

## “Jonah Pt 9”

### A Wayward Prophet

Jonah 3:1-10

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**Jeff:** So you did say that Don said he was just ditching us today.

**Don Rimbey:** Yeah. He blew us off.

**Jeff:** Okay. Is that the exact wording? You’ll have to come back—

**Don:** I have that in writing.

**Jeff:** Oh, that’s good; even better yet! (*Laughter*) All right, why don’t we start with a word of prayer?

Gracious God, we give You thanks and praise, and we ask now that You’ll turn our hearts to Your word, knowing that it is Your word. Father, we delight in it. It is true and clear and it delights the mind because Your Spirit inspired it. And Your Spirit takes it up and impresses it upon our minds and hearts and illuminates it. And Father, we find so many things in it that delight the soul, and Lord, we’re just thankful for that.

But Lord, we pray that these things wouldn’t just delight the mind. We ask that they would also inform our hands and our feet and form the direction of our lives, giving us purpose and motivation to do these things that You call us to do. And Father, we pray that those around us would be cognizant of the fact that we are different from the world, that we are marching to a different drumbeat, and that drumbeat is Yours. And we pray, Father, that we would have opportunities to share our faith and our love for the Lord Jesus Christ as they ask about that different direction of our lives.

And Father, we pray that as we are a part of what seems to be the last forming institution in the world—everything else is something of an amorphous nature these days,—we pray that we would take advantage of that. And as we have been poured into a certain type or form of doctrine, which is of course the Lord Jesus Christ and all that He is, we ask that You would help us to once again shape and form the culture around us through this participation that we enjoy in the church. Lord, we ask that You will bless us as we gather here this morning, knowing that this isn’t the church. But it is a gathering of men who long to understand Your word. And so Lord, we pray that You would help us in that endeavor, to give us understanding that we might have direction to our lives and purpose to our lives. And we pray that would only supplement and add to what these men are experiencing in their own church life and activities. Father, we ask now that You’ll bless us. We pray that You’ll bless us in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** All right. Well let me have you turn with me to Jonah chapter 3, and that’s where we are going to start today. I do want to finish up just a few slides from the last time. And one of the things that I wanted to introduce to us the last time was Jonah and Jesus. I always think it’s important for us to see Christ in the Old Testament. And I think that’s an important thing because Jesus Himself said it was an important thing.

When He meets with His disciples on the Emmaus road He tells them that they were foolish and slow of heart to believe all that the Old Testament Scriptures said about Him. And of course when he talks about the Old Testament Scriptures He talks about it in the

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great three categories: in the Psalms, in the Prophets and in the Writings. And so we need to be thinking about where Jesus is in the Old Testament.

And one of the things that I think is important for you to understand is how we understand Jesus being in the Old Testament. So I want to give you a little bit of an overview of how we ought to understand this before I actually say a couple of things about this slide.

Let's say, for instance, that we have the Old Testament. And of course this is the New Testament. And what we have is, we have 39 books here, and of course we have 27 here. And the question is: Do these 39 books say anything about Jesus on the surface reading of them? In other words, when we look at them from a hermeneutical perspective—that is, in a basic, simple form when we look at it from a grammatical standpoint and from a historical standpoint,—do we find Jesus in the text?

Now of course we would say for instance, when we read Isaiah 53, that we are going to see Jesus in the text. But for instance someone will come along and say, “Well you know, Hosea chapter 11 is quoted in Matthew chapter 2. And when you go back to Hosea 11 I don't see Jesus in that text anywhere.” But Matthew says He's there; in fact Matthew says that's a reference to Jesus coming out of Egypt. But that's really a reference to the people of Israel coming out of Egypt.

And so the question is: Is Jesus there in the Old Testament books on a grammatical/historical reading, or not? Now there are a variety of positions, but I'm going to boil it down to two. There are two positions on this, and one says never! He's not in the Old Testament text by just reading the Old Testament grammatically and historically; He's not there. How does He get there? He gets there because the apostles have an aha moment.

