

Prophecy Update
Why Bible Prophecy Is So Controversial
Pastor JD Farag

KAPONO: Would you please bow your heads and join me in a word of prayer? Oh, Lord, would You teach us to worship, Lord? And I pray that You would teach us to do so with everything that we've got, Lord. In so many ways, our worship is a testament to our faith, Lord. May we sing for joy for who You are. Lord, we thank You so much for this time together.

Lord, we thank You for all of those who are able to be here with us in person, Lord, and for those online as well. Would You bless this teaching, Lord? We need Your help, especially with the Prophecy Update. Lord, we need Your help, that we may have our eyes wide open to see what's going on. Lord, would You speak to us this morning? We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen and amen. Good morning and welcome. You can be seated. Thank you. So glad you're here. Those of you joining us online, we're so glad you are. If you don't mind, we're going to get right to it, though.

We have two services on Sunday morning, as you know, the first of which is the Bible Prophecy Update that we do weekly and have for many years. And then Second Service is the sermon, which is a verse-by-verse study through God's Word. And currently we're in the *Book of Revelation*. And Lord willing, today we will complete *Chapter 1*. What an accomplishment. Our text is going to be just *verses 19 and 20*, the last two verses of *Chapter 1*.

And we're going to look at why it is that God doesn't want us to be ignorant concerning the future. Rather, He wants us to know about the future. So that'll be Second Service. That'll be live streamed at 11:15 a.m. Hawaii time.

And those of you that are joining us by way of YouTube or Facebook, we'd really encourage you to go directly to the website at JDFarag.org for the uncensored and uninterrupted entirety of today's Update, which is actually going to be more of a prophecy teaching than it is a Prophecy Update, as I'm going to address a matter of paramount importance, especially in this, the last hour of human history as we know it, namely, that of why it is that Bible prophecy is so controversial and even seems to be revving up — I choose that word for a reason. It seems to be revving up more so in this regard with each passing day as we near that day.

The Lord has been heavily impressing upon my heart as of late the urgent need to address from Scripture this matter concerning this controversy. And I'm keenly aware that I run the risk of an oversimplification when I say this.

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But I've organized the answer to this question into three categories via three biblical descriptions of who the devil is and how the devil is, specifically as the author of confusion, the accuser of the brethren, and the father of lies. It all boils down to that.

At the core, if you peel back all the layers because **“We don't wrestle against flesh and blood,”** people, brothers, and sisters. We wrestle against these principalities, these powers of darkness, wickedness in high places. The Apostle Paul delineates four different rankings of these spiritual entities in the spiritual realm with whom we wrestle. So that's what the battle is.

And if you really think about it, all three descriptions are at the core of why it is that Bible prophecy is so controversial and seemingly even so — wait for it — conspiratorial. That felt good to say it like that. Let me explain. The devil stirs up controversy, leading to confusion about who's right and who's wrong, chiefly in the arena of Bible prophecy.

Sadly, said confusion comes from the author of confusion, then subsequently leads to the false accusations against fellow Christians, which explains why fellow Christians become our enemy instead of the enemy being our enemy.

Did you catch that? Do I have to do that again? You got it, right? I know that (Frustrated sigh) he has been met with smashing success in getting the Christian to fight the other Christian as the enemy, so that he is no longer the enemy.

I say to you in love as emphatically as I possibly can he's the enemy not that person that's coming to mind right now just as I said that!

[Laughter]

If this weren't bad enough, this confusion which fuels and fosters the accusation, then leads to deception, such that Christians buy the lie about fellow Christians. Okay. To the question of how all three explain why Bible prophecy is so controversial and seemingly so conspiratorial, it's that Satan knows Bible prophecy in particular is a deciding factor.

By a “deciding factor,” I mean when one has ears to hear what the Spirit is saying prophetically to the church, the effect is not only a game changer, it's a life changer for all eternity. How many people have come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ by way of Bible prophecy? And Satan knows that. And this is why Satan will do everything and stop at nothing to keep eyes and ears shut to the life-changing truth of prophecy for all eternity.

I think you would agree that again, he's been met with smashing success by employing what I'll call the big three: Confusing, Accusing, and Lying. Why? Satan has to employ all three in the area of

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Bible prophecy specifically because it foretells of his eternal destiny in the lake of fire for all eternity. Watch this. How would you like there to be a bestselling book of all time, written about you being cast into the lake of fire for all eternity? Wouldn't you try everything to keep people from reading that book?

Again, smashing success because Satan has succeeded in keeping Christians away from the *Book of Revelation*, which foretells what's in store for him. Can't wait. It gets even worse. Satan knows Bible prophecy better than any of us ever will, and he seeks to keep his evil plan for man from being exposed, which explains why he's literally, in every sense of the word, hell bent in his diabolical plot to damn man. You know, diabolical, is the word "devil"?

He's so, s-so [*Effects added*] diabolical. This also explains why controversy surrounding other Bible truths aren't quite as pronounced and pointed as the controversy surrounding Bible prophecy truths. And this because of all the Bible questions, the one shrouded in and clouded by controversy and even conspiracy, is far and away that of Bible prophecy about the last days.

