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” [33] This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

John 12:32-33

But the people were confused by this, answering—

“We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up?’”

John 12:34

Good question. How could Jesus draw people to Himself if He were dead? Obviously, He couldn't. He could only draw people to Himself if He died and then conquered death! That's what He was saying! But they didn't realize that.

So, defeating death was not only Jesus' utter victory over the devil, like I covered in the previous article, but it was also the greatest of all signs to verify Him!

This next passage reveals just how important the resurrection of Jesus is:

Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? **[13]** But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. **[14]** And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. **[15]** Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up — if in fact the dead do not rise. **[16]** For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. **[17]** And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! **[18]** Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. **[19]** If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. **[20]** But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:12-20

The resurrection of Jesus means everything for faith in Him! If He hadn't risen from the dead, His decrees would not be absolute. Indeed, they wouldn't be decrees at all!

Now, having established all this, why did Jesus stop wanting people to even know of His miraculous signs? Here are a few examples:

Then He touched their eyes, saying, **“According to your faith let it be to you.”** [30] And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, **“See that no one knows it.”**

Matthew 9:29-30

Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, **“Talitha, cumi,”** which is translated, **“Little girl, I say to you, arise.”** [42] Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement. [43a] But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it.

Mark 5:41-43a

Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. [26] Then He sent him away to his house, saying, **“Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town.”**

Mark 8:25-26

Why would Jesus say these things?

Even after He rose from the dead, He pretty much only appeared to people who already believed in Him:

And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, [5] and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. [6] After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. [7] After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. [8] Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

1 Corinthians 15:4-8

Jesus didn't appear to anyone outside of this. Why didn't He appear to any unbelievers? It seems unthinkable. Wasn't this the sign He said He would show them to prove He was the Christ? How would they know otherwise? I will examine this in the next article.

Article 3: The Undeniable Inner Witness

Before we move on to what will be examined in this article, let's briefly recap what was covered in the previous one. I shared that Jesus proved He was the Christ by the miraculous signs He displayed. He even said that if He didn't do the works of His Father, then people shouldn't believe Him (John 10:37-38). He knew that people believed because of the signs. So, why did He stop wanting people to know about them? For example, read the following passages:

And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." [3] Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "**I am willing; be cleansed.**" Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. [4a] And Jesus said to him, "**See that you tell no one.**"

Matthew 8:2-4a

And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "**Do you believe that I am able to do this?**" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." [29] Then He touched their eyes, saying, "**According to your faith let it be to you.**" [30] And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "**See that no one knows it.**"

Matthew 9:28-30

The next passage reveals that Jesus didn't even want people to know He was the Christ!

When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them. [41] And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" And He, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ.

Luke 4:40-41

Say what? You might ask, "Why would Jesus tell demons to be quiet about the truth?" But it wasn't just the demons. He also told His disciples the same thing:

Then he commanded the disciples that they should tell no one that he was the Christ.

Matthew 16:20, Lexham English Bible

Now, I should mention that Jesus had to hide Himself at times and take precautionary steps to ensure His safety and the fulfillment of His ministry. Let's look at some reasons:

1) People would mob Him.

Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, **“I am willing; be cleansed.”** [42] As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. [43] And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, [44] and said to him, **“See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”** [45] However, he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction.

Mark 1:41-45

But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea [8] and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. [9] So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. [10] For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him.

Mark 3:7-10

2) They tried to force Him to be king.

Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

John 6:15

3) They tried to kill Him before His time.

This first passage is from early in Jesus' ministry:

So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things [Jesus' sayings], were filled with wrath, [29] and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. [30] Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.

Luke 4:28-30, brackets mine

Even some of His relatives wanted Him to get in the open so He would be killed:

After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. [2] Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. [3] His brothers therefore said to Him, “Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. [4] For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.” [5] For even His brothers did not believe in Him. [6] Then Jesus said to them, **“My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready.”**

John 7:1-6

The final scripture for this third reason is similar to the one we read in Luke:

Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

John 8:59

These three reasons show why Jesus was covert but *not* why He stopped wanting people to know of His miraculous works or that He was the Christ! So, what was His reason? The next passage directly explains it, saying He would operate like this until a certain time:

Great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all. [16] Yet He warned them not to make Him known, [17] that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: [18] “Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He will declare justice to the Gentiles. [19] He will not quarrel nor cry out, Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. [20] A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench, Till He sends forth justice to victory; [21] And in His name Gentiles will trust.”