They have an aha moment, and so what they do is, they take Jesus back to the Old Testament Scriptures. And they super-impose Him upon the text that didn't speak of Him. And so what they do is, they re-imagine Jesus back into the Old Testament.

So for instance we find some texts that are easily imagined, like Isaiah 53. This is an easy one for us to imagine Jesus back here. And then Hosea 11? Well that's a stretch, but we all know that we're really after Jesus, and so that's what happened. They took Jesus back to that particular text. It's probably not the best example in the world of imaginary creativity, but it will do. I mean, we're all looking for Jesus anyway; you know, that sort of thing.

So the idea then is that no, He's not in the Old Testament text. But the apostles re-imagined Him back into it. That's the first answer. Now if you want the lingo of this, this is called Christotelic theology: that is, Christ is the end and the purpose of our interpretation of Scripture. That is, we're trying to find Christ as the point of *telos*, the primary point, okay? So this is called Christotelic; that's all it is.

Okay. The other position says yes, He is in the Old Testament text. Isaiah 53 is about Him, and Hosea 11 is really about Him, because when the Holy Spirit inspired the Old Testament He inspired those texts and all the other texts, knowing that Jesus would come and step into them as the fulfillment.

Now this means that the Old Testament is Christocentric. That is, the Old Testament is about Christ. And when you say that the Old Testament is Christocentric, you can hold a Christotelic position. That is to say that the apostles found Jesus exactly where He was.

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Now I think we have to incorporate into this our understanding of inspiration. If the Old Testament was inspired by the Holy Spirit and the New Testament was inspired by the Holy Spirit, then the New Testament authors found Christ in exactly the places where the Spirit wanted them to find Christ.

So I'm of course of the latter position. I believe that the Old Testament is Christocentric. I believe that it's Christotelic in nature because it's Christocentric; you have to have both or you run into problems. And I think, for instance, that if I were to give a text that sums it all up, here's the text I might give. It's the text in John 8 where Jesus says, “Abraham saw My day and was glad.”

**Brave Man:** Amen.

**Jeff:** And so how was it that Abraham saw Jesus' day? He saw Jesus' day because in his life which was going to be captured by the Spirit in a revelatory manner, he understood that he was advancing toward something beyond himself, and that was the Messiah. Yes, John.

**John Gratner:** I think the problem there, of course, was what their response was to that, right? They picked up stones to stone Him.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**John:** So it wasn't a misunderstanding; I think it had to do with the application too. I would use a term called Yahweh-centric as opposed to Christocentric. The Old Testament is all about Yahweh. And the Jews who were talking here also their history and story was about Yahweh. But His statement here was “That's Me.” That's why they wanted to stone Him.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**John:** That's why there's consistency from the beginning to the cross because He said, “I, Yahweh, have come, and it's Me. Follow Me because I'm the One.” As it says in Jude, Jesus led them out of the way of Egypt. Jesus says to Nicodemus, “You are a teacher of Israel, and you don't understand that it's all about Yahweh?” Am I right here?

**Jeff:** Yeah, think—

**David Miller:** I think that Jesus referred to Himself to Himself in the Old Testament also and not just the apostles. If you turn to Deuteronomy 18:15, “*The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear according to all you desired of the LORD.*” I think Jesus was referring to that, and it was Moses prophesying specifically about the Messiah.

**Jeff:** Yeah. I think that one of the things that we need to remember is what it says in John 1:18. It says that Jesus came to exegete the Father. Remember that text? It's a great text. It says: “*No one has seen God at any time. The only God who is at the Father's side has made Him known*”—has exegeted Him, has explained Him.

