

The Mystery of God and of Christ

Mark Mickelson

Recorded on December 8, 2018

Good afternoon, it's certainly a pleasure. I have two books, a Bible, and my notes, so I'm in the process of ruining my reputation; I used to have a reputation for being the briefest speaker. Now something has happened; I just have too much time to prepare, I guess. I do want to mention, before going into the sermon today, there's a difference between—as I've used the analogy before, of a jigsaw puzzle—there are the border pieces (those are pretty much absolutes, the definitions in scripture) and as you begin to work in from the edge, you find the pieces that match and fit. Obviously in a jigsaw puzzle, it's an exact fit—the piece goes in one place. But conceptually, when you begin to work in from the definitions, you begin to also make certain interpretations. Interpretations are not wrong; they have to be made—a certain reason has to take place. But the interpretation has to be checked against scripture and quite frankly there is a peer review and a back and forth amongst ourselves as that discussion takes place.

I just want to mention one of the sources I use now as a word study is Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. Traditionally in the Church, when I was first attending, there was Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words and that was very popular; everybody had one and tended to use it. Vine's is fairly old in terms of its research. It's still a valid source but Mounce's is very current and is excellent. So in terms of looking at the Hebrew or the Greek, then having to understand the meaning a particular word can possibly have, we're going to have to read a reference, and honestly, I use very little commentary. The commentaries to me have an incredible bias one way or another. It's interesting to sometimes search it out. When we start quoting the commentaries, at some point in time, I think we can lose the thread of the reality of what the scripture says. The influence of the trinity, the influence of the doctrinal basis of who wrote it, goes into the explanation.

Over the years an argument has raged on whether God is three in one, whether God is two in one, or whether He's just one. God the Father is indeed one, but God the Father and Jesus Christ are two. I've tried to address that in an earlier message, at least going back to the Feast. Part of the evidence of them being two is in scripture when they are seen in relationship to each other. I want to address some of the issues, mainly from the Old Testament, where there's evidence of Jesus Christ and God the Father being together in the text. Sometimes it's only a reference, sometimes actually the presence of both of them is indicated. When you begin to do that, it's not exactly the same as reading Acts 3:13—*the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob glorified His servant Jesus*—that's not interpretation, that's a definition—that's a border piece. Saying Jesus Christ is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is an interpretation and a very bad one—a very poor one. When you then go in and begin with what is the implication—where does that apply—then sometimes we have to reason a bit, and even when you reason, it's possible that we can come to different conclusions. So the Bible in that sense is a

mystery. It's the mystery of God and of Christ. It's a mystery that over time is revealed. God didn't give it to us all at once. He didn't give it to His patriarchs all at once, in fact some of what we get today, the patriarchs didn't even get to consider, and it isn't over.

As has been mentioned before, if your doctrine is The Truth, you're finished. Not that you want your doctrine not to be the truth, but if you have arrived at the point where you have the truth then you can't change the truth. There has to be a range in which we can grow and sometimes it isn't going to just be another twig on the branch. Sometimes we have to say we went off on a wrong branch, and we're going to have to move. We have to be willing to let the scripture correct our course, in God's direction.

Again, I'm going to focus more heavily on the Old Testament today, and I want to mention, in this sense, the main word for God in the Hebrew is *Elohim*. It's used about 2,600 times. By one reference, about 2,000 of those times, it is specific to God the Father, or the God who became the Father of Jesus Christ. There are about 600 more times it can be used in additional ways and it's not all one spelling. When we say *Elohim*, to me it's not helpful to go too deep into the technical spelling because, *my God, your God, their God*, are different spellings. In the Hebrew it's one word. To go into that level of it is really not useful, and when we say Elohim just understand that if you look at the list, there are all these different variations. It's because Hebrew isn't English, and what are two and three words in English might be a single spelling of a word in Hebrew, where it's all linked together. We have to understand that; it's not like we don't know when we say something, but at the same time it needs to be in at least a generic reference when we explain.

In the Hebrew, there is no such thing as “the one true God”—in the Hebrew. Or, it would be the one true Elohim, because Elohim, translated God, can mean God who became the Father; it can mean Jesus Christ; it can mean angels; it can mean human judges; it can mean idols. It is sometimes translated in those ways. So there's no such thing as the one true Elohim as if there's only one Elohim—there is only one Yahweh. The Greek reference to the one true God is not equal to the word Elohim and that's important. Elohim means “mighty one” or “mighty ones”. We tend to think in terms of there being the God kind, and then there's the angel kind, and then there's mankind and that's true—that's accurate. But if the God kind is Elohim, the honest answer is sometimes the angel kind is elohim and sometimes mankind is elohim [and it's worth noting that Hebrew has neither uppercase nor lowercase letters; they are all one case].

Elohim is not God's family name. It is simply not the way the term is used. On the notes that I gave you today—those who have them—there's more there than I'll probably have time to review, which is a good reminder; I'll take my watch off as an insurance policy. In Deuteronomy 10:17 (and in the notes), I'm not going to turn there but I'll just quote it, it says: “The LORD your God is God of gods” (Yahweh—God the Father—okay?). It says, “YHWH your Elohim, is Elohim of elohim.” That's what it means, which means there can't be just the one true Elohim because there are other elohim. We use the term in a way sometimes that we're not recognizing what we've done. So, 2000, maybe, out of 2,600 times, it's a specific reference to God who

became the Father and that's the general text, that's the general sense of scripture, but that's the way it plays in all respects.

