Born to be the First to Become God, Pt. 2

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In only three days we'll be observing Passover. It's amazing how fast sometimes it seems like it just creeps up on you, and here it is. Everyone, hopefully, knows what to do. It's all on the internet, on the Church site.

Anyway, we're in the process of going through different sermon series right now, actually, that focus on those things that are revealed in God's plan concerning His Son. And the primary reason for doing this is there have been a couple of times in the past where I've gone through some series on His life leading up to Him coming into Jerusalem, Passover, and so forth, and resurrection, but there is a lot more that we've learned since that time, and I wanted something up to date that goes through it more thoroughly.

So, that's why we're going through these, breaking it up into different series as well, until we get through the entirety of the story, so that it goes along with the book. As the book goes out and people come to see some of those things on there, it'll be a good place for them to begin listening if anyone desires to begin listening to some of those kinds of sermons. Because these are generally pretty easy to follow, easier than some things, especially if someone is just beginning.

Anyway, we're going to pick up in Mark 1 today where we left off last Sabbath. After these events concerning Zacharias and Elizabeth, then Mary, we looked at that particular story flow. God begins to reveal more during the period of John the Baptist's preaching along the regions of the Jordan River.

And so, we're going to begin here now in **Mark 1:1—The beginning of the good news of Joshua the Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophets: Behold, I send My messenger before Your face who will prepare Your way before Me**. So, it's about God's way, it's about God's way of life and preparing His way of life and what He's going to begin revealing through John the Baptist about the coming of the Messiah and the need for repentance. And so, this is what he's preaching and he's baptizing in the Jordan River thousands of people, as it turned out.

And then it goes on. This is a prophecy, then, it's quoting here, **The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord**. Or **of the Eternal**, if you will, if you look at the Old Testament scripture, **make His paths straight**. So, it's a matter of revealing truth, giving more truth, things that were about the Messiah that He would come along and teach as well. And it's about making God's way straight in individuals' lives, that this world has always been fouled up in those things, not understanding God, not understanding God's plan and purpose.

And so, here is a process of a beginning of some of that during this particular time period when God's will was to begin giving more understanding. So much was going to be revealed through Joshua as He began teaching and preaching, and a matter of making God's ways straight. Because it's been crooked in

the world. It was crooked in the ways of Judaism. By the time of Christ, Judaism had totally lost sight of so many things.

Several hundred years after the captivity – they went to Babylon, then Persia conquered them – and in that seventy years before they went back to build on the temple, things became so fouled up because they didn't have the Levitical system working then. They began to lose sight of various things. They began to write their own things that eventually led into the Talmud, and so forth, of how to keep the Sabbath, what to do, what not to do. Because they never had this before.

Here they were away from the temple and temple service, and so they started this process. And it carried on for several hundred years and just got bigger and bigger, greater and greater, and in that process, they got farther and farther away from the truth, as some of the book has talked about. So, a horrible process of what they went through

And so, this is a part of God restoring truth then at the time of John the Baptist, then leading on into Joshua the Christ.

So, I'm going to read that in Malachi 3:1 because that's what it's quoting from: **Malachi 3:1—Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. The Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come** (speaking of the Messiah) **to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming, says the Eternal of hosts. But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears?** So, this is going through a process that covers prophecy that starts with Christ all the way up to the end, the end of the Great White Throne.

It says, "Who can stand when He appears?" And for individuals, He doesn't appear. It's in the mind. Until people begin to see and understand what is true, there are things they can't deal with in life. But then, when it is given to them, like it will be during the Millennium more and more, those whom God has called over a period of 6,000 years, then the Millennium, then the Great White Throne when there is a massive resurrection to people to a second life.

What an incredible thing, a second physical life. Something the world doesn't grasp nor comprehend, and yet it's very clear in Revelation. But they won't touch it because it talks about a second death, and they don't understand how you can die twice. Well, you have to live twice.

And so, then it says, "Who is going to be able to endure?" This isn't an easy thing. Who is going to come through all of this? Because it's a matter of deep conviction, it's a matter of making God's way straight in one's own life using the truth that God has given to them. So, anyway, that's a part of what this is talking about.

He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the children of Levi. That's spiritual. It's not about a physical tribe anymore because the Levitical system stopped a long time ago. And it's not about

it being restarted or anything like that, it's about who makes this up as far as a Levitical priesthood, as far as God's is concerned. That's why He refers to the Church as a royal priesthood.

And so, He says, **they're going to be purged as gold and silver**. That means what? It's going to be heated up. People have to go through trials and hardship in order for dross to come to the surface. It's only through fire and having to address some of the most difficult things in life and then going through trials of different kinds that we can begin to see ourselves and our nature begins to be exposed; we can begin to see our own thinking, our own minds, and our own motivations through the help of God's spirit. And then what's unclean, that which is dross, comes to the surface, like in silver and gold when it's heated up. Then it can be taken away. But we have to be able to see it first.

So, now going on in **Mark 1:4—John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins**. That's all he could do. It wasn't a matter of being forgiven of sin. That hadn't happened yet. It wasn't a matter of receiving God's spirit yet. That hadn't happened yet until Pentecost 31 AD. And so, it was strictly a message about the Messiah's coming, there's a need to be forgiven of sin, and to turn to God.

Then all… It means "within all." It doesn't mean everyone in Judea came, but **within all the land of Judea**, in essence, **and those in Jerusalem**, those who went out, in essence, **went out to him and were all**, those who went out, in other words, for that purpose, **baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins**, acknowledging them to God. So, that's what his message was about: repentance of sin, live God's way of life, turn from your own ways.