And one of the things I think about when I think about that text is this: Did Jesus come and explain God? And the question that we have to ask about that is, in what sense? In what sense did He explain God? Did He explain God in terms of God's attributes? Did He explain God in terms of God's incommunicable attributes, His communicable attributes, His aseity, His essence, all that sort of thing? And I think the answer to that is no; there is a lot revealed about God in the Old Testament. But what did He come to reveal? What did He come to shed light on? Well, He came to shed light on who Yahweh is in terms of His personage, right?—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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That is to say that in the Old Testament we see a room lit dimly: that is, we see indications of the Trinity, right? I mean, clearly the Father is there, and we oftentimes think about Yahweh as being the Father. But we also see other figures there. This Messiah looks like God. Psalm 45 talks about “You are God,” and that’s applied to Jesus in Hebrews chapter 1. So we see that there is another Person here who just kind of hangs out, who has hinted that He’s going to come in fullness. But we don’t know when and who it actually is.

And then there is also the Spirit there, God’s Spirit. And God’s Spirit is also divine. So we see this. But it’s not until we get into the New Testament that we see the fullness of the different Personages. For instance in Matthew 28, you are baptized in the name—singular—of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the three names. Or even in Hebrews chapter 1 verse 3 we find that Jesus Christ is the effulgence of God’s glory, “*the exact imprint of His very Person*” or nature. And so the idea is that He is of the same essence but a different Person.

But we catch that same sort of thing in John 1:18 where Jesus who is Himself God, and was in the bosom of God, comes to reveal God—that is, the Father. And so I think there’s a sense in which we have a Yahweh-centric Testament, yes. But what is it about that Yahweh-centric idea that is emerging? I think it’s that Christ shape to it. Do you know what I mean? There is a Messiah coming, sent from God the Father. And He is the One who is going to reveal the Trinity, the Triunity of this one God. That’s the idea I want to put the point on.

**Ron Baling:** I didn’t even realize this until a couple years ago. The word for God in the Old Testament is Elohim, which is plural.

**Jeff:** Uh-huh.

**Ron:** The other thing is, I tend to think of Christ in the Old Testament as it flows. For one thing, Jesus is the Word made flesh. Remember that before He became flesh He was the Word.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Ron:** That Word is all through the Old Testament; it speaks of both law and grace.

**John:** If we take Jesus at His word in John 1:18—which obviously we should--, (*Laughter*), then it is also true that in the Old Testament that “*no one has seen God at any time.*” Yet we-re told all the time in the Old Testament about people seeing the Lord. And that leads to where yes, He had not come and humbled Himself in the form of a man. But Jesus who said, “That was Me”—

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**John:** He is the revelation of that personal nature of God in some way. It’s not human in the sense that He became human, but in a way that was seeable and relatable, as God was not this far-off Entity that could not be discerned. But He made Him known in that way in the Old Testament.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**John:** And much more in the Incarnation it was unmistakable.

**Jeff:** He was the Mediator at the very beginning in Genesis chapter 3. And I agree with you; He is the preincarnate manifestation of all of those appearances.

**Jim Hamilton:** So do you believe that from the beginning there was a Trinity and that there has always been a Trinity and that there always will be a Trinity?

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**Jeff:** Absolutely. Okay. Well with that background let me say this to you. How is Jonah a type of Jesus? Jesus Himself says this in Matthew chapter 12, verses 38-40. It says: *“Some of the Scribes and Pharisees said to Him, ‘Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.’*

*“But He answered and said to them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign. Yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.’”*

Now the question I have for you is: What is a type? How do we determine what a type is when we think about typology? Because we oftentimes talk about a type and its fulfillment which is an antitype.

Now there are a variety of ways we might talk about this. But I think that central to understanding what a type is are two things. I think that first of all there is a historical and a theological correspondence. Now what do I mean by that? I mean that when we talk about Jesus, I’ll just say it like this. When we talk about this text that Jesus talks about Himself in, we think to ourselves historically that just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so Jesus is in the heart of the earth. That’s the historical correspondence.

What about the theological correspondence? Well I’ll just state it thus: Jonah was a preacher of righteousness. And so too is Jesus a Preacher of righteousness, a Prophet of righteousness, a Prophet of God’s word. Now when we think about those two things we have the heart and soul of a type.