Matthew 12:15b-21

Jesus knew that His miraculous works would be clear signs that He was the Christ (John 5:36), as I shared in the previous article. But this is not what He preferred. He *preferred* that people believe in Him because of His *words*. *This* is the major reason He was so secretive about His identity and showing people signs! His words revealed that He was the Christ!

Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, “How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.” [25a] Jesus answered them, “**I told you, and you do not believe.**”

John 10:24-25a

When did Jesus tell them He was the Christ? There are no instances before this where He told them plainly. But He *had* told them in a way that was *sufficient*—through His teaching! The Scripture says—

And when He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, “Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works?”

Matthew 13:54

I touched on this in the first article when I referenced Matthew 7:28-29, but after hearing Jesus teach, they should have concluded that He was the Christ. Some eventually caught on, but many didn't. Maybe the ones who didn't wanted Jesus to

respond the way John the Baptist had, who said plainly, "I am not the Christ" (John 1:20). One of the only people Jesus told plainly He was the Christ was a Samaritan woman:

The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." [26] Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

John 4:25-26

Notice, she didn't even *ask* if He was the Christ; He just *told* her!

The only other time Jesus said plainly that He was the Christ was after He was arrested and the high priest, Caiaphas, told Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!" (Matt. 26:63). Jesus answered him, "It is as you said" (Matt. 26:64).

Now, Jesus was disappointed when people only believed when they saw signs. When He said "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe" (John 4:48), that wasn't a compliment! He expected His words to be enough.

After Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to some of His disciples who had gathered. One of His disciples, Thomas, wasn't there at the time. When the other disciples told him they had seen the Lord, he said he wouldn't believe unless he saw Him for himself. Let's pick up the story, on the day Jesus appeared to the disciples again:

And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" [27] Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." [28] And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" [29] Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

John 20:26-29

Interesting.

Thomas believed when he saw the Lord, just like he said he would. But that wasn't what Jesus *expected* or *preferred*, least of all from one of His apostles!

So, get this: Jesus expected Thomas to believe just because the other disciples had *told* him He was risen!

Jesus wanted the miraculous signs to only *bear witness* to what He had said. That's why, after Jesus had told the Jews He was the Christ and yet they didn't believe, He said, "**The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me**" (John 10:25). He didn't say the *signs* told them He was the Christ; He said *He* told them.

Now, you might think that people would believe if they saw someone risen from the dead. But it's not always so. Look what Jesus told the Pharisees that confirms this:

"Then he [the rich man] said, 'I beg you therefore, father [Abraham], that you would send him to my father's house, [28] for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' [29] Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' [30] And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' [31] But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"

Luke 16:27-31, brackets mine

"Moses and the prophets" refers to the Scriptures Moses and the prophets wrote; that is, the Word of God. The Greek word for **"hear"** in verses 29 and 31 was used in Matthew 11:15, when Jesus said, **"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"** He was talking to people who had physical ears and could hear Him. Otherwise, they wouldn't even have heard Him say that. This same Greek word was translated "understandeth" in 1 Corinthians 14:2 (*King James Version*). So, what Moses was talking about is a spiritual understanding, or perception. He was saying that the rich man's brothers needed to *perceive* the Word in order to believe—they shouldn't *need* a sign!

So, the question is, what's so special about Jesus' words that they were enough for people to believe? The answer: Jesus' words carried the conviction of the Holy Spirit! They weren't like any other person's. Jesus said—

"The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."

John 6:63

When the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest Jesus and they didn't, the chief priests and Pharisees were upset. Look at the officers' explanation, in reference to Him:

"No man ever spoke like this Man!"

John 7:46

These officers were convicted in their hearts when they heard Jesus speak. That's why the Pharisees asked them, "Are you also deceived?" (John 7:47). But it was clear to the officers that Jesus was speaking the truth and they should not arrest Him.