I want to go to Colossians 2 because Colossians 2 describes the mystery of God and of Christ, and that's where I want to start out, in verse 1. What do you have to have, if you watch a mystery? If you watch it on television, or if you read a book, what does it do? With a mystery, they give you clues and then you are guessing at the answer and they give you some more clues, and then sometimes you recognize your guess wasn't quite right, so they give you some more clues. Then by the end of the book or the movie or the show, you're supposed to have the answer to what the mystery would be. God and Christ, how they relate, what they do, is a mystery, and it's a mystery of scripture that God is revealing to us.

Colossians 2:1 *For I want you to know [Paul is saying] what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh,*
2) *that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,*
3) *in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* (NKJV)

Conceptually, in our past, I would say many have looked at this, the knowledge of the mystery of God, then there's the mystery of God the Father, and then there's the mystery of God the Christ. Well, that's not what the Bible says and that's not the way the word is actually recorded. I took Young's Literal Translation and sometimes it's very literal—it's not heavily used for reference or reading, maybe more for reference—but it says, "The full knowledge of the secret of the God and Father and of the Christ." It's not saying that Christ isn't God—John addressed that, we won't throw that away, that's true. The point of Colossians is a reference to God and Christ, not God the Father and God the Christ; that's just simply not the meaning of the text. So it's important for that, but again, a secret is something Young's Literal Translation says is "a full knowledge of the secret of God the Father and of the Christ." So a secret is something that isn't known; a secret has to be revealed, and the Bible is that revealing. It doesn't come all at once, it comes in stages.

I want to start with the revelation of God the Father and I want to start in Genesis 1, and I won't again turn to that because we've been there so many times, but in Genesis 1 God the Father reveals that He is the Creator and then He also reveals that He's not alone. We don't have a lot of information, we have some, so that information in the record of scripture lays out over time. Later on in Genesis we learn that He is the Most High Elohim and the Almighty Elohim. But that's not in chapter 1, that's inferred by the fact that He is the Creator, but that comes later in reference. How many years was it then until God said, how would you like to know My name? Yahweh is God's name. Almighty is a reference—a superlative—and we can refer to Him as the Almighty but the honest answer is that at some point God gave His name to Moses—from Adam to Moses is 2,500 years; if you're the friend of God (Abraham) and God doesn't tell you

His name, it means it isn't time for that to be expressed and the meaning of that name isn't yet to be applied, and there's a purpose in that. You and I maybe would do it differently; I would walk up and say, hello, my name is Mark, how are you, what's your name? God says—2,500 years—just wait and I'll get to it, and He did, but it took 2,500 years. So in Exodus 2, notice where that is and then there's some implications to this. Again, this is a mystery, a secret, and it's revealed but it's revealed in a process. Exodus 6:2.

Exodus 6:2 *And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "I am the LORD. 3) I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name LORD [YHWH] I was not known to them. (NKJV)*

That's a statement of fact; I don't think that needs to be interpreted but it might need to be understood. So here's the problem—go back to Genesis 2 and the God that is there in the garden, appearing and described going forward, is Yahweh Elohim. God here says, in verse 3, you know what, they didn't even know me by my name Yahweh; yet He's in the text. Sometimes I've had that question arise and I'll give you this as an example. This is my belief and understanding: I believe that Moses, in recording the first five books of the Bible, wrote back into the text who the references were to, even though they weren't known at the time that the story itself took place.

I'll give you an example of that. Joshua fought the battle of Jericho, but he also fought the battle of Amalek. Joshua was the commander that Moses appointed to be the head of the army, and as they were leaving Egypt and before they got to Sinai, the Amalekites attacked those in the rear, and Moses sent Joshua out with the army to fight against the Amalekites; that's the story where Moses had to have his hands held up, and that's *before* Sinai. How old is Joshua then, leaving Egypt but before they get to Sinai? He's the head of the army, so he's older than twenty; he's an adult. He lived to be 110, there's forty years in the wilderness so possibly Joshua could be, maybe, who knows, thirty-five, if half of his life is before the wilderness and half of his life is after; the fact is, Joshua was born in Egypt and is a full adult when they leave out of captivity and his name is what—Joshua. What does Joshua mean? "Yahweh is salvation" or "Yahweh saves". Well how could that be, before Joshua knew the word Yahweh, how could it be his name? It's in the text, it says Joshua. Let's look at Numbers 13 and I want to at least offer this—again, the mystery God reveals over time. He didn't even reveal His name and therefore the meaning of His name, until the time of Moses.

Numbers 13:16 *These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. (NKJV)*

So now we have the story of the spies being sent into Canaan.

16 continued) ... *And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua. (NKJV)*

So here in Numbers it's recorded that Moses changed Hoshea's name to Joshua but Joshua has already been in the text by name. He didn't have that name when the event

took place, he has it here. When the record was written then the name had to have been put back in; this is who that is referring to. I can only say I offer that to you; there's no scripture that says the names were post-dated back into the text. I only offer that to you as a consideration. What happened with the name Joshua probably is what I would assume happened with the name Yahweh: The name was put back into the text but was not known; it was a revelation that came in the time of Moses. Once you know who God is, by name, now you go back, and Moses had already marked the places where that was, where the reference was to be, and then you begin to understand the text more clearly.

