

25-1005p Transcript

25-1005p - Discerning God, Steve Cain

Bible Reader: Mike Mathis

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Discerning God

Scripture Readings

<p>1st Reading (0:04 - 1:13): Mike Mathis</p> <p>Psalms 19:1-6: (0:04) I have [two] passages of scripture to read tonight, both are in Psalms. (0:12) The first one is in Psalms 19, 1-6. I'll be reading out of the New King James Version. (0:20) The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork. (0:27) Day unto day utter speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. (0:35) There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. (0:41) Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. (0:47) In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, (0:57) and rejoicing like a strong man to run its race. (1:02) Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end, (1:09) and there is nothing hidden from its heat. (1:13)</p>	<p>2nd Reading (1:14 - 2:16): Mike Mathis</p> <p>Psalms 97:1-6 S(1:14) And the second scripture reading passage that I'm going to read is taken from Psalms 97, 1-6. (1:25) The Lord reigns. Let the earth rejoice. Let the multitude of isles be glad. (1:34) Clouds and darkness surround Him. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. (1:42) A fire goes before Him and burns up His enemies round about. (1:49) His lightnings light the world. The earth sees and trembles. (1:55) The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. (2:04) The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the peoples see His glory. (2:12) And that concludes the reading of God's word. (2:16)</p>
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Transcript (0:04 - 36:58), Preacher: Steve Cain

(2:21) This evening I would like to address the subject of atheism and agnosticism. (2:31) Atheism is where the individual says he doesn't believe in God, there is no God, (2:36) and you can't change his mind. He just believes that we exist, (2:43) and we came into existence probably through evolution, (2:46) and I heard a long time ago where the thought was that some UFOs landed on the earth, (2:57) and they got out and had a picnic and left some of their garbage, (3:02) and the garbage started turning into what we have today.

(3:08) Can you believe that? It takes an awful lot of faith to believe that, doesn't it? (3:15) But agnostics, they don't go as far as to say there is no God. (3:20) What they want to do though is, they say, how can you know? (3:25) And I need to be convinced. (3:28) And so in essence, they basically don't believe in God either, (3:33) and you have to more or less provide them with some convincing things, (3:40) and perhaps their attitude and the way they perceive it, (3:46) they're not really in a position to receive any advice that we might, (3:53) or any education or any input that we might have concerning that.

(3:59) One of the things that I like to start out a lot of times with my Bible class is, (4:06) the question, what pleases God? (4:12) And they all know what the answer is, but they don't say, (4:15)

because I keep asking them, and I keep giving them the answer, (4:20) and they want me to give it to them. (4:21) What pleases God? (4:23) Well, Hebrews 11 points out to us what pleases God, (4:27) and if you want to turn there, I'd like to just basically read it, (4:31) and let you see for yourself what the Hebrew writer wants us to know, (4:37) what pleases God? (4:39) And so then we'll deal with it from that standpoint. (4:44) Starting with a very persuasive verse, and ending up with verse 6. (4:52) Now, faith is confidence in what we hope for, (4:57) and assurance about what we do not see.

(5:01) This is what the ancients were commended for. (5:05) By faith, we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, (5:11) so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. (5:18) So I'll just stop there for a minute, because I always like to stop there (5:22) and point out what the Hebrew writer is trying to tell us about Genesis, (5:27) and about our faith, about whether or not Genesis belongs in the Bible, (5:32) and that it is from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, written by Moses, (5:38) and that he's pointing out to us, we need to believe.

(5:42) If you're going to have faith, and if you're going to believe in God, (5:45) you need to believe the creation, (5:50) the way the Genesis account gives us concerning the creation, (5:55) and how God created us. (5:58) He made the earth in such a way that it sustains us, (6:03) and then he puts us in the earth. (6:05) So faith, by faith, we understand the universe was formed at God's command, (6:11) so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

(6:17) Then he goes on in verse 4. (6:20) By faith, Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. (6:25) By faith, he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. (6:31) And by faith, Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

(6:36) By faith, and here we are, we're going to be introduced to what pleases God. (6:44) By faith, Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death. (6:51) He could not be found, because God had taken him away.

(6:54) For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. (7:01) So Enoch is an individual who pleased God. (7:04) And how did he please God? (7:07) Well, verse 6 tells us.

