

Hebrews (Part Fifteen): Chapter 2, A Mind Bending Purpose (Part Four)

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I am going to begin this sermon with a fairly quick review of my previous sermon, which I titled, "Five Easily Neglected Doctrines." I am doing this because I intended when I gave that sermon, that it was going to be a preface to my "Mind-bending Purpose" series. So what I have got going here is, I have got two full blown series that I am carrying on. One is the mind-bending one and the other one is the bigger series on the book of Hebrews itself. The mind-bending is just really mostly on Hebrews 1 and 2.

Today, we are going to definitely finish with the "Five Easily Neglected Doctrines" sermon today. I am using this to eventually become the preface to the Mind-bending series. Now, this is because I believe that our understanding of the epistle of Hebrews, which focuses us as strongly as it does on the work of Jesus Christ in our behalf as our High Priest, would be helped if we are able to grasp some possible pitfalls that might help keep our minds focused and good accomplishment achieved on the way to salvation.

A second reason that I stepped backward, as it were, is especially regarding Hebrews 1 and 2. The content is that I did not explain, I felt anyway, clearly enough for my satisfaction, the connection between the exaltation of Jesus Christ by the author (and I believe that the author is the apostle Paul), and the mind-bending future that awaits us because we are in Christ. And I hope to improve on that by some clarification.

I will not be doing it much in this sermon in terms of clarification, but I will tell you what the mind-bending future is because I do not want you to be questioning yourself. It can be explained in a whole sermon. But on the other hand, we can just announce it this way: that mind-bending future is *we are co-heirs with Christ*. Do you understand what that means? What He receives from the Father we share in. Now, we will not have the same positions and we will not share in, I am sure, in terms of all that might be part of it. But

nonetheless, that is an awesome, awesome thing to rise from the grave to be part of.

Now, back to my previous sermon for a short while, that is, the "Five Easily Neglected Doctrines." The possible pitfalls that appear in that sermon are these (I am just going to give you a very brief mention of them).

Doctrinal reality number one is, either we make efforts to have a viable relationship with Jesus Christ through prayer and obedience, or we produce no fruit. "Without Me you can do nothing," He said, and therefore there is no Kingdom of God in our future. That is blunt, brethren, but it is nonetheless true. That is something we *must* do.

The point of doctrinal reality number two is, we need to be very thankful that Jesus *cares*, continuously. I showed you that from many details in His dealings with the Jews. His faithfulness to us matters greatly. And it is a solid doctrinal support also for doctrinal reality number one.

The point of doctrinal reality number three is, it clearly appears that in this culture, the screws are tightening and thus our witness for God's way is becoming more demanding. Remaining anonymous will not last a great deal longer.

Doctrinal reality number four is, God follows specific patterns that help us correctly identify His workings. Do not deny your calling. You were called; do not deny it, do not trash it, do not drop it, hang on to it with all your might! God is assembling His Family and is in absolute control. Nothing gets beyond Him. And if you attracted His attention for some reason, some way, take it and run with it. God tells us outright in the book of Romans that all Israel will be saved. Now, I do not know that He means every single person, but He does make that statement. *All Israel will be saved*. He at least promised it.

I did not really get into doctrinal reality number five, so we are going to spend a short period of time on it. It involves our understanding of the building of character. Some have the tendency to use the phrase that they are "building character," and by that they imply that they are creating the character. Now, that understanding may be true in normal carnal

circumstances, but not when God enters the picture through His calling. Let us chase this process out a bit so our understanding is somewhat more correct.

There is no doubt that we *contribute* to the building of character, but God is the one who is the Creator. Let us go all the way back, just to get a positive statement regarding this, in the book of Genesis.

Genesis 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; [He said, "'Let's make *man*. . ." You cannot get anything any plainer than that.] let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

These verses clearly identify Father and Son involved as the Creator. It is very clear that Adam and Eve did not create themselves. In fact, they added absolutely nothing to what the Father and Son did entirely on Their own, until after Adam and Eve were living and thinking creatures. And it was not until after their creation as humans was completed and they were given a life that they began adding to what God created. And from then on, God's finished original creative work deteriorated. Mark that down.