Jesus wanted people to perceive Him through His words:

Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He [Jesus] had answered them [the Sadducees] well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?” [29] Jesus answered him, “**The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. [30] And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. [31] And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.**” [32] So the scribe said to Him, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. [33] And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” [34] Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, “**You are not far from the kingdom of God.**” But after that no one dared question Him.

Mark 12:28-34, brackets mine

The Greek word for “perceiving” in verse 28 is most commonly used for spiritual understanding in the New Testament. It’s an understanding that comes from God. So, this man *knew* that Jesus was telling the truth, and acknowledged it, yet he wasn’t *far* from the Kingdom. Why didn’t he dare to ask how he could get *in*?

John the Baptist said God sent him to preach “a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Mark 1:4), but when people wondered if he was the Christ, he said—

“I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

Luke 3:16

When John met Jesus, who came to him to be baptized, something remarkable happened:

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. [14] And John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?”

Matthew 3:13-14

Why would John say this? The Scripture says that “all the people were baptized” (Luke 3:21) by him, so why did he try to make an exception with Jesus? It’s because when John met Jesus, he perceived that He was the Christ! The next day, John said God told him that he would see a sign that revealed the Christ:

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! [30] This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' [31] I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' [34] And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

John 1:29-34

But John knew that Jesus was the Christ *before* he saw this sign, and *before* Jesus said or did anything! It was clear to him before any of that! God went *beyond* what John expected! Glory to God! When John *did* see the sign of the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus, it only *verified* what he already perceived!

Now let's look at the reaction of those who would become Jesus' disciples when they first met Him:

And looking at Jesus as He walked, he [John the Baptist] said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" [37] The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

John 1:36-37, brackets mine

Notice that these two followed Him when they *heard* He was the Christ. A few verses later, it says—

One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. [41] He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ)... [43] The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "**Follow Me.**" [44] Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. [45] Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

John 1:40-41 and 43-45

Why was Philip so quick to draw such a strong conclusion about Jesus? He hadn't seen a *sign*. He didn't even act like he *needed* one. Let's keep reading:

And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." [47] Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "**Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!**" [48] Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "**Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.**" [49] Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

John 1:46-49

First, look at all the different titles to describe Jesus: Lamb of God (John 1:36); Messiah, Christ (John 1:41); and Son of God, King of Israel (John 1:49). All of these titles, though they may have different connotations, are synonymous and can be used interchangeably.

Now, in the passage of Scripture we just read, Nathanael didn't come seeking a sign; he was seeking the Christ. And when He came to Jesus, *then* he received a sign. And it wasn't necessarily an unexplainable sign, as Jesus pointed out—

“Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.”

John 1:50

Jesus told him he would see greater things, or you could say greater signs, but it was *after* he believed.

Notice that Nathanael, just like Philip, sounded like he *knew* that Jesus was the Christ. Just a little while later, that's exactly what many people of the city of Samaria said after they heard Him:

“Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

John 4:42

How awesome!

Now let's look at the response Jesus got from Peter when He asked His disciples who He was:

Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” [17] Jesus answered and said to him, **“Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”**

Matthew 16:16-17

Jesus didn't attribute what Peter knew to a miraculous sign. It was the Father who revealed to Peter, in his heart, that *this* Man was the Christ. It wasn't unfair of Jesus to expect others to have this same revelation. His words, some of which He repeated, and all the signs He performed were more than enough for anyone to believe! Otherwise, He wouldn't have been disappointed when He told people they would **“by no means believe”** (John 4:48) if they didn't see signs.

Let's look at one final example, from after Jesus rose from the dead:

So it was, while they [two disciples] conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. [16] But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. [17] And He said to them, “What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?” [18] Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, “Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?” [19] And He said to them, “What things?” So they said to Him, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, [20] and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. [21] But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. [22] Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. [23] When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. [24] And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.” [25] Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! [26] Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” [27] And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Luke 24:15-27, brackets mine

Shortly after this, Jesus miraculously vanished from their sight. Look at what they said to each other after this:

“Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?”

