

THE SCHEME OF REDEMPTION GOD'S PLAN IN PROPHECY 1

Program #1035

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EDDIE: God has a plan for your life. We've been studying that plan for the past couple of weeks, and we're going to continue that study today on *The Truth In Love*.

EDDIE: Thank you for joining us today. We're so glad to have you here as a part of our program as we continue our study of God's word. We hope you have your Bibles with you and that you'll open them and study with us today. Mark Teske is here this week on our program, and we'll be continuing our series of lessons that we began a couple of weeks ago.

MARK: Yes. A couple of weeks ago, we started talking about God's plan for man's redemption, also called the scheme of redemption. It's not a scheme as in some sinister plot, but the unraveling plan of what God had devised before the foundation of the world. In the first lesson, we talked about that eternal purpose and the plan that was there before the foundation of the earth. And last week, we talked about the promises that He made to individuals, seen time and time again throughout the Old Testament. Then we saw in the New Testament how those promises all relate back to Christ. Today, we're going to move on to our next subject, prophecy.

EDDIE: Prophecy is our next subject. God's plan in purpose, promise, and now prophecy. The prophets were men through whom God revealed certain elements, again, of His plan for the redemption of man. The prophets predicted certain things that would take place relative to the kingdom, and relative to the King who would rule in His kingdom, Jesus. They told us about a number of things that would help the studious member of the family of God to have a grasp and an understanding of the

nature of the kingdom, when it would be established and other characteristics like that. So we're going to be studying prophecy.

Before we actually look at any of the specific prophecies themselves, I think it would be helpful for us to look at the misconception of the nature of messianic prophecies that characterized many people in the days of Jesus when He came to establish the kingdom and rule as the King over it.

MARK: The people had the prophecies of the Old Testament. They just didn't put the pieces together like God had designed them to be.

EDDIE: That's right. Of course, Jesus was the Messiah. And the prophets predicted the coming of the Messiah. Messiah means 'anointed one'. The Hebrew word translated Messiah corresponds to the Greek word that's translated Christ. So both the Messiah and the Christ mean the 'anointed one'.

MARK: Just in two different languages.

EDDIE: Yes, two different languages. The prophets predicted the coming of this Messiah or this Christ, and those prophecies created within the minds of the Hebrew nation a great hope for a restoration of the old political kingdom and the glory of the type of kingdom that existed in the days of David and Solomon. And when the prophets predicted that a king was coming to establish a kingdom, in their minds, they didn't think of a kingdom of a spiritual nature. They thought of a kingdom in the political sense, which was the kind of kingdom that they had known in the past. They were expecting the political prominence, like existed in the days of David and Solomon, to be restored when this Messiah made His entrance into the world.

MARK: It would be natural to assume that history was going to repeat itself and that God would give them the same type of kingdom that He'd given to them before. We could see how that could happen, and that somebody would expect something similar to what they're used to. We all do that from time to time.

EDDIE: Right. You can see how the expectation might be there. Now, having said that, if they would have studied and looked at these prophecies more closely, they would come to realize that the destiny of this King that was coming was that He was going to be killed. We'll look at that prophecy a little bit later. Next week in our lesson, we'll look at a prophecy from Daniel that will reference the fact that this was all a part of the plan and that the kingdom, based upon how Daniel words the

prophecy, would by its very nature have to be spiritual and not physical or political. But we'll save that for our next study. We just want to establish the fact that this was the common misconception among the people of Israel in the days of Christ.

MARK: If you weren't looking for the differences between the physical kingdom and the spiritual kingdom, those nuances could be misconstrued and not fully comprehended and brought together. I'm not saying that the people who did this were necessarily bad people.

EDDIE: Right.

MARK: But, we all tend to do that, just assuming when we read something like this, that it's going to be similar to that which we're used to. Before then, they had never seen a spiritual kingdom. They didn't know what it looked like. They didn't know what it acted like. So how would they come to expect it? Yet, with 21st century glasses, we can look back upon this period and say, ah, I see.

EDDIE: We certainly are at an advantage, because we have the New Testament writers tying a lot of these things together and giving us inspired commentary on many of those Old Testament passages. But they had enough that they should have grasped this, even with the prophecies that they had. Later, we'll look at a passage where Paul seems to indicate that in Acts 26. We want to look at some passages that illustrate how the misunderstanding was expressed in the lives of some of the people in the days of Jesus. One of those is in John 6.

