

Connecting the Dots ... Prayer: Its Power and Perplexities

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 April 2022

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] We are right now beginning session one of a protracted series that we are labeling as Inter-related Issues of Progressive Revelation and the Right Division of Scripture.

And I need to explain a little bit the format that we're going to be following because it's going to be different than anything we have ever done in that who will be bringing content and when and where because we are going to kind of alternate things with Nathan Rambach who by the way is away this weekend visiting with family also.

And so session number one is beginning here right now. Session number two of this content will be at 1015.

Then when Nathan returns he will resume the nine o'clock series and I will continue with the same content at 1015.

He will be teaching entirely different material and I don't know what he will be bringing yet but I know he's giving it some thought. So you're going to be kind of switching back and forth and I will be in the pulpit for a couple of months and Nathan will be back here and then we will reverse and I'll be back here and Nathan will be in the pulpit.

[1 : 27] And I don't know how long that will continue but as long as it seems to be working and we are giving this young man some opportunity and exposure I think everybody will benefit from it.

So that being the case I want you to consider if you may if you will what we're going to be looking at the interrelated issues of progressive revelation and the right division of scripture.

And one of the reasons in fact the biggest reason that I'm doing this personally is because in due to a number of issues namely one of them being age and health and all that none of us know exactly how long I'm going to be able to continue on here or how long I should be able to continue on.

So I want to make sure that we leave as possible as much as possible a kind of foundation that will be reinforcement to some of you and will be new to others but it is vital content and that's what I plan to be doing for the next several sessions.

And our first kickoff session if you want to call it that is entitled prayer. It's power and perplexities.

[2 : 49] If you have never been perplexed about prayer and the way it works I want to talk to you because I certainly have been over the years and we are beginning with this particular topic of prayer in connection with progressive revelation and right division because two reasons.

Number one, most if not all believers can identify with the subject of prayer especially its perplexities.

Who among us has not become discouraged over unanswered prayer? In fact, some have gone beyond discouragement and have developed a grudge against God for not getting with it and doing what he asked him to do because he has the power to do it.

So where are you when I need you? Why aren't you doing something? And it's very natural, somewhat predictable in our human nature to just kind of say I'm ticked with God and I'm not even going to pray anymore and what's more I'm not going to read your old Bible either.

These are Christian temper tantrums and we're all capable of having them because we still have this thing called the flesh that dwells within us and I'm not talking about blood and tissue.

[4 : 19] I'm talking about that old Adamic nature that wants to rule the roost and sometimes we're very eager to tell God how to run his show and I think we've probably all slipped into that.

And secondly, there are few issues that are so obviously different and distinguishable as that of prayer when considered from the kingdom perspective as opposed to the church perspective.

That in itself can create a lot of confusion. When people do not know the distinction and do not see the distinction, it can lead to discouragement and spiritually being unsettled.

If this is fuzzy to you in talking about the distinctions between prayer in the kingdom perspective and the church perspective, if it is fuzzy to you, it will become much clearer as we pursue it.

So, I would ask you to turn first of all to 1 Timothy chapter 2. There ought not to be any need to do this, but I'm trying to cover all the bases and leave no stone unturned.

[5 : 42] And we want you to see the emphasis that is placed on the subject of prayer by the Apostle Paul. And let me inject here also that Paul, insider, I guess you could call him the ultimate insider, the insider that he was, obviously had some real issues with prayer himself.

Particularly when he prayed that he would be relieved of that thorn in the flesh and God said, no, I'm not going to do that. And Paul is obviously wondering, well, why wouldn't you do that?

Because it would result in thus and so and thus and so and it would be so much better. And the Lord said, I'm going to give you grace to bear up under it. And God knew that that was what Paul needed rather than removal of the thorn.

So, we'll be looking at that and some other related issues. And in 1 Timothy chapter 2, Paul says, First of all then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men for kings and all who are in authority.

We would just transfer that a little bit and make it presidents. And we ought to all pray for our president. And the Lord knows our president needs it.

[7 : 12] Actually, anybody in that Oval Office needs it big time for sure. In order or so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of our God, of God our Savior. And then he talks about God's desire, all men to be saved, come to the knowledge of the truth.