This is why many a pastor today won't touch Bible prophecy with a ten-foot pole. Is that a saying still? Okay. It's an old one. Let me have it. The reason being is the devil's aim — and I want you to listen very carefully to this — the devil's aim is to get people to throw the proverbial baby of the Bible out with the bathwater of prophecy in the Bible.

Did you catch that? So if I can dismiss Bible prophecy, of which one third of the Bible is prophecy, then wouldn't it stand to reason that I can throw the whole thing out? Here's how I get there. If the devil can confuse, accuse, and deceive people, they will no longer know what to believe, or more importantly, who to believe.

And when this happens, and make no mistake about it, it's happening, then Bible prophecy and the entire Bible with it is thrown out into the rubbish can of conspiracy theory. You see how insidious and diabolical that is? This for several reasons, chief of which is because of confusion from the author of confusion, which is where it all starts, and as such, that's where I would like to start: Confusion. This is the genesis.

Thankfully, we can turn to the word of God and the God of the word in order to un-confuse, if you will, any and all who are sadly and woefully confused. Replete throughout the pages of Holy Writ, we find passage after passage as it relates to this confusion, this controversy, even this conspiracy. So what follows are just two of many Scriptures that speak to this, the first of which is from the Apostle Paul and the second which is from the Apostle Peter.

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Let's start with Paul in his first epistle to the *Corinthians, Chapter 14*. I'll begin reading in *verse 31*. He writes, by the Holy Spirit, **“You can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.”**

Do you know that Bible prophecy is very encouraging? How about *1 Thessalonians Chapter 4*, when the apostle Paul talks about the rapture, when we're all caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and then when he's done talking about, teaching about the rapture, he ends by saying, **“Therefore, encourage one another with these words.”**

Bible prophecy is encouraging. It's exciting. It's not terrifying. Now, if you don't know Jesus, you should be very afraid because I want to scare you into heaven, not flatter you into hell. And that, by the way, is one of the reasons why many come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

I love that one testimony we heard recently. This beautiful sister said, “Man, I started realizing that this is the end of the world, and that I was in big trouble.” And she got saved. That works. That works. Whatever it takes, right? So that all may be encouraged.

Encouraged how? Well, this is in the context of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the church, which are for us today. There is a false teaching, I might as well just mention it parenthetically, called cessationism, which is the false teaching that the gifts of the Spirit are not for the church today. And that is heartbreaking to me. You have the gift of the word of wisdom, word of knowledge, word of prophecy, and so Paul is wanting to encourage the Corinthian church in the exercising of these gifts. And when it comes to the gift of prophecy, let's do it decently and in order that all may be encouraged.

And then I want you to listen to what he says in *verse 32*. **“And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, [And then he says this] as in all the churches of the saints.”**

Boom! Wait, they're teaching Bible prophecy? They're exercising the gift of prophecy in the church? They used to. They used to. Hang on to that. I want to come back to that in a second.

Let's go to Peter, his second epistle, *Chapter 1*, beginning in *verse 19*. **“And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, [The more sure word of prophecy] which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, [Listen] that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”**

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Both passages, along with the others with them, become this anchor for us, as they un-confuse us when it comes to the truth of Bible prophecy. In other words, when any interpretation of Bible prophecy becomes riddled and rife with both confusion and uncertainty, God is not in it with a certainty. Because God is not the author of confusion.

I am hoping, Lord willing, to expound on this in our Second Service teaching with the sermon I've titled, 'God Wants Us to Know the Future' because, well, God wants us to know the future. In other words, He's not going to play a heavenly prophecy chess game with us, you know, cryptically trying to, you know, the secret code you need to decipher.

Man, I shouldn't have went there. Too late. Decode. Really? We got to decode this thing? Or how about this one? New revelation. No, it's not new.

It's... (Frustrated sigh) That's your own interpretation. You came up with that. No wonder everybody's confused by what you're teaching. I'll save it for a Second Service. You have to come now, since I said that, so...

Well, this brings me to the devil being the accuser of the brethren, which is another one of the main reasons as to why, specifically, Bible prophecy, in particular, is so controversial. Here's what's interesting, and I want you to think through this with me.

This tactic of the devil — you know, Paul writes and says, don't be ignorant of the “wiles” of the devil. I like that word. It's King James. It's got — that'll preach. That's why I growl with the “wiles” of the devil, the strategies, the tactics that the devil employs.

But this particular tactic of the devil concerning falsely accusing true born-again believers or true Bible teachers is that God will always have the final word. And one need look no further than to the prophets of old like Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, just to name three, all of whom were seen as being very controversial.

What if I told you that Ezekiel's prophecies were so controversial that many saw him as being mentally unstable at best, and completely insane at worst. He's in good company with the likes of Isaiah, who was written off as being another one of those conspiracy theorists when God had him, among many other things, go naked through Jerusalem as a visual prophecy to Judah. Now, how would you respond to that?