MARK: Verses 14 and 15. "Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, 'This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world'. Therefore, when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone."

EDDIE: This happening or sign that they're talking about in John 6, was when Jesus had fed thousands of people with the lunch from the little boy. The people were amazed, as naturally anybody would be, to see a miracle like that. When you think about it, Jesus had just done something amazing. He had taken five loaves of bread and two little fish and fed 5000 men, plus the others that were there, too. If they had a king that ruled over them that could do that kind of miracle, they'd never have a poverty problem anymore.

MARK: They wouldn't have a poverty problem. Think about the army. One of the biggest problems an army has is supplying the troops

and making sure they have their food. But if the king could supply the troops with just five loaves and a few fish, that would be a great military advantage.

EDDIE: There would be nothing or no one militarily that would have been able to stand in their way. Of course, the Hebrew people at that time were under the domination of the empire of Rome. And most of them didn't care for that. They didn't like having to answer to Rome. But if this man who could feed this many people with that little bit of food could take care of their poverty issues, and could take care of anything militarily, there would be nothing that could hinder them as a nation. As the people thought about this, they began to see the things that could be from a political standpoint. The text says in John 6 that they went to take Him by force and make Him their king. Here were 5000 men that would have been ready immediately, if Jesus had given the word and said 'Okay, we're going to rise up against Rome, and go fight them', and they would have been ready. They knew He could do it. So they were going to take Him and forcefully make Him their king. But the interesting thing is that Jesus didn't accept that offer. He turned and left them and went off to be alone. He rejected their offer to be a political king.

MARK: So if the role of Jesus was to set up a political kingdom, He shirked His responsibility.

EDDIE: That's right. Here was His chance. Here was His opportunity to say 'Okay, I came here to establish a kingdom, anyway, and you people are obviously ready for me to do that'. So what would stop Him from doing it? Nothing, unless His purpose was not to establish a political kingdom. We'll see as we look at other passages that's clearly the case. He didn't come to reestablish and restore the political prominence that Israel once had. That wasn't His purpose. John 6 is one indication of how that's the case.

Another indication comes in looking at what Jesus said about the kingdom, beginning with what John said about it, and then some things that Jesus said afterwards. John the Baptizer came and said to the people, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:1-2). One of the central themes of John's preaching was the kingdom, and the nearness of it. It's at hand. It's close by. Jesus would make the same point about the kingdom being very near in Mark 9.

Later in Matthew 11, Jesus makes a comment on the nature of the

kingdom, on the fact that John began to preach it and then the things that happened since the preaching of John. Jesus said, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matthew 11:12). In other words, Jesus is saying that ever since John came on the scene and told people that the kingdom of heaven was near, the people have been ready to take up arms and fight for it. People are trying to usher in the kingdom by violence and force. The violent are trying to take it over. There were some among the different sects or divisions of the Jews that were a violent lot. The zealots were very patriotic, and they hated Rome and wanted the empire out of the way. Maybe it was some of them that were among these that Jesus described as violent who were trying to take the kingdom by force. But violence, as a part of the establishing and the perpetuation of the kingdom, was not a part of it. It wasn't violence that was going to do it.

MARK: If we look at the history of Israel in the period between the Old Testament and the New Testament, we would see that it was filled with violence and bloodshed. Leading up to the time of Jesus, violence was something that the people had tragically become used to. And that's what they were used to in the way nations acted at that point in time.

EDDIE: Right. Jesus was making it clear that His kingdom was not about that. We'll see another passage in a moment that again makes that point. Paul would later say about his kinsmen in the flesh, the Hebrew people, "They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge" (Romans 10:1-3). This was evident in the lives of those who were trying to press a political kingdom into existence in the days of Christ. And every time they tried to do that, Jesus stepped away from it and would not allow them to do that. The point to be made is that it was not the kind of kingdom that God had planned.

The instances, even in the lives of the disciples, that indicate that they had a misconception of the kingdom are interesting, too. Matthew chapter 20 is one of those.

MARK: Starting in verse 20, "Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him," (being Jesus), "and He said to her, 'What do you wish?' She said to Him, 'Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on your left, in Your kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, 'You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that

I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able."