Now the revelation of Jesus Christ; again, Christ not being Jesus' last name—He is Jesus, the Christ. When was Jesus' name revealed? Four thousand years. Really? Four thousand years. There are references to Emmanuel, there are other references in certain ways; those are prophetic, they were fulfilled; the Bible shows when they were fulfilled, but there's no record of anybody coming up to Jesus Christ and saying, how are you, Emmanuel, shall we have lunch? It was prophetic, it was fulfilled, but His name was Jesus. That took 4,000 years. The honest answer is, the revelation of Jesus Christ is principally the New Testament. The revelation of God the Father is what we see principally in the Old Testament. Was Jesus Christ in the Old Testament—yes. Where does it say so—in the New Testament: That rock was Christ, it's very specific. John—the Word was with God, the God—John. So those very specific definition statements are in the New Testament, so then we would say, okay, if He's there then there has to be an indication of Him being there; let's go see what is in the record and what is in place. That's what I mean by a measure of interpretation.

Sometimes we get comfortable, I would say, and we rely on the translator. If the translator uses uppercase letters or capitalizes a word then that's God or Christ and if he doesn't then it's not. I'm sorry, the Hebrew doesn't have lowercase or uppercase, it's all one case and it's run together. The fact is, the translator is telling you what He thinks. Sometimes the translator is correct and other times you have to say, that isn't proven, that's just simply the translator's position. I have heard, look it says it right there, it's using a capital letter. Well, okay, so what? At some point you have to ask what is the record, what is being inferred. Look at John 14. We're looking at the revelation of Jesus Christ and I hope to focus mostly on that today. Obviously when you go to find Christ in relationship, God the Father is there, in many cases. Sometimes Jesus Christ, in the Old Testament, is there alone. Sometimes God the Father appears to be there alone. All we have is what is revealed to us. We don't have the background and all of the context in every case. In John 14:1, Jesus is talking to his disciples; it is after the Passover.

John 14:1 *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.*

2) In My Father's house are many mansions ... (NKJV)

I don't know any place in the Bible where the Father's house or the house of God is a reference to anything other than to God the Father—everywhere in the Old Testament,

everywhere in the New Testament. The temple—the house of God—is obviously a reference to the Father. So Christ just said, *you believe in God, believe also in Me*. If they thought that He was the God of the Old Testament then they already believed in Him and He needs to introduce the Father. That is not the record of scripture. Christ told the Samaritan woman at the well, we know who we worship—the Father in spirit and truth. He wouldn't say, we know who we worship and it's Me; He didn't say that.

So Christ is telling the disciples—as He calls them out and begins to work with them and teach them—believe in Me. What are we to believe? We are to believe that Jesus is the Christ. That is the New Testament. That is almost the entire New Testament. God sent His Servant and His Servant is the Anointed of God. Antichrist—to be antichrist is to deny Jesus and the fact that God sent Him. You deny that Jesus is the Christ, which means you deny Him and the Father, and that's what the record of scripture is. Antichrist is not a depreciation of Jesus Christ, it's denying that God sent Him and that He arrived after being sent. It's denying that whole relationship. So the revealing, as I said, of the secret of Jesus Christ is pretty much the New Testament. When we go back then to the Old Testament we are looking for the record of what the New Testament revealed, saying, back there, this is what took place. I wanted to go then back to John 1; give me a moment in the New Testament before I go back into the Old. This scripture is just simply too fundamental not to address.

John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God [the Word was with the God and a God was the Word, would be one way to translate that], and the Word was God.*

2) *He was in the beginning with God.*

3) *All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. (NKJV)*

He was always there. So at some point, if He is with God then we should be able to go back to the Old Testament and see evidence of God and Christ together, or God having sent Christ as His messenger, or Christ showing up with His message from God—any one of those things.

The New English Bible came out some years ago. The translators did a lot of research and they actually did some good work with it but they were free in their rendering to the point that they changed some of the people's favorite passages, like in John 1, so people didn't use it because you can't take away their favorites. Here's the New English Bible, John 1, and notice the wording (and it's actually very good):

John 1:1 *When all things began the Word already was. The Word dwelt with God and what God was, the Word was.*

2) *The Word then was with God at the beginning*

3) *and through Him all things came to be, no single thing was created without Him. (NEB)*

But again, that changed a very favorite passage and people said, that's interesting, but I don't think so. I give it to you only as a rendering that I believe is fairly accurate. So then, Jesus having His name revealed, Matthew 1:18.

Matthew 1:18 *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.*

19) *Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.*

20) *But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.*

21) *And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."* (NKJV)

That's a revelation; it's revealed, here's the instruction. That is what the record then is, going forward. I mentioned as well, the reference 1 Corinthians 10, that Rock was Christ. So, of Jesus the Christ in the New Testament, we're now being directed to go back and see evidence of Him, or references to Him, in the Old Testament, and I want to share some of that with you. I was going to try to skip Exodus 3 because it's been addressed a few times, but frankly it's the setup for the passages that follow, so let me read just the six verses at the beginning without a lot of explanation; I think we do understand.

Exodus 3:1 *Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.*

2) *And the Angel [or the Messenger] of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed.*

3) *Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."*

4) *So when the LORD [Yahweh] saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." (NKJV)*

If you go to the New Testament, Mark 12:26, where it references that account, Jesus said God spoke to Moses at the burning bush. It doesn't say right here that the Angel of the LORD is actually Jesus Christ—that's interpretation. But it's the type of interpretation if you have "that Rock was Christ", referring to Israel coming out of Egypt and who was there [1 Corinthians 10:4], then we would expect to go back to that time and find evidence of Christ being there in the text. So again, it would appear to us, and it has been our historical understanding, that the Angel of the LORD here is Jesus Christ. He is not an angel, he is a Messenger; He was sent. The entire New Testament says He was sent. A messenger comes with a message. Is He the spokesman? No. The Bible doesn't say Jesus Christ, the Word, means spokesman. It doesn't mean the

spokesman and the Bible doesn't say that. What does a spokesman do?—you tell him what you want done and he goes and tells everybody. You're always going to the spokesman for the latest press release. You go to the press conference and you hear the spokesman speak at the press conference, not the president or chief executive officer. They might take questions on the side but the fact is, to label the Word as the spokesman (which is not actually in scripture) means that everything you're going to expect to hear is now going to come from the spokesman only. That is simply not the way the text is relayed. So again, not spending more time on Exodus 3, I want to go to Exodus 13. This is now interesting because I think this is closer to 1 Corinthians 10—the Rock that accompanied Israel was Christ.