Now what happens if we take away the historical and we just have the theological? In other words, what if there is no historical correspondence and there is just a theological correspondence? Then we have what is called an allegory. An allegory basically looks for the theological. And it says that it doesn’t matter whether there is a correspondence with the historical.

I’ll give you an example of that. In Genesis 14 it says that Abraham had 318 men that he took with him in order to go and capture the army that took his nephew Lot. And patristic scholars looked at that text and said that with 318, 3 is the Trinity. And the 1 in that looks like Jesu; it looks like the first letter in Jesus’ name. And then I think they said that the figure of 8 looked like a across. And so what we have here is Jesus being part of the Trinity.

Well that’s not what we have in 318 men going out and capturing an army. That would be an example of looking for the theological without any reference to the historical at all. And Jesus here is saying that there is both a theological correspondence and a historical correspondence. So I think the typology is clear.

What is that typology? The typology is that Jesus is the Prophet of righteousness who has come. And He has come and He is better than Jonah, just as for instance He’s better than the temple; He’s better than Solomon in all his wisdom, and so on. That’s the point of the passage. But I think the typology is clear because the points of correspondence are clear.

Now what’s the point of application? The point of application is that we’re united to Christ. His death is our death, His burial is our burial, His resurrection is our resurrection. And so when we talked about being hemmed in, we are hemmed in Christ that we might

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be set free in Christ. I know that’s been a week ago. But when you think about Jonah being hemmed in by his own sin and then re-born, if you can think about that last lesson you can think about how Christ comes under sin’s dominion. He is hemmed in by sin—not His own, but our sin. He drinks the cup on our behalf, and so He is hemmed in by sin. And then just as Jonah is birthed out of the fish, so too He is born again to newness of life because death couldn’t hold Him; He is resurrected. And it’s in His death and in His resurrection that we have life. And so remember that the Lord spoke to the fish and it vomited him on to dry land. It birthed him on to dry land; that is what we talked about the last time.

That’s all I have in terms of finishing that lesson out. Do you have any questions about it before we go on to the next one? No? Okay.

All right.

**Jim:** You’d think it would be clearer.

**Jeff:** Say that again.

**Jim:** I said that we have to accept what we’ve just discussed, but you would think it would be clearer somewhere in the Bible so that you wouldn’t have any doubts in your mind.

**Jeff:** Well, you know, one of the things that I love about the Scriptures, and what I love about what we affirm about the Scriptures, is that the Scriptures are simple enough that children can understand them. But they are deep enough that—what is the saying? How does it go? A child can bathe in the Scriptures and an elephant can bathe in the Scriptures, something like that. We can go as deep as we want to go in the Scriptures. But we can also just understand the message of the Scriptures, which is not simplistic but simple. And that is that Jesus died for sinners. That’s the beauty of the Scriptures, right?

All right. Well, let’s look at Jonah chapter 3, verses 1-10. Let me read this for us: Jonah 3:1-10.

*“Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, ‘Arise, go to Nineveh that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.’ So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD.*

*“Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days journey in breadth. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day’s journey. And he called out, ‘Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!’*

*“And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.*

*“The word reached the king of Nineveh. And he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he issued a proclamation and published it through Nineveh: ‘By the decree of the king and his nobles, let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. And let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows? God may turn and relent, and turn from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish.’*

*“When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that He said He would do to them, and He did not do it.”* The word of the Lord.

**Brave Men:** Thanks be to God.

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**Jeff:** All right. So what I want us to look at in this particular text is that I want us to look at the nature of sin, the nature of repentance, and the description of repentance. Now we’re going to be focusing a little bit more on what’s happening here in the text through these three things.

So first of all let me talk to you about an introduction. I want you to notice that Jonah recedes. Jonah actually recedes into the background of the text, and other characters come out. Yes, Jonah goes into the city and he does what God tells him to do. But the great thing about it is that all of a sudden the city comes into the foreground. We read about it being a great city. The king comes into the foreground with his decree and his repentance. And all of a sudden we realize that in some ways Jonah actually recedes into the background, and the effects of preaching come into the foreground.

