

## 201416 caesareaphilippi joeamaral 20140804am

Hey guys, everybody got their coffee and Timbits? Awesome. Well, listen, as you're finishing up just your coffees and stuff, we're going to have just a casual time together this morning. I don't normally sit, but this is kind of nice.

I'm not sitting in the seat of Moses, so don't worry. There must be Pentecostals here. Look at all you guys in the back rows.

Oh my goodness. Wow. Revival today.

There's a Baptist in the front row. Wow. Well, this is nice just to kind of have a smaller, more intimate, just kind of a non-formal time together with the guys.

I'm just going to talk about some things this morning that I don't usually do in a larger meeting or in a Sunday morning service because it's kind of, it's more teaching. It's not really, you know, churchy in the sense of, you know, altar call and making you feel good and all that kind of good stuff. This is more about, hey, let's look at some stuff and let's go like really deep today because we can do it in this kind of setting.

And if we have time, maybe we'll do a little bit of Q&A at the end. If you could keep your questions to the topics at hand, please. I'm always afraid to give over the mic to people I don't know because the number one question is, when's Jesus coming back? They always ask me that.

And I always have to tell them, listen, he told me, but he made me swear not to tell. So don't, so don't ask. And yeah, so we're going to skip all the normal introductions that I do, you know, going through the ministry and who we are and what we do.

And hopefully by now you, you know who we are and you, and you know what we do. So I'm just going to kind of tell you one last time about what we have, the back table there, if this will move. Is that on, bud? It's moving on the screen, on your screen? It's not up here? Okay.

Oh, I saw something. Here, just keep enjoying your coffee for a second. Yeah, it's important that you guys have, that we have the PowerPoint today because there's a lot of images that you need to see to kind of understand what we're talking about while they're doing that.

If you hadn't had a chance to pop by the book table, we have, I have spent years and years and years researching this information. And, you know, people say, man, like, how do you, how do you do it? I said, well, listen, this is all I do. You know, I don't have a full-time job in the sense of, you know, going to an office every day or going around and doing daily business.

You know, I'm not a pastor, so I don't have people to look after. I don't have to go visit people in hospital. I don't have to prepare sermons every week.

So I can like, I can really take the time and just go and invest in these things. You know, somebody asked me about the story and the stars that I did the other night. And they said, how do you learn that much in 18 months? I said, well, when that's all you do, you better be good at it.

You know, I pastored for a long time. And when I pastored, I really, really did love it. Are there any pastors here? Okay, well, I'll pray for you.

God bless you. It's hard being a pastor, man. You don't punch in at 9 a.m. and punch out at 9, 5 p.m. It doesn't work that way.

And so, you know, being on the road and doing what I do, I get a lot of time just to really go deep and focus just on one part of the Bible. And for me, it's been studying Jewish history, Jewish literature, and the Jewish culture in general. And so this morning, we'll spend 30, 40 minutes, whatever, just kind of walking through some deeper teachings that I normally don't get to do on a Sunday morning.

So like I said, if you haven't had a chance, please pop by the book table. It's not that, you know, that makes me feel good or important that people buy my stuff. But, you know, if you would like my children to eat, please just go to the back.

But don't feel guilty. Just, you know, it's fine. Just, you know, whatever.

See, you never say that in a big service. You never say that. We can say that here.

We're joking, but I'm serious. Okay, let's move on. Oh, tonight, I've been asked to talk about what's happening in Israel with the Israeli, people call it the Palestinian conflict.

We're going to look at the term Palestinian tonight. What is that? What is a Palestinian? And why is there a conflict? Why can't Arabs and Jews just get along already? That's what people say to me. Why can't they just get along? What's their problem? So we're going to address that tonight.

And things have been heating up. They've been escalating. There's been ceasefires broken over and over and over again.

There's been thousands of rockets launched. There's been way too many casualties on both sides, too much suffering. And I'll even just preface tonight by saying this, you know, God loves Jews and God loves Arabs.

He's not willing that any should perish. He wants all to come to everlasting life. But there is an issue.

There is something at the core that's causing this conflict. And we'll talk about that a little bit tonight. And again, I may or may not open it up to Q&A, because when you talk about Israel and Gaza and the West Bank, it can be a bit of a Pandora's box.

You can get a lot of things going. So I'll try to be objective, yet truthful. You know, sometimes people think that in order to be objective, that you can't tell the truth.

I think you have to tell the truth. You have to tell it in love. You might not like the two plus two is four, but it is four.

And so you might not like why I think there's a conflict in that region. But, you know, the source is the source. And so we'll talk about that tonight.

So if you're here, come on out seven o'clock again. We're doing OK. All right.

Well, let me take you to the story here in Matthew. Matthew 16, 13 and 18. And let's make this very, very Israeli in style.

Think of me as a rabbi leading you guys, a bunch of students who have come to a Torah class to learn more. And just like in Torah class, if the rabbi speaking, the student can say, Rabbi, clarify that. Can you confirm that I have a question about that? If you have something nice to say, that's fine.

If you don't. What do they say? What's that? No, don't say it anyways. Didn't your mother ever tell you if you have nothing nice to say, don't say anything at all.

She was Canadian. So no, but seriously, if there's something that you don't understand, I'll say, Joe, can you clarify that? Or like, how do we know that that's the case? Or like, how do we come to this? You know, feel free to ask. One time I was preaching in a church here in Canada and I didn't know the guy, but apparently he was a lawyer.

And right in the middle of my lesson, he stood up and he said, I object. I said, you what? I object. I don't agree with that.

I said, okay, well, let's, let's talk it through. And, and we worked it out. So I don't want to embarrass you.

You don't want to embarrass me. That's not the point, but for something that you'd like a little clarification, please feel, feel free to ask. Okay.

So Matthew 16 is one of those stories in the new Testament. That geography is really important. You know, you read the Bible a lot of times, and we forget that it's about real people in real places.