(7:10) Without faith, it is impossible to please God, (7:16) because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists (7:22) and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him. (7:29) I'm going to turn to Romans now (7:34) and make most of my comments concerning our faith (7:43) and whether atheism and agnosticism is something that is brought about (7:50) or is just completely out of rejection and defiance. (7:57) And the individual who is an atheist or an agnostic (8:03) is really just defying and challenging God (8:07) and saying, you can't tell me what to do (8:10) and you can't say to me that there is a life that is more pleasing than another.

(8:17) And so they reject and they defy the things. (8:21) So what we want to know and what Paul is going to be pointing out to us is (8:25) that individuals throughout the life, and of course this is in Psalms, (8:31) and that's the reason why I had Psalms read before the lesson, (8:36) is because man can discern that there is a God. (8:44) He can discern that there is a God.

(8:48) Now he can't discern because God has to reveal His nature. (8:53) And he can't discern what pleases God until God reveals what pleases Him. (9:03) But we can discern that there is a God.

(9:09) And he's going to be using it in the psalmist's use, as we just got through reading, (9:14) the psalmist's use is the fact that we can discern that there is a God (9:17) because, just like we have a

watch, where there's a creation, there's a creator. (9:25) And so the stars shout out, there is a God. (9:30) The earth and everything around us shouts out, there is a God.

(9:36) He's created us. (9:37) And so you can sit on a tree stump out in the middle of the forest (9:41) and sit there and you can look around and see all these beautiful trees (9:46) and all these flowers and the animals and the wildlife as they go by. (9:51) And you can discern there is a God.

(9:56) You can discern. (9:59) Now, that's the thing. (10:01) How are we going to know what we need to know about God? (10:07) And the only way that we're going to know what we need to know about God (10:10) is to look into the Bible because God, through the Holy Spirit, (10:16) is revealing himself and tells us how to please him and shares with us.

(10:23) And the only source that you and I are going to have concerning our knowledge of God (10:30) and who God is and how to worship him and how to please him is only found in the Bible. (10:37) And what's the Bible? (10:38) It's the product of the Holy Spirit, isn't it? (10:42) Who has been searching the mind of God. (10:46) And God is giving the Holy Spirit the information he wants us to know.

(10:52) And the Holy Spirit, according to 2 Peter, is the Holy Spirit has revealed that through prophets. (11:00) The prophets did not come up with these things on their own. (11:03) The prophets were given inspiration by the Holy Spirit (11:09) and the prophets then wrote as they were being inspired by the Holy Spirit to come.

(11:16) And so we need to realize that we can know that there is a God. (11:22) So what are we going to do about that as we go along? (11:27) Well, I want us to take a look at the Roman letter. (11:32) Paul writes to us concerning God's, you know, disappointment in the fact that we do not search for him.

(11:42) Read this morning Acts 17. (11:46) In Acts 17, Paul points out to us about the unknown God that the Athenians had a statue written to. (11:56) A statue dedicated to the unknown God.

(11:59) And what does Paul tell us about that unknown God? (12:03) It's found in Acts 17. (12:06) And what he tells us is that God determines where we live. (12:12) And through one man he created all the people in the world.

(12:18) And so he determines where we are. (12:20) And why? (12:24) Why? (12:26) Paul points that answer out for us, doesn't he? (12:28) He wants us to seek him. (12:33) And Paul says, he wants us to seek him for he is not far.

(12:40) Take a look at Romans 17 chapter yourself and you can see that. (12:44) So God is divinely intervening in our lives. (12:50) God is working in our lives, making himself known to us.

(12:55) And we have to know that he is. (12:57) So let's take a look at Paul's writing in Romans, starting with verse 18. (13:03) The first chapter, verse 18.

(13:08) The wrath of God. (13:10) He's angry. (13:11) He's upset.

(13:13) He's showing his wrath. (13:15) He's really upset concerning the events that are going on in this world. (13:20) And that there are individuals who are atheists.

(13:23) There are individuals who are agnostic. (13:25) And there are individuals who definitely do

not want us to know about God. (13:33) And they interfere and they do everything under the sun to try to disrupt our faith.

(13:40) And to get us to question about whether or not there is a God. (13:46) So God is angry. (13:48) He's really upset.

(13:50) And so he points out that the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven (13:55) against all the godlessness and wickedness of people (14:00) who suppress the truth by their wickedness. (14:05) Since what may be known about God is plain to them, (14:09) because God has made it plain to them. (14:12) For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, (14:17) his eternal power and divine nature, (14:21) have been clearly seen being understood from what has been made (14:25) so that people are without excuse.