EDDIE: Yes. James and John come with their mother, and they want to be close to Jesus in His kingdom. They want for one of them to be on the right hand of the Lord, and one on the left hand when He comes into His kingdom and His Glory. Well, their idea of the kingdom was not the same as the Lord's. His response to them was, "You don't even know what you're asking". You're asking for these chief, special places in my kingdom. You don't even realize what you're asking for.

MARK: You don't even realize what the kingdom is.

EDDIE: Exactly. They didn't. They were thinking in terms of the regal prominence, glory and majesty of a political reign of this Jesus who would be the king and the political ruler over their people. And that's not what it was about. Jesus told them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? Can you be baptized with the baptism that I'm going to be baptized with?" He's talking about drinking the cup of suffering. Didn't He say in the Garden of Gethsemane right before He was crucified, "if it is possible ..."

MARK: Take this cup from me.

EDDIE: "...let this cup pass from me," (Matthew 26:39). That's the cup to which He was referring. He asked them if they were willing, ready and able to drink that cup.

MARK: And when the time came, they weren't ready, willing and able to do that. They fled with the other disciples.

EDDIE: Yes, initially they did. One of the ironies of this event in Matthew 20 is that ultimately, James and John became very near to Jesus in His kingdom, but it wasn't what they had in mind when they came with that request. James was beheaded because of his faith and trust and devotion to Jesus (Acts 12).

MARK: He was the first of the apostles to be martyred.

EDDIE: Right.

MARK: And some people claim that John was Jesus' best friend here on earth.

EDDIE: Yes. And he ended up being exiled to the Island of Patmos for tribulation in the kingdom (Revelation 1:9). They became, through their embracing of Jesus, very close to Him in a lot of ways, including

that they suffered in many ways like He did. But when they came to Him and asked to be close to Him in His kingdom, I don't think that's what they had in mind. They were thinking politically and about glory, majesty and grandeur, when in reality, they were going to drink that cup. They just didn't realize it at the time because the concept of the kingdom in their minds was not accurate.

MARK: I'm sure John, when he asked this of Jesus, or when his mother asked on his behalf, didn't imagine he'd be exiled to the Island of Patmos and having this vision of Jesus as the Lord of the church, walking among the lampstands as we read in Revelation 1. That is being close to Him in His kingdom. I'm sure that was far from John's mind at this point in time. He had no clue what he was headed into.

EDDIE: That's right. We read also in the 24th chapter of Luke of an instance where, again, the nature of the kingdom and the misconception of the kingdom that was a part of the thinking of the disciples, is evident. In Luke 24, you're dealing with a circumstance after the death of Christ and after His resurrection. This is one of His appearances to His disciples where He meets with a couple of His disciples as they're walking from Jerusalem down to the little town of Emmaus. While they're walking and talking about the events of the past few days involving Jesus, He joins them and walks with them, and they have a conversation. But initially, those disciples don't realize that it's Jesus. It's one of the interesting scenarios in the scripture.

In the process of their talking with Him, He asks them why they were so downcast, and so they told Him about this man who was crucified and things about Him. One of the things they said in Luke 24:21 was, "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened." They had hoped that this was the One who was going to redeem and restore Israel. And they said they killed Him, and it's been three days since this happened, and they hadn't seen Him raised from the dead yet. They didn't think they had. They were actually looking at Him.

But in the process of their conversation, Jesus says to them, in verse 25, "Oh, foolish ones and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Notice the implication of what He said to them. After they had

expressed their lost hope because they thought He was going to redeem Israel and He didn't, He then said to them, "Ought not the Christ to have suffered?" In other words, wasn't this the way it was supposed to be, that the Messiah suffer and die? Then the scripture says that He began at Moses and all the Prophets and taught them the things concerning Himself from those prophetic passages, again correcting their misunderstanding of the purpose for which the Messiah came and the nature of the kingdom that He was to establish. He says the Christ was supposed to suffer and then enter into His glory after the suffering.

MARK: If they had only understood where they were in time, and that Jesus had just died, and shed His blood for the forgiveness of mankind's sins. And the day when they're having this conversation is the day of His resurrection, which was the greatest victory of all time. Had they really understood what was going on, they would be shouting for joy as we do today because of what happened on that very day when they were downcast.

