

# Understanding Scripture

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Good afternoon, it is nice to be able to come down. Reflecting back on the Feast, it was a wonderful, wonderful Feast for us. We were very grateful for the fellowship, and there was a kindness in the relationships and the differences of opinion and perspective, a kindness that connected those who were there, and it was really noticeable to us, and very much a relief and a pleasure to be in that environment.

I started attending with the Church of God in 1973, and I had studied the literature for about a year, and when I walked into services the very first time, I was struck by the conviction and the power of the teaching. I will never forget my first church service, and then I remember going to the Feast. It was too soon for me to be ready for the Feast because I hadn't prepared for it, but I came in for the weekend and I will never forget the first service at the Feast. It was just this incredible conviction and power. In my mind, obviously then, I was looking at what the teaching was and how it was being delivered, but God, in His mind, obviously was working with me by His Spirit, drawing me and convicting me. So there was a power there that I couldn't quantify but I remember sitting in my very first church service, back then it was in Pasadena, California, and I said this is where I was going to be—not location but body. I said this is what I want to do, this is for me, I'm going to be here. Honestly, if you look at that from the perspective of being a part of the ecclesia, then this is where I still am and I'm grateful for that.

In those early years I was taught what was called "the truth". We were all taught it. If there was additional information brought forward that hadn't been taught, then it was called "new truths". It wasn't like it was new but it was new to us. We looked at what we understood as the truth. One thing about that, once you have the truth, you can't change it because if you change it, then it really isn't the truth after all. Conceptually, that was a bit of a problem when the heavy emphasis was on "this is the truth, this is the truth that hasn't been taught, you're being taught and now you have to hold on to it." So in that sense, what I was taught in those early years in the church was as if somebody had handed me a box that had been all wrapped up and tied with a bow, and I had to protect the box—don't let anybody hurt this box; here's the answer, here's the story. So conceptually, I had come out of a worldly environment, not religious, into a body of people who were worshipping God. I tried to hold onto that box and protect it as such.

In the process of time, I began to understand that there were things in that box that actually were perceptions or beliefs but not necessarily the record of scripture. That began a different bit of a process, but in addition to being offered God's word, what we should have been offered was the instruction and understanding to think critically, and by critically I don't mean negatively, but rather analytically. Critical thinking is to analyze information objectively in order to come to a conclusion. Entire institutions are based on not thinking critically—educational institutions, and here is the way I would describe

that: Here's the answer, now repeat back the answer, and the way you get a good grade on the test is to remember the answer that you were told and put it back down on the paper and repeat it. That's not critical thinking, that's not analyzing information, coming to a conclusion, and then living accordingly.

To a degree within the Church of God, historically, we were not expected to have critical thinking, we were expected to protect the package we were handed—here's the answer. I went to college, Ambassador College, and I did take my tests, and I would stay up the night before the test, sometimes all night long, memorizing strings of answers, strings of information, and then we had open Bible in Bible class so in the back of my Bible I would write the notes that I needed to have access to, and I was actually fairly good at that. Putting a phrase in the first place and the second place was actually a device you would use to memorize things, such as in the first room of a house—there was something there and that was the first thing to remember. In the second place you would then walk to the next step. I would make up long stories of information in order to memorize the elements of the story so that I could put back on the test whatever it was that was needed. I was fairly effective at it; I got out of college with good grades. College is a system, education is a system, but brethren, we're not supposed to just take a package and hold on to it and protect it, we're supposed to be able to analyze and evaluate and then understand in order to apply God's word.

In my sermon at the Feast this year, I mentioned that the Bible is like a jigsaw puzzle and there are border pieces—everyone here certainly has done a jigsaw puzzle—and nobody is going to argue with you on a normal puzzle what the border pieces are because they have a straight line on one side. Everybody will agree that's a border piece. You don't have to interpret if it's a border piece, it is defined as a border piece. So in terms of scripture, I believe the Bible is like a jigsaw puzzle. You have to start with the pieces that are, by definition, as compared to by interpretation, the pieces that contain the rest of the puzzle. You put those in place and you have a frame. Once you have a frame, every single piece of the puzzle goes on the inside. Doesn't matter whether you know where it goes, doesn't matter if you know yet where to put it, it goes on the inside. You can't have one piece that disagrees with another piece inside the same puzzle—it doesn't happen. We have a problem with understanding. There are problems with transmission, there are problems with translation, so there are issues and we may not know what the solution is, but you have to know with the border pieces, the rest of the Bible goes on the inside. The definitions are the frame, interpretation goes on the inside. The border is not built with critical thinking, the inside is put together with analysis, contemplation, and God's Holy Spirit obviously needing to lead the way.

I gave seven elements of understanding scripture at the beginning of my sermon, and I walked through them very quickly because my point had to go on in additional ways. In this case, I wanted to go back to the seven points. I've had a little bit of time to do some critical thinking since the Feast, so I've adjusted one of the points and moved a bit on my compilation. I want to walk through those points and I've given you an outline of my notes to be able to follow. I never had time to hand out outlines when I spoke every week because there was simply too much that was required in process, plus I pastored

during the week in the meantime. By giving an outline, my intent is to give you hopefully the opportunity to listen more and to write less. We all have learned to take notes so we can go back and analyze what it was that we wanted to study. Sometimes I find, more and more, that when someone is speaking I am trying to listen—to hear what is said because every time I stop and write something there's a little bit of a gap there in my focus. So to the degree that I only have to speak now, on occasion, I will try to produce an outline so that you can listen and still have the flow of the material and then make the notes that you choose. In 2 Timothy, I want to go to the Bible as the living word of God, which is equal to where I had started at the Feast. So again, my first point is:

## **1. The Bible is the living word of God.**

The active agent in our comprehension is not just an absolutely wonderful explanation, (though hopefully that helps), it's God's Holy Spirit, because you can go to your neighbor and explain something to them and they're not necessarily even going to understand. There has to be a miraculous agent; it's God's Holy Spirit and that is what helps us in our comprehension—that's what secures it. God also provides guides or teachers: Philip goes to the Ethiopian eunuch and asks, "Do you understand what you're reading?" The eunuch replies, "How can I unless someone guides me?" So Philip steps up and begins to teach. Later on Paul was with the Bereans and Paul taught the Bereans. The Bereans then didn't say, well, obviously Paul said so, so that's the truth, no, they went and searched the scriptures daily to see if these things were so. What I've tried to say is that's what my Bible says; I want you to know what your Bible says. It says the same thing but you have to see it, you have to understand it, it has to have meaning to you. The Bereans didn't go search the Talmud, they didn't go search the teachers of the day, they had to go look at God's word and say, is that in my Bible? That's where the Holy Spirit takes its place—how it works in our mind. 2 Timothy 3:14, Paul writing here to Timothy,

**2 Timothy 3:14** *But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them ... (NKJV)*

So there were teachers, among them his grandmother and relatives, and Paul took him under his wing at some point and became a guide and a teacher.

15) *and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

16) *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, [all teaching is not, but all scripture is] and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,*

17) *that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (NKJV)*

Why did God give us His scripture? So that we might do these things and give God the glory due His name. When it says scripture is given by inspiration of God, "inspiration of God" is a single word in the Greek and it's the only place it's used in the New

Testament. It's possible that Paul actually coined the combination of words but it means "God-breathed". It says if God-breathed—and then we have His presence and His word and His law to understand in our own mind—it just means that all scripture, God-breathed, comes from God. Now, all interpretation is not from God, all transmission is not from God, and that's where it takes some critical thinking. At some point in time we have to say the Old Testament has to agree with the New Testament. You can't have a scripture in Jeremiah 31 that doesn't agree with a scripture in Hebrews 8—they have to agree. Now, in their original text they have to agree, and there are times when we have to then stop and analyze, consider, discuss, ask God to open our mind to understand.

Back to Nehemiah 8; I remember going to speak to a group of people in Africa, a couple hundred strong. They had a historical connection to the Church of God and were Sabbath keepers, keeping the holy days; they were not part of the fellowship that we were attending but a friendship had begun to build. As I began to speak, you had people jumping up or making some comment; there was a little bit of evangelical background in this group and they were brand new to me. I was later talking to their leaders and was trying to explain to them why we did services the way we did at that time in our group, and it was a bit different from what they were doing, and I went to Nehemiah 8:1. This is Ezra reading the law; we have the restoration of religious worship back in Jerusalem and in the land after the captivity.

**Nehemiah 8:1** *Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel.*

2) *So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month [which would be the Feast of Trumpets].*

3) *Then he read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. (NKJV)*

It says the people were quiet when he began to teach because we're not having some kind of an activity, we're having instruction. I was trying to explain to the leaders of this group that the purpose of teaching is not to have a fun time, it's to actually transmit instruction and be a guide of God's words to the people. Then go on down to verse 7; it mentions all these individuals there (so I think maybe you'll understand if I don't attempt to mispronounce most of them). The name *Levites* is familiar to me so I'll start there.

7) *... and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law; and the people stood in their place. (NKJV)*

They were listening.

8) *So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading. (NKJV)*

That's what they are, they're guides, they're teachers, and the people were there to listen and try to understand so that they could consider these things. They actually *gave the sense* so there was an explanation; they didn't just read the verse, they explained it. They showed what the context of that would be. Then down in verse 12.

*12) And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them. (NKJV)*

In that sense, that's what I look at as a model for an element of our own services—why we don't have a lot of emotional display. Here, the people were quiet, they were listening, the teachers were teaching, they were teaching from the scriptures, and the people then understood and it made a change. The Bible is the living word of God. We have to do our part, we have to actually read it. What's in our heart God can then bring out when the time comes, but it's not like He's going to put it in there if we don't read it. It's not like all of a sudden He pours in a verse that we never read; you have to have read it and then it is in, hopefully, our heart.

## **2. The Bible is not an English book.**

It would be nice if it was English, right? Sometimes we think it is because we read it in English. The Bible is not an English book. We have to know and understand some of the original terms, we have no choice. If all you do is trust your guide or your teacher to tell you what the answer is, then where is your knowledge, where is your critical thinking? You have to confirm that these things are so or not and that is up to each of us. I've heard people say, I can't do that, that's not my skill. Well, up to the level that God's Holy Spirit works in your mind, it will take place, and you have to take it as far as you are able. Everyone will not necessarily have the same set of skills. I want to mention then just a few of the things—these will be familiar to you—that are a problem in the fact that this is not an English book.

What is the most egregious translation mistake in the Old Testament record of scripture? What's the worst thing in the Old Testament where the translators made a choice and it doesn't work? It's the word "LORD" in all caps. If you read the King James or the New King James, the word "GOD" in all caps is the same word. When the translators saw "Adonai" paired with "YHVH" they didn't want to translate it "Lord LORD" so they translated it "Lord God", even though YHVH was translated LORD in every other place. It would sound odd to translate it Lord LORD but also because Yahweh or YHVH doesn't mean LORD. That is not what it means. It means something like Moffatt tried to use: *The Eternal* was actually a good effort in the English. So that's probably the biggest cloud of smoke in the Old Testament, the way it was replaced with another word—replaced and not translated.

I think probably the greatest problem in the New Testament is the word "church", because it was the same thing now. When Tyndale translated the Greek into English, he

used the word “assembly”, because he was trying to translate the word into English and the word “assembly” would have been a great benefit to us, but the King of England didn’t want that, so the King of England ordered the translators to use the word “church” because the word “church” can connote governments, denomination, edifice, the symbol on the structure, as compared to only the people. I think the biggest problem, maybe, in the New Testament, is how the word “ecclesia” is translated. In the Old Testament it’s the word “Yahweh” or “YHVH”, whichever it is that has been translated, and, again, not actually translated, but replaced by another word.