Now, John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. Also, he preached, saying, There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loosen. So again, talking about the Messiah.

I indeed baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the holy spirit. So, an awesome thing to understand what the word baptize means. It means "to immerse," thoroughly immerse. So, John the Baptist was thoroughly immersing people under water, coming up, and as the New Testament shows, for those in the Church who come up out of that, it's to walk in newness of life. You're burying the old self. And so, we're blessed to be able to understand those things that God has given examples here to learn from, physical things that teach us spiritual things.

And then it talks of Christ baptizing people in the spirit. In other words, "immersing you in the spirit." That's what happens on the occasion when you are baptized: You come up out of the water, and hands are laid on you by the ministry, as the example is given, again, in the New Testament. And when that happens, people receive the impregnation of God's spirit. They're immersed into for the first time.

They're drawn by God's spirit before that, just as some of these were drawn to be able to understand some things about the need to be baptized. But to have it in you always? That's what happens after

baptism. You're impregnated with God's holy spirit, and then God and Christ can begin to dwell in one on a spiritual basis. Awesome, the things God has given us to see and to understand.

Then it goes on to say here in **verse 9—It came to pass in those days that Joshua came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Then immediately, coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens parting and the spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased**. Awesome.

So again here, He was being immersed, if you will, with God's spirit. He went through the process, setting an example of what we are to go through. We're to be baptized, we're to receive the impregnation of God's spirit as Christ did at that moment in time. Awesome.

Luke 3. Luke gets very specific, as we talked about last week. It says here in **Luke 3:1—Now, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea… and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, and while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests**, basically, **the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness**. So again, very specific here. **And he went into the region round about Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance and the remission of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying…**

And in **verse 5** it goes on – **Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill brought low**. Speaking of governments, because it's about the rule of mankind for the first 6,000 years, and this is a process that the world is going to have to go through at times, at different times.

The crooked places shall be made straight. And everything is crooked, like I said about Judaism, it was so messed up by the time of Christ. Horrible. The things that they had left, there wasn't much there to be taught, that they could teach that was true and right.

Then it goes on to say, **The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough ways smooth. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God**. It doesn't mean they'll all choose it, but all are going to see. That's God's plan. What an awesome thing! Everyone is going to see what God has brought together. In the Last Great Day, Joshua the Christ has been reigning for a thousand years already, 144,000 with Him, and people are going to be able to see them. Awesome.

And so, it says everyone is going to see God's salvation. They're going to see Joshua. They're going to be brought face-to-face with truth. During the Millennium, there will be no other religion taught. It won't be allowed. God's way is going to be taught. Only God's way. Awesome.

By the time the last hundred years are established, then at the end of the Millennium, that's all established in a very powerful way all over the world. And so, people are going to be resurrected into that, and they're going to be exposed to the truth immediately, and there will be nothing… Except for those who are resurrected who have believed false things all their lives, it's going to take a long time for

them, candidly, a lot of them, to conquer, if they choose to conquer and overcome it. So again, just because they see it doesn't mean they'll choose it, as we know the story, the end of the story is that there are going to be billions who don't.

Luke 3:12, dropping down a little bit. **Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, Teacher, what shall we do? Then he said, Collect no more than what is appointed for you. Likewise, the soldiers asked him, saying, So, what shall we do? And so he said, Do no violence to anyone falsely, and be content with your wages**. So again, we went through much of this here.

Let's jump on down now to **Matthew 1:18—Now the birth of Joshua the Christ was on this occasion: When His mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child of the holy spirit. Then Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make a public example of her, was of the mind to put her away privately**. In other words, to let her be removed from other people, to be able to be away privately, as it says here, to not bring embarrassment. Because something like this, they weren't married, and at that particular time especially would have been a horrible thing as far as a social matter was concerned. And how do you explain that? Well, anyway, you can't, so he was desiring to protect her, and so he put her away.

And while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. So again, it was hard for him. We can't imagine some of these things, what people, what they went through, what Mary was going through. She agreed to what the angel told her, that yes, so be it according to God, if I've been chosen, so be it, not understanding it fully. And then her husband-to-be, knowing that she's pregnant, not an easy thing to experience because nothing like this had ever happened. And who is going to believe that one, you know?

So, **the angel**, God sent an angel then to talk to him, **appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, you son of David, do not fear to take yourself Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived** (or begotten, as it is) **in her is of the holy spirit**. So, awesome. It's from God. It's not from human beings. It's not by the normal process of conception. This is from God Almighty. That's what the angel is telling her.

Now, she shall bring forth a Son and you shall call His name Joshua. It wasn't "Jesus." It wasn't a word that was changed later on. That's why I really get ticked off sometimes when you think about the translators and what they did very early on. In the book of Hebrews when it speaks of Joshua, and they knew it was Joshua of the Old Testament, then they translated it with a different word that reflects that name, Joshua. A different way of saying it, Jeshua, in Hebrew, and so forth. And so, the same thing as what was done in English. It's Joshua. But "Jesus'" name was the same word, so they gave a different name to Him. Amazing what's happened in history, through history, through time.

…for He will save His people. Because Joshua means, in essence, "the Eternal is salvation," or "the Eternal's salvation." When God gives names, has names at different times, they mean so much. Jerusalem, the word Israel, on and on it goes, different names that God gave to different prophets, and

so forth, they all have meaning and purpose in what God was giving. And so does the name of His Son. So again here, "the Eternal's salvation."