The New Testament has information regarding creation. That is very surprising to those unfamiliar with what God is doing with His creation of mankind. Creation by God Almighty in heaven has not stopped. Mark that one down, too.

Turn with me to II Corinthians 5.

II Corinthians 5:14-18 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh, even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a

new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

These verses clearly state this; and here is a surprising reality: when one is called and converted, a new creation of the kind, quality, and thoroughness only than the Father and Son are able to perform has begun. Now, virtually everyone, most especially those living in Israelite nations, have heard the phrase declaring you must be born again. Many may actually know by memory that that declaration is found in John 3:3.

Now, Jesus made that declaration to a Jewish rabbi named Nicodemus in terms of a brand new birth. But Jesus thought, as He did that, was on a spiritual birth that was in agreement with the new creation announced in II Corinthians 5:16. But Nicodemus was intellectually completely frazzled by what Jesus stated. And that is why Nicodemus' first thought was of a person's birth from his mother's womb a second time, even though an adult. But the second birth does not require that process because it is a spiritual birth of a called one following having died to sin, as the apostle Paul later said.

That point in time though, when that person is born again, begins when one who is truly spiritually born again must begin growing in the grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ. And it is during this period of time that the spiritual image of the Father and Son is formed within us. And who is it who carries out the creation during this period of time? Well, it is the same Ones who did it in Genesis 1 at the creation of Adam and Eve.

I will give you an obvious spiritual reason why this creation has to be designed and completed by God, even though we have a role to fulfill within its creation. Our role is to yield to what God directs in His Word. That *only* is what we must do, because what God is creating is our mind, or in the biblical terminology, our heart. Here is a question. It is really an obvious one. What in the world do we know about spirit life, especially at the time that we are born again? Almost nothing—zilch, nada.

Now, if we are creating, what model do we follow when we are at that point in our conversion? What do we know? What do we know about the demands

of what we are being prepared for in our following Jesus wherever He goes, as Revelation 14:4 clearly says?

Doctrinal reality number five is, God is doing the creating.

Back to I Corinthians again, this time in chapter 13. Here we are as human beings being described by the apostle Paul.

I Corinthians 13:9-12 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. [Right there that clinches it. How much do we know of spirit life? Even what we do know, and we might be really proficient at, is physical things, things of this world.] But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. [What are we going to create when only what we can see is *dimly* seen?] Now [Paul admits] I know in part [I know a little bit]. . .

He may know a great deal more than we ever did spiritually. But still what he knows is only in part. How can you create something perfect spiritually when you do not even know it except in part?

What are you going to do with all that character you are building? You see, we are not building the character. God is building the character because He knows what He is creating. It is that simple. We only know in part. But then Paul says,

I Corinthians 13:12-13 . . . but then I shall know just as I am also known. And now abides faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

So we are being prepared for circumstances of governing, of teaching, and cooperation that we have never experienced in this life. How does one prepare for changes of character and circumstances that none except for Jesus experienced and perhaps we will not experience until Jesus Christ establishes His Kingdom on earth? Where do we begin? We begin by simply yielding to God's Word at this time and within our conversion.

Now, one final thought that touches on this sermon (as well as the Hebrew series that follows) is I gave the subject of my Pentecost sermon largely for one reason. Here I am thinking about way back then, it seems like ages ago, but it fell into this pattern that I am in right now. And that was to hopefully trigger motivating thoughts in your mind of admiration and appreciation for Jesus Christ and His quality and level of leadership. Now, why admiration and appreciation? It is because those two qualities are strong, motivating influences toward our imitating Him.

Admire means to regard with approval and respect. Now, that is good, but it does not quite have the effect, the punch, that appreciation does on our thinking and therefore on our actions. To appreciate is a stronger emotional quality than admiration. It is easily possible to admire a person's skill at doing something and not appreciate that same skilled person as a person because of personality or character issues. So appreciation carries with it a stronger sense of valuing the entire person as a whole, not merely one quality that one may possess. Appreciation's fruit is to value, place a value there, to esteem highly, including even with deep sensitivity. So appreciation results from careful evaluating a wide spectrum of characteristics against others with similar traits. It carries a great deal more thoughtful, caring impact than admiration.