There’s another issue that we need to understand. When they reference Yahweh in the Old Testament they add the word “the” in the English. So YHVH is translated “the LORD”, but there’s no “the”—it’s a name. By adding the word “the” it makes it sound like a designation or a level of existence or some thing: the car, the building. I’m not the Mark—you understand the difference—I’m Mark, and God is not the Yahweh, He’s Yahweh. So then they add the word “the” in the Old Testament and what did they do?—they took away the word “the” in the New Testament because it actually is in the Greek. So in the New Testament almost all of the references to God in the Greek are written as “the God”, meaning, that one, the specific one, because God is not a name, it’s a designation, a level of existence. So in the Greek they took away the word “the”, and in the Hebrew they added the word “the”.

If our argument is, I don’t need to know any of that, then the honest answer is, you’re not going to, but it will go beyond just “how do I live this Christian life?”— it’s going to go conceptually to the point where you do not fully recognize who God is. That’s what guides and teachers are for. We have something in this age that didn’t exist before—you have biblehub.com, you have the [Blue Letter Bible](#), we have search engines of various kinds and programs that give us exactly what it is we can go check and look for, besides all the reference sources. An honest answer is, none of us has enough time. I have all my time and it’s still not enough; I didn’t used to have any but it still worked— God did what He did.

There’s something else I want to mention because it’s an argument that comes up. Regarding the King James version, the original translation was 1611—has anybody here seen a 1611 version? Can you read it? It’s pretty tough because the spelling changes and the pronunciation changes and the use of the words changes. When someone starts arguing, that’s this and it can’t be changed, and you have to say it the way it is because it’s the only way it would work, I’m going to say, sorry, that is not how language is, that is just not how language is. I can’t read, easily, a 1611 version of the King James.

Let’s take something in my lifetime (and many of yours), the word “gay”. It doesn’t mean what it meant when I was young. It means something totally different now. If I were to say, “I’m gay”, it would come across in a different way than it would have if I had said it at the age of fifteen. That’s because language changes. Now the name “Jesus”, let’s take that as an example, because again the argument is you can’t change the way a name is spelled, and you can’t change the way a name is pronounced, and that has to

stay the same, everywhere you go it stays the same. It's not a true argument, it's not true. If you go to Mexico and they say the name Jesus, what will they say? Jesus, [speaker pronounces it "Hey-soos"], same spelling, different pronunciation. What will happen over time is the spelling will change too. It doesn't stay static after all. So the argument, it has to be this and you have to say it this way, you can think that if you want. If your name is Steven in English, anybody know what your name is in French? Etienne, right? So when you move around through language, if you just stay in English and you move over time, the English itself will change. We have to be aware of the fact that there are modern versions that are making modern translations that are in our current context, and we have to be able to analyze them from that perspective. We cannot always go back and argue that no, the language cannot change.

I want to make a different argument now in terms of using the words that are in the Bible and not using the words that are not. We keep the Passover. Do we keep Easter? Of course not, but the King James translators put Easter in the place of Passover because that's what they wanted that to be as the portrayal. Do we keep the Eucharist? Do we keep Communion? No, but Eucharist and Communion actually have meaningful translation to the Passover, but we don't do that because the Bible didn't call them that. So when we start using words that are not in the Bible, we create problems without even knowing what the problem will be. If you expect to see something, you will see it. If you don't believe it exists and it walks in front of you, you won't recognize it. That's how life works.

I'll give one example. The first resurrection is in the Bible, right? It says so, first resurrection. Does the Bible use the term "the second resurrection"? Does the Bible use the term "the third resurrection"? No, it doesn't. That doesn't mean there aren't other resurrections, the point is the Bible doesn't use those terms. Don't you think God needs to know that? Did He have some easy access to terms He could have used that would have made it perfectly clear and all He had to do was use that and then we'd all know what to say? Where this came up for me initially, going back some time, was during a Bible study for teenagers; I would use one of these terms, and they would say, where is that? You couldn't turn to where it was because it's not there. So now you have to explain, well, here's what it really means and here's where it is, and they'd look and say, really—that's it? It was very, very difficult to teach a young person when you couldn't point to the Bible, read it, and say, it says it right here.

I think there's great risk as well in making terms that are descriptors, that we use, that are not actually in the Bible. "Second death" is in the Bible; you can actually turn to a verse and say, it says it right here. I would be very, very cautious, remembering that our Bible is not an English book, so that we don't start making up any terms that actually aren't reflective of the exact translation. We're not going to solve the problem with "church" and "LORD" because we're not going to write our own Bible and the people that have, even in the Church of God, didn't make those fixes. We have to understand enough of the terms so that we know what at least some of the rules need to be. In terms of the argument that if you have a first resurrection then you obviously have to have a second, logic is not proof; logic is a tool and it's an important tool. Analysis is an

important tool but it's not proof. Proof is scripture. So at some point we're going to have to go and consider the fact that if it's actually here, then we can stand on it, at least to the degree we understand. If it's not, then I can only say circumcision is not logical either. So if the proof is it's only logical, well circumcision isn't logical—doesn't make any sense at all to me. All it is, is that God said, under these circumstances this is what you will do. So it's not based on logic, it's based on God's word.

I have on the table over here the blue index; I call them by their color. Before that was the red, before that was the brown, before that was the green. Very few people have seen the green, only a few the brown, but as this project proceeded over sixteen years they became more recognizable. The next one is the silver. I wanted to make it gold—I wanted it to be the gold standard, and we looked at the gold cover and it just didn't look good. The material didn't look like gold, it looked like material that somebody was trying to make look like gold. It's actually at the press, in the process of production. I hope by the end of the year to have copies of the silver. [Copies are now available.] But here is something I did: If a word was not in the Bible, I didn't use it. In the blue, I did. In the blue index, which was six years ago, I did it so the Church of God could use it with terms they recognized as part of our historical teaching. One specific example would be the second and third resurrection because that's the way we taught those subjects.

