

Jesus' Response to Israel's Agnostics

Matthew 16:1-12

Halifax: 29 January 2006

For the past several weeks, we have been looking at Jesus' response to different sorts of persons...

1. In Matthew 15:1-20, we saw His response to Empty Traditionalists—
 - that is, those Pharisees and Sadducees that had come down from Jerusalem and found fault with Jesus for not ceremonially washing His hands before meals according to their man-made traditions...
2. In Matthew 15:21-28, we looked at His response to a Gentile Israelite
 - that is, to a woman who, although a Gentile according to her lineage, proved to be like Jacob when he wrestled with God and became the first Israelite. Like him, she would not let the Lord go until He had blessed her...
3. Then last week, in Matthew 15:29-39, we saw His response to a Gentile Multitude...
 - we saw how He had compassion on them and not only healed them when they came to Him, but also went beyond that and gave them more than what they asked.
4. And today I want to show you Jesus' response to Israel's Agnostics...
 - by "Israel's agnostics," I mean those among the covenant people who doubted the truth of God.
 - An Agnostic is somebody who claims that he or she still does not have enough evidence to believe.
 - Such a person is unstable in all his ways, like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.

And of course in looking at this,

- my concern is not primarily about the people Jesus confronted in our text,
 - You are not here for a mere history lesson...
 - but my concern is about the same agnosticism that is found in God's covenant people today...
 - The agnosticism that is found in our church leaders sometimes to the same degree it was found in the Pharisees and Sadducees who were the official church leaders of Jesus' day...
 - And the agnosticism that is found even in every believing disciple even as it was found the Twelve, though they had indeed laid down their lives to follow Him.

- We will look at the agnosticism that prevails to this day under these two headings:
 1. The deeply entrenched agnosticism in the church's unbelieving leaders...
 2. The remaining agnosticism in the true disciples of Christ.

Consider first, then,

I. The deeply entrenched agnosticism that is found in the church's unbelieving leaders.

A. Despite God's clear and wholly sufficient revelation of His Son,

- the church's unbelieving leaders always claim to have insufficient evidence to be convinced!
1. The Pharisees and Sadducees show this by coming to Jesus and asking for a sign from heaven.
 - They are united together as is indicated by the fact that the same definite article is used for both...
 - They are called "the Pharisees and Sadducees" rather than "the Pharisees and the Sadducees."
 - a. It is quite remarkable to see these two parties united together...
 - They had very different principles and practices.
 - 1) The Pharisees were the ritualists of their day.
 - They believed that the Bible was the Word of God,
 - but they also believed in the traditions of elders and gave equal weight to them.
 - Their chief error was to add to the Word of God their own traditions, much as the Roman Catholic Church does today.
 - They also believed in the free will of man and taught that salvation was found in the observance of these traditions.

TRANS> If we call them the ritualists of the day...

2) The Sadducees were the rationalists of the day...

- They did not really believe the Bible to be the word of God,
- but saw it as a useful moral guide as far as it went.
- They did not believe in a literal resurrection or in angels and miracles.

- They were quite involved in politics and were strong supporters of Herod (whom the Pharisees despised).
- In Canada, we might compare them to the leaders in the United Church, or other liberal protestant leaders...
 - many of which do not believe that Jesus was truly God incarnate or that He literally rose from the dead.

TRANS> But here in our text,

- you have the ritualists and the rationalists united together in their agnosticism about Jesus.

b. They come to Him and they say,

- “Show us a sign from heaven.”

1) Jesus had, of course, performed many signs right before their eyes.

- He had healed the sick, restored sight to the blind, caused the lame to walk, raised the dead, and multiplied the bread and the fish to feed the 5000.
- It was very difficult for them to deny what Jesus had done, though they tried...
 - One thing they had come up with was that Jesus did these miracles by the power of the devil.

2) So now by asking Jesus for a sign from heaven,

- They were suggesting that if He were truly from God, He would be able to do more than earthly signs...
 - He could make it thunder or part the Red Sea as Moses did...
 - He could make the Sun stand still as Joshua did...
 - He could make fire come down from heaven and consume their enemies as Elijah had done.
- It is interesting to consider that when Israel was in the wilderness and seen signs from heaven, she asked if the Lord could prepare a table in the wilderness...
 - When Jesus came and prepared a table in the wilderness, they demanded a sign from heaven!