You know, you read about a city or a person and we spiritualize them and David's this perfect King and Isaiah is this amazing prophet and they are those things, but the Russell people. And so when you read the story, a lot of times, because remember I said, Matthew writes as a Jewish person to Jewish people, when he writes and he says, we're in Caesarea, everybody knows where Caesarea Philippi is. Everybody knows the background.

They understand what's going on and around them. So he never gives the details. I mean, if I said, you know, um, I was at the CN tower and while I was there, I had dinner.

And then I tell my story, I wouldn't explain how high the CN tower is. I wouldn't explain what I can see from the CN tower, how many yards of cement it took to build, how many people it took to build it. I wouldn't say any of that because as a Canadian, you understand the CN tower and you know, you know, the geography.

And so Matthew, like a lot of the guys, when they write, they didn't have the understanding or the vision to know that thousands of years later in lands that they had never heard of, people would be studying their words. So they couldn't write to Canadians. They couldn't write to people who come to a standard camp.

He didn't know how we thought. So he just wrote the way that his own people would understand. For instance, we read in Kings where Elijah confronts the prophets of Baal, right? Where does that story take place? Do you guys remember? No, not the actual first like geographically.

Do you know where it is in Israel? Mount Carmel. Okay. Where's Mount Carmel in Israel? Do you know? Yeah.

Northwest, just off of the shore, not too far from the Mediterranean. You have Haifa, which is a major port city today. You come inland 10 minutes by car.

Boom. You're on Mount Carmel. And so that's the first thing we need to understand about that story.

It's in the northern part of the country. But then Mount Carmel, as you're standing there, and as you look down and you look across, there's a great valley beneath Carmel. And on the other side is Nazareth.

On the other side is all these biblical cities. But the valley that you're looking into when you're standing there, which Elijah doesn't tell you, which the writer doesn't tell you, is the valley of Armageddon. And so here you have on this mountaintop, this battle going on to understand who the God of Israel is.

Because Elijah says, let's stop wavering between opinions. Let's settle this right here, right now. No more questions.

Whichever God answers, he's the true God. He's the victor. But what we don't understand is that the backdrop for that is the valley of Armageddon, where the ultimate battle to determine who the God of Israel is.

And so those kinds of things, knowing the geography of the land, can really help. Now, by the way, this is a non-wow necessary session. So feel free, because I know you have your coffees in

your hand.

If you say wow, you'll spill them on the people beside you. So Matthew 16, let's read it and then we'll kind of break it down a little bit. When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, who do people say the Son of Man is? They replied, well, some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.

But what about you? He said, I don't care what people really are saying. I want to know, what about you? Who do you say that I am? Who do you think that I am? And Simon Peter answered, you are the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Now, we read that and we say, wow, praise God.

Good for you, Peter. What a revelation. But for a Jewish person to call a human, the Son of the living God, punishable by death.

Did you know that? And so Peter has this incredible revelation and he refers to a fellow man. We now know who he is, but they didn't know it at the time. He calls a human being the Son of the living God.

Absolute blasphemy, if anybody had heard it. But Jesus replied and he said, wow, blessed are you. I think Jesus said wow to Peter.

You? Of all the people in the group, I didn't see that one coming. Let's be honest, Peter wasn't the sharpest tool in the shed, okay? So many times it'll be, and Simon Peter said, and Simon Peter said, but no one asked Simon Peter anything. All the time.

He has open mouth, insert foot syndrome. You know that one? I think he created it. But finally, he's actually asked a question and he answers it right.

Jesus says, wow, blessed are you, Simon, Son of Yonah or Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you that now you are Peter. You're no longer, no longer Simon, but you're Peter, Petra.

And upon this rock and on this rock, everybody say this rock. He says, I will build, when we use the word church, my movement of followers, this group of people who are going to follow me and this movement that today we call the church, he says that the gates of Hades or the gates of hell will not overcome it. Now, how many times as pastors and as people, parishioners sitting in church, have we heard that Christ is building his church, right? And the gates of hell shall not prevail.

Have you ever heard that before? Right. And everybody goes, amen. No, I didn't mean for you to say it, but I'll take it.

Okay. But what are the gates of hell? And how do they prevail? That's a question I had. What are the gates of Hades? What are the gates of hell? What are they? But before we get to that, let's

address another question.

Why is Jesus asking them, who do you say that I am? You see, Matthew could have said, Jesus took the disciples and went to the north to get away from Capernaum, where it was busy, where there was a lot of ministry going on. So Jesus took his disciples and went to the north, or he went to a hill far away. But all of a sudden Matthew becomes detailed and he says, no, no, he didn't go just to the north.

He went to the region called Caesarea Philippi. And most of us, let's be honest, we don't really care where Caesarea Philippi is. It doesn't really seem to affect the story.

It's just another place in Israel that many of you will never go to. But Matthew decides, inspired by God, to mention the city by name. And we're going to see here in just a few moments why the name of the city is important because of what's going on in the city in turn lends itself to the question of who do you say that I am? You see, Caesarea Philippi was the head office for Greek mythology in Israel.

Did anybody here know that? Okay, a couple of us. You probably read my book, okay, which is available for \$15 at the back, which will buy two meals for my children. Okay, so I'm so bad.

I'm sorry, George. Where was I? Caesarea Philippi, okay. Caesarea Philippi was the head office for Greek mythology, for Hellenism, for pluralism, for multiple God worship celebrations.

If you think to the south in Jerusalem as the head office for Judaism or the Mecca, if you will, of Judaism, then Caesarea Philippi was that for the Greeks. Alexander the Great had come just 300 years before that and he came from the north over the mountain and when he came to this huge mountain base, he decided to build a camp there. He fortified the city and whenever you come into a new country, the first thing you do is you bring your gods with you.

You set up altars to sacrifice things to that God in thanks for the victory for the land that you just acquired. That was just standard practice in those days. You set up an altar, you worshiped your God, in this case, many gods.