In the silver index I took out anything that I thought was "church-speak" and just removed it. There's the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that's accurate. There's a resurrection to condemnation, that's accurate—it's a descriptor, it's not a made-up term but it's a descriptor. I went through opportunity for salvation, and various judgments, making sure that as I used terms, I was not adding terms that were in addition to the record of scripture. In a moment we'll look at John, chapter 20. I want to go back to the fact that the Bible is not an English book. The scriptures I pulled for this sermon and I reordered, honest answer is scriptures don't all exist in some fine box of understanding. You could use one scripture in more than one place so I realize there's a certain amount of fluidity to where I pick to emphasize something; just be patient with me in that course and I will at least try to show you the explanation that I intended. John 20:24; I mentioned this at the Feast but, again, it was just riding by on a fast horse, so to speak, and it wasn't where I could stop and actually explain. Verse 24 is Thomas—also known as "Doubting Thomas"—here seeing Jesus Christ. This is the story, you'll recognize it.

**John 20:24** *Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.*

*25) The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord."*

*So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."*

*26) And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!"*

*27) Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."*



28) *And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"*

29) *Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* (NKJV)

For me to go through that passage in the past would have been to focus on the word *belief* and the meaning of that, and being believers, but my point today is *my Lord and my God*. If you want to discount an argument then what you probably will often do is find an exception to the argument, focus on the exception, and use that to rule out the argument. That doesn't work. If you have a hundred things that agree and then you have five things that don't seem to agree, what's the answer—the answer is the hundred things. Unfortunately, too often in the past of our historical teaching, we made doctrine out of the five and just wrote the others off or ignored them or left them alone. In the presence of Jesus, Thomas refers to Jesus as my Lord and my God.

If you go to the Greek, [biblehub.com](http://biblehub.com), just to show you what the Greek is, it's very simple; it will say "my Lord and my the God". So Christ is now referred to as the God in this case, and what I've been arguing is "the God" is the Father. Here's the answer—a friend of mine who is conversant in the Greek and knows the language, says that's possessive. There is one place that we have found in the entire New Testament where Jesus Christ is referred to with the word "the" before God—one place, right here, that's it. I mentioned again at the Feast that it's common to designate a ship as a "she" but that doesn't mean a ship is feminine, it just means somewhere along the way that became a rule of grammar. There are rules of grammar—you do certain things in certain ways. This is a possessive reference to God. When the Greek is possessive you add the word "the" to the text, it's a grammatical rule. That doesn't mean that Christ is the God because there's probably a couple hundred references to the Father as the God, and I went through John 1:1—"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with the God," in the Greek, and what it should be is "and a God was the Word". So Christ is God, a God, but God the Father is the God.

Can you take this one reference in John 20 and discount all the other references in the New Testament—no. You can only do it if you don't know the answer. The answer is that's a grammatical rule because of the possessive form shown in the text—that's it. It doesn't extend anywhere beyond that. So we have to learn a few of those things and maybe we need some guides or teachers, each of us, so that we can go look at them and confirm; you can certainly go do that. You won't confirm it in the English but you can confirm it on the Internet or with a different type of reference material.

Another point I made that I want to expand on is:

### **3. The Bible is not extra-biblical.**

I was reading something recently that was arguing from the Aramaic Targums—that they were so clear, and they gave additional sense to the meaning and were used to interpret the text. Sorry, the Aramaic Targums are not scripture. The Talmud is not scripture, commentaries are not scripture. You can go look up all the commentaries you

want, they're actually useful for critical thinking, but if you're looking for the answer and you think the answer is the commentary, the answer is the scripture, because the commentaries are opinions. So the literature, including church literature, including study papers, those are issued materials for us to use to help with critical thinking and analyzing, but they're not the answer, the answer is in the Bible. So we can't go to the extra-biblical source and say that's the proof. The proof is not Jewish custom and tradition either. I've heard a number of sermons given, walking through showing what the custom of the Jews was, what their traditions were, how the marriage ceremony went, all the steps and what took place, and I've heard it used as proof of what the meaning is in the Bible—it is not. It's interesting, it might be helpful or useful, but it is not proof, this is proof [the speaker points to his Bible], and we have to always keep that in the order.

I want to go to Exodus 3. I can't hardly get around without bumping into Exodus 3 because it's so significant and it's so earth-shaking compared to what I was taught for many years. This will be one of the longer passages that I read but I do want to address Exodus 3.

**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 of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. (NKJV)*

*The Angel of the LORD*, in our understanding, clearly, here, is Jesus Christ. Every single place it says *Angel*, in some significant way, even if it's capitalized, is not proof because the Hebrew language has neither upper nor lower case letters. I've heard church members say, it's capitalized, so that tells you. No, that tells you that the translator tells you what the answer is. So you have to look at each one and you have to be willing to consider. Just because it's capitalized versus not isn't the answer, but it might be helpful.

2) *And the Angel 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 saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush ... (NKJV)*

Now the Angel of Yahweh and Yahweh are not going to be the same individual, the same Being. The Messenger of Yahweh tells you there are two Beings and what's interesting is when you begin to study it out, God and Christ are together over and over and over, doing things, actually both of them, in the text. Maybe sometime I'll have a chance to go through some of those; there are repeated references where they are both there. There are times when it's just Christ and there are times when it appears to be

just God the Father, but if all things are of God and all things are through Christ, then their relationship is going to be very, very close.