Then he talks about what praying ground consists of. And that is the fact that there is one God and one mediator between God and men.

The man Christ Jesus who gave himself as a ransom for all. The testimony born at the proper time. So, the content of prayer is varied.

Even as Paul mentioned here. In connection with petitions and thanksgivings and so on. And we offer our thanksgiving to God for his being and for his benefits.

[8 : 21] We petition God on our behalf and also on the behalf of others. Making requests to God to do or provide what we ourselves clearly cannot.

Because prayer, among other things, is an automatic admission of our weakness and our inability. And it's often an admission of our ignorance because there's so very much we don't know. And in doing so, in praying, we are also acknowledging that God is both strong and able.

And he doesn't have a smidgen of ignorance about him. Because he knows the whole thing. So, it is a tacit admission of our lack of knowledge while acknowledging God's omniscience.

And omniscience is just a big theological word that simply means all-knowing. God knows everything. And prayer is a privilege afforded to all who are on praying ground.

[9 : 32] And praying ground is defined as believers in Christ, thus properly positioned because of our relationship to him. And that is what gives us access to God.

Being related to Jesus Christ means you automatically have access or an open door to the Father through him. Prayer is not only a privilege, it is a responsibility of all who are believers to maintain an ongoing communication with God who speaks to us through his word and we speak to him through our prayers.

So, we've got a communication set up. Prayer is powerful because God is powerful. And we need to keep that in mind. There's nothing magical about prayer or mysterious about prayer.

The real element of prayer is the one who is behind it. That's what makes prayer powerful. It isn't us or our ability to articulate prayers, etc. It is in keeping with who he is and why he is as he is.

And while we're in 1 Timothy, let's just come over to just getting these things on the on the table. And it's 2 Timothy chapter 1, just a page or so.

[10 : 56] Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my beloved son, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

I thank God. Here's another indication of prayer. whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, longing to see you even

as I recall your tears so that I may be filled with joy.

So, he is assuring his young protege that he is upholding him in prayer mightily. And we've seen also that prayer, and I've already mentioned this, that prayer can be perplexing, confusing, and sometimes downright discouraging.

And I well remember, in fact, it seems like just yesterday, but it was 1957. I had not been a believer for even a year.

Many of you know circumstances of my testimony. I won't go into it. But in December of 56, I came to know the Lord, the day that Barbara and I were married.

[12:27] And in September of 1957, when I was not yet one year old as a believer, I was enrolled in the freshman class at Cedarville College.

And there, I was going to cram four years into five. while my sweet wife was working on the side helping to put me through.

And we received the GI Bill, which was a grand sum of \$90 a month to help in my education. And as a new believer, having served a three-year term in the Army, and starting there as a freshman at Cedarville, it wasn't a university then, it was Cedarville College, the vast majority of the student body, which was very small, maybe 150 students in the whole thing, vast majority of them were PKs, preacher's kids, and MKs, missionary kids, deacon's kids, and so on, sending their young people to a Christian college.

And these people spoke a foreign language. They spoke Christianese. I was still speaking Army barracks language, if you get my drift.

But I was a new believer in Christ and all pumped and excited and ready to learn and to study. And it was a thrilling time, but it was a very confusing time.

[14:10] We had chapel every day, I guess they still do. And I can well remember some of the messages on prayer, some of the marvelous speakers that came through from different churches, different pastors, missionaries, and so on.

And they would just kind of light up the congregation with some of their teaching and stories and so on. And I don't know how many accounts I heard about miraculous prayers and answers to prayer and everything.

I just sat there as a new Christian and went, wow, wow, this is really something. But it didn't seem to work for me. And I started looking for reasons why my prayers seemingly didn't go any higher than the ceiling.

And I would read the scriptures and try to figure out what the problem was. I knew enough to know the problem couldn't be with God because he didn't have any problems.

He's perfect. But Wiseman, you've got a lot to learn. You're far from that. So the problem's obviously with you.