(14:30) I love that statement because it gives us power. (14:35) These people who are atheists, these people who are agnostic, (14:39) are without excuse. (14:42) They don't have an excuse.

(14:45) They're just rejecting the knowledge of God. (14:52) They're being defiant. (14:55) And of course, who's the object of their defiance? (14:59) Christians, anyone who might have an inkling that they might want to know (15:05) a little bit more about God.

(15:07) And so I might even go as far as to say that our young people (15:13) are basically the target for these atheists and agnostics (15:23) because they are put into a position where they can influence our young people. (15:29) So he's pointing out to us that they are without excuse. (15:36) God is angry with these people.

(15:40) Verse 21, (15:43) For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God (15:47) nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile (15:52) and their foolish hearts were darkened. (15:55) Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools (16:00) and exchanged the glory of the immortal God (16:04) for images made to look like a mortal human being (16:08) and birds and animals and reptiles. (16:13) Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts (16:17) to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

(16:22) They exchanged the truth about God for a lie (16:26) and worshipped and served created things (16:29) rather than the Creator who is forever praised. (16:33) Amen. (16:34) And so these atheists and agnostics think that they are intelligent.

(16:42) They're not being fooled by Christianity. (16:46) They're not being fooled by the fact that there might be a God. (16:51) They know better.

(16:53) You can see I'm ugly. (16:55) I'm presenting this in an ugly manner (16:57) because I am just as angry about them as God might be. (17:02) I don't know if I'm as angry as God about this, (17:05) but God is very angry about it (17:07) because Paul is pointing out that His wrath is very angry.

(17:12) So here are individuals who deem themselves (17:15) to be more intelligent about this stuff. (17:19) And they get their master's degrees (17:23) and they get their doctor's degrees (17:26) and they put themselves in a position (17:28) where they can influence the young people (17:33) who put and idolize education (17:36) and idolize the person who is the professor. (17:41) Why, they're so much more smarter than mom and dad.

(17:46) They're much more smarter than the people who go to church. (17:51) That's basically how

the agnostic and the atheist present themselves. (17:58) So I want us to take a look at 1 Corinthians, the first chapter.

(18:07) And I want us to take a look, starting verse 18 in particular. (18:22) Let's go to verse 13 and use it as an introduction. (18:29) Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? (18:34) Were you baptized in the name of Paul? (18:36) I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Christ and Gaius.

(18:41) So no one can say that you were baptized in my name. (18:45) Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanus. (18:48) Beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.

(18:52) For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, (18:59) not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. (19:08) In other words, he's saying, I am preaching the gospel to you. (19:15) But I'm not presenting myself as a person who is educated, (19:21) like a master's degree or doctor's degree or whatever.

(19:25) I came to you only knowing the gospel itself. (19:29) And so now, keep that particular concept in mind when we get into the meat of Paul's letter here. (19:39) Where is the wise person? (19:42) Who is he referring to? (19:46) He's referring to that person who sets himself up as being smart, (19:51) not falling for Christianity or the thoughts of there is a God.

(19:57) Well, I am more intelligent than that. (19:59) I'm sharper than that. (20:01) So Paul is saying, where is that wise person? (20:07) Because they set themselves up as being that wise person.

(20:12) So I want to know, where is the wise person? (20:15) Where is the teacher of the law? (20:16) Where is the philosopher of this age? (20:21) In other words, he's pointing out and he's wanting to let us know (20:26) that he has absolutely no respect for these individuals. (20:32) They do not impress him at all. (20:35) They can be educated from here to doomsday.

(20:40) He's not being impressed by them because they don't believe there is a God. (20:45) And he's not going to be impressed with them. (20:48) Where is that wise person? (20:50) Where is the philosopher of this age? (20:54) Then he goes on and he says, (20:56) Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? (21:00) For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know Him.

(21:08) In other words, they have not bothered to figure out that there is a God (21:14) or they're rejecting it or they say that it is. (21:17) So they do not know Him. (21:19) They do not even want to make an effort to know Him.

(21:22) Through its wisdom did not know Him. (21:25) God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. (21:33) He's not saying that my sermon or your sermon or anybody's sermon is foolish.

(21:40) What he's talking about and he's referring to about is that the wise person says it's foolish. (21:49) The wise person says those sermons that are being preached are foolishness. (21:56) Paul says it's through the foolishness that he is making himself known.