For us to have made God into a deadbeat dad who misses the birth and skips the wedding and shows up after everything is put in order—can't get His hands dirty with sin—you know what that means? That means if you are converted and God can't get His hands dirty with sin, it means you don't have God's Spirit, because you sin, I sin. That's God's Holy Spirit that is being referenced, and if He's in us and we sin, then He can be around sin. The Bible doesn't say God can't be around sin; see, that's a problem. We said that, but it isn't what the Bible said, that was our explanation that was wrong. He certainly can. He is not going to dwell with sin. If we refuse to put Him first and cleanse ourselves in the sense of becoming righteous, not just by implication of the Spirit but by our behavior, then God will remove His presence from us the way He removed His presence from the Temple—that's the warning.

So this goes forward; we have two Beings here, both God and Jesus Christ, together:

**Exodus 3:4** *So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush ... (NKJV)*

I'm going to go later and confirm in the New Testament to show that there's no distortion in this, the confirmation is in scripture. You can forget about what the commentaries say; the guy who wrote the commentary might be trinitarian and for him it doesn't matter: If the God Beings are all the same but they're all different, and you can't understand the trinity because it's a mystery, then you can say whatever you want, so it's okay? Well, no, you can't say whatever you want.

4 continued) ... *And he [Moses] said, "Here I am."*

5) *Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground."*

6) *Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." (NKJV)*

Let me ask this question: Is there any place in the entire Bible that explicitly states that Jesus Christ is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Explicitly—not intuitively, not interpretively. The answer is no. What does the Bible say? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant, Jesus. It explicitly says, God the Father is; it never explicitly says, Jesus Christ is. So this must be Jesus Christ, right? No. It's what the Bible specifically, explicitly says, so this is God the Father.

6 continued) *And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.*

7) *And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.*

8) *So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk*

*and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.*

9) *Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.*

10) *Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, (NKJV)*

Whose people are we? We're the people of God. Which God? God the Father. We're the Church of God. Which God? God the Father. It will be the Kingdom of God—Which God?—God the Father—same, it's the same.

10 continued) *... the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”*

11) *But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”*

12) *So He said, “I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.” (NKJV)*

That has to tie in. Who is it they went to serve on the mountain when the commandments were given? They were to serve God. Which God? God the Father—the first commandment. Terry Swagerty gave a sermon at the Feast, “What Difference Does it Make?”; it makes a big difference. It quite frankly makes a big difference whether or not you are referring to God or Jesus Christ.

13) *Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?”*

14) *And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’*

15) *Moreover God said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.’ (NKJV)*

What is a reference to the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?—*I AM*. Is Jesus Christ's name *I AM*?—John 8:58—no, it is not. Does the Greek match the Hebrew? If you translated the Hebrew into the Greek, would you get the word *I AM*?—you would not. The only connection between the argument is in the English. It's not an English book so we have to be very, very careful.

I will give you this: When you have your computer, your smart phone, whatever you use, google the “Billy Graham Evangelistic Association” and then google “The ‘I AMs’ of Jesus”, and you will find a sermon that you will have heard any number of times from the Church of God ministry, over the years, on the archives, that is the same effective sermon that Billy Graham gave on the I AMs of Jesus, and he will tie in the connection of Jesus Christ as the I AM to the I AM of Exodus 3. That's just how that works. Just

because somebody says something and they're not part of the Church of God community doesn't make it wrong. Billy Graham is an honorable person by almost any record I've ever seen, and has sacrificed and served and worked hard in his life to forward what he believed. So it's not a criticism but the point is this, the I AMs of Jesus and the connection back to Exodus 3 is not a biblical doctrine. It is an English argument and quite frankly it is a Protestant sermon. Don't go to the bookstore to see what book just got written by somebody so that you can use that as an example in the Church of God and begin to teach the same as they. You're going to run into problems, they are going to not have the comprehension in some ways that is needed.

I'll give you something else to google in this context to show why Exodus 3 is so important to me. Google the Mormons; they don't want that term used anymore (and that's fine—I call the Presbyterians the Presbyterians, the name is not important), but I tried googling the "Church of Christ", or the "Church of Jesus Christ", which is a shortened version of what they want to be called, and it didn't come up. It brought up the Church of God literature instead. So google Mormons, then google "the God of the Old Testament". You know what cost me my job in the Church of God? When I pointed out that it was Moroni who pointed out who the God of the Old Testament was to Joseph Smith. That was the moment it was over. Moroni is a fact of Mormon history; he is the spirit who explained to Joseph Smith the meaning of the golden plates. It was Moroni who told Joseph Smith that Jesus Christ is the God of the Old Testament and that was long before our Church of God existence had even started, at least to our knowledge. That material was there before we arrived on the scene. It was wrong before we got here and it's still wrong. I'm not saying that's where we got it. I have a suspicion that that material was at least considered because threads of that then also go back further. The point is this—the Bible is not extra-biblical. You're not going to have the answer in a commentary or in a Talmud or in a Jewish tradition, but critically thinking, those issues might be worth considering in order to analyze the facts.

Let's look at Mark chapter 12—I want to go forward to show you the unity and conformity of the Bible and scripture. In Mark 12:24, we have the story of the Sadducees; they're trying to trip up Jesus Christ by asking about a resurrection they don't even believe in. That's amazing—I've certainly seen some of that take place where the whole argument was to win rather than to understand, and that to me is such a sad place for the discussion to be. In verse 24 Jesus responds. The question is framed around a woman who had seven husbands and each of them kept dying. So the Sadducees asked, in the resurrection, whose wife will she be?

**Mark 12:24** *Jesus answered and said to them, "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God?"*

*25) For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.*

*26) But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read [now notice this] in the book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him ...*

*(NKJV)*

Jesus said *God* spoke to Moses at the burning bush. Jesus didn't say, I AM was there and I did this—He didn't say that. God the Father is Jesus Christ's God: *My God, My God*, Christ cried out.