Luke 24:32

When these disciples had been talking to Jesus, there was a burning conviction in their hearts that He had *indeed* risen from the dead, even though, as far as they knew, they hadn't seen Him! Their physical proof was talking to them the whole time, but the only proof they thought they had, the only proof they *needed*, was in their hearts.

So, there's a surer way to know who Jesus is than even seeing the signs He did! To the person who says “I wasn't there when Jesus supposedly did all these things. There's no way I can ever know He was the Christ,” I would say, “*You know* Jesus is who He said He was by a conviction, an undeniable inner witness, that testifies that He is the Christ!” Jesus said His wisdom cannot be resisted:

“Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; [15] for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.”

Luke 21:14-15

So, Jesus' message was no ordinary one. It wasn't a set of proud boasts or an argument to engage and stimulate only the mind. No, there was something in His preaching that resonated with people in such a way that it rang true in their hearts. But it didn't resonate with everyone. Why would that be? It should've been clear to people that Jesus was the Christ. But instead, some people thought He was out of His mind:

But when His own people heard about this [what He was doing], they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

Mark 3:21, brackets mine

Others thought He had a demon:

Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these [Jesus'] sayings. [20] And many of them said, "He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?"

John 10:19-20, brackets mine

Jesus told people that if they wouldn't believe Him for His words, then they should believe for the miraculous signs He did. It wasn't what He preferred, but at least they would believe in Him. In John 10:38, He said—

"Though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."

He told Philip something similar here:

"Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves."

John 14:11

Some, even in the face of notable miracles, went as far as hating Him and His Father:

"If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father."

John 15:24

Then there were those who took it a step further and plotted to kill Him:

And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. [2] So they [the scribes and Pharisees] watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. [3] And He said to the man who had the withered hand, **"Step forward."** [4] Then He said to them, **"Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?"** But they kept silent. [5] And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, **"Stretch out your hand."** And he stretched it out, and his

hand was restored as whole as the other. [6] Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

Mark 3:1-6, brackets mine

Crazy!

These people were the ones out of their minds. Why couldn't they tell that Jesus was the Christ like others could tell? This will be examined in the next article.

Article 4: All Part of God's Plan

Jesus had a very important reason for His method of not wanting people to perceive Him primarily by miracles. He wanted them to perceive Him by His message and the conviction of the Holy Spirit upon His message. So, why didn't people perceive Jesus despite His words *and* His miracles? That was certainly enough for others to believe in Him! There are several reasons:

1) Jesus said the Father had not given them to Him.

"But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. [37] All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out."
John 6:36-37

2) Jesus said they couldn't come to Him because the Father had not drawn them.

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day."
John 6:44

3) Jesus said they were not His sheep.

"But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. [27] My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."
John 10:26-27

4) Jesus said they were not of the Kingdom of God.

"Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me [Pilate]. What have You done?" [36] Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

John 18:35b-36, brackets mine

5) Jesus said they were not of the truth.

"For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

John 18:37b

The Greek word for *"hears"* here is the same one used in Luke 16:29 and 31, which we looked at in the previous article, and it has the connotation of spiritual understanding or perception. So, Jesus said that those who are of the truth perceive His voice, or His words, that He speaks the truth.

Now, of those who didn't believe in Jesus, there are two groups:

1) Those with conditional faith.

There are more than a few examples on this that I want to look at.

And they [a great multitude] were all amazed at the majesty of God. But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, [44] **“Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men.”**

Luke 9:43-44, brackets mine

The Greek word for “marveled” in verse 43 can mean “by implication, to admire” (Strong’s Concordance).

Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. [24] But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, [25] and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

John 2:23-25

Where it says Jesus did not “commit Himself to them,” it means He didn't entrust Himself to them. He held back. Why? Jesus knew that their “faith” was a fickle, feeble type of faith.

From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

John 6:66

In John 8:30, it says that many believed in Jesus when He spoke, but just a few moments later, He was telling the same people—

“I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. [38] I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.”

John 8:37-38

Look at what Jesus said after they didn't understand Him:

“Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. [44] You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. [45] But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. [46]

Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? [47] He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

John 8:43-47

Their father was the devil and his desires they wanted to do. This is why they kept asking Jesus for a sign to prove He was the Christ. Their father had done the exact same thing, which I pointed out in the second article.