So, it goes on here **…from their sins**. Because that's what they were going to be saved from, in essence, here. **…for He will save His people from their sins**. As their Passover, obviously.

Verse 22—Now, all this was done so that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. So, this is prophetic, and what it means. Awesome.

That's why this sermon bears the title that it does, *Born to be the First to Become God*. He was the first who would become Elohim. There was no one else Elohim, as I've already gone through some of those scriptures in the Old Testament. He makes it very clear that He is the only one who is Yahweh. He is the only one who is God. He is the only one who is Elohim. Because we understand Elohim as a uni-plural word, and it's like the word "family." And so, He's making it very clear He was the only one in Elohim, and so Christ would be the first from among mankind to become Elohim, which is the God Family. It's not angelic. It's God. Not as Almighty God is God, not as the Father. No one will ever be as God the Father, but it is a God Family. Awesome! Call it what it is. That's why they hated Christ so much when He, in essence, was claiming that. "He claims to be God, the Son of God, born of God." That's what this is all about.

Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had appointed him and took unto him his wife, and did not know her (speaking of a relationship that can produce children), **till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Joshua**. He did what the angel told him.

Let's turn over to John 1. This, to me, is one of the most awesome chapters in scripture. John 1, John 14, incredible what was revealed, what God gave.

John 1:1—In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was unto God. It's not "**with God**." That's not the right translation at all. To put the word "with" there makes it sound like there are two. And that's why they put "with" there, because of the teaching of the trinity, because someone was "with God," because there were three in the godhead. So, "the Word was 'with God'" because the Word became Christ. Anyway, so many mistranslations like this.

It's saying here **…and the Word was unto God**. Meaning it's God's Word, it is God. It's unto God and no other. It's His Word. It's His mind. It's His being. That's an awesome thing. His Word reveals who He is. That's how we learn about God; it's His word, the word He's given to us even. His way of life, what He teaches, it's God. And if we love what we learn, the truth, we learn to love God because that's God. Awesome!

…and the Word was unto God, and the Word was God. It's who God is. It's His mind. I love the example or the teaching that Herbert Armstrong gave because he gave the definition of it, which is what it means, literally. It's about the revelatory thought, meaning the mind, the revelatory mind of God, that which is revealed. God's word has to be revealed. Whether it's spoken through an angel, whether it's spoken through a ministry, whether it's spoken by someone who knows the truth, it's God's word. It comes from God and it has a revelatory power in it because it comes from God, revealing things from God, God's way of life, God's truth, prophetic things, and so forth, or whatever.

The same was in the beginning unto God. It's always been there because it's God. That's why I love the Proverbs, because the word "wisdom" basically means exactly the same thing. The wisdom it speaks of there is God; it's the mind of God. When it speaks of wisdom, it's not about mankind's wisdom; it's about that which comes from God. It's the same as the Word. It's the wisdom, the mind, the revelatory thought and thinking of God.

The same was in the beginning unto God. All things were made by Him. By God Almighty. Everything, in essence. The power came from Him. He used the angelic realm in a powerful way, and He gave them power to accomplish things, but it all came from Him to do everything within creation.

All things were made by Him, and without Him there was not anything made that was made. I basically just said that. Nothing can be done when it comes to God's power without God. The source is God. It's a matter of spirit. It's a matter of His power. And so, even in creation that was true. For us, it's true in the sense of the truth. It comes from God. And without it, we don't have God.

The same was in the beginning unto God. **All things were made by Him, and without Him there was nothing made that was made**. **In Him was life**. God reveals that He is the only one who has life inherent within Him, eternal life at that.

I've been writing right now in Chapter 9, the last chapter of the book, just to bring it up to date. I'm pretty well rewriting the whole thing because children got a hold of it, and they explained some things to me that they were concerned about. Well, I didn't explain it well enough. Then right away, by talking to them, it helped me to see what needed to be addressed, how to address it, and so forth, in a better way. And so, I'm able to even add different things to it. And what's amazing is God is actually giving more right now, so to me I'm exceedingly excited about this chapter. Everything else has been information that God has given to us to this time. This is actually bringing out more. So, awesome! But you're going to have to wait a while because it's going to take me a while.

So again, **all things are made by Him, and without Him there was nothing made that was made. In Him was life...** God is the source of all life. There is no life without God. Everything that has life, it came from God. Awesome! **…and the life was the light of**, or if you will, **for mankind**. When we receive it especially, and our minds are opened up to see God, to grasp things about God, to see the truth, it's a difference

between dark and light. Because that which is dark can begin to be seen for what it is. The light exposes the things that are wrong in the dark.

Even the light shines in darkness, and the darkness doesn't comprehend it. So again, the world is in darkness, and it needs light. It's getting worse and worse out there.

Verse 6—There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. So, speaking of John the Baptist, sent from God. **This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light**. So, he began preaching about the Messiah is coming. He began preaching about the need to be forgiven of sin, the need to be baptized. And so, he began to bear witness of. That's what it's about, testimony, witness of, and so forth, and what he would see as well because he's going to be the one who baptizes Him as well and sees these things that took place.

…to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, speaking of John, **but was sent to bear witness of that Light**. So, here is the beginning of it. 4,000 years had passed, things written about the Messiah throughout scripture, things written about a Son of David that God would raise up to rule, to rule for eternity (forever, in other words), and a Kingdom of God. And so, he began to be a witness of all this. Now is the time He's going to come.