So what's his name? Alexander, yes, sets up this fortress and eventually it grows and it becomes a city known as Philippi and this is where all the pagan activity in Israel takes place. If you want to learn about other gods and you want to worship other gods, it was like the capital of the prostitution in Israel. It was Las Vegas times a million.

It was the worst part in Israel. You went there, you could get anything. What happens in Caesarea Philippi stays in Caesarea Philippi.

It's one of those places and because of this belief that there many gods in Hellenism, they would set up all these altars everywhere. Basically, whenever somebody did something which they believed that was above a human's ability to do it, they would call that person a god. They would build an altar to him and then people would come and they would worship and they

would sacrifice goats and animals and all kinds of things.

So it became a hugely pagan place. Now when Jesus says, who do they say I am? Why is he asking that question? In light of all the miracles I'm doing, surely they must think I'm a god too. Which god am I? Am I Zeus? Am I this god? Am I that god? Am I that prophet? And his disciples start to answer, well the people think actually you're this and you're this and you're that.

He says, I don't care. Who do you think I am? Now let me show you something to kind of just to, not authenticate, but just to show you to validate this whole idea. In Acts 14, 8 through 13, we have a story.

It says that in Lystris, or Lystra, there sat a man crippled in his feet and who was lame from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking and Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and he called out, stand up to your feet. And at that the man jumped up and began to walk.

Look at what it says, when the crowd saw what Paul had done. Now Paul heals one man. How many lame men did Jesus heal? How many dead people did he raise? How many sick did he heal? How many devils did he cast out? Paul does this one miracle and they shouted in their language, the gods have come down to us in human form.

So Barnabas they called Zeus and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and reeds to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them. So do you understand that when a man did a miracle, something beyond human ability, they tagged him a god, they built up an altar to him and they started killing stuff on his behalf.

And as time went on, they would make statues in his likeness and that's how religions grew. And so in this place, this place commemorates all of these false gods. And let me show you a picture of what it looks like today.

You can see here there's niches built into the rock. Do you guys see that? There's a big one here and there's all these little niches there. We're just going to back up a little bit.

See the same gate here? Do you guys see that? So I'll go back again for a second. There it is, they're close. And then we go on wide zoom and there it is again.

So Jesus is here at the base of this place. This is called Mount Hermon. That's how white people say it.

Jews say it Hermon, but we white folk say Hermon. So here they are at Mount Hermon and at the base of this where they have all of these niches in the wall built up to all these gods. Look at what it was like in the time of Jesus.

There's that same niche, you see it? Can you guys see it there? So here it is as it is today, but in

the time of Jesus, it was incredibly built up. People from all over Israel who were tired of just worshipping one God. Maybe their God wasn't answering in the way they wanted.

Maybe he wasn't giving them what they wanted. They said, let's go to Caesarea Philippi. There's gods coming out our ears up there.

Surely one of the gods will hear us there. So people would go up and they would bring sacrifices and do all kinds of deplorable and horrible things. Jews themselves would go.

They would become what they called Hellenistic Jews. They would convert to this Hellenism, to this idea of multiple gods, which of course was against what God said in the Scripture. You shall have no other God but me.

I mean, it was rule number one. And so the building to the far left, you guys see that elongated temple? That was built to a guy named Pan, a Greek god Pan. You guys have heard of the Greek god Pan before? No? Some of you are shaking your heads.

Let me show you. Pan is this guy who was half goat, half man. He's a womanizer.

He used to chase the nymphs through the forest, and he would run around and he would play this flute, and people would run away in terror from him. And that's where we get the term panic, to run in terror. It kind of stems from this.

So he's just one of the many gods who were there. Now let me go back here for a second. In the temple of Pan here, guys, there's an altar, and my wife and I have been there, and several people who've come with me.

Doug, did we go to Caesarea Philippi? We did, okay. Remember that huge opening in the cave? When you walk down to the bottom, there used to be an altar there where they would make sacrifices, and they would throw animals, and some people think even children would be thrown into this river. Their heads would be smashed and die.

And when the blood flowed underneath the cave and it came out into the ponds, they believed it meant that their god had answered your prayer or had accepted your sacrifice. And when you saw the blood go into the pond, your prayers had transcended, had gone. That was the gate into the afterlife into Hades.

So this temple, this worship center became known as the gates of Hades. Okay, I know I told you not to say wow, but you can if you want. That's pretty cool.

So we always think of the gates of hell or the gates of Hades as some spiritual or supernatural realm or term that he uses, but in fact we know now the gates of Hades was an actual place where people would go and worship false gods. And Jesus says, I'm telling you this, I'm going to use you guys. And from this, at this very place, on this rock, we're going to start a movement bringing Jews, bringing people back to the one true God of Israel.

And the gates of Hades, he says, all of these false gods, all this prostitution, all the sacrifice, all of this, the gates of Hades is not going to prevail against the movement that's going to begin with you. Wow. See, within 300 years, Christianity became the official religion of Israel.

The gates of Hades were destroyed, left in ruins, and now there's nothing there. The gates of Hades did not prevail against the church. Yes, sir.

It did for a few hundred years. It did for a few hundred years. People followed, and there's still some Jewish people today who would follow mysticism and following multiple gods, but for the most part, they went back to the faith of their forefathers, which was Judaism.

Hero Israel, the Lord your God is one. Is that pretty cool? You see, this is why we can't do this on a Sunday morning because it's, there's just so much, but in a setting like this, it's just kind of nice to kick back, have a cup of coffee, and go a little deeper. Okay, we can do one more? Yeah? Okay.

Whoa. Yeah. Yeah.

Sure. Yeah. You guys heard his question, right? The Catholic papacy basically has come out of this verse because Jesus gave Peter the gates or the keys to the kingdom, and he said, I'm going to use you to build my church.

And so Peter became the first Pope. We're actually going to look at that a little bit later. We're going to address what Jesus meant when he said, I now give you the keys to the kingdom and whatever you bind is bound.

Whatever you loose is loose. What did that mean? We're actually going to get to that. So I'm not going to answer it now, but I am going to answer it.