You go to downtown Judah, you're walking around, and you see this guy, and you're thinking, that guy's crazy. He's the prophet Isaiah. This was what we call a visual prophecy to prophesy as a

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warning of God's coming judgment. And that would get people's attention. Talk about a conversation starter, not right there necessarily with Isaiah, but about Isaiah. Did you see that guy?

And let's not forget Jeremiah, arguably one of the most controversial of all when he uses very bizarre visual prophecies such as, get this, soiled underwear. Well, at least he's got something on. But it was a prophecy, visually. He actually did this. Can you imagine what the joke — the Jeremiah jokes?

How many Jeremiahs does it take to change a light bulb?

I've just mentioned three controversial men, but I think we'd be grossly remiss not to include Habakkuk, Hosea, Elijah, Moses, and Jonah, among others. The common denominator with these and the many other men of God, mightily used by God, is that they were all extremely controversial. We talked about this last week; I think.

Even the Savior himself was controversial so much so that in *Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 12:46-50*, we have this account of when His mother and brothers were so concerned that they tried to stop Him. They were certainly pressured to do so by the Pharisees. And it's evidenced by how they interrupted Jesus in the middle of His teaching to the multitudes, in order that they might talk some sense into Him.

Commentators suggest that they were receiving all of these reports, and again, as a result, being exceedingly pressured to do something to stop Jesus from being so controversial. Everybody's coming to us, asking us about this controversial teacher. And when trying to rein Him in so He would tone it down and soften it up didn't work, well, the Pharisees resorted to more drastic measures, if you know what I mean, to silence Him.

Then there's Noah. (Chuckle) I think a lot about Noah. I think a lot about Lot too because Jesus said the last days would be like the days of Noah and like the days of Lot. So I think a lot about Lot. But I think a lot more about Noah. I love Noah. I can't wait to meet him. Wow. I mean, what he went through.

You'll forgive me for how I see the humor in how people in the days of Noah would see Noah, which you got to know would have been quite the sight. But we're told that Noah was "a preacher of righteousness." He was preaching what was right and true, the truth, yet he was falsely accused and dismissed as having completely lost his mind. Can you imagine how crazy let alone controversial Noah would have been as he preached for no less than a hundred years? Some believe a hundred and twenty.

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Let's just, for purposes of discussion, say a hundred years. Man, that's a lot, that's a lot of years preaching. I'm on year 20 — I don't want to tell you what year I'm on. Wow. I'm exhausted thinking about it.

But this is one of those places in God's word that rises to the level of us using our God-given intellect and God-given imagination to place ourselves into this profoundly prophetic passage of Scripture. In fact, all of Scripture, we would do well — I'll say it a different way, the opposite way — I'll flip it around.

We do err greatly when we don't put ourselves into that passage because in so doing and to our great peril we miss the application of God's word to our lives. It just becomes words on the pages of our Bible, not the living and alive word of God. We get into the Word, but the Word gets into us, and it transforms us and renews our mind. Remember, we talked about that last week. Was that last week? You don't remember. I don't remember, so...

Those who have been brainwashed need to have their — need to wash their brain. Let me try that again because I botched it. Those who have been brainwashed need the water of the word of God to not be brainwashed, but wash their brain, renew their mind. *Romans 12:1-2*.

So God's given us an amazing mind. How about let's use it? Is that okay? Will you allow me, along with me, to do just that and rewind back to the days of Noah? You want to go there? Well, what else are you going to say?

[Laughter]

Let's go. (Chuckle) Let's do this. Okay, let's start with this. How incredibly and utterly unbelievable and controversial would he have been? Let's go there. For those willing to take this journey back in time to the days of Noah, here's the first thing that we're going to notice: An old man. And not only is he preaching, he's building something.

What's he building, we ask. Well, he says he's building an ark. Okay, what's an ark? Well, he described it as being sort of like a very, very big boat. What's a boat? We don't even know what an ark not to mention a boat is. So we ask him. Noah, what's a boat? And what does Noah respond with?

He posts a Prophecy Update.

[Laughter]

If that was too much, I'm sorry. Not really.

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He prophesies to them about the coming judgment of God upon the entire world in a flood. Now we're really curious because either this guy's crazy, or we're dead, or both. But can I just ask you another question, sir?

So we ask him, what's a flood? You have to understand that heretofore the world has never seen rain. Why would you need a boat, whatever that is, for a flood, whatever that is, if we've never seen rain, whatever that is?

So he preaches prophecy to them about what's going to happen, yet future. This is why I'm building this and preaching this. Because of what's coming.

This is where we go from our confusion about Noah to our accusation against Noah. I mean, come on. That's incomprehensible. That's because he's one of those conspiracy theorists. (Laughing while talking) He's building a... You know what? Let's just leave this old man alone. He seems to be very happy. Just let him build this thing, whatever it is he calls a boat or an ark. Let's just leave him alone.

There's only one problem. He's not keeping it to himself. And instead, he keeps preaching these absurd, controversial, and conspiratorial prophecies about God's soon coming judgment on the world, and he won't stop.

So what are we going to do now? Because we're there, right? You're still there? You haven't come back yet? We'll get back to Oahu. Just, we're still there a little bit longer.