(22:05) God is pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. (22:13) Jews, and here he goes, he's talking about now, (22:17) about those who will reject God and the knowledge of God (22:21) or the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God (22:26)

and that God is saving them through Jesus and His sacrifice. (22:31) The Jews are not believing because they deny, they demand signs and the Greeks look for wisdom.

(22:44) But we preach Christ crucified. (22:48) It's a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. (22:55) But to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, (23:00) Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, (23:05) the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom (23:09) and weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

(23:16) It was pointed out this morning in Bible class (23:18) that man in no way could ever conjure up the plan of salvation that God has created for you and me. (23:30) Nobody. (23:32) I don't care how wise you are, I don't care how much information you have, (23:36) there's no way you could come up with the scheme of redemption that God came up with.

(23:44) And the only way you're going to be able to know what that wisdom is and what that plan is (23:50) is by God revealing it to us through the Holy Spirit (23:55) and that is in the form of the Bible, isn't it? (24:00) So he's wanting us to realize that God's wisdom far exceeds that of any man. (24:09) So you could be sitting out there in the middle of the woods, sitting on a stump (24:13) and you can become aware of the fact that there is a God (24:18) but you cannot come up with anything else until God reveals it to you. (24:25) And so he's revealing it to us through the Holy Spirit.

(24:29) For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom (24:33) and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. (24:39) So the wise man of the world is saying, (24:44) you want to be baptized into Christ? (24:48) Oh, that's silly. (24:50) But that's what God requires, isn't it? (24:55) That's silly.

(24:57) We don't want to be baptized. (24:58) Why? (25:00) Just get in there and get wed? (25:03) That's foolishness. (25:05) But the wisdom of God is wiser than their (25:10) and His foolishness is even wiser than their wisdom.

(25:16) So he's making that... (25:19) For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom (25:23) and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. (25:29) Then he goes on and he says, (25:31) Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. (25:39) And he's pointing out to us.

(25:42) We were not these wise men or anything. (25:45) We were average. (25:47) We were normal people.

(25:48) Not many of you were wise by human standards. (25:52) Not many were influential. (25:54) Not many were noble birth.

(25:56) But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. (26:03) God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. (26:08) God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things.

(26:16) So he's not telling... (26:18) He's not calling us lowly. (26:21) And he's not saying that we're despised. (26:25) Who refers to us as being lowly? (26:30) It's the wise people.

(26:32) It's those who set themselves up as being master's degrees and doctor's degrees and so on (26:38) and said, I'm smarter than that. (26:41) You are foolish. (26:44) We're being called foolish.

(26:47) God's not calling us foolish. (26:48) And He's not saying we're foolish. (26:51) He's saying He's coming to you (26:54) and people refer to you as foolish because you want to become Christians.

(27:02) You're foolish because you want to become Christians. (27:05) Only fools do those things. (27:08) But Paul's wanting us to realize that not many of us were of noble birth, (27:14) but God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise.

(27:18) God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. (27:22) God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things (27:27) and the things that are not to nullify the things that are (27:31) so that no one may boast before Him. (27:36) It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus (27:41) who has become for us wisdom from God.

(27:46) God is our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. (27:52) Therefore it is written, let the one who boasts boast in the Lord. (28:02) If I'm going to boast, the wise man does.

(28:06) The one who sets himself up and says, I am smarter than the average man. (28:11) I know what I'm doing. (28:14) He's boasting.

(28:17) But if we're going to boast, let's boast in God. (28:22) How are we going to boast in God? (28:26) Because He chose us before we did anything worthy of being saved. (28:34) He chose us and sent His Son to die on the cross (28:37) so that whosoever will, believeth in Him, shall be saved.

(28:44) He did not send His Son into the world. (28:48) This is John 3, 17. (28:50) He did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world.

(28:57) So if we're going to be boasting about anything, (29:00) let's boast about what God has done, is doing, and will do for us. (29:07) Period. (29:08) But the thing is, the atheists and the agnostics are having their way in many cases, aren't they? (29:22) I don't know what to make of Charlie Kirk, (29:27) but I know that he definitely targeted college students (29:33) to try to get them to not be persuaded by their so-called teachers, educated men.

(29:45) He tried his level best to get them to believe in God and live a godly fashion. (29:54) He tried his level best to do those things. (29:57) That I know about Charlie.