They didn't understand why He was coming. The Jews didn't grasp it; they didn't see it without God. Only those who were called and whose minds were opened up, who were baptized by John (because that's where most of it started). Many of them were baptized in the holy spirit on the day of Pentecost in 31 AD, as it says.

So, awesome story here. So, he was sent to bear witness of that Light, "It's His time to come; He's here." Awesome.

That was the true Light… As it says here, it goes on to say, "**which gives light to every man coming into the world**." It's not translated properly at all. But **He was the true Light coming into the world that gives light to everyone**. So, that's all it's saying here. He was the true light coming into the world, and it's through Him that light is given to everyone.

Verse 10—He was in the world, and the world was made through Him. So, again, it blows people's minds, especially when they believe in a trinity, because it's like, "See, He was there. He was with Him." No, it's not what it's saying at all. It's about God's purpose and God's plan, that everything that God is creating, that the whole purpose of all God's creation is about Elohim. It's about the God Family. Beautiful story.

That's why I love the way some of the things have come together in the book in the sense of making it even clearer, everything is established upon that cornerstone. Awesome! All the Holy Days. That means all the plan of God from beginning to end of the Last Great Day, it's all based upon Joshua the Christ. Incredible!

So again, **He was in the world, and the world was made through Him**. In other words, God's purpose and God's plan. Everything was established. I love those scriptures when it talks about, "He was predetermined before anything was ever created." It was established, a process. God didn't just start building things and creating things without a purpose. It was all about Elohim. It's about His Family. And Joshua had to be the focus of it all, otherwise, it couldn't come into existence. Awesome!

…and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, speaking of those in Judaism, the Jews. He came to them. They claimed to know God. They claimed to serve God. They had their different factions by that time, Sadducees, Pharisees, Zealots, and on and on it goes, different ones. And they were not in agreement; they argued over different things. They'd lost so much by this time.

And so, when He finally came, that which so many of them claimed to believe, that there would be a time that the Son of God would come, or referring to the Messiah would come, the descendant of David, that God would raise up someone from that lineage. Then, when He came, they refused. They refused that He could be the one.

So, it says, **the world didn't know Him. He came to His own, and His own didn't receive Him**. It really is a sick, hideous thing what they did at that time, those leaders. They have a great condemnation upon them. They are going to have a tough time in the Great White Throne because they are so set in their ways. Those minds were so set in their ways it's going to be very difficult for them to come to a point of humility, to humble themselves and to acknowledge and to finally admit when He's right there in front of them, that He is who He is. Because it didn't happen the way they wanted it to or believe it should be. It's amazing what pride will do sometimes.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the children of God. We have only understood this in a greater way in recent time. We understand that no one of mankind is ever referred to as the children of God except Joshua and those who are impregnated with God's spirit. They then become the begotten children of God. Awesome! Before that, human beings are just human beings. They're part of a physical creation. But unless or until they receive the impregnation of God's spirit, they cannot be classified as the children of God. Without God's begettal, they're not in that category. Awesome!

So, that's why it says, "and to them He gave power," the holy spirit, "to become the children of God." They're not yet. We're not yet. Those who are dead of whatever it is, of all who are dead through time in the past 6,000 years who are a part of this first great resurrection that's coming, who did receive this power and that mindset, who did become the begotten children of God, they're not the actual children until they're born. Being begotten doesn't make you a child.

So, that's why the analogy of pregnancy and being begotten as a human being, you're not a human being, candidly, until you're born into life. Then you have life of your own. And some people wouldn't

like that expression, but they'll read it in different ways in what was said. But the reality is the same. It's like a miscarriage. If a miscarriage takes place, there is no life.

That can happen in a spiritual realm as well. You can be begotten of God's holy spirit and be a miscarriage by one's own choice. Just because one is begotten of God, they're not yet born of God, they don't yet have spirit life in God's Family, they're not yet in Elohim. And that's the way with human beings. Unless someone is born into life, they're not a human being yet. Boy, I can hear some people getting really upset about the phraseology, and they would misconstrue and misread a lot of that. But that's just a reality. Life isn't there until there is individual life on its own.

And that's the way with us. We have God's spirit. We have the flow of God's spirit in our life. And like an umbilical cord, we can quench God's spirit and not receive the kind of help we need like a baby does in a womb to grow. And this has happened over and over and over again in the environment of God's Church in the last 2,000 years. Because it says only a few of those are actually chosen, have actually come through it.

And so it is in God's Family. We become the children of God literally once we're actually born. That's why so much in traditional Christianity, they don't grasp what it means to be begotten of God's spirit. They don't grasp that there is an actual birth that takes place and that's at a resurrection when a change is made from mortal to immortal or when someone is resurrected by God, that they're just to dust right now and they wait until a resurrection. Then, when God gives them that life, because they grew to a point that they needed to, then God can give them life in a spirit Family, His Family, the God Family, forever.

So again, **to them He gave power to become the children of God, to those who believe in His name**. And so, many say they believe in His name. Well, not Joshua, but they believe in His name. What does that mean, just to believe in His name? It's to know who He is. It's to know the truth, to believe in who He is. What is a name unless you believe who He is? Is He the Passover or not? Is He the Messiah or not? Because your sins can't be forgiven unless He's your Passover. And taking a chunk of bread every week or taking a little bit of wine every week is not Passover. Incredible!