So we're there. And we notice now that there's this attempt to — okay, again, he's crazy, so just — he's one of those prophecy nuts. So we settle our hearts and console ourselves by going along with the crowd, all of whom see him as being just crazy and over-the-top. And they seem to now be taking comfort in believing, yeah, no, just he's old. He's, you know — you know what happens when you get old? He's losing his mind. Just leave him alone. He's out there.

However, it's not left at that, nor should it be. Because now he's causing quite a stir and getting people to really ponder and wonder if what he's prophesying and preaching about is true. Well, that's short lived because Noah has become the laughingstock of the town by way of the false accusations that “he's just another one of those.”

Not only is Noah accused by the accuser of the brethren of being a false teacher, he's probably also being accused of seeking to be sensational in order to gain a following — okay, I'm just going to say it — on social media. I'm trying to bring it into modern-day terms.

And you got to hand it to him. If that's what he's trying to do, that's pretty sensational. I mean, you picked a good one, Noah. I'll give you that. It's gonna — it's gonna rain. Never seen rain before. The

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rain's gonna come down, the world is gonna be flooded, and you're building this big, huge boat you call an ark to be saved? (Laughing) Yeah, no, uh-huh.

So we notice one more thing here before we leave. And that's that all his accusers remain smug, arrogantly dismissing and discrediting poor Noah, this man of God. But God has the final word with a raindrop. You can read this account. Don't do it right now. I'm still preaching.

It's chilling. And we're provided with some pretty graphic detail about how they were clawing the side of that thing to try to get in, but it was too late. The door was shut. And they perished exactly as this crazy man was preaching and prophesying would happen, that same old man that we ridiculed and mocked and dismissed and accused and...

There's one more aspect to the devil being the accuser of the brethren, and it's one for which it's so subtle that it's not so often or so easily recognized. And what I'm speaking of is this resorting to bickering, backbiting, attacking, and accusing those with whom we disagree.

Here's what that looks like and sounds like. I don't agree with you.

Well, stop right there.

Yeah, I just don't — I don't agree with you.

Well, that doesn't mean it's not true. Oh, you don't agree. So that's the litmus test by which you gauge whether or not it's true: whether or not you agree or disagree? Have fun with that one. I don't agree. It doesn't matter whether you agree or not. It's the truth.

I don't happen to hold that view.

See ya. Wouldn't want to be ya. I don't want to see how that's going to work out for you. And think of the audacity of that, the hubris in that, as if to say, I have the final word.

I will determine whether or not this is true. And I don't agree with you. Okay. In fact, I'm going to unfollow you.

Bye-bye. You shouldn't be following me anyway. You should be following Jesus.

[Congregation shouts, "Amen!"]

So again, this is what it sounds like. I don't agree with you. So I will oppose you, attack you, criticize you, demonize you, and ostracize you as I accuse you of being wrong. Why?

Because I am right.

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Okay, have a nice day. Be on your way. You're right? Oh, if you say it's right, well, I guess that settles it then. It's not right. It's so wrong on every level.

When this happens supremely over prophecy about Jesus coming, you know what happens? It dismantles the Gospel of Jesus saving. Hear me out. What ensues is what always ensues, which is that of the sacrificing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the altar of Christian accusing Christian over prophecy about Jesus Christ. And when this happens, and again, this is happening, it's inconceivable to agree to disagree agreeably at a time when those who need Jesus see Christians fight about Jesus.

It's about 20 years ago now, I had the privilege of spending the better part of a weekend with a brother in the Lord who's now with the Lord. And during our time together, he shared with me an illustration as we were driving in the car, and I've never forgotten it because it speaks so poignantly and powerfully to a Christian's unwillingness to agree to disagree agreeably, which one so aptly and affectionately referred to as, quote, "one of the highest marks of spiritual maturity."

Now, there are a couple of variations of this illustration. Perhaps you've heard it before. But I've updated it and also abbreviated it, so I want to share it with you at this time. It goes like this. I was walking across the bridge one day, and I saw a man standing on the edge, about the jump. I ran over and said, "Stop! Don't do it!"

"Why shouldn't I?" he asked.

"Well, there's so much to live for."

"Like what?"

"Do you know Jesus?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "So do I. Are you born again?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "So am I. Are you denominational or non-denominational?"

[Laughter]

You see where this is going?

He said, "I'm non-denominational."

"Wow. So am I. Are you pre-trib or pre-wrath?"

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He said, "I'm pre-trib."

So I pushed him off the bridge.

[Laughter]

Certainly, this is humorous, but so too is this extremely serious by virtue of the fact that it plays out in some way every day, thousands of times a day on social media. May I pose a question, humbly asked, and one for which I ask myself?

Do we realize how damaging arguing, attacking, and accusing fellow Christians can be in destroying our witness for Jesus before a lost world that is closely watching us out of their hopeless and desperate need of Jesus? Maybe better said or asked, how is it that we expect to win anybody to Christ if all we're doing is bickering with our brothers and sisters in Christ?