(29:59) I don't know a whole lot about him, (30:01) but I do know that his focus was on our teenagers and our college students (30:09) to keep them from being influenced by the atheists and the agnostics that are teachers in those colleges. (30:18) Our children are the primary target (30:22) because they want our children to think we're stupid. (30:28) We're dumb.

(30:31) And so, they do have an influence on our children (30:37) because they are influenced by education. (30:40) They are influenced by the teachers, (30:43) and we need to be able to deal with that in particular. (30:49) I would like to draw attention, and then we'll bring it to a close.

(30:57) Colossians, the 4th chapter, or the 2nd chapter rather, (31:05) Paul is admonishing them, (31:09) and I'm going to be focusing in on verse 8 in particular. (31:15) Let's take a look at verse 6 as it leads into the 8th verse. (31:22) He's trying to admonish the Corinthian believers (31:28) to remain steadfast in their faith in God.

(31:34) So then, verse 6, reading from the New International Version, (31:39) Just as you received

Christ Jesus as Lord, (31:43) continue to live your lives in Him, (31:47) rooted and built up in Him, (31:49) strengthened in the faith as you were taught, (31:53) and overflowing with thankfulness. (31:56) Notice this admonition. (32:00) Verse 8, (32:01) See to it that no one takes you captive (32:08) through hallow and deceptive philosophy (32:12) which depends on human tradition (32:16) and the elemental spiritual forces of this world (32:21) rather than on Christ.

(32:26) He's telling us. (32:29) There are people out there who are going to say, (32:32) you're barking up the wrong tree. (32:38) And they are individuals that we respect, perhaps, if that's a good word.

(32:49) But they're wise in the world. (32:53) Wise by the world. (32:54) See to it that no one takes you captive (32:57) through hallow and deceptive philosophy (32:59) which depends on human tradition (33:03) and the elemental spiritual forces of this world (33:07) rather than on Christ.

(33:12) I close my lesson with that particular thought in mind. (33:17) Because we are bombarded every time you turn the television set on. (33:22) Whenever you listen to anybody that has, (33:26) oh, we found out how the world was created.

(33:29) And then they'll start doing that. (33:30) Or we know evolution has been proved. (33:35) Or various other things.

(33:36) And they use their PhDs and their master's degrees (33:40) and their various other forms of influence (33:44) to try to convince us that the Bible is not correct. (33:52) They try to devalue the Bible in every way. (34:00) But God wants us to know, (34:02) and God reveals to us, (34:05) how we can be right in His sight.

(34:09) And we can be seeking Him out. (34:12) What pleases God? (34:15) To believe that He is. (34:18) That He's a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

(34:25) Focus on the word diligently. (34:27) Takes a lot of energy. (34:33) Takes focus.

(34:37) It takes concentration. (34:42) And a full faith and belief that there is a God. (34:47) And that He does communicate with us.

(34:50) And that through His divine intervention, providence, and preservation, (34:53) we exist and have our being. (34:57) And that He is reaching out to us, (35:01) and He wants us to be saved. (35:03) He wants us to be with Him in eternity, (35:07) at the end of the world, (35:09) at Judgment Day.

(35:13) So, He's making it possible for us to do that, isn't He? (35:17) And He's extended to us Jesus. (35:20) And He's asking us not only to have faith in Him, (35:23) but He wants us to have faith that He sent Jesus, (35:27) to put Jesus in the position to reconcile us to Him, (35:31) and to overcome our sins, (35:33) and to be able to have the forgiveness of our sins, (35:35) and that Jesus can present us before God without spot and without blemish. (35:41) And as we did at the start of this worship service, (35:45) going into prayer before God, (35:48) and we were able to get into His presence, (35:54) because of Jesus.

(35:57) As we put Christ on in baptism for the remission of our sins, (36:01) He cleanses us, (36:05) and He becomes our Advocate, (36:07) our High Priest. (36:08) And He's interceding for us, (36:10) and He's praying for us, (36:12) and He's able to present us before God without spot and without

blemish. (36:20) So, how do we get Jesus to become our High Priest? (36:26) By obeying His prerogative, and that is, (36:31) He wants us to go into all the world, (36:34) making disciples of Him, (36:36) baptizing us in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

(36:41) And he that believeth in Him shall be saved. (36:44) That's the message. (36:45) That's the message we need to be given.

(36:48) And if there's anyone here who needs to respond to that message, (36:51) we'd like to extend to you the opportunity to do so. (36:55) Now together we stand and sing the song of encouragement.