Finally, read what Jesus said in Matthew 7:21-23:

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. [22] Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' [23] And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Jesus didn't know those who call Him Lord but practice lawlessness. He only knows those who are His sheep, because they follow Him, as we read in John 10:27.

2) Those who flat-out rejected Him.

He [Jesus] was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. [11] He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. [12] But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.

John 1:10-12, brackets mine

This next verse is taken from a parable Jesus told. It captures the same idea that there were those who rejected Him:

"But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'"

Luke 19:14

Moving on, here's a passage where Jesus expected people to be able to perceive. He told the multitudes—

"Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming'; and so it is. [55] And when you see the south wind blow, you say, 'There will be hot weather'; and there is. [56] Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time? [57] Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right?"

Luke 12:54-57

In verse 56, Jesus asked them why they *couldn't* discern the time they were in. In John 8:43, He told the Jews they were not "**able**" to listen to His word. I'll come back to this.

Now, Jesus was *sorrowful* that people didn't perceive. Read it here:

Now as He drew near, He saw the city [Jerusalem] and wept over it, [42] saying, "**If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. [43] For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, [44] and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.**"

Luke 19:41-44, brackets mine

The next passage explains why people couldn't perceive and believe:

But although He [Jesus] had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, [38] that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" [39] Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: [40] "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them."

John 12:37-40, brackets mine

Who's blinded them? God, "just as it is written: 'God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day'" (Rom. 11:8).

Why would God do this? The bottom line: These people were evil. And this was their *chosen* predisposition, "for Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him" (John 6:64b). Their predisposition was set from the very beginning of Jesus' ministry!

Jesus was never unclear that there were some people who were good and some who were evil:

"Brood of vipers [the Pharisees]! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. [35] A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things."

Matthew 12:34-35, brackets mine

He [Jesus] answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. [38] The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. [39] The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.”

Matthew 13:37-39, brackets mine

Further in, I'll explain more what Jesus said about those who are good.

So, how did Jesus respond to the two groups that didn't believe in Him; that is, that were evil? Well, as I shared in the last article, He stopped showing them miraculous signs and told people not to make Him known.

But with those who believed in Him only under certain conditions, Jesus no longer used plain speech but spoke to them in parables. His disciples noticed this, being prompted to ask Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” (Matt. 13:10). Jesus answered them—

“To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables.”

Mark 4:11

By “those who are outside,” Jesus meant those who don't perceive Him. Matthew's account of this gives the most detail:

“For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. [13] Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. [14] And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: ‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; [15] For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.’ [16] But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; [17] for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”

Matthew 13:12-17

According to this, Jesus didn't even want to *help* them understand! Look at what He prayed to God about this:

“I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have concealed these things [relating to salvation] from the wise and understanding and learned, and revealed them to babes (the childish, unskilled, and untaught). Yes, Father, for such was Your gracious will and choice and good pleasure.”

Luke 10:21, *Amplified Bible*, brackets mine

The next passage says that Jesus just told these people parables as much as they were able to listen:

And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it.

Mark 4:33

Wait—what? Why!?

Well, first, notice it says Jesus “spoke the word to them”; that is, He was speaking the truth:

All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, [35] that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: “I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.”

Matthew 13:34-35

Jesus “taught them [a great multitude] many things by parables” (Mark 4:2, brackets mine), and He wasn’t wrong to do so. He wasn’t misleading them or speaking half-truths. He even spoke to His disciples in parables sometimes:

Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples... [39a] And He spoke a parable to them.

Luke 6:20a and 39a

Now let’s look at how Jesus responded to those who flat-out rejected Him:

1) He warned them.

And He said to them [the Pharisees], “You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. [24] Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”

John 8:23-24, brackets mine

2) He rebuked them.

Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent.

Matthew 11:20

3) He said things concerning Himself that disarmed and confounded them:

Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk... [41b] Jesus asked them, [42] saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." [43] He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: [44] 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"'? [45] If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" [46] And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

Matthew 22:15 and 41b-46

One time, after Jesus gave a warning to some people to repent, He told them a parable. Here's the first part of it:

He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. [7] Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?'"