We're getting ready to take Passover. It was kept once a year up to the time of Christ. He kept it with His disciples. They had the physical Passover that night, on Passover night, and then Christ gave the new symbolism for Passover. It was the last time that the requirement of the Old Testament, of eating a lamb on Passover night, would ever exist because He was about to fulfill it as the Passover of all mankind. Then He gave to the disciples how to keep it from then on, as Paul clearly shows in 1 Corinthians 5 and 10, and 11. And it's all there, that we are to take the Passover every year. Not every week, every year. Not communion, Passover once a year. Awesome!

The bread, the wine, and the washing of feet as Christ did His disciples, He said, "You are to do this when you keep it." And God commands us to keep it once a year on the 14th, on the night of the 14th of the

first month. Awesome! That's where the Jews got off track. They quit observing things at the right time. They lost sight of what Passover was all about. They had to reject certain things about it, or they might have to admit that He was the Passover.

So again here, "the power to become the children of God, to those who believe in His name." We believe in His name. He is the Christ. He is the Passover. Awesome! What does it mean if you don't believe those things?

Who were begotten, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Powerful! **Now, the Word became flesh**. I love these verses because they tell so much. It's a very inspiring and incredible story. The very being of God, the mind of God, in ways that are so far beyond what we receive in the Church, He grew up with that mind. I can't comprehend all that, but we're learning more and more as time goes on, and we learn it as a matter of growth in ourselves, in the sense of understanding the Word and what it means, that it is the revelatory thought of God. He was the revelatory thought of God walking on earth.

He dumbfounded, as we will read, when He was twelve years old, dumbfounded the people in the temple, the priests and so forth, because of what He said. They couldn't believe, they couldn't grasp, let alone understand, that someone like this, this young, is saying what He's saying. They were in awe because of what was in His mind.

That's why when He died, what He knew God said, what God had already written through scripture, what God's will was concerning Him; it was so real to Him, the pain, the suffering of what He was getting ready to go through, that He perspired blood. Blood came out in the droplets of His perspiration.

Now, the Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory. The things that He did, the stories that we're going to read about as we go through these different series, they're so inspiring.

…the glory of the only begotten of the Father. His own Son, the things that He did, the miracles He performed, the proof that was there, Lazarus being resurrected from the dead, and the Jews still wouldn't acknowledge this has to be of God, no human being can do such a thing. And they wouldn't do it. **…full of grace and truth**. Because that's the way God is. It's Him, and then He gives it to His Son.

John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, This was He of whom I said, He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me. Not alive. Not a matter of timing of being born. John the Baptist was born first, several months before Joshua. It's talking about "He was before me," meaning His purpose, everything that was established upon Him by God Almighty, that He was the cornerstone of everything that would be constructed. John came later to be a witness of him; he didn't come before Him in that regard.

And as His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses. The physical law, the various other laws that were given, that, candidly, Christ even fulfilled so many of those laws when you look at the Levitical system and so forth. **For the law was given through Moses**. Mankind's first written codified law of how man is supposed to live toward God and towards mankind. Very clear.

For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth… It wasn't that the law was done away with. Christ came to magnify it, as He said. He said, "Don't think that I've come to destroy the law." Isn't that amazing? The very thing He said, absolute, toward the very beginning, is the very thing that has happened in the world, "He came to do away with the law," or whatever garbage they want to say. "See, you don't have to keep the seventh-day Sabbath," you know, or whatever.

The Catholics got so bad about it, they had so many idols and everything else, that they had to get rid of the second commandment about having idols. And so, in their commandments, which is something we had to change in one of the chapters because it needed to be added in there because some wouldn't understand it. Because most in Protestantism in the protestant world know the Ten Commandments as they are in Exodus 20, but if you look at the commandments given by the Catholic Church, they don't have number two. They leave out the one about idols.

Why? Well, just look around. That's the reason they had to get rid of it. Because everything they have, much of it, so much of it is based upon idolatry, pictures, Mary, a child, whatever it might be, the things that people do, crosses, whatever, that God says we're not supposed to have in the first place. And so, wow, you open up a can of worms in this world when you do those things.

So, what did they have to do? Well, how do you get rid of the second commandment? Well, the tenth one is really not ten, it's two. The first part says, "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife." That's supposed to be number nine. So, get rid of two, make that number nine, and then all the rest of the covets, "Don't covet 'this', covet 'that'," as it says in that particular verse, that's number ten.

I don't know if you all know that. I hope you do. Does everyone pretty much understand what I'm saying there? That the Catholics got rid of two, and they made what was ten, nine and ten. They took one part of a covet, "Don't covet your neighbor's wife," to be the number nine. "Now we can have idols and have number nine." (I'm sorry.) It's such a joke sometimes, some of these things, and hideous what mankind has done.

So, grace and truth. Grace, the blessing of being able to be forgiven of sin. Sin, which is the transgression, as it says in the New Testament, sin is the transgression of God's laws. So, mankind has to be forgiven of transgressing His laws. And the only way of doing that, again, is through Joshua as our Passover. So, grace, which is from God, it's God's favor, it's God's truth, it's everything about God, if you will, but it's what God offers to human beings when they begin to be called or when they're shown the truth.

There is a favor given to them that God is ready to reveal Himself to you, and you can choose His way of life. You're going to have the ability through the power of the spirit to see. Then you can choose it if you will. God's going to give great favor because now you can be forgiven of sin through Joshua the Christ.

…and truth came through Joshua the Christ.