Exodus 13:17 *Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go [you know the context; we're coming up to the Red Sea], that God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, "Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt." 18) So God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt. 19) And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you." 20) So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness. 21) And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. (NKJV)*

Who is the pillar of cloud and the pillar of light?—Yahweh. That's what it says.

22) He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people. (NKJV)

The pillar of cloud of course is what came down on the house of God—the temple, the tabernacle—and it was the presence of God. Again, that is God the Father. Now in Exodus 14:13, they're now up against the crisis of facing the Red Sea.

Exodus 14:13 *And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD [Yahweh], which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. 14) The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace." (NKJV)*

Going down to verse 19.

19) And the Angel of God ... (NKJV)

Notice that we have the Angel of the LORD and the LORD back in Exodus 3. Now here again, we have, the LORD is going to fight for you and this is now the Angel of God.

Both are being referenced. What we believe, in this case, is the reference is to [the one who will become] Jesus Christ—the Angel of God.

19) And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; [and then it says] and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. (NKJV)

Those are two events. We were just told here that it is God, the LORD, who goes before them in the cloud and in the fire. Then we have the Angel moves, and then God moves—they are both there, same as in Exodus 3. That again would be our interpretation and I believe that is accurate. Down in verse 24.

24) Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians.

25) And He took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty; and the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians." (NKJV)

All of the story of the New Testament confirms that the Old Testament is the foundation of the New Testament—it has to agree. When Christ said, I am the true Manna from heaven, who sent the Manna? God sent the Manna and Christ is the one who is portrayed by the Manna. He's not the one who sent Himself, He's the one who was sent. Again, these layers continuously reinforce themselves.

In my notes, if time allowed, I had planned to go to the book of Judges [Judges 6:11-27; Judges 13:15-25], and the honest answer is, there's not a chance that I can do that. You have it in your notes if you have notes there. I'll just say this, there is a Messenger of the LORD *and* the LORD referenced in these verses. If you read them, you're going to see where the Angel of the LORD appears as a man, which is in various places in scripture. Daniel 3:25—In the fiery furnace they saw what appeared to be four men, but it says one was "like the Son of God". Daniel 7 talks about the Ancient of Days (verse 9) and one like the Son of Man (verse 13)—there are two Beings there and they are differentiated. God the Father is never portrayed as being like a man in the reference.

I do believe personally, when it says no one has seen God at any time, He has never appeared in the flesh, He has never appeared in human form—God the Father. When you see one like man, if it is indeed a reference, not to an angel walking around—it's not Gabriel, it's not Michael—it's Jesus Christ. That is only by the knowledge of what we've had revealed to us, generally in the New Testament, and we go back, then, to see what the record is. So I'm going to leave you to study the two accounts in Judges.

I'll just say this—it's interesting—Sampson's parents, before his birth, the Angel of the LORD appears to them (first to the wife and then to the husband) so they at some point say, what's your name? [Judges 13:17] I suppose the vernacular might not be totally accurate but the inference is what business is that to you? They are answered with,

why do you ask my name seeing it is (as the King James says) a secret. Well, it *is* a secret, actually; it wasn't to be revealed yet—No, you can't have my name. Daniel knew Michael's name and he knew Gabriel's name—all angels don't have their name revealed but there was one Angel who said, that's a secret—not now. That name ultimately was a secret for about 4,000 years before it was fully revealed in its place and time.

I want to go on now to a string of references to Jacob because these tie together and I have to be able to get through them in one series. I'll just leave Judges to you as your own to study. Genesis 28 is Jacob's dream, and this is one of those that I would say contains parts that are fairly complex in the way the record was written. I think it's one that is frankly abused in terms of declaring Jesus Christ to be Yahweh, on the basis of references in the series of Jacob in wrestling with the Angel, and I want to try to lay that out a little bit and maybe make a basis of what we should consider. Again, when you start to make interpretation, it doesn't say in the Old Testament the Angel of the LORD is going to become Jesus Christ—it doesn't say that. The New Testament says back then was what took place; you go back to see what the record then was. These are things that now I want to offer based on what the record is, and then inferences that we have made, and I think, in some ways, accurately; in some ways, frankly, I think we have made the wrong inferences as well. Genesis 28; I want to look at the basis here of what is going to be Jacob's dream.

Genesis 28:1 *Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.
2) Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.
3) "May God Almighty bless you ... (NKJV)*

This is important; God Almighty is God the Father, God Almighty is never Jesus Christ. The Most High God cannot be two Most High Gods; there is one Almighty.