Luke 13:6-7

Why would Jesus tell them this? Because He was a farmer, sent to reap those who were ripe for picking:

Jesus said to them [His disciples], "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. [35] Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! [36] And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. [37] For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' [38] I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."

John 4:34-38, brackets mine

The next passage is another instance of Jesus talking about the harvest of people:

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. [36] But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. [37] Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. [38] Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

Matthew 9:35-38

Of course, Jesus preached the Gospel to *all*, not just to those who could perceive Him. But He didn't come to *change* people's hearts as much as *reveal* them! That's a big deal! The next couple of passages speak to this:

"Behold, this Child [Jesus] is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against [35b] that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Luke 2:34 and 35b, brackets mine

People should have received Jesus when He came on the scene, but when they didn't, He pronounced woes:

Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: [21] "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. [22] But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. [23] And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. [24] But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

Matthew 11:20-24

Strong!

Jesus told chief priests and elders the consequences of not receiving Him:

"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it."

Matthew 21:43

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave further details about what He was after:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [4] Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. [5] Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. [6] Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. [7] Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. [8] Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. [9] Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. [10] Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:3-10

This is what makes up a good person, harkening back to earlier in this article. Note that it doesn't say it's a perfect person. But these were people "of whom the world was not

worthy” (Heb. 11:38). These were the kind of people Jesus could harvest. Here is more of what He had to say about them:

“I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.”

John 17:14

John the Baptist, whose ministry preceded Jesus’, had come “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17); that is, make a people ripe for the picking:

Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”

Acts 19:4

But those who didn’t receive John’s baptism weren’t ready for Jesus when He came:

And when all the people heard Him [Jesus], even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. [30] But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.

Luke 7:29-30, brackets mine

Understand, Jesus was a farmer and this was *harvest* time. He expected people to be able to discern this and be ready for Him when He started His ministry. Of course, He did plant during His ministry, but He never said it was necessarily the *time* to plant, or even to garden.

Jesus only reaped who was already ready, but He would have liked to reap *everyone*. He wanted to gather them to Himself, but they were not willing. He said—

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!”

Luke 13:34

Many from Jerusalem had believed, like we read in John 2:23, but Jesus knew that their faith was conditional. They would ultimately reject Him.

When asked by the elders, priests, and scribes if He was the Christ, Jesus said—

“If I tell you, you will by no means believe.”

Luke 22:67

It wouldn't have *mattered* if He told them He was the Christ! Why? What He said next is very revealing:

“And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go.”

Luke 22:68

How did Jesus know they wouldn't let Him go? Because He knew God's plan, that God would cause these people to put Him to death! That is a strong statement, with big implications. But there are more than a few verses that speak to this. Check it out:

Jesus said to them [chief priests and elders], **“Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes’?”**

Matthew 21:42, brackets mine

Notice it says this was the *Lord's* doing. Whoop!

When Jesus mentioned **“the chief cornerstone,”** He was referring to Himself. The Apostle Peter later confirmed this:

“This [Jesus Christ of Nazareth] is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders [rulers of the people and elders of Israel], which has become the chief cornerstone.’”

Acts 4:11, brackets mine

Now, shortly after this, Peter prayed—

“‘The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ.’ [27] For truly against Your [God's] holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together [28] to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.”

Acts 4:26-28, brackets mine

He said God's hand and purpose determined what Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel did to Jesus.

Here's another verse on this:

“Then He [Jesus] said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day.”

Luke 24:46, brackets mine

“It is written” here means God said it and purposed it.

Here are two other passages of what Peter said to people of Israel:

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know – [23] Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death.”

Acts 2:22-23

“Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. [18] But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.”

Acts 3:17-18

God only caused these people to do what was according to the predisposition of their hearts, as I mentioned, even though they didn't know the full scope of what they were doing. Read a couple of passages of what the Scripture has to say about this:

And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. [34a] Then Jesus said, “**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.**”

Luke 23:33-34a

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, [8] which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory [Jesus].