[15:21] and it obviously has something to do with my spirituality or lack thereof. Because if I were the kind of Christian that I ought to be, the answers to my prayers would be almost automatic.

You know, I'd have to be able to just, whatsoever you ask in faith, believing, God will do it. Well, I was asking and I was trying to pump up that faith and that believability and it wasn't working.

And I couldn't figure out why. I knew that the problem had to be with me and my inability to understand or to see just exactly what it is that these other people have that they get such wonderful answers to their prayers and so on.

And that doesn't seem to be true of me. So I began beating up on me and trying to think and see what could I do different.

Maybe I should be, maybe I should be fasting. Maybe I should be reading my Bible more. Maybe I should be reading the Bible on my knees. You know? Here I was as a 21, well, at the time I was 22 years old and totally perplexed.

[16:40] And I would go to class and I remember, bless his heart, sainted man of God, Dr. Arthur Williams. taught Old Testament Survey.

And one of my first experiences in this class of Old Testament Survey elicited some chuckles from kids all around the room. When I raised my hand and I said, Dr. Williams, we've got an Old Testament and a New Testament here.

Obviously, one of them is older than the other, but other than that, is there any real difference between them? And of course, there were snickers and chuckles all throughout the place. And I wasn't trying to be a smart aleck.

I wasn't, you know, I was dead serious. I was just looking for some answers. But that kind of caused me to submerge my thoughts and my speaking too. And I kind of went silent after that.

I didn't say anything. I didn't want to show my ignorance any more than I had. But I labored and struggled through that. And my wife, Barbara, helped me because she had been a believer for a number of years.

[17 : 49] And she knew a lot of things that I didn't know. And she was trying to coach me and teach me on the side. And I remember what a struggle it was. And I ended up with a D in Old Testament survey.

And I'm sure that D was heavily saturated with grace. It probably shouldn't have been a D. But I didn't fare much better in psychology.

I got a D in that. That too was some more grace. Speech, I flunked. Different reasons, I guess.

I won't go into that. Anyway, at the end of the first quarter, or the first, actually, the first semester we won semesters in, my grade point average was .6.

And Dr. Maddox, Clifford Maddox, he was a dean of students, I got a note in my box that said Dr. Maddox would like to meet with you at such and such time. So, I said, well, okay, so I had no idea what he wanted, so I went in, sat down, and Dr. Maddox sat there and he, I don't like this.

[19 : 14] He says, well, young man, what are your plans now? bless his heart?

And I said, my plans? And he says, yes, now that you've had this first semester here, what, what, what do you plan to do?

I thought, well, well, he said, you weren't thinking about continuing, were you?

Well, I thought I might, you know. He said, well, you realize, and he's looking over my grades here and he says, this is quite a, this is quite an array here of what looks very much like substandard work.

And I said, well, I was a poor student in high school. Actually, I was a poor student all the way through school. And it was reflected in this because when, when I was in grade school, we moved three or four times from Chillicothe to Columbus and Springfield and moved around and it was, it was during the war and everywhere we, everywhere we moved in the new school I went to, I was behind whatever they were doing.

[20 : 49] And they were doing stuff that I hadn't even heard of. And this, by the time I was in the second and third grade, and I started developing a negative attitude toward learning.

Largely to cover my inadequacy and my embarrassment of not being able to measure up, I took a tough guy attitude, I don't want this stuff anyway, you know, I don't need this, you know.

And I developed a very negative attitude toward learning and it was an emotional thing and it was going to follow me all the way through. And when it came time to graduate from Springfield High School, I broke my mother's heart because I didn't have enough credits to graduate.

And I should have because I was the same with everybody else in the whole graduating class, but I couldn't make it. And this is in addition to having gone to summer school about four different years, just so I wouldn't be retained in the same grade, I could get on to the next grade, but I had to go to summer school and make it up.

And the whole problem was I had a negative attitude toward learning and this bravado, this phony, false face that I put on was one to cover my lack of performance with the bravado that I don't want to do this anyway and you can't make me, that kind of thing, you know.