2. Of course what they were really doing is claiming that they did not yet enough evidence to receive Jesus as the Messiah.

a. It was an excuse.

- They were essentially saying:
 - “We are very honest men and we will not follow just anyone.”
 - “We need to have more evidence to support your claims before we will believe.”

- b. Like the rationalistic church leaders of our day, they say,
 - “We just don’t have enough evidence to say that Jesus rose from the dead.”

- c. Now of course the ritualists are different because they do claim to believe in the resurrection and miracles...
 - But they have changed the very character of the religion that Jesus taught,
 - and whenever those who speak His truth show them that they have buried the truth of God under their traditions,
 - They ask for more evidence that this so.
 - If these men are to believe Jesus’ teaching enough to forsake their vain traditions and their reliance upon them for acceptance with God,
 - Jesus would have to do a lot more to prove Himself to them!
 - They required more proof before they would give up their vain traditions.

TRANS> So both groups were basically agnostics—demanding more evidence before they would repent and believe.

- Both claim that they need more evidence...

B. But Jesus shows them what their real problem is!

1. First, He shows what is **not** the problem...

- a. It is not due to an inability to understand what is going on around them...
 - It is not that they are dim-wits and can’t put things together...
 - No, they are able to look at the sky and determine what the weather will be like.
 - If there is red sky in the morning, they know that a storm is on the way,
 - but red sky at night is, as our saying goes, a sailor’s delight.

TRANS> Their problem with recognising Jesus was not due to a mental deficiency.

- b. But neither was it due to a lack of sufficient evidence...
- The “signs of the times” were all there for them to see...
- 1) The prophecies of Daniel had laid out a calendar that showed the coming of Messiah at this time—the seventy weeks of Daniel were at hand.
 - That is, seventy sevens of years (or 490 years) had transpired since the decree to rebuild the temple had been issued.
 - They knew this.
 - 2) John the Baptist had come and broken the silence of prophecy, claiming to be the forerunner of the Christ...
 - They had also seen this sign.
 - 3) And now Jesus had come and wrought wonders such as had not been done from the foundation of the world, even giving sight to those born blind...
 - And His teaching was bore witness to His divinity to all who were honest.
 - Every time these men confronted Him, the darkness of their own hearts was exposed and they could not resist the wisdom by which He spoke.

TRANS> And so you see here how Jesus makes fun of them...

- He cuts through all their pretended scholarship and spiritual sensitivity
 - and shows them that they are better at predicting the weather than they are at understand what God is doing before their eyes...
- c. So it is today.
- The problem with those who doubt is not due to a lack of evidence or to some mental deficiency...
- 1) Anyone who comes honestly to the Word of God will have his sinful heart clearly exposed...
 - And when He sees Jesus presented in the scriptures,
 - He will have no doubt that He can be no other than the Son of God.
 - He will see that the Bible is no humanly devised story book...
 - Divinity is stamped on every page...
 - That this is the voice of God!
 - 2) They can raise all their objections,

- whether about evolutionary theories or the impossibility of a virgin birth,
- or about the necessity of their traditions and rituals...
- But God's revelation to us in the scripture cuts right through all that and leaves them without excuse.

TRANS> So now Jesus shows them what the real problem is—

- It is not due to a mental deficiency or a lack of evidence...

2. The real problem is that they are a wicked and adulterous generation!

a. A wicked and adulterous generation is a generation whose heart is not loyal to God.

1) **A wicked person** is one whose life is not conformed to God's will as it is set forth in His moral law...

- He doesn't love God with his heart or his neighbour as himself...

2) **An adulterous person** is one who does not keep his covenant with God—this is talking about spiritual adultery—

- God had made a covenant of grace with these men to redeem them, promising to provide salvation for them,
- but they had broken His covenant by their unbelief.
- As spiritual adulterers, they had gone after other lovers!

b. If they had been holy and devoted to their husband,

- They would have rejoiced to see Jesus.
- They would have known Him immediately.

1) If they had had hearts renewed by the Spirit of God,

- their main goal in life would have been to please God...
- and they would have been looking for their redeemer and they would have known Him as soon as He came.

2) But they had many other commitments...

a) They were loyal to many other lovers.

- They loved the praise of men...
- They loved money...
- They loved political control....

b) And clearly, Jesus was a threat to all these things!