1 Corinthians 2:7-8, brackets mine

The chief priests and all the council thought they were fulfilling God's Law in putting Jesus to death because they believed He was blaspheming when He said He was the Christ:

Again the high priest [Caiaphas] asked Him, saying to Him [Jesus], “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” [62] Jesus said, “**I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.**” [63] Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “What further need do we have of witnesses? [64] You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?” And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

Mark 14:61b-64, brackets mine

The Jews answered him [Pilate], “We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.”

John 19:7, brackets mine

The Jews were correct in their interpretation of the Law—Leviticus 24:16 says that anyone who blasphemes should be put to death—but Jesus had already refuted their accusation of Him, at another time when He told them He was the Son of God:

“Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, “You are gods”’? [35] If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), [36] do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? [37] If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; [38] but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.”

John 10:34-38

As we looked at in the previous article, these people should have *known*, if not by Jesus’ words, by His works that He was the Christ. This nonsense about Him blaspheming because He said God was His Father was hypocritical because they had said the exact same thing (John 8:41). The truth is, they only wanted to kill Him, when Pilate “was determined to let Him go” (Acts 3:13), “because they were jealous of Him” (Mark 15:10, *The Last Days Bible*) and because they couldn’t grasp or accept that He was actually speaking the truth. And why? It’s because “they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Thess. 2:10). As I mentioned earlier, they were evil, for they should have *known* that they weren’t fulfilling God’s Law in condemning Jesus. They should have *known* that His words *weren’t* to be treated as common. These weren’t the words of just any man; they were *decrees*—from God. That meant they had to *humble* themselves and *change*, or else. Jesus said—

“Unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”

Luke 13:3

But, no, this was unacceptable to the Jews. They were unwilling to consider—and concede—that Jesus was who He said He was, and they “killed the Prince of life” (Acts 3:15). Nevertheless, in doing so, it was all part of God’s plan.

Now, Jesus could’ve gotten out of God’s plan or defended Himself, but He didn’t want to. He said—

“Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? [54] How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?”

Matthew 26:53-54

And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing.

Matthew 27:12

Jesus could have judged the people who didn't believe in Him, but He said that wasn't what the Father wanted Him to do:

“And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. [48] He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him – the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. [49] For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.”

John 12:47-49

“I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He [the Father] who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him.”

John 8:26, brackets mine

Jesus didn't want to thwart God's plan, so He humbled Himself to the death of the cross:

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Philippians 2:8

While Jesus preferred that everyone understand Him, He knew that was an impossibility. It wasn't that they didn't understand the words He was saying; it was that they didn't understand enough to conclude the right thing about Him. For example, one time, after Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees a parable, “His disciples came and said to Him, ‘Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?’” (Matt. 15:12). Therefore, Jesus answered, *“Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. [14] Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch”* (Matt. 15:13-14).

Here is another example:

Then they [Jesus and His disciples] came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him. [28] And they said to Him, “By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?” [29] But Jesus answered and said to them, *“I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things: [30] The baptism of John – was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me.” [31]* And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ [32] But if we say, ‘From men’” – they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed. [33] So they answered and said to Jesus, “We do not know.” And Jesus answered and said to them, *“Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.” [12:1a]* Then He began to speak to them in parables.

Mark 11:27-12:1a, brackets mine

At another time, “when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them” (Matt. 21:45). In this instance, they understood enough to know He was speaking of them. That’s why the next verse says, “But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet” (Matt. 21:46). They wanted to *kill* Jesus for what He said, as I mentioned in the previous article, and they eventually succeeded. But they couldn’t take His life; He said He would lay it down willingly:

“Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. [18] No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”

John 10:17-18

Now, the Scripture says “it was the LORD’s will to crush him [the Christ]” (Is. 53:10, *New International Version*, brackets mine), meaning God’s plan was Jesus’ death on the cross, as we’ve read. But God’s plan didn’t end with Jesus’ death or His resurrection. After Jesus rose from the dead, He told His disciples—

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Acts 1:8

The disciples would be witnesses of Jesus in the very city where He had been arrested and crucified!? The Jews couldn’t perceive Jesus during *His* life and ministry; why wouldn’t the disciples get the same results during theirs? Wouldn’t the Jews immediately try to kill them as well?