[22 : 25] And it was just an attitudinal problem. Needless to say, this was long before I knew anything about Christ or salvation, this was going through school. So when I went in the Army, my first sergeant came in, who was in Alaska, and he said, Wiseman, he said, I was looking over your records here, and he said, I'm thinking you might be our next company clerk.

And I was looking over your records and I said, you didn't graduate from high school, did you? And I said, nope, no I didn't. He said, well you could probably still be a company clerk. And I was working at the time at the quartermaster clothing sales store where we sold uniforms and all kinds of stuff like that to officers and enlisted men.

And I ran the cash register. That was all I did, just ran the cash register in the military clothing store. And he said, you could be our company clerk and our clerk typist.

And I said, well I don't know how to type. I don't type. And he said, you don't type? And I said, nope, I've never tried typing at all. He said, you run a cash register?

I said, well yeah, I run a cash register. It's got keys on it, doesn't it? Well yeah, it's got keys, but those keys are complete. Yeah, keys, keys, it doesn't make any difference. You come in, you'll be our company clerk.

[23 : 37] This is your taxpayer dollars at work. This is why the military wastes so much money, among other things. Anyway, he told me about USAFI and USAFI is United States Armed Forces Institute and if you appeal to them and take the test that they give you, you can get your high school diploma.

I said, well, maybe I ought to do that. Well, when you're in Alaska with nothing to do anyway, nowhere to go, broke all the time, colder than all get out, you just hole up in the barracks with a bunch of guys playing cards and swapping cigarettes and stuff like that.

I said, well, I could do that. So, I filled out the paperwork and I took a few tests and sent them in and forgot all about it. And about three months later, I received this large envelope in the mail and it was from Springfield High School.

A high school diploma was signed by the principal and leader of the Board of Education congratulating me. Now I was a high school graduate the hard way. And all of this was before Christ.

with a real kind of negative attitude toward learning. But like I said, it was all a cover-up because I felt so intellectually deficient I wanted to cover it up with the tough guy attitude that I don't want to learn this stuff anymore.

[25 : 02] I don't need this stuff anymore. And that explains my flunking speech. Flunked it in high school, flunked it in college because I didn't have any study habits at all. I mean, I never studied, never brought books home.

I was as poor a student as you could possibly be. But when I came to faith in Christ, it changed everything. It changed everything.

And I remember I discovered the joy of reading and it wasn't a comic book. It was a real book. I remember what a breakthrough that was that first summer.

So, in connection to all this, I was also praying. And, little by little, God was revealing to me what my real problems were.

And, they were all about me and my attitude and my deficiency. And, it just, just started filtering down.

[26 : 04] And finally, I started to get a little bit with the program. And, the grades came up and everything turned around. And I, graduate, I wasn't, never was on the dean's list, but I came close a couple of times.

And, you may be sure that prayer had a lot to do with that because all the way I was praying for enlightenment, I was praying for, God, I don't even know what I need.

But, I know I need something and whatever it is, I need a lot of it. And, if you would be pleased to give me whatever it is that you know I need, I want to be a willing recipient of it.

So, it was a growth process and, all the while this subject of prayer started becoming more and more alive to me. But, I still had some real problems and we're going to be discussing those here and there also because many of you may have experienced some of the similar things or can identify with what we're talking about.

And, it's just been a blessing and an education for me and I guess it's still, I hope that it's still ongoing. So, and I am determined before I get into this any further to give you an opportunity to say something or to ask questions.

[27 : 28] So, I don't want to wait for the last three minutes. And, anybody? Okay. To me, while we're in Timothy, we're real close by, let's come over if we may to Philemon.

Just get these things on the table and Philemon is a little short book, just a couple pages over. And, I just want you to look at verses four through six because they too are talking about prayer.

Paul said, I thank my God always, and I've learned this, by the way, the best, most consistent prayers you need to be offering to the Lord is perpetual thanksgiving.

We just, we have no appreciation of what we have for which to be thankful. And, when you start forgetting that or don't know that, it can sour your attitude towards spiritual things.

I've learned that the hard way too. I thank my God always. Well, Paul, could you thank him when you were in jail, when you were in prison?

[28 : 51] When you were not only in prison, but you were in the inner prison. and you weren't only in the inner prison, you were in stocks in the inner prison.