So despite all of the displays of human leadership we see or hear about within the multitude of disciplines of human achievements made in all of the history of mankind's existence, whether from personal conversations, books, newspapers, TV, entertainment, politics, by means of the electronic media or any other means of communication, news that might motivate us to communicate with others about that leadership, the apostle describes absolutely *nobody* possesses that quality of leadership except Jesus Christ. He can honestly be admired *and* appreciated.

Now Jesus, as the apostle John describes Him in John 1 and Paul describes him in Hebrews 1, is unique in all of earth's history. And though He looked like a man, like all men, *nobody* whatever conducted themselves like Him. He is far and away the only true, holy Model for following in an unquestioning manner.

That is the end of that sermon. So now I am going to start blending the two of them together.

John 14:1-6 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know." And Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how can we know the way?" And Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

That is something that we face every single day. We live and walk and earn our living; grow and whatever. I believe that most of us can agree that here in the United States of America, we are living through potentially the most dangerously destructive period of time in this nation's most recent history. The key word there is "potentially." But surely we can all agree that what has happened in recent years appears ominous. Now, I am confident that it is going to take a great deal of effort, but if Americans try hard enough, it is still going to take a great deal of striving to live up to the major disaster of the Civil War. But I am confident we can do it. We are growing, it seems, evermore destructive in what we accomplish to do.

Looking back in time, a little over a century, a great many major events occurred that contributed to pulling some of the shiny luster from this nation's international glitter. Follow me as I move through time to the present.

In 1918, this nation was emerging from the First Great World War. That is only 100 years ago. And that in turn (listen to this series of events), was followed by the Roaring Twenties. The Roaring Twenties were economically glitzy on the surface, but were in reality immoral to the bone. Right on the heels of that came the Great Depression (when I was born in the 1930s) and then came the disaster of World War Two in the 40s, followed by the assassination of President Kennedy in the 1960s. In the 1970s came legal permission from the federal government to murder 60 million babies! (Are we going downhill or what?) And now we are at this time in the midst of a

pandemic and a fairly large number of citizens are enraptured by communism and deceived into thinking, by political forces combined with news sources, that it is going to produce a better life than what we enjoyed in the past.

What stupid reasoning when they have all the history of the 20th century before them to see how the communists produced nothing but war. We are already suffering through a confusing array of revolutionary internal violence that is evidence to me that we are rapidly becoming unhinged from sanity because fewer and fewer are living their lives anywhere near close to Christianity. The nation's culture has taken a major step downward during those periods of time that I just listed for you.

Now, looking at this gradual downfall from our point of view, that is, from the church's point of view, the central reason is easily stated. The founding of the United States of America benefited very greatly from the Protestant Reformation that occurred over the roughly 300 years before 1918. And I believe the major reason is because what made this nation so powerfully great was that a very large percentage of the population sincerely believed that it was a Christian nation, and thus at least loosely bound to the Creator God and His way. And therefore they practiced a fairly good form of Christianity in their lives. And did this nation ever prosper!

History has always been my number one subject. I will give you my testimony from the much reading I have done in history.

In the almost 6,000 years of mankind's history, no historian has ever discovered a nation like the United States of America—ever! It did not become this way because we were so inherently intelligent, wise, and inherently good. It was because God made it mighty for His end time purposes, even though it was thoroughly immoral.

Where God stepped away, as it were, to continue His other and end time purposes, He more or less left it to our own to destroy ourselves by our own hand. And we have done an excellent work of destruction in so doing, and we are not finished yet. The screws are tightening down on the church though. You can see that in the news almost constantly. The reason I believe that we are not finished yet is because I believe that as we continue stepping

away from obedience to God's laws, so also will our conduct become ever more irrational.