EDDIE: That's right. They had a lot of misunderstandings about it. Even on the day Jesus was ascending back to the Father, as recorded in Acts 1, they still showed their lack of a grasp of what all that was about.

MARK: That's in Acts 1:6. "Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?'"

EDDIE: See, there's the question again. Here He's about to ascend back to the Father, and it's as if they're saying, "Okay, is it now? We're still waiting. We're still waiting for you to restore the kingdom to Israel."

MARK: And those two men that Jesus just spoke to on the way to Emmaus, apparently that word hadn't spread like it probably should have.

EDDIE: Yes. It all simply points to the fact that Jesus came to establish a kingdom that was not political. When He was arrested and stood before Pilate in John 18, He said as much, when He said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight," (John 18:36). If it was a political, earthly kingdom, He said, my servants would take up arms and fight for that kingdom, because that's how you perpetuate that kind of a kingdom.

It is interesting that one of His disciples tried to do that very thing in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus was arrested. Peter, one of his disciples grabbed a sword and was ready to fight for the kingdom in that

fashion. And he ended up cutting off the ear of a man. I don't think he was aiming for that. I think there'd have been a dead man in that garden if things had worked out differently. Peter was ready to kill for the kingdom. And remember what Jesus told him?

MARK: He rebuked him.

EDDIE: He said, "Put your sword into the sheath" (John 18:11). That's not what His kingdom was about. He says to Pilate, 'my kingdom is not of this world. My servants would fight for it if it was'. But it's not. Over and over again, you find Jesus trying to help them understand the nature of His kingdom. But the misconception was so ingrained that they couldn't seem to get it out of their minds until such time as they were given the Holy Spirit (Acts 2) that Jesus had promised them, when He said, "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth," (John 16:13). Through the Spirit's revelation to them, they were able to then understand the things that previously they didn't.

MARK: They were thankful for that, and we're thankful for that, because as the Spirit revealed it to them, the Spirit also through their pens revealed it to us. So we have that understanding of the spiritual nature of the kingdom in its totality, like God intended.

EDDIE: That's right. Yet, the sad thing is that this misconception of the nature of the kingdom was not something that just characterized people in the days of Jesus. The idea that the kingdom of Old Testament prophecy was political in nature is an idea that's still around today. There are people today, even religious folk that claim to be Christians, who still believe the nature of the kingdom is political and that it hasn't been established yet and that it will be established at some point in the future and Jesus will reign as king from David's literal throne in Jerusalem for a thousand years over a political kingdom. And God's original plan, they say, was for Jesus to establish a political kingdom. They say that the prophets predicted a political kingdom, and Jesus intended such when He came to earth. And then He was rejected, and when it became evident that the people were rejecting Him as their king and were planning to kill Him, then God came up with this secondary plan that included the church to kind of 'get us by' until such time as the Lord could return again and establish His kingdom.

MARK: It's kind of interesting, because the passage we read in John 6 after Jesus fed the 5000, was before He really started facing opposition in His ministry. And if there was a time for Him to set up a physical,

earthly kingdom, that was the time when everything came together very well. If He was going to do it, that was the golden opportunity.

EDDIE: Right. And who was rejecting whom? They offered Him the kingdom. They offered Him a political kingdom, and He rejected that. It is when He didn't live up to their conception of the Messiah that they then pressed Him toward the cross. So the nature of the kingdom is spiritual. I want to close with a passage from Acts 26:22-23 that illustrates that when the prophets spoke of the events involving the coming of Christ, they spoke of those events in terms of spiritual things and not physical things. In Acts 26:22-23, Paul said, "Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come – that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles." Paul said the things that he was preaching about Jesus and the church are things that Moses and the prophets have already said. Paul was just telling them what the prophets said about the suffering of Jesus, His rising from the dead and salvation to Jew and Gentile alike. That's what the prophets spoke about.

If you'd like to have a copy of today's lesson, contact us at P.O. Box 865, Hurst, Texas, 76053 or email us at requests@thetruthinlove.com. You may also go to our website, www.thetruthinlove.com, and contact us there if you like. Audiocassette, CD, and DVD are all available and free of charge. Just let us know which format you'd like to have that in, and we'll be glad to send it to you.

Mark, thank you for being with us today. And we thank you for being with us. Please come back next time.

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