Were you thankful then? Well, he was. And it was his thanksgiving and his and Barnabas' singing unto the Lord that got the attention of all the other prisoners and the guards.

so, he could legitimately say, I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints.

And I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you, for Christ's sake. So, Paul is exhibiting this ongoing thanksgiving attitude, and while we're dealing with this, let's come back, if we may, to another area of Paul's writings, and that's Philippians chapter 4.

And as far as I'm concerned, I cannot find a more wonderful, refreshing, fortifying expression of prayer and the attitude, that we ought to have for it.

[30 : 11] And right here in Philippians chapter 4 and verse 6, if ever there is a verse that you might want to commit to memory, it is this. Be anxious for nothing.

Some translations render this, don't be uptight. Well, that's very easy for somebody who isn't uptight to say that.

But when you are the one who is going through the negatives, whatever it might be, it can ring very hollow, just like cheap, insincere words.

But I can assure you they are coming through the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Don't be uptight or be anxious for nothing. Don't be unsettled, don't be on the edge.

but in everything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and whatever you ask for, God will grant.

[31 : 20] God will do. That is a perverted translation, because it doesn't say that, but that's the way that we like to take it sometimes. And by the way, isn't there something in the Gospels that says, and whatsoever you ask in my name, I will do.

what's going on there? How do these jibe? How do they mesh?

They don't. They don't mesh. They clash. What's going on?

Isn't this all from the same source? Isn't it the Spirit of God that inspired it all? Why do we get one thing in John's Gospel, supported by the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, 6, and 7, and something different in what Paul is saying?

What is going on here? And for the longest time, I had absolutely no answers.

[32 : 43] I knew there had to be an answer. Didn't know what it was. But it is so easy when you come to what appears to be a perplexity in Scripture or in a passage of Scripture or a doctrine and you can't figure it out.

You just say to yourself, I'll have to look into that more deeply some other time. I don't know what the answer is. I know there is an answer to it, but I don't know what it is, and we just kind of slide on by, and we just deposit it in our someday reservoir, and I'll figure that out later on.

But I know that they're both true, but I don't know how that works. I spent years doing that, and I cannot help but believe it contributed to a stunting of my spiritual growth.

The text says, let your request be made known to God and the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension shall guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Really, now, that is a far cry from just let your request be made known unto God and he will answer your prayers and give you whatsoever you ask.

[34 : 16] So, I had some real difficulty with that, and it plagued me for quite some time. But all I knew was, and prayer is perplexing, confusing, sometimes downright discouraging, and that will affect your willingness to pray, and it will affect your confidence in prayer when you don't see or understand how these things are designed to come together.

And this does not mean, let me inject this by the way, this by no manner of means suggests that the Gospels are somehow wrong.

Oh no, the Gospels are right on track. Every word, every tittle, every jot, every line is exactly what it's supposed to be. And so are those of the epistles.

angels, but there are two different programs all together. And if you try to make those two programs mesh and come together as one, because you're looking for harmony, it's not going to happen, and it's not supposed to happen, because there is a progression of revelation, a development of

doctrine, things are occurring and taking place that radically change the situation as time goes on. And never, never in the history of humanity has that been so dramatic and so emphatic as the first century A.D.

[36 : 06] from the time Jesus was born, what scholars generally consider 4 B.C. Well, how could he be born four years before Christ?

Well, that's a different matter, but you know what I'm talking about. The first century, it's a time of transition, a time of upheaval, a time of change, a time of confusion, a time of moving from strictly, exclusively, Jewish, Jewish, Jewish, with Gentiles having nothing apart from God, without hope, without Christ in this present world, they were as bad off as they could be.

These disparate groups of Jew and Gentile, the Jew with his law of Moses and the Pentateuch and the Old Testament and all the rest, and the Jew steeped in paganism and idolatry and worshipping all these false gods and the Roman gods and the Greek gods and all the nonsense that went along with it, you could not get two more extreme elements than that, Jew and Gentile.

And now, in that first century, God as much as says, enough of that, I'm putting them together. Jew and Gentile together?