And if I don't, I'll, I'll make sure I address it before, before we close. Okay. So we need to understand that Greek mythology was very much alive in Israel at the time.

Judaism was the prevailing religion. It was the common faith of the people, but whether you're Jewish or Portuguese or Canadian, you're Scottish or Chinese, your human nature is to want to check other things out. It is our nature to have what we can't have.

Okay. Adam, there are 1 billion trees in this garden. Just don't touch that one.

Well, why would it mean God? It's our human nature. Remember your kids don't stick a fork in the socket. Don't give them the idea.

They're going to do it, right? Don't touch that drawer. Well, why what's in the drawer, but we always want what we can't have. And Jewish people are no different.

I mean, God wants to rule and be their King. Oh, but God, all the other nations have a King. We want a King too, right? Israel and us, we always want what we can't have.

And so people like this idea of a plethora of gods of a multitude of gods. If this one doesn't answer, you go to the next one. That one doesn't answer.

You go to the next one. They liked having options when it came to gods. And so Hellenism then really becomes, um, a very active religion for about 300 years during, during the first temple period, the time of Jesus.

And you see pieces of it. If you know what to look for, you see, if you didn't know what Caesarea Philippi is, you wouldn't understand what the gates of Hades were, right? Well, there's another story here in John five, which let's be honest. It's a really weird story.

Yeah. I'm going to, I'm going to cover that. You guys heard the question.

It's kind of echoing what we heard here. Like how, how, how do we, how do we grapple with that? Cause he did say, I'm going to use you on this rock to build the church. I am going to address that.

Okay. So I'm not like ignoring it. I will get it.

Cause it's in context. We know the teaching that we're going to do in just a few moments. Okay.

So this is one of those stories where when you read it, you won't admit it, but it's weird. Okay. Let me read it.

And you tell me if I'm, if I'm the only one who thinks it's weird, then that's fine. But I don't think I'm going to be alone. Okay.

It says that sometime later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. Now there is in Jerusalem near the sheep gate, a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda, which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here are a great number of disabled people used to lie, the lame, the blind, the lame, and the paralyzed.

And one who was there had been an invalid or paralyzed for 38 years. And when Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, do you want to get well, isn't it a given if you've been coming to this camp for 37 years and every time there's an altar call for healing, you came to their front. What kind of a question would it be to ask? Are you sure you want to be healed? Like, isn't it a given is that, dude, I've been coming for 37 years.

Yeah, I'm pretty sure I'd like to be healed, but Jesus asked the question anyways. And you got to ask yourself, why would he ask such a question? You have to know the background. You have to know where physically where they are, because it makes sense when you understand and know what was there.

Well, verse 70 says, sir, the invalid replied, I have no one to help me into the pool where the water stirred. Well, I'm trying to get in. Someone else goes down ahead of me.

Then Jesus said to him, we'll get up, pick up your mat and walk. And when I started teaching this, when I was traveling, I went into Bible gateway.com. I found John five, one through eight NIV, uh, highlighted the section I wanted control copy, went into my PowerPoint control paste, didn't look at it, went to a church and I'm reading it. I said, Oh, I missed verse four.

How did I miss verse four? It's just copy paste. How can I mess that up? So back to Bible gateway.com back to the NIV version control, all control, copy, control, paste verse four is missing. We're in the world is verse four.

So I went to another version. I went to the King James, aha, there's verse four. And it's a weird one.

If you'll be honest with me this morning, listen to what the narration says. Same story, insert verse four for an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water, which means to stir or move the water. Whosoever then first, after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatever disease he had.

Now that's, that's different. So let me paraphrase for you. And some of you are looking at me, don't look at me.

It's in the Bible. Okay. This is what it says.

An angel would come from heaven, get in the water. And I don't know what he would do a backstroke tread water, whatever he would do. And the angel would stir the water and get it going.

First went in, got healed too bad for the rest of you. That sounds like God, right? Does that sound like God? Then I wouldn't have a job. So here it is.

This mysterious angel of the Lord comes down, stirs the water. The first one to go in would be healed. The rest of you, I'm sorry.

Come back. Only one miracle per day, limited edition healing. Come back tomorrow and we'll try.

That's why the guy says, I can never be healed because when the water stirred, everybody goes in and like, forget the lame guy too bad. Nobody's going to miss out on a miracle to do something for me because I'll be coming here. Should I live? I'll be coming for another 37 years.

I'm never going to get in that water. So when you say, do I want to be healed? Yeah, I really do, but I don't think it's ever going to happen. Nobody will give up a healing to help me.

So why is verse four in the King James and why is it not in the NIV? Does anybody have the NIV version of what we read? Tell me what it says at the bottom. Yeah. And the footnote.

Yeah. Okay. Does it say anything else about maybe this not appearing in the original

documents or manuscripts? Okay.

Anybody else have a version that says that? Okay. Yeah. So basically what translators are saying is this does not appear in all of the original documents and some of the older documents of verse four is not there.

It seems to be either it wasn't there where it was added later or it was found later and then put in. But the bottom line is it wasn't there originally. It was added at a later time.

Why would somebody add verse four? Well, I'm not asking the question. Yeah. It's an afterthought to explain why the water is being stirred, but we need to understand who is this angel of the Lord and how did healing come? What was the background? Let me just walk you through this a little bit.

By the way, I'm really enjoying you guys asking questions and throwing comments in. If I pastored again, this is how I would do church. I really like this style.

Okay. Let me take you to the pools of Bethesda because I think you need to see the pools to understand the story. Okay.

So here we are just outside the old city of Jerusalem. And if you look to the back, you can see there's original steps. See them all going down.

You can see them on both sides of the screen. Okay. So you come down and we're standing at the top level, at the ground level of the ancient pools of Bethesda.

And that's about from the top to the bottom. It's about a 30 foot drop. Okay.

Yeah. Oh, during the Herodian times. Yeah.

It's part of the aqueduct system. That's how they brought fresh water into here. Yeah.