3 continued) ... *And make you fruitful and multiply you, That you may be an assembly of peoples;
4) And give you the blessing of Abraham, To you and your descendants with you, That you may inherit the land In which you are a stranger, Which God gave to Abraham."* (NKJV)

Here is the layout for the whole story. What does Jacob's name mean? The one who supplanted or the supplanter. Here's a reference, Lockyer's book, All the Men of the Bible, and I looked up the name Jacob in it, and that section is titled, "The man of two natures." Lockyer writes, "Jacob is an outstanding illustration of the presence and conflict of two natures within a believer. Similar to Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in Robert Louis Stevenson's story, Jacob is good and bad; he rises and falls, yet in spite of his failures he was a chosen instrument." It continues on, saying, Jacob was selfish, Jacob was crafty and deceitful, and the author goes through and he lays out some of the arguments. So here we have Isaac giving a blessing to Jacob, which is based on the

promise of God Almighty, that you're going to be a great nation, and God will work through you and you're going to inherit the land. So what does Jacob want—I had better secure the promise. So Jacob literally, by nature, wrestles in the womb, and by any means possible, he's going to get his birthright, he's going to nail it down; he's not going to leave this to chance or to God. The whole story is Jacob trying to find a way, any way, to get what he wants. Yet he is a chosen instrument of God, God directing his course and purpose. It's important to understand that, when we recognize how the story is being told. Jacob is trying to work his own deal. He wants what God promised but as insurance he's going to set it up so that when it happens he can get it for himself.

Genesis 28:10 *Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran.*

11) *So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep.*

12) *Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. (NKJV)*

This could be like a staircase; it doesn't much matter—I'm sure angels could do either one quite easily, but it's a vision. The angels of God are on the ladder, going up and down, and who's at the top of the ladder?

13) *And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; (NKJV)*

He's not yet the God of Jacob because that's the deal that is in process and God wants to cement that; Jacob wants to take the benefits for himself.

13 continued) *... the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants.*

14) *Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (NKJV)*

We have this story that now begins to unfold and it goes on down; verse 16, then Jacob awoke from his sleep,

16) *... and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it."*

17) *And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God [God must live right here and I'm right in His house] ... (NKJV)*

The house of God was always a reference to the Father and Yahweh was the one at the top of the ladder in the vision.

18) *Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it.*

19) *And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously. (NKJV)*

This is going to be very important. When Jacob is shown in scriptures at Luz, which he named Bethel, only God the Father is there evident and present. There is no Angel of the LORD portrayed at Bethel and you'll see this. Now, the Angel of the LORD is portrayed with Jacob in other places, so when it comes back and you have to refer back to this, you have to remember how the story begins.

20) *Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, (NKJV)*

Can you imagine? If you do what I want, then you're my God—you're the right one, I'll pick you. This is arrogant—this is amazingly arrogant.

21) *so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God.*

22) *And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You." (NKJV)*

The story starts with this ladder set up on the earth, we have the LORD (Yahweh—the God of Abraham and Isaac) pictured above it; it reaches up to heaven, with the angels coming up and down on the ladder. Jacob says, this has got to be the house of God. Look at John 1 now, verse 47. It shows a little bit of the context—the dream is prophetic. Here you have Jesus in the course again, picking his disciples.

John 1:47 *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!"*

50) *Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these."*

51) *And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." (NKJV)*

Jacob's dream. Christ saying, I'm the ladder. They know the dream, they know the story; the angels are ascending and descending upon Jesus Christ, portrayed as the ladder, set up on the earth, reaching to heaven. Now, how is that now explained in scripture? I had this in my notes for reference: angels are ministering spirits, okay? Is that the answer—it's true, but is it the answer? I'm not sure what the answer is. This is a prophecy; Christ indicates he is the ladder in the dream, by which the angels ascend

or descend, showing He is going to in some way be giving access to (or utility that leads to) God the Father. I've thought about it and I do know this; this is a reference back to Jacob's dream, to what Christ said—I'm the ladder. However, He's not at the top of the ladder and His name isn't Yahweh—that's God the Father. That's important. At Bethel, there is no Angel of the LORD portrayed as being there as part of the exchange. God the Father is portrayed and Jesus is the ladder, the means of access to God, in the dream. Those are important things to keep in mind.

Going forward then, let's go to Genesis 31. We now have an account where Jacob is fleeing from Laban and he's taking his wives and his family with him. This is important. Is this Bethel? No, it's not—it's Haran. As to the location of each of these stories, I want to give them to you as it was given in the text, so that we don't get confused when it says, I'm the God of Bethel. Who was it, who was at Bethel and was God?—the Father. Was the Angel of the LORD even portrayed? No. So who is the God of Bethel?—God the Father. Sometimes it seems to blend, so I hope to help clarify some of that a little bit today. Genesis 31:9—Jacob is explaining the process of why they are fleeing and what the problem is.

Genesis 31:9 *So God has taken away the livestock of your father [speaking to the daughters] and given them to me.*

10) *“And it happened, at the time when the flocks conceived, that I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the flocks were streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted.*

11) *Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, ‘Jacob.’ And I said, ‘Here I am.’ (NKJV)*

Now we have the Angel of God that we would assume—I assume, I believe—is a specific reference to Christ. Christ is part of this process because He is directly involved here in ways that become visible; Jacob wrestles with the Angel at one point. This is a process but the Angel of the LORD wasn't at Bethel—He wasn't there. So, notice what it says:

12) *And He said, ‘Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks are streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you.*

13) *I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.’ (NKJV)*

Who did Jacob make a vow to? “If you take care of me, you'll be my God and I'll be your servant”—to God the Father. Here's what this has to be, I believe. The Angel of God spoke in a dream; Jacob replies, here I am, and then the Angel now delivers the message. I know it's not the way we would have written it in the English—it's not in the English and I can only go by what I know to be true; the Angel of the LORD wasn't portrayed at Bethel and the God who is, is God the Father.