The Apostle Paul said, we're living epistles. You know what that means? We're living letters. The world is reading the letter of our Christian lives. What are they reading in your life? What are they reading on your page? What are they reading in your post? I'm gonna come up with a new one.

I just thought of this. Thank you, Lord. Someone's going to make a T-shirt. I got to be careful. I've got — by the way, I've got a lot of T-shirts. Thank you so much for the hats and cups and... You know, it's not what would Jesus do? It's what would Jesus post? I might be onto something. What would Jesus post?

I saved the worst for last. Isn't that kind of me? But we have to talk about it because deception is one of the main reasons that Bible prophecy is so controversial. Yes, the devil is the author of confusion. Yes, the devil is the accuser of the brethren, but infinitely worse, the devil is the father of lies. Think about this. He's authored a book, and the title of the book that the devil has authored is 'Confusion.'

I'm not reading that book. It's very confusing. He's also fathered children. You know what their names are? Lies. And he's also the accuser of the brethren. In other words, if a brother or sister in Christ is being falsely accused, I assure you on the authority of God's holy word, it's the devil. The devil is in it, behind it, and doing it because he's the father of lies. I love it when Jesus — the strength of it.

We talked about this last week. I think I'm starting to doubt myself again, but... Just the strength with which the Savior would speak, the harshest words that ever came out of the Savior's mouth were for the religious leaders.

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He called — this might be another one you want to — especially when you're really feeling it, right? Go through the Gospels. All the times that Jesus, I mean, He did not hold back, **“You den of vipers.”** You got to growl when you read that one. **“You whitewashed tombs.” “You’re of your father, the devil.” “The father of lies.”**

Listen, I could just see Peter — this is not in the account. I could just see Peter taking Jesus aside saying, listen Jesus, this is not how to get more followers.

[Laughter]

So we got to talk about the devil as the father of lies. Why? Because when one will buy the lie, it's the result of the accumulative effect with confusion and accusation already solidly in position. I'm going to explain that.

If you'll kindly allow me to, I'll take the remainder of our time together today and expound on this last one. But in order to do that, we have to, at this time go ahead and end the live stream on YouTube and Facebook.

While I am keenly aware that we've addressed this ad infinitum, even as recently as last week, I still think it's incumbent upon me to approach this yet again, only this time specific to the deception and division of Bible prophecy. By deception and division, I mean that of precious brothers and sisters in Christ who are deceived by and divided over Covid-19 and the so-called vaccine.

If I could be so blunt — you're saying, “what stopped you before” — this singlehandedly, in the hands of the father of lies, the devil himself, has been, still is, and will continue to be the most controversial and conspiratorial aspect of Bible prophecy, bar none. I'm not angry. Example?

[Congregant says, “Please.”]

Thank you, Charlie. I love you, man.

[Laughter]

Let's take our three-pronged template of why Bible prophecy is so controversial and apply it to this so-called Covid vaccine. Okay. You ready? That wasn't very convincing, but we're going to do it anyway.

Let's start with the first one, which is the ‘confusion’ over the few Christian leaders who came out against it (Raising his hand)

[Laughter turning into applause]

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Okay. Praise the Lord. No, He gets... I did not intend for that response but thank you. I gotta start over again. You messed me up.

[Laughter]

You guys are so gracious. You have treasures in heaven. I want you to know when you get there, they're going to go, "You went to Calvary Kaneohe?"

"Yeah, that was me."

"Wow. Enter in, brah!"

[Laughter]

Right? Yeah.

"You? Oh! We've got VIP special reservations over here for you; what you had to adore."

That's not biblical. So please don't — don't email me, please. Okay, let's get back to the prophecy teaching already in progress. Stop doing that to me. I don't need help getting distracted.

Okay, so the first one, confusion over the few Christian leaders who came out against it and then many well-known Christian leaders who were injected with it. Now, I ask you, how confusing is that?

What? Wait. No. What? (Garbled sounds of confusion)

[Laughter]

I don't know, I'm speechless. That's a miracle in and of itself, right there. I mean, to add this to this confusion, prior, many of them, myself included, sadly, we're walking together in agreement up until the year 2020. And that's when everything changed, never to be the same again.

And if this weren't bad enough, like with Noah in the days of Noah, it's not just left at that because there's still some controversial teachers creating quite a stir. (Raising hand)

And people are pondering whether or not it's true, as outlandish as it seems, as conspiratorial as it seems. (Said with a deep voice)

Gotta get up close to the mic. As controversial as it might be because you both can't be right. So now I'm really confused because up until this-s-s — I didn't plan on the emphasis there, but this-s is-s-s this-s. It comes from the pit of hell. This is probably — oh, I'd better be careful because we do get a lot of people asking us about, well, listen, I was injected. Did I lose my salvation? Did I take the mark of the beast?

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Absolutely not. If you're saved, you can't be unsaved. If you're born again, you can't be un-born-again. And it's not the mark of the beast because there's no beast, and we're not in the tribulation, contrary to what some are suggesting. This happens during and in the 7-year tribulation. That's not now. The rapture has to happen first.

