

The Jewish Final Solution to the World's Problem - Paul, the Apostle of the Gap, Part 2

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[0 : 00] We're in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, and we'll be looking at verses 1 through 9. And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ.

I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able.

For you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

For when one says, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are you not mere men?

What then is Apollos, and what is Paul? Servants through whom you believe, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one.

[1 : 14] I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then, neither one who plants, nor the one who waters, is anything, but God who causes the growth.

Now he who plants, and he who waters, are one. But each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building. This, of course, is a passage that speaks very poignantly to the subject of divisions that exist among believers.

And very often, personalities get involved, and people get their favorites in line, and they start choosing up sides, and one is a follower of this, and one is a follower of that.

And you know, in a very real sense, whether you like it or not, whether you follow it very closely or not, we are inundated with divisions and choosing up sides right now.

[2 : 31] We are engaged in politics, the likes of which we have perhaps never seen before, at least most of us in our lifetime. In some respects, it's politics as usual, but there are enough new ingredients in the mix for this presidential election that there are liable to be a lot of precedents established.

There are some respects in which we've never been here before in this kind of situation with the two political parties that we have that are both vying for your vote. And I think it goes without saying that perhaps the chief concern of both the Republicans and the Democrats is this.

Will they be sufficiently able to unite their party so as to turn out all of the people who are eligible to vote to the polls, to vote for the candidate of their choice?

Because party unity has a great deal going for it. And I do not recall, at least in my lifetime, I do not recall any time when both parties have been so fragmented as is the case today.

It is quite remarkable, to say the least. And every time there's a presidential election, there are always controversial issues. That just goes with the territory, and it's inevitable.

[4 : 02] But the likes of which is taking place now, we have never seen before. It is really going to be something. And a failure on the part of either one to sufficiently unite their party will result in defeat.

So which is the most united? Which party's platform will have the greatest appeal to the greatest number of voters? Which party's planks in their platform will appeal to the greatest number of voters?

The platform. The party platform is the overall superstructure and philosophy of the party generally. That's called the platform.

And now we have got choices to make between what is generally labeled as the conservative element.

And suffice it to say that there are various levels of conservatism involved. There are some real hardcore conservatives.

[5 : 13] Conservative to the bone. There are conservatives who are less conservative. There are conservatives who are mildly conservatives. There are conservatives whom you might not even think would be conservatives.

And it isn't any different with the liberals. Only the liberals don't call themselves liberals anymore. That's their old name. I don't think it wore very well. So they've changed it to progressives. And that has a nice positive sound to it.

Because after all, everybody wants to be progressive. You don't want to be regressive, do you? So there is value in being able to choose a name because you tend to make that your definition.

And there are varying degrees of progressives. There are those who are hardcore, extreme progressive. And there are those who are not so progressive.

And there are those who are just mildly progressive. And then there are those who are barely progressive at all. But each belongs to those two particular parties. And then, of course, we also have those who prefer an altogether different party.

[6 : 18] And they usually don't have much going for them by way of numbers. Because not too many people identify with the libertarians or those of like ilk.

Planks in these platforms primarily consist of national security. Each candidate of each party is expected to set forth their solution, their rationale, how they plan to deal with issues of national security.

And in a sense, this may very well be the number one burning issue. Because if our nation is insecure and is severely compromised, it doesn't make any difference what the other platform planks are.

We'll be down the tubes anyway, so it won't matter. So national security is a very big item. How is that going to be handled by a Republican president?

How is it going to be handled by a Democratic president? And which one do you think would be likely to be most successful? And then, of course, combating that is, along with that, is the ISIS situation in the Middle East and terrorism, such as we have experienced here and as France has experienced as well.

[7 : 44] It's all part of the same package. Immigration and the closing of our borders and the southern border is a hot potato item, and people are all over the map on that from just eliminating the border and letting anybody who wants to come in to building a huge fence and making sure that everybody that we don't want to come in is made to stay out.

That's another plank in the platform. Abortion on demand, sometimes labeled women's health care. You can buy that.

Same-sex marriage. What will be the official position of each party regarding same-sex marriage? And you must understand, there is a lot of wrangling and argumentation that goes on within each party about these issues because no party is completely solidified on these.

There are always people who hold different views yet within the same party. And the gay-lesbian issues, same-sex marriage, and, of course, the economy and the production of jobs.

Which one is going to be most likely to be successful in that? And each one will try to convince you that they will be more successful. Therefore, you should vote for them.

[9 : 01] So nothing is new along that line. Parties are united or fragmented not only by issues of controversy, but each party puts forth a personality in the candidate they choose to represent them.

And he or she becomes the face of the respective party. And that is designed to kind of narrow down the platform kind of like into more discernible personality so that you might like this person more even though you like the other platform more.