So, taking all this in an orderly manner in which these events came to pass through Joshua's human begettal, and then what was revealed to the apostle, John, about the Light from God, who was the very Word of God made flesh, we now come back to His actual birth and events surrounding it. So again, inspiring stories beginning to end.

Luke 2:1—Then it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. It was a kind of census that was taking place, much of it for the reasons of taxation and so forth, but it was a census, basically. **This registering was first made when Quirinius was governor of Syria**. So again here, Luke is always very specific about everything in his writing. **So all went to be registered, everyone to their own city**.

Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth. Now, sometimes these are kind of hard to say because it's like "he came up out of…" It's kind of awkward English because Galilee is well north of Jerusalem, and Nazareth is in the southern part of Galilee, kind of west of the Sea of Galilee, obviously, west and a little south of there. Kind of in the middle, lower middle of Galilee, toward the bottom. Anyway, this is where he lived. That's where they went back to live later on. That's where Christ went to dwell and live later on, as we'll come to in time.

But anyway, they went from there down **into Judea, to the city of David**. So, they were having to go past Jerusalem, farther down, in order to become registered. So, this is what this is about. **…which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house of the lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was pregnant**. So, that was the purpose why they travelled down there, Mary being pregnant obviously at that time, and they were travelling down there because of this decree that had gone out from Caesar Augustus.

Verse 6—So it was, while they were there, the time came for her to deliver. And she delivered her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in cloth, and laid Him in a manger. It's a place, wood, with straw in it, used to feed cattle or livestock or whatever, and so that was soft. So, they had the blanket there, the cloth there, and whatever, and laid him in that.

…because there was no room for them in the inn. So, there wasn't any place in that respect where people had guesthouses. It wasn't like a motel we have out here on the freeway. But there were homes where people had maybe five or six or whatever people that they could put up and feed and so forth, for people travelling, and this was a common practice in many areas, especially in travel routes. And so,

there wasn't any room there because this was taking place, and there were so many coming into these different areas.

Now, in the same region there were shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watches over their flock. So they had to protect them, protect them from wild animals and so forth, and so this is their job. They're out there watching over them, and especially at nighttime because of watches, night watches.

Then, suddenly, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord was shining around them, and they were greatly afraid. So, if you were out there at nighttime and you're watching over sheep to protect them, and all of a sudden there is light all around you in the area and something like this happens and you see an angelic being, you're probably going to be scared spitless, you know, because these things just don't happen.

Then the angel said to them, Do not be afraid. Why did he say that? Because they were afraid. And so, he told them, **Don't be afraid, for see, I bring you good news and good joy**. "This isn't something to fear. I have good news for you." So, he's trying to give them a calming effect by what he's telling them so they can get rid of some of this trepidation or whatever they're experiencing right then.

I bring you good news of great joy that will be to all people. **Because there was born to you today in the city of David a Savior**. Awesome! About "the Eternal's salvation," Joshua, **who is Christ**. They knew what that was: "The Messiah." We use the term Christ in the New Testament because of what was written from Greek and so forth, and obviously, but their words, they understood this is about the Messiah. So, that's what they were saying.

He is the Messiah, the Lord, the anointed one. They knew exactly what this was about. People had carried this for so long. Especially at this time, it was being talked about. During the Maccabees, a couple hundred years before this, they wanted to be free. They didn't want different rule over them. They were being oppressed horribly. And so, they were looking for the Messiah to come because that's what they had been taught, that the Messiah is going to appear at a time to save God's people. And so, in their minds, "This is an important time. We need to be saved! They're horribly oppressive." So, it says here, in essence, they knew it was about the anointed one, the Messiah.

Even this sign to you is that you will find the baby. "Newborn infant." That's what the word means, literally in the Greek language here. It's a newborn infant. And he said, "This day born," obviously. "This is what you're going to see." **…wrapped in cloth, lying in a manger**. In other words, in essence, a feeding stall, lying there. **Then, suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God**. Probably a little more fear. All this sound, all this taking place?

…and saying, Glory to God in the highest. This is what they were crying out, more angelic beings, if you will. **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth…** And they have messed up this one here. It's been quoted so often as "**peace, goodwill toward men**." It isn't what was said, that syrupy, watered-down way

of twisting things around. **Glory to God in the highest**—and literally saying—**and on earth peace to men of goodwill**. That's how peace comes. If you have goodwill and good intentions and good desire, and want to do what's right toward others, that's how peace comes. And so, this is going to be a matter of revelation, revealing more about how to have peace – God's way, God's truth through Christ.

Then it came to pass as the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds agreed with one another to go into Bethlehem and see what had come to pass. Yeah, they wanted to go. They'd just been told all this. You'd want to go! "Let's go see what they just told us. The Messiah!" That excitement there alone, that He's here.

…which the Lord had made known to them. So, they went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the Baby lying in a manger. **Now, when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which had been told to them concerning the Child**. You bet they did! Can you imagine trying to keep your mouth shut about that one? To tell everybody what they saw, what they were told, and the power that was there then, toward the end, of angelic beings crying out to God and praising Him, and then going there and seeing the Child that they were told is the Messiah? **Then all those who heard it wondered about what they had been told by the shepherds**. "Did this really happen?" Awesome!

Yet Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. What she was told because she was told in the beginning she's going to bear a Son. She knew she had never had any relationship with anyone. That which was growing in her is of the holy spirit, and now being told He is the Messiah, absolutely, definitely, even more so than what she'd already had in her experience when she was with Elizabeth. So, just more being built up for her, in that respect.