So please be encouraged. And don't let the enemy lie to you. In fact, Lord willing, I'm hoping to have a discussion concerning this. We might probably pick a Thursday night to discuss this, very specifically, what about those that have been injected with this thing? What now? We'll talk about it if we're still here.

Okay, so now we're confused because, you know, you say, "No, it's safe and effective." Just like that too. And then here's this other guy over here, saying, "No! It's a lie. You're going to die!"

I wasn't quite like that, but close to that. Dare I say that this virtually, standalone, explains why it is that the division vis-à-vis deception within the body of Christ is the likes of which we've never seen before, nor will ever see again at this time in human history.

And here's the thing. It started with confusion, which led to the false accusation, giving way to the strong deception that has, in turn, caused all the division. What does that sound like to you? Does that not sound like the textbook case of the devil's evil and diabolical plan to divide and conquer? Isn't that what Jesus warned us about and prophesied about? **"A house divided cannot stand."**

Don't you think Satan knows that? He knows that verse in the Bible more than you do. He knows where it's at, which I can't think right now, chapter and verse of exactly where it's at. You could tell me after. Be gracious when you do.

Anyway, what's the point? Well, **"a house divided cannot stand."** United we stand, divided we fall, as it's been said. But think about that in the context of the body of Christ. So Satan cannot prevail against the church outwardly. So it has to be an inside job. You gotta do it from within. Just like he could not curse through Balaam, though Balak was paying him big bucks to pronounce this curse upon the Israelites from without.

How did he finally get them and get paid? Well, he did it from within. He had the Moabite and the Midianite women get all dressed up seductively and seduce the Israelite men. And then once they committed sexual immorality, they introduced their false gods, and they brought it upon themselves from the inside. The gates of hell cannot prevail against the church, outwardly. So Satan knows he's got to come from within.

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And that's why Paul wept for three years, day and night, knowing that after his departure, there would come those from among their own midst [*That would be wolves in sheep's clothing*] that would not spare the flock, that would draw disciples unto themselves. And they would divide the church, split the church. That's the end game. That's what the goal posts are for the enemy. Divide and conquer.

And that's how he does it. And that's what he's doing. And again, I'll say it one more time. He's being met with smashing success, pun intended. The church that we're going to read about when we get to *Revelation Chapters 2 and 3*, whenever that is, it's not a strong, sound, standing church.

It's a church that's barely hanging on by a thread, a thread, a battle-weary church, the Church of Philadelphia. **“Because you've obeyed My command to persevere and endure, I'm going to keep you from the hour of tribulation that is coming upon the whole world.”**

That's the 7-year tribulation. That's the Pre-tribulation rapture of the church, right there. But notice He also says — this is *Revelation Chapter 3*, by the way, the Church of Philadelphia, the sixth of the seven churches. You can look it up. But again, not right now. I'm not done.

“I know you have little strength.” Translated: I know you're barely hanging on. But you're persevering and you're enduring. Just hold on. Not much longer. I'm coming. Man, I'm coming. I know you're hanging on by your — no, you're past hanging on by your fingernails. You got like one pinky, and that fingernail's starting to break because all the other ones have already broken. And you're just like, oh!

I know. I see. I know. I'm coming. Hang in there, literally, hang in there by your pinky.

Why is the church in that condition? Because of this. Because of the division in the body of Christ that came by way of the deception, that came by way of the accusation, that came by way of the confusion, where it all started. I'll bring it into a close by adding one more controversy, as if you need one more.

You want one more? I got one more. Think about this. The Gospel of Jesus Christ in and of itself is controversial. Have you ever thought of it like that? No, think about this. How could — it's even conspiratorial. Stay with me. Watch this.

Okay. The good news, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that Jesus came, He was crucified, died, buried, rose again on the third day, and He's coming back again soon and very soon one day. Did you know there are over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament about the First Coming of Jesus Christ?

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Do you know how preposterous those prophecies were? The odds, one calculated, incalculable, just fulfilling eight of those over 300 prophecies of Christ's First Coming. Could you imagine? Pre-Bethlehem, you're out strolling around, walking around, just enjoying the day, the sun, the beach. Up walks a guy, says, Hey, Jesus is coming.

Who?

Jesus, the Savior of the world. And He's going to be born of a virgin.

(Laughing) Okay. Just. Okay. Yeah. Okay. Okay. It's going to be okay. It's okay.

You would have already dismissed him. We haven't even got to the other ones that are even more preposterous. He has to be born at a specific time, in a specific place, to a virgin, and He has to fulfill all of these prerequisites and prophecies in order to be the Savior. But He's coming.

How conspiratorial is that? How controversial is that? All are born sinners and need the Savior who was born of a virgin, as God becoming a man like me to die for me instead of me here on earth so I could live with Him forever in heaven.

(Laughing) Okay, wait. God's going to become a man and be born of a virgin? Man, I don't know what you're drinking or eating, but that is just ludicrous.

The Gospel's controversial and even conspiratorial. But it's true. How about that? Here's my point. The controversial nature or even the conspiratorial nature of any prophecy or interpretation of prophecy in God's word that is not the gauge by which you measure whether or not it's true or not. If God said it, that settles it. It's the truth. I love it!