And I think this is, in one sense, every Sunday I tell the folks at Grace to prepare their hearts for worship. And I have a tendency to pray the same thing every time I bow to pray. I have a tendency to end that prayer with “Lord, let me recede into the background and let Christ come forward.” And I also ask that He would minister to His people and not to forget one of His people. I don’t want to be left out of that ministry. *(He laughs)*

And so every preacher who is worth his salt wants the effects of preaching to come forward and him to recede. And I think that’s what we see happening here to Jonah whether he likes it or not. This is not a commentary on whether he does like it. But whether he likes it or not, this is what’s happening. And it’s happening because this is the way it ought to happen.

So what’s the effect? Well, the effect is what we should have seen in the life of Jonah. Actually, maybe we should say that we shouldn’t even have needed to see repentance in the life of Jonah had we seen obedience. But we certainly begin to see repentance in the life of Jonah because of his flight. But now what we see is that we see repentance as an effect of the preaching.

Now why repentance? Well let’s think about that from another angle. Of course we can say because there’s sin, and of course that’s the answer. And I want us to kind of fill that out a little bit.

Why repentance? Well, this is a great city. I want you to think about how often that is said to us. 1:2: “*Arise and go to Nineveh, that great city.*” Sorry, I just read to you 3:2; I meant to read to you 1:2. “*Arise, go to Nineveh that great city.*” It’s the same thing. And so here in 3:2 and 3 we have that same command again: “*Arise, go to Nineveh that great city.*”

And then in verse 3: “*So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city.*” And then 3:11. There is no 3:11. *(Laughter)* Maybe it’s 4:11. Yeah, it’s 4:11: “*And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city?*”

So in what sense is it great? Well there are a variety of senses in which it’s a great city. I think one of the ways where it doesn’t come out in the text as clearly is that it’s an ancient city. Remember, this is the city of Nimrod. And so what we find is that this is a great city, an ancient city. It’s a great city in terms of its size: 7.75 miles, right? So in terms of its size, but also in terms of its sin, “*for their evil has come up before Me*” in 1:2.

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So we find that there are a variety of ways that we might think about the greatness of this city: its ancient aspect, its size. But of course one of the things that is brought to us in this text is that it's sin is great before God. And I will give you a couple of places where history tells us what these ancient kings did.

For instance, listen to this: just a couple of statements. *“I flayed the skin from as many nobles as had rebelled against me, and draped their skins over the piles of corpses. I cut off the heads of their fighters and built with them a tower before their city. I burned their adolescent boys and girls. I captured many troops alive. I cut off some of their arms and hands. I cut off of others their noses, ears and extremities. I gouged out the eyes of many troops. I made one pile of the living and of the heads. I hung their heads on trees around the city.”* That's one of the kings of the city.

Here is probably one that we'll know more about: Shalmaneser III. *“We see an Assyrian soldier grasping the hand and arm of a living captured enemy whose hand and both feet have already been cut off—dismembered—hands and feet flying through the scene, severed heads hanging from the covered city's walls.”* This is a description of the time of Shalmaneser and his days of being a conquering king.

So one of the things that you think about when you think about this city being great is that it's a great city in terms of its antiquity. It's a great city in terms of its size. But it's a great city in terms of its sin. It's sin has risen up to God.

And so why the need for repentance? We asked this early on: Why the need for repentance? And the answer to that is sin.

I want you to think about this. I want to take a minute to reflect on our culture for just a minute because I think this is an important thing. I was reflecting on this a little bit and I want to reflect on it with you.

There was a time when I would have said this. I would have said that our culture is dealing with the question of whether or not sin is sickness, right? Remember that? So for instance, there was a time when the question was: Is sickness something we really want to call sin? Remember, that was a question that was alive and well in the church in the '90s; remember that? You know, some of us were saying “that's sin,” and others were saying, “Yeah, but that may have been sin that's developed into a sickness.” There was that great question whether sin was sin or sickness.