So personality and the way things are expressed really comes into play. And nothing has changed. The passage that we read just a moment ago was all about divisions and what each individual brought to the table and had to offer.

These people had chosen up sides. Some were with the party of Apollos. Have you ever heard Apollos speak? Wow, he's a spellbinder. I mean, he's my guy. I could listen to him all day long.

[10 : 23] But then there is Peter. Cephas. He was one of the twelve. He was the one whom Christ designated as the chief of the apostles.

Hard to pass that up. And then there is Paul. Paul the apostle. And he writes to the Corinthians and he charges them, chides them actually, for choosing up favorites and aligning themselves behind different personalities.

And Paul's bottom line here in 1 Corinthians 3 is, listen, the only thing that really matters is Jesus Christ and God who gives the increase. And all the rest of us people, we are just nothing but messengers.

That's all. So don't think more highly of this, of any of these than what you ought to think. So we are confronted with an issue of division and choosing up sides.

In our political sphere today, but it is something that is thousands of years old. And even though they were not Republicans or Democrats back in the days of the Corinthians, they were still people who represented one philosophy or idea as opposed to another.

[11 : 37] And people would choose their favorites because we tend to be more attracted. Now hear me well on this because this is really important. We tend to be more attracted to the personality of a person than we are of the positions the person holds.

Now it shouldn't work that way. But in all too many cases, it does. I really like the looks of him. Does that say anything to you? Can you imagine people actually casting a vote based on the way a picture in the newspaper comes across to them?

Now that is crass subjectivity. And the dangerous thing about people who make decisions like that is they vote.

So what each of us needs to do is our homework. And we need to look at the issues and who holds what position. And while I would not, I could not do it legally anyway, but I wouldn't do it even if I could do it legally, I would not presume to tell you who to vote for.

[12 : 54] But I will presume to tell you, examine your own values and priorities. and vote for the individual whom you believe most closely lines up with and represents your views, your priorities, and your values.

That's not too hard to do. And every one of us ought to be able to readily arrive at a decision when the time comes to vote. All you have to do is look at the party platforms and the planks that are in it and see with which ones you are in agreement or disagreement and then vote accordingly.

I don't think that's expected too much. You know, as long as 2,000 years ago, the Apostle Paul had issues to deal with and he was struggling in an almost constant way to deliver a message that was credible, that people would accept, largely because many questioned his credentials.

Is this guy for real? Remember, he was not one of the chosen 12. He wasn't with Christ when he began his ministry, like Peter and James and John and Bartholomew and Nathaniel and Simon and all the rest of them.

He wasn't in on that. Saul of Tarsus was a Johnny-come-lately. Not one of the original 12. Was he real?

[14 : 33] Was he legitimate? What's the possibility of this Damascus Road experience that he recounts just being a bunch of baloney?

Maybe he made all that stuff up. Maybe he was having a hallucination. Maybe he's not really a legitimate apostle at all. And you know, I'm sorry to say there are some believers today who almost give us the impression that they really question the legitimacy of the apostleship of Paul.

And because of that, many of them give his writings short shrift. They just don't put the authority into them that they should.

And as I've said before, so say I now again, the real issue in the minds of these people has to do with an inadequate and a substandard view of the inspiration of scriptures.

Bear in mind, if you will, please, and don't ever forget this, that no part of the Bible is somehow more the word of God than some other part.

[15 : 47] It is all equally inspired. It all comes with the authority of God himself. It is the spirit of God who inspired the word of God from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22.

It is all inspired of God and it all has equal authority. This doesn't mean that it is all equally interesting or that it is all equally inspiring as you read it.

It isn't. If you want a good bedtime Bible story to put you into some Z's, turn your lamp down low, get your Bible, lay it there by your pillow and start reading Leviticus, you probably won't last long. You'll be in dreamland pretty quickly. Not very much exciting stuff there, but it's still every bit as much the word of God as is John 3.16.

And believers need to keep that in mind when they come to the Pauline epistles because they rob themselves of blessing and benefit that is communicated, listen now, that is communicated only in the letters of the Apostle Paul.

[17 : 06] And the reason they are found only there is because he was the only one to whom God revealed that information. it was brand new stuff.

It constituted a massive update to what had been revealed before. And people who ignore it or discount it because they envision Paul as not being authoritative, they rob themselves of the blessing and benefit of knowing truth that would otherwise not be done.

And we're going to look at some of these examples and I think you will see precisely what I mean.

First of all, let's go to, while we're in 1 Corinthians, let's come over for a moment to chapter 11.

And Paul makes quite a statement here. And you know, some, some have, and I read these things every time, and I just think, oh my, why do people say things like this?

See, Paul, the Apostle, is arrogant. Can you believe that? How in the world could anybody think the Apostle Paul was arrogant if you just read what the man wrote?