So that's about a 30 foot drop. So you're paralyzed. You can't tread water.

So somebody is nice enough to say, you know what? I'm going to let you cut in line. So they take this guy and they throw an anchor. Seriously.

If you threw a man into a 30 foot pool and he couldn't tread water, he would drown. So this guy actually really had a lot of faith. Honestly, I don't want to belittle that.

He believed whether it was a legend, whether it was a lie, it doesn't matter. This man believed that if he was ever thrown in the pool during the stirring of the water, he would be healed. This guy had a lot of faith, but what Jesus is challenging is not his faith, but what he has his faith in.

Okay. So at these pools of Bethesda, and you will not find this, by the way, in any Bible, you will not find it in any commentary. You only find it when you go to the land of Israel, when you see it for yourself and you're like, ah, that's why Jesus asked the guy if he wanted to be healed

because there's the ruin of a temple at this pool.

This is like a later one, but it's built upon the original temple that's from the first century and it's the ruins of a temple to a guy named Asclepius. Now, have you heard of Asclepius before? Anybody? No? Nobody here worships Asclepius? Nobody went to the waters to be healed by Asclepius? Who's Asclepius? He's a Greek god. Remember we talked about in the north in Caesarea Philippi that people would go there to worship all these gods? Well, Asclepius was a Greek god.

Now remember, this is a legend. We're not talking about a real god here, but the people believed in the legend of Asclepius. And Asclepius is this guy here.

He's coming up on your left. That's a statue of a recreation. And Asclepius was the god of hygiene and healing.

So this was the legend. The legend was that Asclepius had a snake by his feet. And whenever the healing power of Asclepius began to rise, the snake would wrap itself around his staff.

And as the snake wrapped himself around the staff, it would stir the water that he was in. Now just so you know, Asclepius has become the symbol of the medical community. Everybody thinks it's Moses and the serpent.

It's not. It comes from the Greek god Asclepius of healing. Let that sit for a second.

When I first went to Israel and I learned about Asclepius, I said, are you kidding me? Why would that even make it into the Bible? Why would people believe this? You see Jewish people and my Jewish friend, my dear friend told me this. So I'm going to say what he said. It's going to sound really mean, but he said, this is how we are.

We love to cheat God. We love and we all do too. We love to find ways how to get around God's laws, but still be kosher somehow.

See, it's not kosher to worship a false god. You can't do that. And this is just outside the temple.

You went to this pool of Bethesda to cleanse yourself. Remember yesterday you would go into the ritual waters. You would go here, get cleansed, then go to the temple.

So you can't go to the waters, have a little idol worship and then go to church. That's not kosher. That's not cool.

So he told me that the Jewish people changed the name of Asclepius and to kosherize Asclepius, to make them feel good about themselves. Well, let's not call him Asclepius. Let's call him the angel of the Lord.

You see, he goes, now I didn't worship a false god. It was an angel of the Lord. We're all good.

That's a big ouch. So this man who was lame, who was at the pool for all those years, went there waiting for Asclepius to heal him. And when Jesus comes up to him, and when Jesus says, do you want to be healed? What's Jesus saying to the man? He's saying, how's Asclepius working for you? How's the idol worship going? How's the false God worship going? Do you want to wait another 37, 38 years for Asclepius? Or do you want me, the living water? You don't need to jump in the pool, brother.

I'm the living water, one touch from me and I can heal you right here, right now. Do you want to be healed? Wow. Look at how that opens up the story.

All of a sudden, this misunderstood action of Jesus, this misunderstood verse that's missing in the Bible, all of a sudden, it makes sense when you set it in its original cultural setting. I don't know how much more you guys can take. Two, three hours.

Yes? Yes. So the question is, why didn't Matthew put it in originally? Why didn't Matthew explain it? Okay. Remember we talked about Matthew writing as a Jewish person to a Jewish person.

The moment he talked about the stirring of the waters, every Jew in Jerusalem knew what he was referring to. He was referring to Asclepius. Because as a local Jerusalemite, writing to local Jerusalemites, everybody would have known.

When he said, remember that angel that would stir the water? Everybody knew, ah, Asclepius. It wasn't until later as they're looking back, trying to understand what that was, that this clarification was inserted years later. So many times at the time of the event, they don't put in all the information.

They don't put in all of the culture, all the tradition. That's a given. That's already understood to the people who were living in that time period.

It's later as people look back on it, trying to understand it. Oh, he must have been referring to that legend. So it's inserted to help us understand.

Okay. That's what that is. Jesus was known to do a little bit of little poking.

Yes. Yeah. How's Asclepius working for you? Oh yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Some of you are thinking I'm a God right now because of my wisdom, but I'm not.

No, you're right. You know, we love to say, oh, the Jews, oh, the Israelites, they kept going to false gods. Oh, we don't do that.

We may not have official temples and altars, but I bet you right now, if I asked each and every one of you, we would confess, yeah, we have idols in our lives. We have things. Yeah.

Right. Is really what he's Pentecostal. Correct.

What? Okay. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. We fall into the same trap. It's that syndrome of we want what we can have or what we're not supposed to have.

Okay. Let me, let me throw another couple out here at you. Sometimes again, thank you so much for the interaction.

I always, I always enjoy, I'm going to have all the answers. Okay. But I will try.

If I don't know, I'll say, you know, I I'm really not sure. I haven't studied that. And I just want to be honest.

If I know what I know, sometimes Jesus says things that people react stronger to than other things. Same thing with miracles. We talked about that yesterday morning.

He raises jars, his daughter from the dead. She's only been dead a few moments. It wasn't a big deal.

He, he raised the boy who was coming out of nine, the son of the only son of a widow, not a real big reaction. But then once we understood a Messianic miracle, the after four days, then we see a big reaction at Lazarus. It's the same thing with the words of Jesus.

You need to understand that in that culture, that memorizing what we call the Bible, the Tanakh, the old Testament was part of their education. By year, age five, they had to know what was called the Torah, the first five books of the Bible. And by 13, by age of Bar Mitzvah, they would have the entire Bible memorized.