Next, we move on to the part of the story that traditional Christianity has really misrepresented and has made no real effort to correct or rectify at all.

Matthew 2:1—Now, when Joshua was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men. Now, the word there is "magi" **from the East of Jerusalem**, and commonly believed, because of the terms and so forth that were there, that they were from the area of Persia. That they'd travelled all the way from Persia, where the Jews had history because there were still a lot of Jews there. So, anyway, they'd been taken captive up into that region of the world. And now these magi had come.

I'm going to read a little bit about this. It says a lot of different ideas about who the magi were. In this case, it seems to align with those who were, again, from the area of Persia. Those were often highly educated individuals and often served in the government, in royalty as counselors, and so forth. And so, they begin to bear that name, but the name began to be corrupted through time with magic and so forth. But these here were looked upon as being people who were well educated and sharp; known for that, for their wisdom and so forth, and that they were counsellors to royalty. It's just like the ones that served in Persia that were of Judah that God gave favor to who served the royalty at that time.

So again, **verse 2** again, **asking, Where is He who is born King of the Jews?** So, here they come to Jerusalem, and they're wording it around. They went to Jerusalem because they're looking for the one they're told about or the one that they have come to see or think about, as it talks about here. **For we have seen His star in the East**.

Now, some of these things really get you, but it's like there's a star, and it's shining down like there's this beam evidently coming down from, I don't know if it's Alpha Centauri, what star out there it is. But it's like this beam that's coming down from a literal star, and it's over where He's supposed to be. Well, if it was they would have gone directly to Bethlehem. But they didn't go there; they went to Jerusalem.

Stars are used, in that respect, in this case here, as being as angelic beings or an angel, if you will, and talked to them. There are things that are said, "We have seen him." They had to be told something. They had to be given something. It wasn't something that just popped into their heads. It wasn't something that they thought, "Oh boy, there's that light. Let's go chase it down!" Where did they get the idea what this light was pointing to in the first place? Because they were told.

So, they're looking for this King of the Jews. So, it wasn't about some light and somehow they were so smart that they just knew, "This is about the Messiah. He's come. Let's go find out where He is." Some of these stories are so stupid sometimes it makes you want to vomit. They really do such an injustice in the world. They truly do.

There is a lot said here that is not taught accurately. Again, the magi, these men are asking, "Where is the King of the Jews?" They didn't know. But they came there looking for Him, because being Jewish, being told there is a King of the Jews that's coming or that's come, and where do you go? Well, they were smart enough to go to Jerusalem because that's where the headquarters of the Jews were. That's where the Jewish leaders were. So, they're going there with excitement to find out, "Where is this King of the Jews that's been born?" That's it in a nutshell. They didn't know, so they came to where they could, looking for the child. And if the light had been so good, they wouldn't have bothered by going through Jerusalem, like I said earlier. And so, they're wanting to know about the Messiah, the anointed one who's come to be king.

Now, this is a big thing that took place because they're all over Jerusalem asking, and it's starting to cause an uproar. That's literally what happened. It started to cause a bit of an uproar because this is something the Jews want anyway, and all of a sudden someone is coming, and they're saying, "We're looking for the one who is born King of the Jews." It's like, "You came all the way," if it was Persia, "from Persia and you're asking us this question? Someone is born here that's supposed to be the King of the Jews, the Messiah?" So, because of what they'd been taught, what they believed, and so forth, it caused a ruckus in the city.

So, when Herod the king heard these things, he was troubled. It was unsettling to hear it because no one can be king but Caesar, and this wouldn't be good for him if the people begin to turn toward

someone that they're calling the King. That was the problem all along until Christ was finally put to death. This is how they got Pilate to put Him to death. "If you believe this" or whatever, "and you don't take care of Him, then you're no friend of Caesar, because he's the ruler." They made him afraid so he went ahead and gave his approval to kill him. Incredible.

…he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Now, they were troubled for different reasons. It stirred up things. Herod here was troubled for good reasons because in the long run it could be about his neck. Others in Jerusalem, they were troubled because they want to know what's this all about. Where could this be?

So, when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together… This is how important it was. This is how much of a ruckus was raised up. He got all the leaders together, in essence, of Judaism, and **he demanded of them where the Messiah, the Christ… where the Messiah was to be born. So they answered him, In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet** (this is Micah 5:2), **And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the princes/the leaders of Judah. For out of you will come a Ruler**. So, in other words, "You're small, you're little, but you're not insignificant, because out of you, from you, from Bethlehem is going to come this leader." **For out of you will come a Ruler** (one who reigns, as the Hebrew word clearly shows), **who shall rule My people Israel**. So, they're quoting this prophecy out of Micah and saying it's in Bethlehem.

Now the story begins to become more clarified in what happens next. **Verse 7—Then Herod, when he had privately called the magi, he diligently inquired of them about what time the star appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem**. It wasn't a star. It wasn't something shining down over a manger or over a building. It was about something that they had started with a matter of an angelic being, being told certain things, so they went to Jerusalem to find this Messiah. And so, they didn't know where to go, where to find Him, and so, Herod tells them, "Go to Bethlehem."

…and said, Go and search diligently for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship Him also. Liar, liar, liar, liar. He wanted to kill Him. He didn't want that threat because he had been there long enough to know how the Jews felt about a Messiah, their teachings about a Messiah. And if someone is saying He's coming now, he's going to put an end to it. So, he's tricking them into going down there, finding out where He is down there, and then "Come back and let me know because I want to go worship Him also." You think, yeah, sure, yeah.