Here is Christ saying that God spoke to Moses,

26 continued) ... *saying, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" ?*

27) *He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken.*" (NKJV)

Do we have to interpret Exodus 3 to see what it says? No, Christ gives us the answer right here in Mark. This happens in the Bible in many different directions. What we have to be willing to do is consider the fact that some of these things are defined internally, and stop relying on the fact that we have sometimes defined them externally, interpreting them in a way that was not equal to scripture.

Going on then, one of the other points I didn't give at the Feast, but am now modifying, by moving this one in and a different one out:

#### **4. The Bible uses the Old Testament as the foundation of the New Testament.**

How many direct quotes of scripture from the Old Testament are in the New Testament? There are all kinds of lists but I looked it up just to see what the numbers might be; let's say a couple hundred plus of direct quotes. I went through some of those direct quotes in my sermon at the Feast. How many references are there that refer to a scripture?—maybe don't quote it directly or it's a partial—four or five times that much, so you're up in the range of a thousand or more now in the New Testament. When you study, at times you're going to have to slow down. I know we're busy, okay? Everybody's busy, everybody's got things to do, and you can't get done what you're already doing now, and I'm going to slow you down and tell you to go back and read the original passage. See what it says; you're going to be amazed what you're going to learn. We've made doctrines in the Church of God out of one word. One word—death. One word—sea. We've made an entire doctrine out of a word. Just go back and see what it referred to and see what it says, and you're going to see some things that are going to crystalize in a different way.

Let me give you Mark 1. This is fascinating because these are quotes from the Old Testament, and if we go back to the Old Testament, plus take into account what Christ gave us in the New, it's going to show that it isn't necessarily what, on face value, we would assume this to be.

**Mark 1:1** *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*

2) *As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You."* (NKJV)

The above is a quote and it's from Malachi 3:1.

3) *"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.'* (NKJV)

The above is from Isaiah 40:3.

On a fast horse, you read through these two quotes—I send my messenger before your face to prepare the way before you; the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare of the way of the LORD, make His paths straight—and I used to think these were the same thing. I used to think of them as just kind of a repetition, though each was from a difference place. Why don't we just stop and look at what it is that the Bible says. Let's go to Luke 7 to start with. *I send My messenger before Your face.* Luke 7:24. It's pretty clear because it says:

**Luke 7:24** *When the messengers of John had departed, He began to speak to the multitudes concerning John: [Jesus now speaking] "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?*

25) *But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings' courts.*

26) *But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.*

27) *This is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,*

*Who will prepare Your way before You.'* (NKJV)

Jesus Christ said that's John the Baptist. Now, let's go back to Mark 1 and read the second part again, Mark 1:3.

**Mark 1:3** *"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.'* (NKJV)

If you're using a New King James, the word *LORD* here is all caps. If you're using the King James, it won't show up—it will read as *Lord*, no caps. What they did in the New King James, it's not that the word Yahweh is in the Greek, it's not, but they recognize it as a quote from the Hebrew and they will actually transmit the reference to Yahweh, in caps, to show you what it would be in the original. It's not actually in the Greek but they've done that, they've done that as a tool. Now we're saying, excuse me, if we're going to prepare the way for Christ, now it says we're going to prepare the way for God the Father. Well, that's kind of an important distinction, I would think. Let's see if we can confirm who it is. This is from Isaiah 43. I want to read two other verses in Isaiah and then I'll read Isaiah 43 last. Let's go back to Isaiah 11. *Prepare the way of the LORD.* If we slow down and we say, okay, I want to go back and see what that says in the Old Testament and see if I can learn something from that, then you're going to go to Isaiah 11:15, and it will say:

**Isaiah 11:15** *The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt; With His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River, And strike it in the seven streams, And make men cross over dryshod.*

16) *There will be a highway ...* (NKJV)

Isn't that interesting—the New Testament says prepare the way of the LORD, which might lead us to think it says we just need to go God's way. But when you go back to Isaiah, it's not a way, it's a *highway*. I'll read you three of these and then the third one will be Isaiah 40, and you'll see the connection.

16) *There will be a highway for the remnant of His people who will be left from Assyria, as it was for Israel In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.* (NKJV)

The fact is, God made a highway for Israel to leave Egypt and this is a prophecy that God is going to make a highway so His people can return to—where?— to Jerusalem, and it's called *a highway for the remnant of His people*.

Now let's go down to Isaiah 35. Once you see this, you recognize that there is John the Baptist, in part, Christ said so, but it is declaring the fact that we're going to one day be going up to Jerusalem to worship God. God is going to make a provision to bring His people. He brought them out of Egypt to the mountain to Himself, He's going to bring them back into Israel to Jerusalem to Himself. When you went up to the Tabernacle to pray, who did you pray to—God the Father. Did you pray to Jesus Christ? You prayed to God the Father, you offered sacrifices to God the Father. Who did you offer sacrifices to and pray to in the Temple?—God the Father. In the New Testament, when they had the Temple?—God the Father. In the Millennium, in the Temple, is it going to change? When did it change? Who changed it? It never changed. We're going to worship God the Father in Jerusalem. Going on to Isaiah 35:1.

**Isaiah 35:1** *The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;* (NKJV)

I only mention that to reference the Millennium so we know the context, the timing of the prophesy, then you go over to verse 8, and it says,

8) *A highway shall be there, and a road, And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness.* (NKJV)

What's it for? You are going to follow the highway to God and He's going to bring you to Himself and restore you to your worship at Jerusalem—that's the prophesy. Prepare you the highway of Yahweh. That's what the point is. You're not going to see that in the English. You have to slow down, ask where's that from, what's connected to it. Isaiah, chapter 40, is where it's actually from. I read you the other two references because they're in the book of Isaiah and they're the same point. This is the specific reference—Isaiah 40:1-3.