- If they were to become His disciples, they would have to give up everything they were living for and be His devoted bride.
 - Then they could no longer run after all their other lovers.
- c) And so it was that even though there was ample evidence to show them that Jesus was the Messiah,
- They could not see it because they were wilfully blind.
 - They were deliberately suppressing the truth as it came to them.
 - Every time Jesus came round, they suppressed it again.
 - They were like Pharaoh—the more signs they saw, the more their hearts were hardened even to the point of absurdity.
 - But this was nothing new for them.
 - Their very systems of religion were efforts to suppress Him!
 - These systems grew up over the generations out of the wickedness of men’s hearts who were trying to avoid giving themselves to the Lord.
 - The ritualistic Pharisees had over the generations buried the truth under their traditions...
 - And the rationalistic Sadducees had framed all sorts of arguments to deny the truth and say it could not be.

TRANS> And so it is clear that their real problem with spiritual discernment is not with an inability to see or a lack of evidence,

- The real problem is a wicked and disloyal heart that refuses to see.
 - John Calvin put it like this:
 - “He here proves that they were excessively occupied with earthly and transitory advantages and cared little about anything that related to heavenly and spiritual life, and were blinded, not so much by mistake as by voluntary malice.”
3. And you see that Jesus absolutely refuses to indulge a generation like this with the signs they demand!
- In verse 4 He says:
 - “A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.”
- a. Why should He give such a generation a sign?

- People often ask that—
 - “Why doesn’t God just make Himself plain?”
- 1) Why should He perform signs for men who do not want to be reconciled to God?
 - for people that are trying to avoid true reconciliation!
 - They may want God’s help for their crops and their enemies,
 - but they do not want to be restored to Him with a pure and holy heart.

TRANS> He has made Himself plain to all whose hearts are loyal to God.

- 2) If they honestly wanted to be true to God and to serve God,
 - They would have seen plenty in Jesus to convince them...
 - The rationalists would all be convinced that they were wrong to suppress the truth by their vain reasoning...
 - And the ritualists would all be convinced that they were wrong to bury the truth under their tradition.
 - But they were not really looking to serve God.
 - That was the problem!

b. But Jesus does say one sign will be given to them—

- the sign of the prophet Jonah!
 - 1) This sign involved two aspects—
 - a) First, that Jesus,
 - as the representative of His people,
 - would be put into the heart of the earth for three days as Jonah was in the belly of the fish,
 - and then would be raised from the dead by the power of God...
 - b) Second, that Jesus, like Jonah,
 - after He was raised from the dead, would go to the Gentiles and preach repentance to them...
 - and as scripture had foretold, the Gentiles would believe even as Nineveh repented in the day of Jonah.

TRANS> That was the sign of Jonah that would be given to them...

- 2) And oh what a difficult sign this is for all rationalists and ritualists!
- a) The Pharisees and Sadducees showed their true colours when this sign was wrought!
- As soon as it was reported to them that Jesus had risen,
 - they bribed the guards to say that Jesus had been stolen.
 - Clearly they were not looking for a sign that they might believe!
 - And then when Jesus' disciples came forth proclaiming the truth,
 - they sought to suppress them by imprisoning them and slaying them.

TRANS> They were given the clear sign of Jonah and you see what they did with it!

- b) So it is today that unbelievers will come up with all sorts of ways to deny the sign of Jonah.
- Both the ritualists and the rationalists of our day confess Jesus in name, just as the Pharisees and Sadducees confessed their hope in the coming Messiah when Jesus was here...
 - But the ritualists continue to bury him under their traditions,
 - and the rationalists continue to deny His truth by their vain reasoning.

TRANS> So you see that every agnostic that comes to Jesus claiming to need more evidence is a hypocrite...

- He pretends that He would serve God if there was enough evidence,
 - but it is all just a sham.
 - His denial is rooted in a heart that is not loyal to God.
- How thankful you should be if you have been given a new heart to believe...
 - You should be thankful because if you believe today, it is a sure sign that God has given you a new heart.
 - Otherwise, you would be suppressing the truth either within the church (as the Pharisees and Sadducees) or outside the church.
- But in your thanksgiving, you must not boast...
 - If you are sincere disciple of Christ today whose heart is loyal to God,
 - You will be mindful of much agnosticism that remains in your heart.