So here's the message. The Angel says, here's my message: Lift your eyes and see that all the rams which leap on the flocks are streaked, speckled, gray-spotted; I've seen all that Laban is doing to you; I am the God of Bethel. It is God the Father who gave the message to the Angel, and here's the message—that's the only way to harmonize it with the earlier passage—I am the God of Bethel where you anointed the pillar, you made a vow to Me; arise, return to your family. Genesis 28 specifically says Jacob made a vow to Yahweh, and the deliverer of the message is not Yahweh.

I understand that requires some interpretation; there are things in the Bible we are going to have to reason what the text is, what's the account, what's the example, therefore what's the implication. I offer it to you in that way. Jacob, in Genesis 32, wrestles with a man, actually wrestling with an Angel, and as we have believed, wrestling with Elohim, a God—a God being, a divine being in this case.

Let's go to Genesis 32:22. We're now at Peniel. We're not at Bethel and we're not at Haran and that's important. The location of each of these is important, and we're now at Peniel.

Genesis 32:22 *And he arose that night and took his two wives, (NKJV)*

He's been preparing to meet Esau—he's not fleeing from Esau here, he's actually going to meet Esau but he's concerned. When the Bible makes reference, it's making reference to a particular story at a particular location, so you go read that story and see what that story reveals.

22 continued) ... [Jacob] *took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok.*

23) *He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had.*

24) *Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man [they've capitalized it in the text and I would say, in that format, correctly so] wrestled with him until the breaking of day.*

25) *Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him.*

26) *And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" (NKJV)*

Jacob spent his life fighting for the promise that God would have given him anyway, trying to supplant anybody else—his brother—trying to work out his own deal, and that's why he was a man (as described in the book I quoted) of two natures, and yet God was using him to work with him for His purpose.

27) *So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob."*

28) *And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." (NKJV)*

Again, it's interesting, God is Elohim and at some point we're going to have to say, okay, Jacob is wrestling with the Angel and the Angel certainly isn't the Elohim that is God the

Father. I mean, if human judges are elohim, certainly Jesus Christ as we would believe is above that—an uncreated, eternal God being. But it says, you've struggled with God and with men and have prevailed, and then a reference is being given here to the fact that Jacob has a particular approach.

In my notes, I included a couple of places where God is referenced, the LORD of Hosts is referenced, strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered, He said, against the Man who is my companion (Zechariah 13:7), so there are various places—there's Daniel, there's Zechariah, that are references in which Christ is referred to as a Man or Son of Man or one like unto the Son of Man, but again, go on down to verse 29.

29) Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" (NKJV)

Again, He's implying, you don't need to know my name—that happens in a number of places. His name is Jesus, as we're going to discover, in a few thousand years down the road.

29 continued) ... And He blessed him there. (NKJV)

Jacob was always reaching for the blessing and when he would get it, he would receive it, and when he couldn't, he would try to grab it and take it with his own hands.

30) So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." (NKJV)

He looked at the Angel, the Man with whom he wrestled, and he literally believed that that was God—I would say a God—that was He whom we would believe to be Jesus Christ. There's no problem with that. Then it goes on again in the story. The point here being, is Jesus Christ Elohim? Yes. Is He the same Elohim as God the Father? No. Is Elohim God's family name? Absolutely not. So, Genesis 1, Elohim is plural, modified by a singular verb and its modifier, and is a reference to the Father, and is confirmed in the New Testament actually—I think it's 2 Corinthians 4:6, which confirms the God who called light out of darkness, as in *Let there be light*, is the one who is showing His glory in the face of Jesus Christ; a distinction is made there in terms of the difference. Aren't you glad I gave you notes? Without the notes, I'm telling you this would be a little bit more difficult.

When it says he struggled with God, that reference is also made in the book of Hosea. I want to turn to Hosea 11, because in pondering this and trying, on the one hand, to recognize the Bible is consistent—the Old Testament and the New Testament tell the same story, and some parts of the story are revealed in time—but in Hosea 11, notice the context here. In chapter 12 we're going to get to the story of wrestling the Angel, but notice this.

Hosea 11:1 *When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son. (NKJV)*

Was Israel the son of Jesus Christ? No, he wasn't. He was the son of God the Father, and this is God the Father speaking.

2) As they called them, So they went from them; They sacrificed to the Baals, And burned incense to carved images. (NKJV)

God is saying, I called him out of Egypt and he just brought Egypt with him. The Israelites were always disobedient.

3) "I taught Ephraim to walk, Taking them by their arms; But they did not know that I healed them.

4) I drew them with gentle cords, With bands of love, And I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them. (NKJV)

How did He feed them? With Manna that He sent, picturing Jesus Christ.

5) "He shall not return to the land of Egypt; But the Assyrian shall be his king, (NKJV)

Israel is going to be punished. What is Jacob's name changed to?—Israel. So the reference here is to the fact that Israel, Jacob's namesake, has been in rebellion basically from the first day.

5 continued) ... Because they refused to repent.

6) And the sword shall slash in his cities, Devour his districts, And consume them, Because of their own counsels.

7) My people are bent on backsliding from Me. Though they call to the Most High, None at all exalt Him [the word Him has been added for context]. (NKJV)

The fact is, they would not exalt God—the Most High, the Most High Elohim—God the Father. The story here is about Israel's rebellion and constantly fighting against God and pushing against God, and God having to correct them. Go on over from there to verse 12 of chapter 11. In the New King James, the chapter break has moved slightly.