Daniel, when he interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream, *Chapter 2*, I think — I'm doubting myself again. He says this is the interpretation of the dream, and it is certain and will surely happen. Ha-ha. Wow, mic drop, right there.

In other words, if God said it, you can be certain of it. I mean, God said He would become a man, be born of a virgin, to die for the sins of mankind. And guess what? It happened. Now fast forward. I'm coming back very soon.

And I know this sounds just crazy, but in the twinkling of an eye, not a blink, there's going to be a trumpet sound, the trumpet sound of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first, the bodily resurrection, and we who are alive and remain will be caught up. We'll get our new bodies, a metamorphosis.

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1 Corinthians 15:51-52. And that alone — we put off — this thing's got a lot of miles on it. I'm putting this thing off. I'm given my new eternal body. Thank you, Jesus! That alone!

[Applause]

That is so crazy. I think of a Prophecy Update I did, and I'll bring it in now, but 'When Bible Prophecy Is Too Unbelievable To Be True.' And it's actually when it's so unbelievable, that's when it's true.

Okay, that didn't go over as well as I had thought.

Can I just ask you lastly, as I go through the ABCs of salvation, which is just an explanation of salvation, to please take note of the controversial nature of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ? I want to do it a little bit differently today.

Okay, the A, acknowledge or admit you sinned. You're a sinner, and you need the Savior. No, no, no, we protest. I'm a good person. Well, you might be a good person, but you'll never be good enough. *Romans 3:10* says, **“There is no one [That's good] no one righteous, not even one,”** save one, Jesus the Christ. You'll never be good enough. And *Romans 3:23* tells us why.

This is very offensive to me. I just want you to know it's very controversial too, by the way, especially when you tell me *Romans 3:23*, that **“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”** And you haven't even gotten started yet because there's still *Romans 6:23*.

This is, this is, this is really bad news. And the badder of the bad news is the gooder the good news will be.

What's the badder news, bad news? Well, you've been sentenced to death in hell for all eternity.

Boy, that's pretty bad.

Yeah because **“The wages of sin is death.”** You ready for the good news?

Please.

“But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Stop right there. You're telling me that I can live forever?

Yeah.

Oh, come on. That's crazy.

No. God said it. That settles it. Okay.

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What about the B, which is really central? Believe in your heart that Jesus Christ is Lord. *Romans 10:9* says, **“If you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved.”**

Wait. So I believe in God.

That's not what it's saying. The demons believe in God and tremble. What this is saying is when you believe in your heart, you're putting your trust in, believing in the person of Jesus Christ and that He died for you, instead of you because somebody had to die because you've been sentenced to death. And I know as crazy as a sounds, He went to His death in your stead with His blood shed, was buried, and get this. You want to talk about crazy? He rose again on the third day.

Okay, now you're, now you're over the top. No way.

Way! There is more proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ than there is, literally not hyperbole, literally, than that Caesar even ever lived. Let me say that again. There is more proof that Jesus Christ rose from the dead than there is that Caesar even ever lived historically.

I'll save that for next — no, we won't be here, I don't think for that. I didn't date set. Don't email me.

[Laughter]

Man, oh, man. Can I just say this? I'm going to. There's a difference between setting a date and being excited about a date. And you're never going to take from me the excitement of that day, that date when that trumpet sounds because I'm watching for it, and I'm excited about it, and I'm ready for it, like so ready. Like I was ready yesterday, actually, last year and years before.

Last one. We're almost done. Thanks for your patience. The C: call upon the name of the Lord. Or as *Romans 10:9* also says, if you confess with your mouth, **“Jesus is Lord...”**

Now Jesus said, **“Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.”** So if I believe in my heart that Jesus is Lord and that God raised Him from the dead, then what's going to come out of my mouth? Out of the abundance of my heart the mouth speaks. So I believe in my heart. I put my trust in Jesus. Now what's going to come out of my mouth? Jesus! (Yelling) I'm not going to be ashamed.

You know, when you pronounce the name, the only name given among men whereby we must be saved, have you noticed that demons tremble and air stops? Now, you're in a conversation — I might as well.

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Real quick, just let me have this one, and then I won't ask you for anymore, I don't think. You're in a conversation with somebody, and they take the name of your's and my Jesus in vain. Oh! The Holy Spirit's writhing within you.

Now, back in the day, I used to be a lot more militant, if you can imagine. But I've gotten more gracious over the years, believe it or not. So now when somebody does that — and you know what they say when they do that and they find out that you're a Christian? Or how about this one? You're a p-pastor? Excuse my French. Listen, dude, that was not French, okay? And all of a sudden, everything changes. Why? Because you've just brought into the discussion the name above all names, the name of the Savior.

I've shared this. Maybe this is appropriate, just again, quickly, and I appreciate your patience. But my given name at birth was Wahid Fies Farag. How's that one? My parents weren't that cruel. It's just that I was born in the Middle East and that's a — and by the way, my first name, Wahid, in Arabic is the number one. Thank you very much. The numbers one through five are: wahid, ithnane, thalatha, arba'a, khamsa.