Brethren, the Ten Commandments form the framework of those qualities of which rational behavior consists. Is it a rational to kill 60 many million babies? Is it rational to burn down the businesses that are supporting your income or somebody else's income, your neighbor's income or your family's income? Is it rational to keep something like that going, as happened in Portland for at least 71 days? I do not know whether it went any further than that, but I know the last I heard earlier this week was 71 consecutive days of irrational behavior on the streets somewhere in the city of Portland

Brethren, keeping the Sabbath and the festivals of God is rational behavior. This nation has never done that. They started off irrationally. And though they were, I think, far more moral than people are generally today, nonetheless, the founders never did anything like that, except maybe for just a very few. Maybe God had some witnesses of these people keeping them for them to look at even at that time. But when has this nation ever done that as a way of life?

Interestingly, some of the antonyms of the term irrational depend on the context. Here are some of them. Something that is irrational is absurd. We think it is loony, illogical, not based in reality, unsound, foolish, contrary to reason, senseless. You can see them and more if you get a good dictionary. How rational is it to murder a perfectly healthy newborn? It is not rational at all! Almost 100% of those murders are committed because the baby's birth is merely inconvenient. That is not rational to me.

All these events were major occurrences that severely tested the quality of life even in this nation.

I am giving you this so that you know that the screws are tightening. Eventually God is going to lead it around to where His church is involved because a witness is going to have to be made. It may not be for years yet, but it is coming. I think we can see it falling apart, falling in that direction. Is this the way that God intended that life should be lived? I do not believe that these events were God's original intention.

Now, here is a question regarding Hebrews as I turn somewhat more directly toward it once again. Did you ever pause from any thoughts you may have had regarding Hebrews during your daily life's activities to consider that the very reason why the author of the epistle to the Hebrews (that I personally believe was the apostle Paul) wrote it in the graphic and yet very specific scriptural manner as he did, especially in chapters 1 and 2?

Hebrews 1, partly because of the historical circumstances during which it was written, can be interpreted as having been written in an almost in-your-face style when you feed in what was going on in Jerusalem and Judea at the time. It is as though the apostle was asking, "What more do people want in terms of questioning whether Jesus of Nazareth was going to be High Priest?" Be reminded of what started all the writing of the book of Hebrews. It was because there were Jews who were being called of God, but they were challenging the fact that Jesus was going to be the High Priest. And so that is why I said that it begins with an in-your-face style. It can be interpreted as being written in that kind of an attitude.

That is why I said Paul was saying, "What more do you people want in terms of questioning whether Jesus of Nazareth—of all humans who has ever lived—was qualified for the High Priest's office?"

So take a look at his history in this epistle. This is what Paul was writing. Number one, He was far, far better prepared than Aaron was when the Old Covenant was made. Nobody has ever been better prepared for any responsibility ever than was Jesus and so the apostle could throw at them, "Don't you believe who and what He was?" As a generalization, I think there is no doubt that he wrote it (whoever wrote it) as he did, because the church as a whole vitally needed it. And many Jews coming to conversion especially needed it in order to stabilize the growth of the entire body by so decisively devastating the issue of what the controversy was about.

But even beyond those necessities, the apostle also put in his personal feelings in behalf of what he was experiencing and filling him with a righteous, emotional content as he wrote.

Let us go in the book of Hebrews, chapter 8 because I am going to give direction for the remainder of the sermon from something that the apostle

Paul has written here. The remainder of this sermon is going to focus on various aspects of the church helpful to grasp. It is my personal opinion that there is no other book in the Bible that is so directly written specifically for the salvation of the end time church. (I decided am not going to read that out of the Hebrews there.)

Brethren, the epistle to the Hebrews is not merely required reading material for us. It is required *study* material and we need to allow ourselves to have feelings of amazement, as Paul undoubtedly did, because this was even happening within these people being called of God where they were doubting. Now, Paul most assuredly wanted to get people's (most especially Jews when Hebrews was written) attention, because the epistle consists of vivid slices of the history of some actions of the most important human being who ever lived. And He was a fellow Israelite and a Jew, and it was the Jews that rejected Them—the Father and the Son.

This introduction, this instruction is in the epistle of Hebrews for the called ones, which we are, benefit.