- Oh yes, there has been a great change in you in that you no longer waver concerning Jesus...
- but still, there are many doubts that arise because your loyalty to God is not yet pure and perfect...

And so now we turn to our second heading...

II. The remaining agnosticism that is found in the true disciple of Christ.

A. First of all I want you to see that even though you have been born again and are a true disciple of Christ,

- You are not immune to agnosticism.
 - You can catch it just like the flu.
 - It can easily spread from one person to another.

1. As you can see, Jesus diligently warns His disciples about it..

a. He tells them to “beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

- And although the disciples think He is talking about bread at first...
 - (I will have more to say about this later)...
 - Matthew makes it very clear to us that Jesus is talking about their doctrine.
 - He does this in verse 12 by adding the comment:
 - “Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees”
 - By “their doctrine” is meant “their teaching.”

b. After having just had this troubling exchange with the Pharisees and Sadducees,

- Jesus is thinking about the great danger these men are to His sheep.
 - They were respected teachers and leaders in Israel...
 - The people looked to them as reliable spiritual guides...
 - But their doctrine was poisonous.
 - Jesus wants to make sure His disciples realise the danger!
 - He wants to make sure you realise it if you are His disciple!

c. It is a real danger because you are not immune to such influences!

- How often are believers made to stumble, how often are they weakened and confused by these hypocrites.
 - This whole subject is given great attention in the New Testament epistles.
 - Almost all of them are full of warnings against false teaching.
 - To the Galatians, Paul says,
 - “O foolish Galatians, who had bewitched you that you should not obey the truth!”
 - They had been influenced by false teachers...
 - And to the Corinthians he writes:
 - 2 Cor 11:2-4: “For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or *if* you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!”
2. Sadly, I know many Christians who are puffed up and do not think they will be hurt by false teaching!
- a. They seem to think they are immune to the ill effects of rationalism and ritualism...
 - For social reasons or for some sort of carnal security, they are content to sit under false teaching...
 - Sometimes they claim that they are there to be a good influence...
 - but reformation does not come by joining yourself to false teachers!
 - b. Over the course of the years, I have seen how Christ’s disciples and their children are corrupted by false teaching...
 - How the truth they once believed and loved instead of growing, begins to erode over the years and from one generation to the next.
 - Do not suppose yourself to be immune!
- 1) The danger is all the more great because the Pharisees and Sadducees put on airs of piety.
 - They wear their robes and they speak the language of Zion and confess to love the God of Zion...
 - If they were openly vile and corrupt, disciples would not be so easily deceived by them...

- but they are wolves in sheep's clothing.
- The way to spy them out is by what the teach (and what they leave out)
 - The ritualists add all sorts of pretty ceremonies to God's worship, and it often seems like such a little thing—
 - What danger is an advent wreath and a little incense, and a few religious inflections?
 - It is the agnosticism that says,
 - “Does it really matter if we add to God's word?”
 - “Has God really forbade us to add to His worship?”
 - And the rationalists often leave out things...
 - They argue beautifully for the love of God and the sovereignty of God and conclude that His love is too great to let anyone sink into Hell...
 - They say very little about the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, and they change God's moral law to make it kinder and more appealing to those they want to reach—
 - And too often true disciples glibly and blindly sit under their teaching and assume they will not be harmed by it.
 - It is the agnosticism that says,
 - “Can we really be so sure about certain doctrines?”
 - “Have good men not differed about some of these things?”
 - and this is said even about those doctrines about which the Bible is very clear...
 - That abortion is murder,
 - That women should not serve as elders in the church, nor should men with bad marriages and ungodly children,
 - That Jesus bodily rose from the dead,
 - That God created the world in six days,
 - That homosexuality is an abomination to the Lord,
 - That children are to be chastened with a rod,
 - That immoral persons are to be put out of the church,
 - That we are born in sin and will perish in the Lake of Fire unless we be born again,
 - That Jesus is the only way for us to be saved.

- The rationalists of our day doubt these things that God has said, and they influence those who hear them.

2) As the great Anglican Bishop, JC Ryle said,

- “Like leaven, the false doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees might seem a very small thing at first compared to the whole body of truth, but like leaven, once admitted, it would work secretly and noiselessly; gradually changing the whole character of the religion with which it is mixed.”

TRANS> And so my brothers and sisters, I hope you see that you and your children are not immune to the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees...