Are you kidding me? the Jew with his insistence on the law and circumcision and water baptism and kosher diet and all the rest of it, and the Gentile, the Gentile with all of their paganism and the worship of multiple gods and all the rest of it, you're going to put those together?

[37 : 47] Yes, I'm going to put them together and there's going to be one common denominator that will unite them and it is the person of Jesus Christ. And for the Gentile, his infatuation with all of these deities, all of these false deities and false gods and all the rest of it, that's gone.

That's gone. That's all nonsense. And the focus is on this one true God. And this one true God just also happens to be the God of Israel.

and there is just one God and he subsists in three persons and so on and it is just, the upheaval was inexpressible.

It was humongous. We just cannot appreciate what was taking place in that first century when Cornelius got this thing about God and he was convinced as a Roman army officer that there was but one God and that's the God of Israel.

And he began, of all things, a Gentile Roman army officer with a hundred men under his control, under his orders, he starts attending a Jewish synagogue.

[39 : 17] dog. I wonder if he was wearing his uniform, how would that look in a Jewish synagogue for a Roman soldier to come in and take a seat?

That must have been something. But the text makes it quite clear there, and we won't go to it, but the text makes it quite clear in Acts 10 that he was one who contributed significantly to the synagogue.

That's putting your money where your mouth is, and he did that. And this man one day was praying. This is one of the most wonderful accounts in all scriptures, it's in Acts 10.

This man was praying, and I know what he was praying for. I'm positive I know what he was praying for. He was praying for more light, more information.

He knew about the God of Israel, but he wasn't satisfied with what he knew, and he wasn't getting answers from the synagogue, and he was praying and asking, and you know what?

[40 : 23] God sent an angel. God sent an angel to Cornelius and said, Cornelius, God has heard your prayers, and here is what you are to do so you will be able to know what it is that you're seeking and you'll get some answers.

Now, I've often wondered, why didn't the angel just tell him? But I don't know that angels are privy to that information, the message of redemption.

It's highly questionable. Anyway, he told Cornelius, he said, you send up the coast. They were both on the coast. He was on, Cornelius was stationed in the Roman army garrison there at Caesarea. That was Rome headquarters, right on the coast. And a man by the name of Simon the Tanner also lived on the coast, but way down the coast.

And he told him, he said, you send men to Joppa, where Simon the Tanner lives, and you inquire after a man named Peter, and bring him here, and he will tell you what you need to know.

[41 : 44] Meanwhile, at this same time, this amazing thing was happening in Peter's life. It was about lunchtime, and it was also about the time of prayer.

Peter went up on the housetop, because so many things were conducted on the housetop. They had flat houses, flat rooftops, children played there, mother hung out the wash there, they did all kinds of stuff on the housetop, take advantage of the breeze blowing when it got hot, and Peter was on the housetop praying, and he was getting hungry, and this sheet let down from heaven, and he looks, and it's a vision in this sheet, and it's a huge, huge sheet, and held within this sheet all kinds of animals, clean and unclean animals.

That is, animals that were acceptable to eat in the Jewish diet, and animals that were forbidden to eat in the Jewish diet, and all these animals are here together, and he hears this voice saying, rise, Peter, kill and eat.

Now you got to remember, this is just a vision, it wasn't real, it was a vision, and Peter says, I wouldn't have anything to do with that, my lips have never touched anything that was unclean, and the sheet was taken up, and Peter's standing there wondering, what was that all about, what's going on?

And here it comes again, and Peter looks at it, and here's the same thing, rise, Peter killed, and he said, nope, I'm not going to do that, and I would not do that, no, I'm, I'm, I'm, the law of Moses, so on, and three times this happens, and Peter is locked into this, and he's saying, and then all of a sudden, there's a knock at the door, he hears that down below, and Simon the Tanner comes up, hey Peter, some people here to see you, he wonders, what's that, he goes down the steps and he goes in and meets these people, and they're soldiers, they're Roman soldiers, and he's thinking, uh-oh, what'd I do now, what's this all about, and he doesn't know what to make of it, and they said, you you're Peter?