**Isaiah 40:1** *“Comfort, yes, comfort My people!” Says your God.*

2) *“Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the LORD’s hand Double for all her sins.”*

3) *The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the LORD; [all caps, YHVH] Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. (NKJV)*

That’s where it comes from and that’s what it means. If you just read the English, you’re going to believe it means some generic “way of God” or “way of the Church”, but it is a highway to go worship God, and it will be restored and implemented at the beginning of the Millennium. John the Baptist was certainly a type of that and Christ said that’s him, but it goes on in reverse to a different place, the book of Isaiah, and it has a different meaning. We’re going to go up to Jerusalem to worship God the Father in the Millennium just exactly the way they worshipped Him in the time of Christ and the time of Solomon and the time of Moses. God does not change. Malachi: I do not change, says the LORD of Hosts. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. Do they learn things?—yes. Do they change in character and nature?—no. Does their relationship change?—no. Their relationship has always been the same.

## **5. The Bible is to be read in context.**

I was taught that the Bible was to be read here a little, there a little. You take a piece over here, you add it to the piece right here, you add it to the piece over there and then you have the answer. Actually, in some cases if you do that, you’re going to have confusion, not the answer. The Bible is to be read in context. Isaiah 28 is where that comes from. Isaiah is such a wonderful book and there are so many references that are so significant but it would take a long time to walk through, it’s a very big passage. Isaiah 28:1.

**Isaiah 28:1** *Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, Whose glorious beauty is a fading flower Which is at the head of the verdant valleys, To those who are overcome with wine! (NKJV)*

God is talking about those who are drunk, they’re filled with the pleasures and cares of this life. They’re not looking to God, they’re not focused or attentive. Down to verse 7.

7) *But they also have erred through wine, And through intoxicating drink are out of the way; The priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink, They are swallowed up by wine, They are out of the way through intoxicating drink; (NKJV)*

I think the point here is pretty clear if you just read through it. God says, you know what?—you’re out of it. You are so far out of it that I’m not even going to talk to you any more.

7 continued) ... *They err in vision, they stumble in judgment.*

8) *For all tables are full of vomit and filth; No place is clean.*

9) *“Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts?”*  
(NKJV)

Do you think He’s going to take a baby and teach him the knowledge of God? No, it’s not going to work.

10) *For precept must be upon precept...* (NKJV)

The words *must be* are in italics so that’s an attempt by the translators to make sense out of the passage. Take the *must be* out in this case (sometimes it helps, in this I don’t think it does); it just says,

10 continued) ... *precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little.*”

11) *For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people ...*  
(NKJV)

He goes on to say, verse 13,

13) *But the word of the LORD was to them, “Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little,”* [Notice: the word of the LORD was to them,] *That they might go and fall backward, and be broken And snared and caught.* (NKJV)

You know what? If the scripture is line upon line, here a little, there a little, you know what might happen to you? You might be falling backward, be broken and snared and caught. This is how knowledge is hidden, not how knowledge is revealed. This is not how we are to study scripture. I don’t mean that you can’t take the passages that are related and add them up together, but you do not pick out one verse from a chapter, and another verse, and put it over there, and a third verse and put it somewhere else; the scripture is meant to be read in context. Let me show you one of my very favorite examples that you’ll all recognize, historically, in terms of the church. Isaiah 11. What is Isaiah 11 about, what’s the subject that we use all the time? The lion and the lamb, right? What else is it about? Do you know, if we don’t talk about the rest of it? Let’s start with verse 6.

**Isaiah 11:6** *“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them.* (NKJV)

That’s Isaiah 11, the emblem historically of the Church. Now go back to verse 1, part of the same context.

- 1) *There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots* [that's Jesus Christ, prophetically].
- 2) *The Spirit of the LORD [YHVH] shall rest upon Him* [so there are two Beings being referenced: God the Father, giving His Spirit, to rest on Jesus Christ, who would come in the flesh], *The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.*
- 3) *His delight is in the fear of the LORD ...* (NKJV)

If you go to the Feast and they read Isaiah 11, how many times are you going to hear the lamb and the leopard and the kid and the toys and the wild animals? Well, every time. How often are you going to hear the verses immediately before it that are the same passage, that His delight is in the fear of the LORD? You'll hear it maybe some but not to the same degree. Why?

I believe it's because what we really want to focus on sometimes is the fact that God is merciful, He's kind, and the Millennium is going to be abundant and a blessing. But God is also just, and during the Millennium He's going to be that way as well. So the first verses of this are God is just, the next verses are God is abundant and merciful—it's the same God, it's the same passage. We need to read the one with the other, not the one at the exclusion of the other—it's all right there.

When we start to do that, take a passage, and keep it together, then we're going to understand God more fully. I'll mention in passing, for sake of time, Isaiah 65. Go read it for yourself. Isaiah 65 mentions the new heavens and the new earth. It also mentions the hundred years the child will not die prematurely, the sinner (who dies at a hundred years old) being accursed, and then it mentions people having houses and vineyards and babies. They will not labor in vain.

Again, if you go back historically—I listened to a sermon literally within the last week in which the speaker said, well, the new heavens and new earth, that's way, way, way out there, we know that. Then he said, this hundred-year period is not necessarily a hundred years, it's just a full, long lifetime, and he begins to talk about man in the great white throne judgment in the hundred years. Then he says, these people are having babies—of course there are no babies in the great white throne judgment—so he says, this kind of goes back and forth, in and out of the Millennium—the symbolism goes back and forth in and out of the Millennium.

When he got done, the best I could say is, I didn't used to know what that chapter meant either; I didn't used to know the answer either, and I taught pretty much just the way he did. It meant nothing when he was done. There was no understanding or comprehension of the new heavens and new earth, or the meaning of the hundred years, or the fact that there were people having babies in that context. It's one passage talking about one thing; go back and read it for yourself. There has to be a way inside the border of the puzzle for us to have understanding of how those pieces are then connected in a story flow that works. Again, that would be an entirely different place for me to go. The fact is, I believe that God didn't mean for us to scissor up Isaiah 65, send

it to three different places, unrelated, and define the meaning of the passage away. That's not how you understand; that's here a little, there a little, and that is how confusion ensues.