- Jesus is not speaking to no purpose when He tells His disciple to beware...
 - He is not warning you against something that is not really a danger to you or to His church...
 - We are protestants just like Jesus and the apostle Paul...
 - We must protest against that which is false.
- Leaven spreads,
 - It is your duty to guard both yourself and your household against it.
 - I don't mean that you are to become one of those persons who becomes so narrow you are the only person you can fellowship with...
 - No, Jesus has established His church and we are to love and to labour within her,
 - but we are also to take heed to ourselves and not deliberately place ourselves under false teaching.
 - You are not immune to the agnosticism...
- But your humility needs to go beyond an awareness that you can catch agnosticism from others...
 - I want you to see further that...

B. Every one of you is also **infected** with agnosticism...

- Every believer, so long as he remains in this world, is not yet made perfect.
1. You can see this with the twelve disciples...
 - a. They show that they are infected with agnosticism by the fact that they did not at first understand Jesus' warning!
 - They actually thought Jesus was talking about bread when He warned them about the leaven...

- b. You can see by this, they were on a whole different track than Jesus...
 - They were tuned in to a different station...
 - 1) They had just come from this encounter of the Pharisees and Sadducees,
 - and as they move along through the water in their little boat,
 - Jesus thoughts are filled with the error of these leaders.
 - He is thinking about how pernicious their teaching is and how if it were not restrained, it would destroy the whole church!
 - The leaven of the Pharisees would leaven the whole lump!
 - That is what is on His mind when He warns the disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
 - 2) But what is on His disciples' minds?
 - They are thinking about bread.
 - They realise that they forgot to buy bread before they set out to sea and they are concerned about this and wondering what to do.
 - And so, when Jesus warns them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees,
 - They are clueless as to what He is talking about.
 - All they can figure is that it must have something to do with the fact that they forget to buy bread—
 - Perhaps that Jesus doesn't want them to eat the Pharisee's bread any more?
 - Or is it that they are not to eat with them any more?
 - They are not quite sure.
2. Now I want you to see that there is a very close connection between their lack of understanding of Jesus and the agnosticism of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
- a. Jesus words are not clear to the disciples for the very same reason his signs were not clear to the Pharisees and Sadducees...
 - There is only one reason for it.
 - Their hearts are not fully set on serving the Lord, on loving Him and pleasing Him.
 - 1) Remember what Jesus said about the Pharisees and the Sadducees?
 - The reason they did not see the signs of the times was because they were wicked and adulterous...

- It was not that they were stupid!
 - If their hearts had been set on pleasing God and on the salvation that God had promised,
 - They would have recognised Jesus easily!
 - There was nothing wrong with their reasoning powers...
 - It was just that they were devoted to other things.
- 2) And so what was it with the disciples of Jesus that kept them from seeing what Jesus was talking about?
- a) Was it not the very same thing?
- Their hearts were set on what they were going to eat.
 - They were not in tune with what Jesus was saying because their minds and hearts were not seeking what He was seeking.
- b) Just as the Pharisees and Sadducees could not see that Jesus had come, so the disciples could not see what Jesus was talking about...
- They could not see because the things of God were not on their mind and heart.
- 3) This is why Jesus accuses them of being of little faith.
- a) The person with great faith always sees God in his perspective on life...
- His view of things does not omit the One who made the world and who runs the world and who will judge the world...
 - He lives in harmony with God's truth and evaluates everything from the divine perspective.
- b) The person without faith only sees things from his own perspective...
- and the person with small faith only partially sees things from the divine perspective.
 - His heart is often set on other things.
- b. Now you tell me, isn't this true of you?
- 1) You are very much able to understand the things that matter the most to you...are you not?
- a) If you haven't had anything to drink for a day or two, you are very aware of it and concerned about it...
- but if you are dried up spiritually for a whole week, it is not so great a concern!

- Clearly, if you saw things clearly, you would be more concerned about your spiritual dryness than about going without water...
 - but you see, you are infected with agnosticism.
 - The things of God are not so real to you as your thirst.

- b) Again, if your house was on fire, you would quickly figure out what was going on...
 - Even though you have never experienced a house fire,
 - you would be very keen about figuring out what was going on because your house matters to you!

 - But if you are starting to burn with ungodly anger toward God or toward your neighbour,
 - you do not discern this anger as so great a problem as the fire in your house.
 - You are a little fuzzy about what God means when He speaks about that subject...