[44 : 06] Yes, well, our boss, our commander told us to come here and find you and bring you back to Joppa, where he is, and the voice that let down the sheet told Peter, there are men seeking you, you are to go with them, and he's wondering, what in the world, what's this all about?

So, Peter says, and apparently, I think there were at least two or three, and by the way, they didn't make this trip in an hour and a half, this was an overnight trip, maybe even a couple of nights, two, three days to get there, and two, three days to get back, and Peter looks at you guys, and they're all Gentiles, and he's immediately uncomfortable, and he says, well, I'm not going alone, I'm going to take some of my own people, and they, of course, were Jews, so you get three or four Jews with three or four Gentiles, maybe in uniform, I don't know if they were enlisted men or what, and here's Peter, and he's totally perplexed, has no idea what's going on, so they go up the coast to Caesarea, where this man is, and Peter, they get there, and they knock on the door, and Cornelius comes to the door and says, welcome, thank you for coming, and Peter walks in and looks around, and the room is filled with

Gentiles, and you talk about being out of your element, Peter is very uncomfortable, and he clears his throat, and he says, well, you understand how it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to be here in the company of all you goyim Gentiles.

now, tell me, what is this all about? And Cornelius says that he was praying, and God answered his prayer, sent for him, and here he is, and now you've come, thank you for coming.

I don't understand this any more than you do, but this is something that God has put together, and Peter says, well, what do you make of this? And Peter begins to tell them about Yeshua, Jesus, and the most amazing thing happened.

[46 : 43] The Spirit of God in some way manifested himself and descended on that group of people just like he did on the day of Pentecost when Peter had preached, and he knew exactly what was happening.

This was a repetition of that, and Peter is saying, what is going on? These are Gentiles. God can't be doing that with Gentiles, can he?

But he was. And Peter comes away, he's rejoicing, and he's scratching his head and saying, I don't know what to make of this, what's going on here.

And you know the kingdom of heaven? Jesus said, don't go to Gentiles, confine your ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

So what's Peter doing going to Gentiles? You see the problem? You see the confusion? This is the beginning of it. And he's wondering, what in the world is going on?

[47 : 58] So he gets back home, Peter gets back home, and eventually he makes his way over to Jerusalem, and when he gets to Jerusalem, he is confronted by his Jewish brethren there, and they say, Peter, we need to talk to you about something.

There is a really nasty rumor going around about you, and we need you to clarify this. We actually heard that you went in a house with Gentiles and ate with them?

Tell us, Peter, that it isn't so. Peter explained the whole thing to them, exactly what happened, the Spirit of God coming down, and the people are dumbfounded. They don't know what to make of it either.

And they know that God is in this, it's got to be a God thing, but it doesn't compute with the standard operating procedure. This is out of whack. What's going on anyway?

And here is the start of amazing confusion, confusion, that is going to beset that whole first century. And let me close with this.

[49 : 03] I do not think there is any portion of scripture other than the book of Acts that has been responsible for so much misunderstanding in the body of Christ as that in the book of Acts.

And it is clearly a God thing. It is something that he's doing. And you know what this is? this is the beginning of the mystery, which was never revealed in the Old Testament, never expected, never prayed about, never prophesied, not looked forward to.

So can you not understand why it was looked upon with a jaundiced eye? And people were thinking maybe this isn't legitimate at all, maybe this is, but it was very legitimate.

And that's the beginning of our story. We'll be continuing that in our morning session at 1015. Any questions or comments before?

Dave? I think a lot of people don't understand that there's quite a long transition period there, particularly in Acts, you know, when you read Acts in 30 minutes or something like that.

[50 : 12] But there were so many years, and that must have been a terrible upheaval in the Jewish thinking at that point. so controversial. It just caused so much controversy and so much confusion.

And yet, it was all of God. And it was this mystery of Jew and Gentile together that was never revealed. And if you want to get the real best scoop on it in the shortest space of time, read Ephesians chapter 3, and it explains the whole thing.

This is marvelous stuff. And our time is gone, so we've got to quit. But thank you for your kind attention. Enjoy your coffee break. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.