It was back in the 1950s that I read of that award. Chapter 1 was awarded a number of years before I came into the church. But those carnal people appreciated what they were reading. That vivid and meaningful opening chapter is why a group of noted writing evaluators at that time (this was back in the 1950s) voted Hebrews 1 as the most meaningful and arresting opening chapter ever written for a book at that time. That is how much they were impressed. Now, I was not all that interested in the Bible, but for some reason, that quote stuck in my mind. That was years and years before Evelyn and I ever came into the church. I think now that because of the attitudes regarding religion in the United States of America have changed so dramatically, those evaluators, if they were alive right now, might not think that way today.

Now, regarding leadership, the central figure in the epistle to the Hebrews, the unique Jesus, as the apostle John correctly portrayed Him, is at the very pinnacle of the most important category in all of life. And that category is human conduct; and His is the very highest of all of mankind. In the most important category in all of life, in every circumstance, He always displayed love. But perhaps over and above even that, the Father, through the Son, and

then the Son through the twelve apostles and a number of others, was establishing something perhaps equally important within the church.

Mark this well, because this is what was happening during that period of time that Jesus began His ministry.

Let us turn to Matthew the 16th chapter, verses 15 through 20. Jesus had just asked Peter,

Matthew 16:15-20 "Who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "you are the Christ, the son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." [Let me read that again.] And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock [meaning Himself] I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loose in heaven." Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

Let me back up just a paragraph here, back to Jesus again. In every circumstance, Jesus always displayed love. Perhaps over and above even that, the Father, through the Son, and then the Son through the twelve apostles and a number of others, was establishing something perhaps equally important within the church.

Mark this well. God was continuing to formalize in a more public way, His governance of Planet Earth. And He was first of all doing so within the church, which is also in reality, His Family. Christ's church was certainly planned but not yet functioning as it would after Jesus rose to heaven.

The Levitical priesthood, as the God-approved religious institution under the Old Covenant, had already existed for well over 1,000 years of time before the time of Christ. However, it did not normally function at any time under

the Old Covenant in the same manner and purpose as the church did and has continued doing under Christ, Jesus. This is the important difference between the Levitical priesthood and the church under Jesus Christ. And it is probably no wonder that the Jews got excited in the wrong way because they could see something. By "see," I mean in the sense of perceive something in Jesus Christ and the apostles and that group that was following Him around that was different. They heard the gospel from Jesus.

Now what was happening here in this period of time? And it was not something that happened immediately. It took years for it to unfold. But here in the 30s after Jesus' death, the Jews were beginning to catch on in a way that very few of them did while He was actually preaching. It took a while for it to begin to sink in. What was happening was God's purpose was moving onward. The Levites of course, taught God's Word. But as an organization, it was not set up organizationally and providing teaching guidance from the New Covenant and with the aid of God's Holy Spirit. And it was Jesus preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God, as it states in Mark 1, that triggered the change.

I am giving you a little background of why the Jews were questioning. This is different from the Levites and it is being taught by Jesus. Therefore, they began to doubt Jesus as being High Priest.

I want you to notice the pronoun here in Matthew 16:18. The pronoun "My." "I will build My church." He is making it distinctly separate from the Levitical priesthood. Now, He undoubtedly used that pronoun to distinguish it from all other religious groups. It is going to be Mine, and the Jews, as they were being called, were beginning to question this difference that they were seeing.

Now the word "church" itself is derived from the Greek term *ecclesia*. That Greek term is most synonymous with the English term "assembly." I will build My assembly. Or even to some degree with congregation, I will build My congregation. He is distinctly saying here in chapter 16 that His group is going to be different; and some Jews began to perceive that in a way that was somewhat antagonistic.

In Greek, *ecclesia* indicates a loosely formed grouping. There is nothing formal nor religious at all about the term itself. The term arose within the Greek culture to designate a random group of citizens who are called out to and gathered together for a community meeting. Now, a Greek grouping was not necessarily of either elected nor religious officials but merely random members of a community who were interested in what was to be discussed and perhaps decided upon at a specific meeting.