Let’s look at what happened the day the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in tongues, which caused a group of Jews from every nation to marvel because the disciples were speaking in their languages. Peter stood up and explained it was a sign from God. Then he began to tell them plainly about Jesus, which we read earlier, and concluded his message by saying, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). Look at the Jews’ reaction to this bold statement:

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

Acts 2:37

They were immediately cut to the heart! In other words, they perceived what Peter said as the truth and wanted to know what they should do! How is that possible!? Read on, as Peter told them—

“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. [39] For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

Acts 2:38-39

After this, the Scripture says—

Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

Acts 2:41

Three thousand! The veil that had blinded them had been taken away:

But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. [15] But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. [16] Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

2 Corinthians 3:14-16

So, those who formerly walked “according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2), “were by nature children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3), and who walked “in the futility of their mind, [18] having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph. 4:17-18) could now be “brought near by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13) and “renewed in the spirit” of their minds (Eph. 4:23). God never intended to reject the Jews entirely! The Apostle Paul wrote—

I say then, has God cast away His people [Israel]? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

Romans 11:1, brackets mine

God only caused the ones who didn't perceive and believe in His Son to carry out His plan. Then He would fling the door wide open! But this time, both Jews *and* Gentiles were invited, “for God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all. [33] Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:32-33). Wow! What wisdom indeed! God is a wise God! The Bible says—

He [the Most High] does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?"

Daniel 4:35, brackets mine

Whatever the LORD pleases He does, In heaven and in earth, In the seas and in all deep places.

Psalm 135:6

That just says it all!

Now, on the day Peter preached and 3,000 people believed, it wasn't so that everyone from then on believed. That's why, after Paul told both Jews and Gentiles "And by Him [Jesus] everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39, brackets mine), he warned them:

"Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you: [41] 'Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you.'"

Acts 13:40-41

And read what happened at the end of the book of Acts:

So when they [Jewish leaders] had appointed him [Paul] a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. [24] And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. [25] So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: "The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, [26] saying, 'Go to this people and say: "Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not perceive; [27] For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'"

Acts 28:23-27, brackets mine

It's not automatic that people will choose to believe or, if they do, that they always will:

These people [enemies of Christ] really did not belong to our fellowship, and that is why they left us; if they had belonged to our fellowship, they would have stayed with us. But they left so that it might be clear that none of them really belonged to us.

1 John 2:19, *Good News Translation*, brackets mine

But the Scripture says they will be presented holy, blameless, and above reproach in His sight “if [they] continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel” (Col. 1:23, brackets mine). And they will have eternal life if they “continue to believe in the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:13). Jesus told His disciples “**You are those who have continued with Me in My trials**” (Luke 22:28), so if people do the same, He will say to them as well, “**I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me**” (Luke 22:29). On the other hand, like we’ve seen, it’s not automatic that people who’ve chosen not to believe never will, for “if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in” (Rom. 11:23). But, as we’ve read, those who choose not to believe are blinded:

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, **[4]** whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

Notice the lowercase “g” on “god” at the beginning of verse 4. It appears that way because the translators believed Paul, the writer, was talking about Satan. But Satan is not the god of this age, only the god of the *darkness* of this age. See here:

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **[12]** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:11-12

Every other scripture that talks about people who don’t believe being blind, it’s always saying God blinded them. People with these kinds of hearts don’t perceive the plain truth, even if they were to see miraculous signs.

Conclusion

I believe that what has been established in this volume is overlooked by many in Christianity, who have been trained to focus only on what Jesus said and did. But, like I shared in the first article, if you don't understand why Jesus said what He said and why He did what He did, then you don't understand what He said and did. So, my hope is that if you understand what I've brought forth, then you will receive these things and not be ashamed of Him and the things that are plainly written in the Scriptures. Jesus said—

“For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

Mark 8:38

Powerful stuff!

So, “take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (1 Tim. 4:16). This verse rocks my world! I always strive to do this in my life. My desire is that the things in this volume will, in some way, save you as it has me.

Looking toward the next volume, what did Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection accomplish for man? And what is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God? It is no mere message, to be sure. I will examine these things in the next volume, along with how Jesus revealed people's hearts, what His disciples were like, and how man could be free.

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