And then they would read this Bible every week in synagogues. It was ingrained in them. And rabbis taught with this method.

I told you about Ramez, which was to hint, which was to allude to. So what Jesus does sometimes is, remember when he wrote in the sand, he had just alluded to a verse in Jeremiah and all of a sudden he said, hang on a second, there's a writing in the sand in Jeremiah. Whoa.

He thinks we've rejected him as God. So rabbis and Jesus as a rabbi writes and teaches and talks in this style. And so this is one of those opportunities or one of those times where Jesus takes actually two of the biggest messianic claims.

Oh, I see some ladies snuck in. Hello, ladies. We see here, Jesus takes the opportunity to snag two of the most major messianic titles in all of the Bible.

And it just goes over our head as a really beautiful statement. Because here he says, the son of man came to seek and save what was lost. Is that a nice statement? A compassionate statement? I'm glad he came to seek and save me because I know I was lost.

But when he said this, I'm going to paraphrase the Pharisees freaked out. Like, how dare you? What did he say? He just said the son of man came to seek and save what was lost. It doesn't sound like it was really that bad, but this was bad.

Really bad for a Jewish person to say in those days. There's words in that time that mean things that mean different things to us today. Like today, if I called you a hypocrite, you would be offended, I'm assuming.

If I said, I'm going to point at nobody. You're such a hypocrite. No, I'm not.

But in the first century, if you call somebody a hypocrite, they'd say, oh, thank you very much. I try really hard. You know that? Because the word hypocrite came from the Greek theater.

It meant in real life, you're one person, but on stage, you're something completely different. You fooled me into thinking that's who you really are. But offstage, you're somebody different.

So if you said, man, you're a hypocrite. Oh, thank you. I practice in front of the mirror.

You know, I'm just, I'm really good. So knowing what words meant was important. You're not going to call me a hypocrite, right? Okay.

Well, Caesarea was Matthew 16. This is Luke 20. I'd have to look at the sequence.

Okay. You know what? We'd have to look it up. If you want to, you can, or maybe after.

I don't really remember where it is in sequence to Matthew 16. So here he makes this statement. And what he's doing is he's taking two statements and he's putting them into one.

Let me show you. They are huge by the way. And this is why the Pharisees freaked out.

Look at what it says in Daniel. He calls himself the son of man, right? What's the big deal? I'm the son of man in my vision at night. I looked and there before me was one like, so Jesus, whatever happens after this title, son of man, this is who Jesus is claiming to be the son of man coming with the clouds of heaven.

He approached the ancient of days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power. All people's nations and men of every language worshiped him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away. And this kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. Do you understand why they got upset when he called himself the son of man? You're who Daniel saw, excuse me, you're the carpenter's kid.

And now you're the one who walks into the presence of the ancient of days and gets all the power in the universe. Can you understand why they were upset guys? And then look at the second half. He says, uh, the son of man came to save, to seek and save that which was lost.

And then Ezekiel says, for this is what the sovereign Lord says. God speaks. And he says, I

myself will search for my sheep and look after them as a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them.

So I will look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. So God says, I'm going to seek, I'm going to find and bring back all those who were lost.

Look at that in one phrase, God, he claims to be the son of man who has given all dominion and all the earth. And he also claims to be God who's coming to seek and save the lost sheep of Israel. Can you understand why they got upset guys? See, it's such a simple statement, but when you understand it in its Jewish context, in this religious context, wow, that was a big one.

Okay. I'm going to share one more with you guys. Okay.

This is a story that we all know very well. Have you guys heard this story before Luke seven, the woman who cried at Jesus feet, she cried so much and then she had to take her hair and she washed his feet with her hair. Beautiful story.

Okay. Years ago, I took a group of pastors to Israel from time to time. We do these pastoral trips.

They get a really great rate from the government of Israel because they want you as a pastor to go to see the land and hopefully get excited and say, I want to bring my church. I want them to see this. So they give these amazing prices.

And so I brought 15 people with me, myself, plus 15 pastors, everything, but a Catholic priest. Basically we had Presbyterian ministers, Anglican Mennonite, we had a Baptist Pentecostal. We had everything that you can imagine.

And the ages ranged from a mid thirties until, uh, I would say mid seventies. So quite an array of people. We even had pastors on the tour who didn't believe in salvation.

I won't tell you what denomination they came from, but these two pastors did not believe in salvation. I made a joke. I saw something and went, wow, man, that was so awesome.

I almost got saved again. And they said, save from what? What do you mean saved? I said, well, oh no, that's not what he meant. And we got into this whole conversation.

So we had quite an array of people. You can imagine the conversations we had after dinner around the table. So our tour guide gets us on the bus first day in Jerusalem.

Everybody's excited to be in the holy city. And he says, you guys are all pastors, right? Yes. Praise God.

Do you guys believe the Bible? Yes. Praise God. We believe the Bible.

God wrote the Bible. Absolutely. A hundred percent.

Absolutely. I knew right away he was setting them up. You could feel the knife.

It was coming. So the way it's written is the way it was written. That's how it happened.

We're like, yeah, I think so. The convictions became less and less that, you know, became less. And so he said six days he created the world.

Yeah. Okay. Jonah was swallowed by a whale and lived in its stomach for three days.

The acid didn't rot his flesh. No, it was just, just like the Bible says. Yeah.

And on and on he went and the amens and the confidence became weaker and weaker. And then he say, I'm not saying it didn't happen. I'm just asking you if you believe it happened.

And then he says, get out your Bible. So everybody gets out their Bibles and he says, go to Luke chapter seven. So we all go to Luke chapter seven.

Did this story happen? Yeah, of course. Did this story happen? He goes right there in Bethany. We can see it from, from here.

You looked over there. Bethany's not there. I'm sorry.

Yeah. Right there. This story happened right there.

Yes. This woman cried so much that she was able to properly wash his feet. And one of the guys says, well, girls do cry a lot.