- c) Again, if someone tells lies about your character...
 - You become a very skilled advocate, quite ready and capable of defending yourself!
 - But if someone tells lies about God, you may not even notice it...
 - And if you do, you are not quite sure how to defend His name or if you ought to...
 - Everything is unclear and fuzzy.

 - Tell me truly, is this not because your own glory is more important to you than the glory of God?

- d) And one more illustration—
 - Suppose you live near the railroad tracks and you have ordered your child not to play on the tracks, but he disobeys you...
 - What is your greatest concern at that point?
 - Is it the danger he is in of getting struck by a train?
 - Or is it the danger he is in before the Lord for disobeying his mother and father?

 - I dare say, it's the train, isn't it?
 - But how wrong that perspective!

- If you really loved God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength,
 - you would be more concerned about his rebellion than his physical safety...
 - Not that you should have no care for his physical safety...
 - It is just that you are so blind to the realities of God and so keen to the realities of this present world.
- 2) You see, we who believe in Christ are still affected by agnosticism...
- a) As soon as we are shown some duty that we don't like,
 - We start to doubt—
 - Does God really require me to try to reconcile with my brother who sinned against me?
 - Does He really mean that I have to go to **him**?
 - We get all fuzzy and confused!
 - b) Or if there is a poor person to help...
 - We start to question if this is really something for us to do...
 - We start to reason and to say,
 - “Lord, I need more evidence that this is really something you want me to do.”
 - “Show me a sign.”
 - c) And when there is suffering for us to bear...
 - We start to say, has God really sent this is His sovereignty?
 - Does He really cause such things to work together for good?
 - I need more evidence about this...

TRANS> Oh my brothers and sisters...

- It is not just that you are in danger of contracting agnosticism from others...
 - It is already in you!

C. But I want you to consider how graciously the Lord responds to His agnostic infected disciples.

1. Oh yes, He rebukes you and shows you His disappointment with you
 - a. He says, “O you of little faith...”

- b. And He asks you how it is that you can be so worried about food when He feeds the five thousand with five loaves and has 12 baskets left over...
 - How is it, He says, that you are so concerned about your clothes and your food and your earthly comforts...
 - and so out of touch with the eternal things of my kingdom?

TRANS> He shows you your folly...

- 2. But He gently draws you into the real world...
 - He awakens you to see what your greater concerns are—much greater than what you will wear or what you will eat.
 - a. You see how in verse 11, He says to His disciples,
 - “How is it that you did not understand...”
 - And in verse 12 we have the wonderful change:
 - “Then they understood!”
 - Jesus graciously and patiently works with you and leads you along until you understand...
 - And He does it again and again—as often as it is needed!
 - In fact, He is constantly drawing His true disciples into the eternal realities of His kingdom...
 - Then you understand!
 - b. And this becomes all the more precious when you contrast it with what He did to the Pharisees and Sadducees!
 - He does to them what He might justly have done to you when you doubted!
 - At the end of verse 4, we are told,
 - “He left them and departed!”
 - They were abandoned by the Lord Jesus to their own way!
 - Nothing could be more tragic than that!
 - He left them to flounder in their spiritual blindness!
 - Oh child of God, how thankful you should be that He has opened your eyes!
 - c. Consider how much He has done to bring you into His truth!
 - to bring you into the real world—the world that was created by God and that is upheld by God and that will fulfil God’s purposes!

- 1) When He made you, He gave you language so that He could reveal Himself to you with words...
- 2) And after we fell, He sent prophets to tell us of His promised redemption in Christ...
- 3) And in the fullness of time, Christ Himself left the glories of heaven and came to this sinful world to die for His people...
 - And in doing so, He revealed to us the love of God for us—that He would do such a thing...
 - And the justice of God—that He would demand such a sacrifice to atone for our sins...
 - And the wisdom of God—as He came and preached to us.
- 4) And if that were not enough, He then gave us His Spirit to open our cold and blind hearts to the truth.
 - And so it is that now we who were once blind can see the truth!
 - How you ought to cherish the truth that He has revealed!
 - How you ought to beware of the agnostic leaders of the church who lead you to into doubt!
 - How you ought to go to war against all the agnosticism that remains in your heart to this day!

What can you say but,

- “O Lord, bring me into your truth and teach me to live there forever!”
- Indeed, let us stand and pray!