Verse 9—When they had heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they saw in the East went before them. They did see something. A being. How did they appear? How do they always appear? There's a lot of light, yes, that's part of the story. There's a lot of light around them. Just like when the shepherds were out there, the light shone around them. It's like Moses when he went up into the mountain, came back down, and his face and the garments he was wearing were so bright it scared

the tar out of people who saw him because it's about the glory of God and what God lets mankind see. Light.

…until it came and stood over where the Child was. So, they did follow him then on down toward Bethlehem. He led the way.

Verse 10. And where was the Child? **And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding joy. And when they had come into the house…** Not to the barn. Not to a manger. **…they saw a young Child**. Not a baby anymore as the shepherds saw. They were already gone from there. A lot of time had already passed, so that different word is used in the Greek language here and it's not about a baby anymore, it's about a young child.

…with Mary, His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. So, this is why they talk about the three kings that came, or whatever it is, and it's because of the three kinds of gifts. And it doesn't say how many there were anywhere. May have been three, five, ten, two, we don't know. But they did bring three kinds of gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Why? Because it's presented to a King. That's what you do. A ruler, that's what you do.

So, they were, again, three kinds of gifts, and gold, obviously, given to a king so often. Even when you see people who came to Solomon, if you remember, different ones from different countries, they brought a lot of this kind of thing with them. They brought a lot of gold, as an example. We read about some of those stories already in the past.

And incense, again here, represents, for what it is, a matter of prayer and relationship with God. Myrrh had the meaning of a type of perfume that was often mixed with aloe. And again, it was about Joshua, the Christ's, death. Beginning to the end. Because that's what these things were about. They had representation of something awesome. King, myrrh, relationship with God, and then finally, the last, His death. They're all symbolic.

It's like the words are used in **John 19:39**. It says, **Now, also Nicodemus went, who at first came to Joshua by night…** When he came that time alone in John 3, when you read the story there. And anyway, he was there at the time of His death helping. **…and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes of about a hundred pounds**. So again here, it all had meaning. Beautiful, how God does things.

Matthew 2:12—Then, being warned of God in a dream that they, the magi, **should not return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way**. **Now, when they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, take the young Child and His mother and flee into Egypt, and stay there until I send for you** or **send word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him**.

When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night, and they departed into Egypt. So again here, incredible. God told them to go down there because there is more going on here and a purpose behind some of this to fulfill things that God gave earlier on a long time ago.

Verse 15—and remain there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt I have called My Son. Beautiful. So, in other words, when it's time to be brought back, He'll tell him when that time is there and I'll call Him out of Egypt. So, something that was said long ago prophetically is being fulfilled when it comes to pass.

Then Herod, when he saw that he had been mocked by the wise men… Because they didn't come back. So, he didn't take that very kindly; he was exceedingly irritated and took matters into his own hands and went to the next step. As it says here, **he was exceedingly angry and sent forth to slay all the children who were in Bethlehem and in all the regions thereof, from two years old and under**. Incredible. Because they knew that He was a child by this time and wanted to make sure that He was put to death, so kill every child.

…according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the magi. So, they'd already talked to the magi, and they had enough knowledge to know, or had been told… By whom? It had to be an angelic being that revealed it to them about the birth, about the time that had passed since he had been born, and a child was there.

Verse 17—Then was fulfilled that which was spoken of by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, In Ramah, there was a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. Because they were killed. So, it's a prophecy about what Herod did in killing all the children, and the cries that went out and so forth.

So, kind of an interesting story here. Rachel was buried near Bethlehem. Ramah was just a few miles north of Jerusalem and associated with being in the territory of Benjamin, who, speaking of Rachel's son, if you will, speaking of Benjamin here.

Anyway, this was covered in the previous series about the birthplace of Joshua in Micah 5:2, back a ways. The word says, "You, Bethlehem," a compound word that means "a house" and "bread," "dwelling," and "bread." "Ephrathah," a place near Bethlehem where Rachel died and was buried. So, it's about where she died and was buried. It's right next to Bethlehem. So, that's what it was known for. But it has to do with the prophecy about Benjamin in the north. That's what it is. Benjamin in the north, that some of the things there having to do with the sound that was heard and so forth. I'll try to get that back together again.

So, it says, "and though you were small or little among the tribes of Judah." So, we read part of this earlier about part of the prophecy, "out of you shall go forth to me to be a Ruler over Israel." So again, it's about Bethlehem and where He was to be born, Joshua was to be born. And this prophecy that was

being quoted had to do with the region where they were, or whatever, and Benjamin to the north, and I don't have it right now.

Matthew 2:19—But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. So, here it is, now it's time to come back. **…saying, Arise and take the young Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel, for they are dead who did seek the young Child's life. So, he arose and took the young Child and His mother, and came to the land of Israel**. So again, He lived in the area of Galilee, Nazareth to the north.

Two more verses: **But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Jerusalem in the place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And therefore, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the other part,** if you will, **to the parts of Galilee**. So again, bypassing it and going on up directly toward Nazareth to the north.

And he came and dwelt in the city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene. Got there.

Anyway, awesome story as it continues to unfold and the things that took place, and piece by piece of a story that's true and how it actually came about, and what took place, and the timing of some of these events. But again, very inspiring. We'll continue on there next Sabbath.