So yeah, I guess he goes, you guess it's possible. Do you know how much water is necessary according to Jewish ritual and custom to wash a man's feet? No. And he measures it out.

You need a container, yay big, yay deep. You have to be able to put the man's feet in the bowl and you need to cover at least up to his ankles in order to wash his feet. That's a lot of tears.

So I asked you again, he said, did she cry enough tears in one sitting to fill up that bowl in order for him to immerse and submerge his feet? Oh, never thought of that before. Have you ever thought of that before? Did you know how much water was necessary to wash a man's feet? I didn't know. Well, he said to me, I'm not saying it didn't happen, but I'm saying it didn't happen the way you think it happened.

Then he said, have you guys heard of a lachryma jar? No. So let me ask you, have you ever heard of a lachryma jar? No. Anybody have a Spanish, Italian, French, Portuguese background at all? Anybody? You what? Okay.

Probably won't help you here. How do you say a tear in Portuguese, Spanish, Latin, Italian? Well, lachryma. Okay, lachryma means tear.

So a lachryma jar is a jar that would hold tears. Okay. I've never heard of such a thing.

I'd never seen one until I went to Israel. And there they are. Archaeologists find them all the time.

They find so many that for fun, they just smash them against the walls. It's like finding, I don't know, it's just such a common thing that... A Coke can. It was just so common, they smash them for fun.

See how loud the explosions can be. They were everywhere. Everybody had these in the first century.

I'd never heard of such a thing. Now, the lachrymas were owned by families and passed down from generation to generation. And at funerals, lachrymas were especially used.

Because if you know this about ancient cultures, they would hire professional mourners to lament and weep at funerals. You've probably heard this before. Because the more you weep and the more you wail, the more it shows how much you love the deceased.

And so you would hire people to come and just cry and cry at your funerals. And what somebody from the family would do is they would take... See, because the jar has that narrow opening, but the wide flask at the top, and they would take the lachryma and put it to your cheek. And so as you would cry, it would gather the tears and would go into the jar.

And they would capture this. And over time, slowly but surely, liquid would begin to collect. They would cork it to preserve it so it wouldn't dehydrate, so it wouldn't evaporate.

And they would hold it and hold it. And after centuries and after generations and generations and generations, eventually you would fill up a jar, so you would start a new one. And so people had lachryma jars in their possession, and they would hold on to them because those jars represented tears that were shed during times of suffering, during times of shame, during times of pain, during times of hurt.

I mean, this was already in practice during the time of King David. Did you know that? I didn't. I've read the Psalms hundreds of times like you, and I never noticed this before.

David wrote, take an account of my wanderings. Put my tears in your bottle. David was saying, God, you keep record of all my tears as I'm being pursued by Saul, as I'm making evil decisions and killing people I shouldn't, and I'm weeping and I'm repenting.

Lord, you're preserving all my tears in your bottle. He's referring to God's lachryma, holding, preserving his tears. So already in that time period, this existed.

Let's go back to the story of a woman. It says she poured out her tears. What do you think she did? She brought her family lachryma jar.

Because she wanted to fully and totally repent, she poured out all the tears of suffering of her, her family, and all those who would come before her. That's why she had enough tears to wash his feet and then dry them with her hair. That's why Jesus said, have you seen what this woman has done? Here is a person who has truly repented.

You see, these are the things, guys, that we, we only get when we understand the culture, when we understand the traditions of the people of the Bible. Now, let me say this before I want to address that one question about Peter and the rock and the Pope. I'm not, I'm not skirting the question.

I'm going to close with that here in just a minute. Has anything I presented this morning caused you as a man to want to leave Christianity and convert to Judaism? Let me see your hand. One man.

Do you know what you have to do to convert, sir? Put your hand back down. I mean, like to convert. I'm, I'm, I'm just joking.

No, because I'm, I don't believe we have to convert. I don't believe we have to become anything other than what we are. I'm going to say something crazy.

God even loves Portuguese people. Wow. Thank you.

So first century foundations isn't a ministry about bringing people back into bondage or bringing them back into an ancient culture. But what first century foundations is about is about helping you to learn from an ancient culture. See how much we learn together here in just these few moments together.

Imagine if we started the entire Bible that way. Yes. Yeah, you're right.

The translations. Remember when you don't know the culture, you don't know which word to properly use to bring into the trend, the translation. I can give you so many examples when I found this.

Um, but in Judaism, we know now there is this thing called lacrima and the new American standard. They got it right. They use the right word.

They use the word bottle. It preserves the traditions of the people. Now, let me just kind of wrap this up with this question about, um, about Peter, and then I'll let you guys get ready for lunch.

Okay. And then we'll have our last session this evening at seven o'clock. We'll be talking again about the Israeli, uh, Gaza situation.

What's going on? Uh, is there a solution? Um, why is there an ongoing conflict? We have a film back there called conflict, the power of propaganda, and it's a difficult film to watch. It's a challenging film to watch, but you'll understand why there's an ongoing conflict. Okay.

So that's something that you can pick up if you'd like. Let me just wrap up with this. This is continuing the conversation that Jesus was having with his disciples at Caesarea Philippi.

And we stopped at the part where we said, um, and the gates of Hades or hell will not overcome it or shall not prevail. We stopped there, but the conversation goes on. And he says, I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven.

And whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. And whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

It wasn't yet time to, to reveal it to, to the people. So what was Jesus saying to Peter? Was he making them the head of this new movement? Was he giving him a special kind of authority? Uh, was he graduating him to a higher level of discipleship? What was Jesus doing? Well, we need to understand, right? The words of Jesus. That's what I've been doing this entire weekend.

Not what they mean for us, but what they meant for them. Remember my first day I talked about being in a pickle, right? We all know what being in a pickle means, but the word pickle doesn't have or convey the right meaning if we don't understand how it was used in context here in Canada. Binding and loosing and the keys are the same thing.