Christ's specific assembly of members is called the *ecclesia* twelve times in the New Testament Scriptures. And almost all are in Paul's epistles. But here was Jesus, meeting with His disciples, a Hebrew preacher who without doubt used that Greek term here in Matthew the 16th chapter. Why did not Matthew and Jesus, before Paul, use a Hebrew term? There was one that they could have used, but Jesus gave His approval to *ecclesia*. It is because the Jews were very familiar with the Greek word and Jesus, by using it, shows His approval of its use.

I am going to head off in what may seem like a tangent at first, but last March I read an article I received by email from another religious group claiming to be Christian. Now you might learn something that may turn out to become valuable before this is over. Here is a brief history of how the term *ecclesia* got even into the Jews everyday language.

The Greek term got into the Hebrew knowledge many years before through the dominant influence of the Greek culture, which expanded over a portion of the Middle East by means of the conquering of Alexander the Great. The Greeks conquered all the way eastward to India and even invaded India for a short period of time, but then left, and then southward to and including Egypt. And thus, Greek culture, including their language, dominated governance, business, arts, and language. The deacon Stephen used that Greek term in Acts 7:38 when he addressed Hebrew rulers just before he was stoned to death.

Why did not Stephen think of a Hebrew word? He could have. There was one available, I do not know the answer to that, but he used *ecclesia*. Maybe he did it out of deference to those Jews that he was speaking to. I do not know.

Now, it may have taken a number of generations to be assimilated into the Greek culture, but it became so commonly used because the Old Testament was translated into Greek in what is commonly called the Septuagint version. The rabbis who did the translating used this Greek term *ecclesia* to indicate any grouping of people assembled for a meeting of some sort, including a religious meeting. The term itself has absolutely nothing whatever to do with either a building or a religious organization. I think that Jesus has used it because of the future, of where the church was headed. I do not know whether He ever knew of the United States of America or Great Britain, but He certainly knew at least loosely what was going to happen after His death.

And so the Greek language was going to follow these people, these Israelite people, wherever they went and that language, the Greek, would be more acceptable to those they were moving in and through than Hebrew would have been. You know, people hate the Jews and they hate the Hebrew language with it. But Greek, they are acceptable to.

Everything went reasonably well regarding this word until the Protestant Reformation; and it was well under way by the 1500s. During that century, an Englishman named William Tyndale was translating the Bible from its Greek translation that the Jews had done 1,000 years before the Greek translation into English. And he ran head on into a combination of the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Protestant King James and his citizens of England. The problem arose when Tyndale explained quite firmly, when he was challenged concerning its usage, that he would translate the word *ecclesia* into English as "congregation." Because that is what the term meant and there is no scriptural connection whatever to usage the others wanted them to make and to use.

Now check out this man's faith. He believed in this so firmly, it cost him his life. I do not know who put him to death, whether it was the English, whether it was the French, or whatever, but he was strangled, manually. He was strangled and then he was burned at the stake over *one word*, as far as we know. That is that word, *ecclesia*.

The difference was in the Roman church wanted. They were trying to pressure Tyndale to translate it clearly so that it gave the impression of a

division within the membership of the Roman Church, between the priests and hierarchy on the one hand and laity on the other. To translate using its the Roman Church's choice would create a "we are better than you" ranking. And basically Tyndale's reply said, "There is nothing like that in the Bible. The entire church," his reply said, "is one body." And the Roman church leadership was furious.

To my understanding, it was King James, though, who personally made a political decision to pacify different opinions within Anglicanism and thus forced *ecclesia* to be understood within Protestantism in the sense of a building, rather than the assembly of people within the building. It was a political decision. He did it because of *rivalries* within the internal political systems, within both England and the rest of Europe, because there were intermarriages and the relative positions of royalties as well. Yes, those things were going on then as well as the today. Opinions rather than truth held the day. And so a man innocent in this manner died.

Now understand this: the church of God that Jesus announced in Matthew 16 has been continuously under construction, headed by the direction of Jesus Christ, from the years of Jesus' ministry, and it continues to this day. Its assembly, its group of Christians, are those who are truly under God's direction.