**Ted Wood:** Yeah; that ain't the case no more.

**Jeff:** That *is* the case no more. I was reflecting on this. I was thinking to myself that it's a non-question at this point. Where we are now is at what we might talk about in terms of individualism. Without sort of going into the whole thing, where we are now is that basically our culture has said that we need to turn inward, because when we know who we are internally, then we can operate with authenticity. However, if our culture says that you may not operate according to your inward truth, then we have to say to the culture, “You are making me act in an inauthentic way. And therefore your culture norms have to be overturned.”

Now let's just stop there a second and go back for a minute. If we go back even ten or fifteen years, our culture would have said this. Look, we're happy to tolerate some of your behavior. So, for instance, like in the '70s, we're not going to call homosexual behavior “sodomy,” which is criminal. Now we're going to accept it and tolerate it.



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But that’s not good enough. Now, in today’s day and age, it has to be not tolerated, but accepted and embraced. Why is that? Well if you think about this in these terms, what is it that identity requires? In other words, if I say “this is me,” what is it that being me requires? It requires recognition.

And if we can go back to our old days on the ball field—you know this is true, right?—we wanted to be chosen for the team. Remember when they used to have team captains. I would always get picked somewhere in the middle, but I was always sweating it; you know what I mean? I would survey who was getting what; you know what I mean? But you never wanted to be that kid who was the last one picked, because he’s not recognized as having any value, right?

And today what we’re dealing with is a bunch of people who are basically saying, “We’re tired of standing there and getting picked last. We’re not just wanting to be tolerated; we want you to recognize our value, our identity.”

**Ted:** And pick us first.

**Jeff:** And pick us first, right? And so it’s not just that I’m an individual and I need to be authentic to who I am internally, and therefore culture must accept me; no. It’s that the culture must recognize and embrace me.

And that’s where we are in terms of our culture. And so this whole idea is that we’re talking in a vacuum when we talk about sin nowadays, because sin has nothing to do with an objective standard. Sin has everything to do with my personal inward preference—my likes, my dislikes.

So when you say to somebody today that homosexuality is wrong, what they hear you say is, “You don’t like homosexuality.” And they say, “That’s not acceptable,” right? That’s what they hear you saying, because there is no objective standard by which to measure that sort of behavior. There’s only expressive individualism. You’re saying to me that what I feel inwardly is wrong. What you’re saying is, you don’t like me—who I am inwardly and what I’m trying to be outwardly.

That’s where we are. You think wow, we’ve come a long way. Hold on a second.

I apply this to Jonah. Jonah goes through the city, applying God’s law to the people. And they’re like yeah, our lives don’t match up! The king says, “This is a righteous standard. We’re down here. Maybe God will—“ And we go through the town and we say, “This is sin!”, right? And everybody is going, “He’s just telling us what he doesn’t like!”

And the question is: How does the church, which has a form?—If we’re believers, we’ve been poured into a certain form of doctrine, right? That’s what Romans 6 says. If we’ve been formed by a certain form of doctrine, by a certain truth which is Christ-shaped, how is it that we begin to form the culture around us or even speak to the culture around us? I think that is a live question as we think about Jonah these days. You were going to say something, Ted.

**Ted:** I have so many things to say that I don’t know where to start. This expressive individualism is really a fairly culture-wide phenomenon in the history of mankind.

**Jeff:** Sure.

**Ted:** In Nineveh they sinned. But there was no expressive individualism.

**Jeff:** Okay.

**Ted:** Everybody got in line with the culture of the Assyrians; that was just it.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

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**Ted:** Nobody was saying, “Well I don’t care for this culture and its world view.”