## 6. The Bible is not contradictory.

The Bible does not contradict itself. There are places where we're not going to know what the answer is but let's look at it conceptually. If the pieces on the border are the definition pieces, then those pieces are things we should be able to agree on because they are definitions, but the minute you get into the middle using critical thinking, there are going to be pieces that we have to place based on interpretation. I believe these two connect right here. This is not a literal puzzle, it's a puzzle in the way the scripture has been presented. When we start doing analysis and reasoning then what you're going to find is some of us are going to come up with a different answer on some things.

There's going to have to be room in God's body for people to use critical thinking and analysis, in good conscience, and be able to openly discuss and consider these things, and they're not all going to come to the exact same conclusion. I would like to say if we are all humble and we all submit ourselves to God then we'll all end up in the same place. I hope we will in terms of the Kingdom of God but in terms of all of the discussions along the way, maybe not immediately. Did Paul always agree with Barnabus? We could say, well, that wasn't doctrine so it doesn't count. Well, did Paul always agree with Peter? That was doctrine. Did Paul always agree with the Jerusalem church? Did Peter always agree with the Jerusalem church when he went to baptize Cornelius? Did he go to Jerusalem and say, gentlemen, we need to get in consensus on this to see if this works; if this process works then I'll go do it. No, he did what God gave him to do and it wasn't based on consensus. So consensus is important to Spirit-led people but is it the answer? No, the answer is God's Holy Spirit and His scripture. If we love each other, respectfully, we'll treat each other kindly and respectfully and we will receive spiritual gain on these things.

Let me show something—I'm trying to think of which part of this is most important. One of the reasons I can also hand out notes is because if I run out of time, you'll at least know where I wanted to go if I could have gotten there. Exodus 23:20. I want to show you an example of where you have to stop and think about it, and decide, as much as possible, what it is that God is revealing.

**Exodus 23:20** [God says] *"Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared.*

*21) Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him. (NKJV)*

God the Father's name is in Jesus Christ. Jesus—Yeshua, meaning "God is salvation". Christ, meaning "the Anointed". Whose anointed?—God the Father's Anointed. The fact is, there are different ways you can look at the names, and God said His name was in this Angel.

22) *But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.*

23) *For My Angel [My Messenger] will go before you ... (NKJV)*

I believe this is a reference to Christ in the Old Testament. Again, those are matters we would have to discuss but in some respects I think we're going to agree. But notice Exodus 33; His Angel is going to go before Israel and lead them, guide them in the way. Now Exodus 33:12.

**Exodus 33:12** *Then Moses said to the LORD, [this is a command to leave Sinai, to go out; it's very closely related to Exodus 23] "See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.'*

13) *Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people."*

14) *And He said [God said], "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."*

15) *Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.*

17) *So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name." (NKJV)*

Exodus 23:20 said He was going to send an Angel. Exodus 33:14 said His own Presence—*My Presence*—would appear and go before them. What's the answer? Just keep looking. Go to Isaiah 63 and you're going to have something now to at least consider. Isaiah 63:7.

**Isaiah 63:7** *I will mention the lovingkindnesses 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)*

Both God the Father and Jesus Christ are referred to in scripture as the Savior. One Savior offered the sacrifice, one Savior was the sacrifice, but they're both referred to as Savior.

9) *In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them; (NKJV)*

Well, now you've got a verse that says He's going to send His Angel, then it says My Presence will go before you, then you have a verse that says the Angel of His Presence, and My name is in Him. My answer to that would be they're all the same.

They add information to each other. They don't interpret each other, they simply compile additional elements of what God intended, and I believe that He sent Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was sent—just as He was sent in the New Testament, He was sent in the Old Testament. You go forward and in verse 11, it says:

11) *Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying:  
“Where is He who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of His flock?  
Where is He who put His Holy Spirit within them ... (NKJV)*

Who put His Holy Spirit in them? God the Father, but notice they are together repeatedly once you begin to see it. Where is *He* who brought them up out of the sea *with* the Shepherd of His flock? Who is the Shepherd of His flock?—Jesus Christ. Who brought them out of the sea?—God the Father, gave them His Spirit. They're there, they are both in the passage. This repeats itself numerous, numerous times. The Bible is consistent. The exception is the not the answer, the answer is the answer. Paul said before Felix, Acts 24, I worship the God of my fathers, that's what he said. Was he saying he worshipped Jesus Christ? No, he wasn't. He was saying that he worshipped the God of his fathers. Stephen said, God the Father said that He was the God of their fathers. That's what Stephen said in Acts 7. Look at Acts 5. These are a string of references that are all the same. If you go to Acts 5:29 (the apostles have been on trial and are accused), notice what Peter says here.

**Acts 5:29** *But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men.*

30) *The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. (NKJV)*

Paul knew what Peter knew. Peter knew the God of their fathers was the one who raised up Jesus. Acts 3:13—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant, Jesus. Acts 3, Acts 5, Acts 7, Acts 24—they are all the same. You cannot take and change the scenario to fit a doctrine that doesn't exist. You have to go with the record of scripture. The God of the fathers of Israel was the Father of Jesus Christ.

I believe that it would be helpful for us to begin to focus in specific ways how God has revealed these things to us by His Holy Spirit. Read it in the context, learn the meaning of as many of those terms as we can, recognize that English is not the first language—this is a translation, which includes the bias. Even if it's the honest perspective or not, that's part of the text. It isn't extra-biblical. By God's Spirit we will understand these things. Once you put the frame on, or rather, assemble all the border pieces—and we all have to agree, there's a line on one side, we don't have to disagree on that, we agree that's a definition—then everything has to go inside. We have to think about that, critically think about that. We have to be able to discuss it with each other in honesty and integrity and respect—love and respect. And you know what? I believe in the course of time God will begin to show us these things.