I don't care if you go back to the Greek or the Hebrew, it doesn't matter. It's not enough just to know what the word was, but how were those words used in that time period? Does that make sense? Okay. See, the words binding and loosing are legal terms in Judaism.

Today they have a spiritual meaning. You know, I bind this, I loose this. We pray that all the time, but that wasn't the original intent of the word.

That's not how it was used in those times. Binding and loosing were actually, uh, they were legal terms used by rabbis. Let me tell you why.

The Torah, the Bible says, um, do no work on the Sabbath, right? That's pretty clear, but what's work? What's work? That would, that would change from person to person. Maybe I could carry a bag of potatoes on my shoulder and maybe I'm stronger and I can carry it and it's not work for me. I find it very easy.

Maybe somebody else says, oh, a bag of potatoes, that's way too heavy. That's work. You can't carry that on the Sabbath.

Or I could say, well, no, I could walk two miles and that's not considered work. And somebody says, no, no, no, no. I can walk three miles and it's still not work on the Sabbath.

So you had all these interpretations, all of these struggles over how to keep the Sabbath, how to keep the law of God. So a system, yeah. It's a kosher fridge.

Did you guys hear that? They bought a Sabbath refrigerator. So you don't turn, don't have to flip the lights on. They come on automatically.

This happens in Israel too. They have Sabbath elevators. You're not allowed to press buttons on the Sabbath.

People say, why? Because what happens is when you hit the button, it creates a spark and sends a signal down and tells the computer to activate. He said, God ceased creating after six days. So we're not allowed to, it's not that we can't work, we can't create on the Sabbath.

So we're not allowed to create a spark. So on the Sabbath from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday for 24, 25 hours, because they don't want to under celebrate the Sabbath. They want to over celebrate.

For 25 hours, the elevators automatically open and close on each floor. You don't have to press a button. Okay.

So that's referring to what you were talking about here. So, so, so what is, what's considered work by one or the other? Well, the rabbis were given absolute power. The Pharisees and the Sadducees, the religious courts of Sanhedrin were given absolute power on what was considered to be work and not to be considered work.

And this is how the terms came into being. If I considered something to be work, if you came to me and said, hey, rabbi, settle this for me, can I carry this or not? And I would look at it, I would think about it and I would say, you know what? That's actually, I consider that to be work. You are bound from carrying this on the Sabbath.

Okay. But maybe on another occasion, you bring something to me, I look at it, I evaluate it. I said, you know what? No, no, that's not work.

You are loosed. I loose you. You are now free and able to do that.

It's not breaking the law of God. That's what binding and loosing meant and means in Judaism to this very day. It's not a spiritual application.

It was a religious application of what you could and could not do, what was considered sin and not considered sin. So think about what Jesus was saying to Peter. He says, I'm giving you the authority to bind and to loose.

And he says, and whatever you bind, heaven will back you up. Whatever you loose, heaven will back you up. That's a lot of authority.

He was saying to Peter, listen, Gentiles are going to come into the faith now, and I'm going to give you the wisdom and the ability to decide what they can and they can't do. What's kosher, what's not kosher, what they have to do and what they can't do. And later on in Acts 15, remember, they have a council of Jerusalem.

And who stood up? Peter. We have decided that you can do this, but you can't do this. You can't eat blood.

You can't eat strangled meat and stay away from sexual immorality. Everything else, you are loosed from the law, but these you are bound to do. Okay? So he wasn't making Peter the Pope of the church.

He was setting in place as an example that those who are brought into leadership, called by Christ to be leaders, God has given them the authority to bind and to loose. Sure, they had it then too. They had it then too.

Again, it's human nature to always go against, always human nature to go against. Okay? I'm not going to argue that. I'm stating what it meant and you can take it and now that you have it in its proper cultural understanding, you can make that decision.

Yep. Did who, sorry? Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Because Paul was a human being. Why do we question our authority? Why do we question coming through Stainer and it's only 50 kilometers per hour? There should be at least 70 out there. Amen.

Oh, now you woke up. It's our nature to question authority. Remember, Paul was a follower of Christ, just like everybody else was.

So he questioned and they parted ways. Well, I don't agree with you. Well, we have Pentecostals, we have Baptists, we have Presbyterians.

Why? Because I don't agree with you. I'm challenging and questioning your authority. I'm going to make my own authority of the decision.

That's human nature. Now, I'm not going to get into any more of Pentecostals and Baptists. Jesus was Pentecostal, deal with it.

And no, he wasn't. No, he wasn't. I'm kidding.

Kidding. That was meaning he had the backing of heaven. Jesus was saying, if you tell them that they're loosed from doing this, then we're going to agree with you on that.

Huge, huge authority. Because this new movement was emerging that needed to be different than the Judaism that had put people in bondage for all those years. Remember I said Peter wasn't the sharpest tool in the shed? Peter couldn't catch the vision that now Gentiles could be saved.

He couldn't get it. He said, what Lord? No, never. Nothing unclean has ever entered my mouth.

And God says, don't call anything unclean that I've declared to be clean. He just, and he got to Cornelius's house and he said, hey, if God hadn't shown me in a vision, I wouldn't even come into your house because we Jews don't associate. He couldn't get it.

So Paul picks up the burden. Paul picks up the mantle and he goes to the Gentiles. And so Peter stays and he shares and witnesses to the Jews.

Remember, he had to do everything three times. I feel more like Peter than Paul some days. Listen, guys, we could be here all day, but we're not going to be all day because I'm hungry.

I hope that there have been some things that we talked about that have maybe just caused you to think and look at those scriptures in a different way. Did we learn something together this morning then? Yeah. Okay.

George, do you want us, do you want to dismiss? Do you want me? Okay. All right. Get out of here.

No, seriously. I've enjoyed talking with you guys. I don't have all the answers and sometimes answers create more questions.

Okay. And it's a Pandora's box and we could talk all day, but we can't. But I hope there's been something that's been just reenergized in your mind.

Listen, guys, have a great afternoon and we'll see here at seven o'clock for our final official session. Okay.