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Ted:** We’re in a completely different realm. We have ventured into a world and a universe that we’re not prepared for.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Ted:** My youngest child is 33 years old. And many of our friends don’t care for Christianity because they think that we hate kids; it’s gotten to be that simple. There is no context for them to see why this is important.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Ted:** I heard an interesting statement the other day by Mormon leaders. The Mormons were saying that they are losing their young people because the young people in the Mormon faith are not even asking the Mormon questions; they think they’re irrelevant.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Ted:** And I would say that’s my 33-year-old daughter!

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Ted:** She thinks the questions aren’t even relevant. I might as well be talking about how to make ice cream.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Ted:** Or aardvark sleeping habits; it’s just irrelevant. I don’t think we quite know how to handle it.

**Jeff:** Well, you know, I want to tell you something, Ted. I think you’re right. There are people out there. What I just gave you is a distillation of the thinking of people like Alistair Macintyre, Charles Taylor and Carl Truman as he summarizes these guys. And if you want to read an excellent book, read Carl Truman’s *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*, because he takes all of these things and he just puts them in—I hate to say a very clear way, because there is philosophy and it has a lot of philosophy in the book. But if you’re patient with it, I think he makes it understandable.

For instance, when we think about our culture, Charles Taylor says that basically we live in a culture that now says that I can create culture. And how do I do that? Well, I have to find out who I am. And then I have to say that who I am will be oppressed by the current culture. And so I need to take the culture that is and I need to change it.

And this is the view of our young people today, because they believe that culture and everything is just so many building blocks that they can make what they will, whereas we grew up and we realized that no, there are cultural norms into which we must fit. So by the time we were older it was that you either went to your job from 8:00 to 4:00 or from 4:00 to 12:00 or midnight to 8:00. This is what you did for a living, right? And you didn’t come out of that saying, “As I packed that last crate last night I felt so self-satisfied.” No, you got to Friday and you got your check and you said, “With this check I can now take care of my family.” And there were cultural norms to which you must fit, and so forth and so on.

And that was a different way of looking at it. That way is past; that way is gone, right? We are now living with a bunch of people who believe that they can actually shape the culture.

**Jim:** But we also have the law. If the law doesn’t punish homosexuality, what’s your point in criticizing the homosexual? The law allows it.

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**Jeff:** Well there are things that are immoral that aren't necessarily illegal.

**Ted:** Slavery in the 1850s. The law said it was okay, but it was immoral.

**Jeff:** Yeah. So we have to speak against things that may not be illegal, but they are immoral.

**Jim:** Okay.

**Jeff:** And there are things that are legal that are immoral that we have to speak against. And so that's part of talking about the church being a reforming institution. How does the church step into that role where it says to the government, “You guys have all of a sudden become just as amorphous as the culture. And it's up to you to keep the law of God in the civil realm, and you're not doing that.” So how does the church step into that and become a reforming institution in the midst of an amorphous culture?

**Jim:** It's as simple as divorce. The church has a long way to go to prevent divorce, because it's generally so.

**Ted:** Yep.

**Jeff:** And I'm not talking about the Inquisition. The church can never go back to the days where we force conversions and things like that; we can't do that. But the church can be—

**Ted:** Kind of like the Germans?

**Jeff:** Hey!

**Ted:** Sorry.

**Jeff:** I personally think the church can be a reforming institution without being a military institution. You were up next.

**David:** If you ask if my repentance isn't on the level, why should they repent? But then you should ask this. Seeing the history of all these great sins of which they did not repent, on the heels of judgment, why did they repent?

**Jeff:** Yeah. I mean, that's the question, isn't it? Why the repentance? It is because they recognized their failure to live up to God's law.

**David:** But it had to be the sovereignty of God that—

**Jeff:** Oh, sure. Yeah, just go to the sovereignty of God. (*Laughter*) No, you're absolutely right; I understand.

**Gary Craig:** There was a woman who came out and said that she hoped that Queen Elizabeth would die a slow and painful death.