12) "Ephraim has encircled Me with lies, And the house of Israel with deceit; But Judah still walks with God, Even with the Holy One who is faithful. (NKJV)

The Holy One of Israel was God the Father. So Judah is not yet going to be sent into captivity, but they are on their way. Israel is about to be defeated; their king is going to be Assyrian. Then it goes on down in chapter 12.

Hosea 12:1 *“Ephraim feeds on the wind, And pursues the east wind; He daily increases lies and desolation. Also they make a covenant with the Assyrians, And oil is carried to Egypt.*

2) *“The LORD also brings a charge against Judah, And will punish Jacob according to his ways; According to his deeds He will recompense him. (NKJV)*

So Jacob is the nation of Israel, but Jacob is also the person Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel.

3) *He took his brother by the heel in the womb, And in his strength he struggled with God. (NKJV)*

I am going to suggest that in the reference here, in the womb, he was a supplanter, and as an adult, in his strength, he continued to be a supplanter. Christ said if you've seen Me, you've seen the Father, if you reject Me, you reject the Father. I believe the reference personally to God in this context is actually to God the Father. That does not mean the Angel is not God. Jacob said, I've seen God face to face, and I think that confirms what his understanding of that would be. Let me just show you because this passage breaks down into something that doesn't exist otherwise; so let's look at it in this context. We're looking at God as the Father, the being who is described in the context of the LORD and the punishments here.

3 continued) *... And in his strength [as an adult, when he was strong] he struggled with God.*

4) *Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed; He wept, and sought favor from Him. (NKJV)*

If you go back to the story here, it doesn't show Jacob weeping, but you can imagine that he wrestled until he could wrestle no more, and then in tears cried out for his blessing. He was seeking a favor or blessing from the Messenger of God and he received it—that's in the story. But read it this way: read the end of verse 3 and then go to the end of verse 4, and look at the wrestling with the Angel as the insert, and here's how it would read: In his strength, he struggled with God ...

4 continued) *... He found Him in [at] Bethel, And there He spoke to us—*

5) *That is, the LORD God of hosts. The LORD is His memorable name. (NKJV)*

Was the Angel of the LORD at Bethel? No. Who was there? Yahweh. Who was it that Jacob heard and got his message from? God the Father. So in his strength he struggled with God, he found Him at Bethel. I believe the other part of that is the insert, where you wrestle with men, you wrestle with God; you struggled with the Angel and you cried out and asked for your blessing. But where did he find God—he found him at Bethel. Did he find the Angel of the LORD there? It isn't in the story. The story has to work. You can't have the God of Bethel be Jesus Christ and His name the LORD of Hosts, and then throw away three-fourths of the rest of the record of scripture—it simply doesn't work that way. So again, I offer that to you. When it goes forward, it just says:

5, repeated) *That is, the LORD God of hosts. The LORD is His memorable name [or, memorial, in the King James].* (NKJV)

I took the New Living Translation [an older, online version] from Hosea 12:4-6, and I want to just read a bit of this again. Hosea 11 and 12 are an indictment against Israel, which means Jacob, and Genesis 32 was where Jacob's name was changed; Genesis 35 is where that was confirmed, okay? So now in Hosea 12,

Hosea 12:4 *Yes, he wrestled with the Angel and won; he wept and sought His favor.* (NLT)

And then it says,

4 continued) *There at Bethel he met God...* (NLT)

I believe that refers back to God, wrestling with God and he found God at Bethel; he did not find the Angel of the LORD at Bethel—it's not in the story. In fact there are two times when we're in Bethel and only God the Father is evident in either one. And we're not talking about Haran and we're not talking about other locations where the story plays out; this is specific.

4 continued) *... and there He spoke with us—*
5) *the LORD is the God of Hosts, the LORD is his name of renown!*
6) *But you must return to your God, maintaining love and justice and always waiting on your God.* (NLT)

The verse then that follows is not talking about returning to Jesus, it's talking about returning to God, and Jacob was wrestling, Israel is being corrected, Judah is being warned. So I believe, again, when you go there, he found Him at Bethel—he found God there, God appeared to him there, the Angel of the LORD did not appear to him there.

Let's go to Genesis 35 then; this is Jacob now returning to Bethel. We've been there one time, Genesis 28, now we're going to go back, Genesis 35. The honest answer is, if I can get through these accounts, then the rest of this you'll have in your notes, but I'll be as close as I can. Genesis 35—Jacob now returns to Bethel; Yahweh—God—is there; the Angel of the LORD is not there.

Genesis 35:1 *Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother."* (NKJV)

Then, verse 6.

6) *So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him.*

7) *And he built an altar there and called the place El Bethel, [or, God of the house of God] because there God appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother. (NKJV)*

The Angel of the LORD did not appear to him there, God did. That's why when you go to Hosea, and it says he found God, then it has to match who he found in the story when he was there.

9) *Then God appeared to Jacob again [that's right, he found God in Bethel, God appeared to him again], when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him.*

10) *And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel.*

11) *Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. (NKJV)*

There's no other way to harmonize the accounts other than to believe what it says. If God appears and He is the only one who appears and Jacob found God at Bethel, here's the God he found and here's the story.

11 continued) ... *Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body.*

12) *The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land."*

13) *Then God went up from him in the place where He talked with him.*

14) *So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it.*

15) *And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel. (NKJV)*

You know what happens if you offer a sacrifice to the Angel of the LORD?—He says, no, don't do that, you offer it to the LORD. Go back to the account in Judges [Judges 13:16] and that is simply what it is in the text. Whenever Jacob was at Bethel, only God the Father appeared. No Angel of the LORD in either Genesis 28 or Genesis 35.