So my name literally means... (Chuckle) It's actually — wait, wait, wait, wait, wait — just don't get me in trouble now — only one. So you're reading an Arabic Bible, "Al Wahid" is Jesus, the only begotten Son. That's even better. Actually, I'll take that. So okay, just a minute. Let me get back here before a lightning bolt strikes me.

So you have just spoken with your mouth the name of Jesus to somebody that just took the name of Jesus and spoke it in a blasphemous way. So what do you say? Here's what I say. "I have a question. I just want to ask you a question. Why is it that you're not an equal opportunity blasphemer?"

Now they're going to look at you weird. And then you're going to say, "I've never heard anybody ever take the name of Muhammad in vain, or Buddha. When was the last time somebody said, 'Oh, Buddha!'"

[Laughter]

Right? That doesn't work. Oh, Muhammad! Well, you're going to get beheaded in some areas for doing that, insulting the Prophet Muhammad, who's a false prophet, by the way, Islam, a false religion, Allah, a false god.

So you've just spoken the only name given among men whereby we must be saved. And when you confess that — and oh, by the way, **"Every knee is going to bow, every tongue is going to confess."** But now it's for salvation, then it's for damnation for all eternity. That's how powerful this is.

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Lastly, *Romans 10:13*, and this seals the deal.

I mean, you've got me a little bit stirred up here. I'm still kind of dealing with the fact that you just called me a s-sinner, that I need the Savior, and that the Savior is going to be God incarnate, born of a virgin. I'm still trying to wrap my mind around that. And now you want me to call upon the name of this guy to be saved? I mean, that's crazy.

And Romans 10:13 is crazy. **"All who call upon the name of the Lord will be [Will be] saved."**

That's crazy.

No. It's true. Notice it doesn't say "most who call," "some who call." No. "All who call." And notice it doesn't say "all who call upon the name of the Lord have a pretty good chance of being saved." "Maybe, but the jury's still out." "We're waiting for the verdict to come in." Could be saved, might be saved, should be saved? No. **"Will be saved."**

That's crazy.

It's true. Okay.

All right. I'm done. Just one — two more minutes? Okay. Again, what are you going to say? Like last week, in lieu of today's "But God Testimony," again this week, I need to make another announcement. Boy, I need to let you know that I'll be out of the pulpit after today for the month of May. And here's why. Please hear me out.

In May, we will celebrate my wife's birthday, who, as many of you know, continues to battle breast cancer. But God, as only He can, is shrinking the large tumor and stopping the aggressive spread, for which we give Him all the glory and are most grateful. Thank You.

[Applause]

We are most grateful — you have no idea — to all of you who have been praying and continue to pray. We're also going to commemorate our daughter Noelle's memorial when she went home to be with Jesus on May 4th, which is two days before my wife's birthday and eight days before Mother's Day, which is on May 12th of this year.

Then, six days after we celebrate our second-born son's graduation from college, and shortly after that, our daughter's graduation from high school, one year early as a junior, then we will also celebrate my first-born son's birthday as well.

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Then in addition to all this, I will also be officiating the celebration of life for a dear friend and brother in Christ, David Anderson, in Waimanalo on Sunday, May 26th, which happens to be Memorial Day weekend.

Now, these are just a few of the many things that I really want to be with my family for, and all of which are during the month of May. Please know that you'll be left in the very capable and loving hands of both Pastor Leitu and Pastor Mac as they fill in for me in my absence.

Then, Lord willing, and if we're still here, I will return to the pulpit, beginning with our prayer meeting on Tuesday, June 4th, which I'm very much looking forward to because I'm going to be so exhausted. I'm just going to need to come back for that alone. But I am very much looking forward to that.

And I will be so ready to come back for that, this for a number of reasons, not the least of which, and I hope you know this because it's true. I love you all very much, and I will miss you all very much. And I am so profoundly privileged to be your pastor, both locally and internationally, for which I thank you all so very much. I really didn't want that to sound like a eulogy. I'm sorry if it did.

Kapono, please come up. Save me from myself and these poor, precious people.

[Applause]

Let's go ahead and stand. We'll close, finally. And thank you for your grace again. And thank you for understanding, by the way. You know, you can always find another pastor for a church, but you can't find another me for my family.

Father, thank You for — oh, wow. This was kind of big today. But You're a big God. So, Lord, we just now would ask for Your Holy Spirit to not just, as He already does indwell us, but enable us to begin that process of assimilating and applying and processing all of this that we've seen here today. Perhaps it's, for some, a time of introspection and reexamination, allowing You unfettered access to that deep recesses in our hearts to see if there be anything at all that would keep us from hearing You, knowing You, loving You.

Lord, protect this, Your church from this that we've looked at today. And lastly, Lord, for any who have never put their trust in You, believed in You, I pray that today would be the day of their salvation, right here and right now, whether here in this church or watching online that no one would delay the most important decision of their life for eternal life. Oh, please, Jesus. And Jesus, come quickly. Maranatha! In Jesus' name, Amen.