**Jeff:** Yeah, I remember that.

**Gary:** Of cauterization. It was something she had nothing to do with; in fact it was a friend of her father. But this Christian woman was saying that she had valid emotions, in spite of the fact that they were sinful. But they were also racist; it was anti-white racism. So they said that was valid despite the fact that it was racist; she expressed her individualism. So there's a basic conflict there. With racism you have to recognize their individualism. But if that individualism is racist, then they start drawing exceptions to the rule with something like that.

**Jeff:** If expressed individualism is the going way of understanding morality today, then what you have is that you have people saying, “Oh, great; this is true freedom!” It's only freedom for those ideologies that permit those kinds of authenticities. There are ideologies in power that do not permit other authenticities, right? And we're getting to the point where Christian authenticity is not being permitted. Slowly, but it's happening.

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**Don Bishop:** I think a lot of what Ravi Zacharias used to do in his presentations. I know he had problems, but he said a lot of good things. For instance, one kid, a young person, would ask a question. “I don’t see what you have against subjective thinking when there are so many other countries that do this.” And all he would say was, “Do you lock your doors at night?” (*Laughter*)

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Don:** And everybody started laughing. He would show that you can’t live in a world of subjective thinking.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Don:** If you question the person who thinks this way,--

**Jeff:** Sure. If I owe you \$5 and I gave you a dollar back, and you would say, “You owe me four more,” and I say, “No, I’m identifying that dollar as a five,” it doesn’t work.

**Jordan Obaker:** I was going to say that sometimes someone says, “Well, the culture permits it, so I can’t go against it.” It was impressed upon me a year or so ago at our church that we need to focus on the Kingship of Christ. If Christ is truly King of not just me but of everything, the nations are to submit to Him as King. The nations ought to bow in obedience to that King. And I have a sister-in-law who claims to be a Christian. But she lives in a very liberal part of New York. She’s constantly dealing with government officials up there. She is progressive and has gotten much more liberal in her thinking. And so I remember that a couple of years ago I was just talking with her about one area of communication, and she was telling me that she thinks that abortion is okay; women should have the right to choose. She was on board with homosexuality as well. Her thinking was as long as the government permits it, how can we say no?

And I said, “If you believe that Christ is King, then how can you not say no?” He is the One to whom we ought to bow our knees. And it doesn’t matter what the government says. The government ought to bow the knee as well. And for me that was something that was just impressed upon me. How good are we at recognizing the Kingship of Christ in this world, not just in our nation?

**Jeff:** Yeah. When you think about Psalm 2 it says in the very last verse that the nations need to kiss the Son, that very text talks about the Father giving the Son the nations as His inheritance. And then we move forward into Daniel 7:13-14, where we see the Son of Man going to the Ancient of Days and receiving the nations as His inheritance. What we gather is that at the Ascension, at the completion of the Son’s work, the Father gives Him the nations in response to the prayer of Psalm 2. And that’s the basis for Matthew 28: “Go therefore into the nations and disciple them.” Tell the nations—not just the individual people—but the nations themselves that it is time to kiss the Son because He is King. The nations have been given to Him, right?

And so that’s what I’m asking. How does the church perform its function? This language needs to be refined as a missionary organization where you want to be missionary-oriented. But I think we need to think of ourselves now as a forming institution. And the reason for that is because we have a message that our culture and our world—our governments and our individuals, however you want to take it—needs. And the only way that this turnabout is going to happen is that of course that the sovereignty of God applies the Spirit and brings newness of life. But that does not relinquish or

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abdicate us from our responsibility to take this message that is needed into the nations and cede it to them.

All right. We'll start with the next point next time. I just wanted to drop some seeds about where we are today as a culture and how we've changed. Maybe there will be a time with the next upcoming lessons that we can talk a little bit more about how we ought to be facing this as men. So why don't we pray as we close?

Father, thank You for the day and for the blessing of life in Christ and for our time together. Lord, give us not only hands and feet to accomplish Your will, but give us minds that have been enlightened and informed by Your word, that we might have that same desire to do it, for we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. (*Applause*)