Let's go to Genesis 48 because that is part of the story as well, as it's explained. We now have Jacob's blessing being passed on.

Genesis 48:1 *Now it came to pass after these things that Joseph was told, "Indeed your father is sick"; and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.*

2) *And Jacob was told, "Look, your son Joseph is coming to you"; and Israel strengthened himself and sat up on the bed.*

3) *Then Jacob said to Joseph: "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz [named Bethel, and it was God Almighty] in the land of Canaan and blessed me,*

4) *and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.' (NKJV)*

We have read that twice. He was in Bethel twice, and the promise was reconfirmed but that is exactly the promise that was made. Then up to verse 14.

14) *Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn.*

15) *And he blessed Joseph, and said: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked [God the Father], The God who has fed me all my life long to this day [God the Father],*

16) *The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; (NKJV)*

The Angel—Jesus Christ in this case, based on what we understand and believe.

16 continued) ... *Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."* (NKJV)

We now have *the God who has fed me*, who fed Israel and the descendants, who sent Manna from heaven—God the Father. The Hebrew is, *the God who pastures me*—a Shepherd. The 23rd Psalm comes to mind: The LORD is my Shepherd, and so the reference to *the God who has fed me* is to the Father. But then it says, *the Angel who has redeemed me*. Don't imagine that in terms of redemption from sin. In the Old Testament, God the Father is the redeemer. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is the redemption. When you go in to redeem something from the shop where you sold it, you offer them the price and they give it back to you. The one who pays the price, lays it on the table, is the redeemer; the price is the redemption. Christ is the redemption, God the Father is the redeemer. The words sometimes have a little blend to them but let me just show you in Isaiah 63, a reference that would at least need to be considered in this light. I'm going to have to push this one a little bit together. Verse 7.

Isaiah 63:7 *I will mention the loving kindnesses of the LORD And the praises of the LORD, According to all that the LORD has bestowed on us, And the great goodness toward the house of Israel, Which He has bestowed on them according to His mercies, According to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses.*

8) *For He said, "Surely they are My people, Children who will not lie." So He became their Savior. (NKJV)*

God the Father is our Savior because in the New Testament He offered the sacrifice. Jesus Christ is our Savior because in the New Testament He was the sacrifice. So what is Abraham a type of? God the Father or Jesus Christ? Obviously God the Father. So the reference to God saved Israel out of Egypt, He is indeed their Savior.

9) *In all their affliction He was afflicted, (NKJV)*

It just means God suffered in the sense that He saw His people suffer and He wanted them to do well and to do good.

9 continued) ... *And the Angel of His Presence* [who's presence?—God's presence] *saved them;* (NKJV)

So the Angel of His Presence saved them.

9 continued) ... *In His love and in His pity He redeemed them;* (NKJV)

Again, redeemed in the sense of delivered or rescued, and that is true. That Rock was Christ—He had something to do, He had the power to do it, He had direct instructions to do it, and He did. So we would expect then to see both God and Christ, at times, together in the text, and yet at times God the Father appears, and at times the Angel of the LORD, or, in those cases, whom we believe to be Jesus Christ, appeared.

The mystery of God and of Christ goes way beyond this and I listed that in my notes. There's the mystery of the Kingdom of God; the mystery of the blindness of Israel; of the wisdom of God; of the gospel; mystery of iniquity of the faith; the mystery of godliness. Satan also has a mystery: the mystery of Babylon the Great; he has his own mystery which is his deception as compared to his ultimate revealing, because his purposes are different. The greatest revealing of God's secret is clearly yet to come:

Revelation 10:5 *The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven*

6) and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, (NKJV)

The time is going to come when the mystery of God is going to be complete and it will be fully revealed.

7) but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets. (NKJV)

I do believe, brethren, when we are able to see God face to face, we're going to see Him as He is and I think the mystery is going to be completely revealed. The secret is going to be fully able to be told. We understand God's mysteries because God chose to open our minds, but the record of that came from reading scripture. It came from reading what was here and believing what God said and then responding to God's lead. Brethren, there is no other way.

When you go through this and you see man responding to man's lead; when you see man responding to the commandments of men; when the commandments of men overrule the commandments of God—excuse me—Terry Swagerty sat down from

speaking because he was told he could not say what he had said from scripture because it wasn't what it had said in the literature. Terry says, I will not deny God—I'm done. Commandments of men cannot overrule God's own word. In vain they do worship Me, teaching as doctrine the commandments of men. So, 1 Corinthians 1, you'll see in my notes, possibly Isaiah 29—I changed the end of my sermon just at the last minute and if I can get out the door on this one, 1 Corinthians 1. This is actually quoting from the verse in Isaiah 29, starting in verse 18.

1 Corinthians 1:18 *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

19) *For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." (NKJV)*

Those who have reasoned their way out of the truth, those who have demanded and contained things and required them of others that were not from scripture, God says I'm going to take that away and I'm going to take away the deception. The point is—what? The point is that God has chosen ...

27) *... the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;*

28) *and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,*

29) *that no flesh should glory in His presence.*

30) *But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption*

31) *that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord. (NKJV)*

When God has a mystery and you don't yet know the answer, and He reveals it to you and opens your mind to see and you respond, you give the glory to God. It didn't come by man, it came by God's Spirit. It isn't recorded in man's literature and annals, it is recorded in God's words and scripture, and God's words are true. He has called us to understand the revealing of His mystery and it says in the last days, approaching the time of when that seventh angel sounds, that mystery is going to be complete. We're literally going to see God and we will know the answer.