[18 : 29] Because he makes an issue of the fact that this information was revealed to him, that doesn't make him arrogant if it's accurate.

It just makes it truthful. evil. He's not bragging about that. He puts himself in the position of humility. And he refers to himself as being less than the least of all the apostles. To me, was this grace given? I didn't earn this. I didn't deserve this.

It was just given to me as a gift of grace. So he's got nothing to brag about. His only boast, if you read his epistles, his only boast, is in the cross of Jesus Christ.

That's what he brags about. Is there something wrong with that? That's where his boast is. God forbid that I should glory. God forbid that I should glory.

[19 : 28] Save or accept in the cross of Jesus Christ. That's my boasting. And anybody who reads these epistles and comes away with a conclusion other than this has to be one of the most humble men who ever lived.

I don't know what they're reading or where they're reading or what translation they're getting. This is the only thing I can come to. In verse 1, he says, Be imitators of me just as I also am of Christ.

Well now, is that a proper thing to say? Well, let me tell you one thing. As your pastor, I am not going to tell you, folks, be imitators of me, your pastor, as I am of Christ.

Emulate me. Follow me. That has a horrible sound to it. I wouldn't dare make a statement like that. And the reason I wouldn't is because I know me. I know me. Well, why would Paul say something like that?

[20 : 50] Be imitators of me just as I also am of Christ. now, I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions just as I delivered them to you.

I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man and the man is the head of a woman and God is the head of Christ. Be imitators of me.

Now, he doesn't stop there and say be imitators of me but he does say be imitators of me as I also am of Christ.

Come over please to Ephesians 5 while we're in Paul's epistles. We'll just look at a couple of things here. Ephesians chapter 5 and notice what he says here.

Therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children. Well, which is right? Well, they're both right. They're both right.

[22 : 00] And walk in love because this is what God did. This is what Christ did when he was here. Walk in love just as Christ also loved you and gave him self up for us and offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

And then, if you would please, Philippians chapter 3. Philippians 3, verse 17.

Brethren, join in following my example and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

For many walk of whom I often told you and now tell you even weeping that they are enemies of the cross of Christ. These admonitions are not given out of personal pride.

They are given from the position of apostolic authority and that makes all the difference in the world. That's what enabled Paul to say, be a follower of him.

[23 : 14] I can't say that. I don't have apostolic authority. Not even close. In fact, we are of the opinion that apostles simply do not exist today.

And because someone wants to call himself an apostle and put that on his stationery doesn't mean that that's what he is. It just means he's a self designated apostle.

Apostolic authority was a very, very unique thing. Relegated to only a handful of people and directly commissioned by Jesus Christ himself.

While we're in the neighborhood, come back to Galatians chapter 1. This passage in and of itself ought to settle it. It really ought to settle the issue regarding apostolic authority and the commission that was given to Paul.

Galatians chapter 1 and verse 11. And you must take this as the truth or as a barefaced lie. It's got to be one of the two. And if we accord any authority at all to inspiration, divine inspiration, we have to embrace this as the truth.

[24 : 28] Verse 11. For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel, the good news, which was preached by me, is not according to man.

For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

True or false? You can't have it both ways. God said it is not true. If this text belongs in the scriptures, if this is legitimate, we've got to go with this.

We've got to accept this as a true statement. This is not a matter of opinion. This isn't Paul expressing some kind of self-elevated, self-appointed pipe dream. What he is saying, he received directly from the risen Lord, and otherwise he wouldn't have had a clue as to what he was writing in these epistles.

It was all by revelation. It wasn't by personal ingenuity. Paul did not know any of these things and never would have known them had Jesus Christ not personally revealed them to him.

[25 : 46] And it's just, I just wish everybody in the so-called evangelical community could understand. Is this hard?

Is this difficult to embrace? I don't understand how that could be. I neither received it from man nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 2, Galatians, verse 1. He's giving a historic account here regarding his own life.

After an interval of 14 years, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along. And it was because of a revelation that I went up.

In other words, I wasn't sitting there sipping a cup of coffee one day and saying, you know, I think it would be a good idea if I went up to Jerusalem. No, no, it wasn't his idea.

[26 : 48] He never thought it out. It was because of revelation that he went up. And I submitted to them. To who? Well, to the people he is going to meet when he gets to Jerusalem.

He submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles. now, I'm going to stop right here and ask good questions.

Why did he do this? What would be the necessity of doing this? Wasn't he preaching the same gospel that they were preaching?

No. That's the whole point. That's what this is all about. This is what he is clarifying here in Galatians. He is as much as saying he wasn't preaching the same thing that the twelve were preaching and that's why he saw the necessity for running it by them so they would know what he was preaching because he wasn't preaching what they were preaching.

And if he had been, there wouldn't be any point in comparing notes. We all preached the same thing, but they didn't. And here, by the way, is where one of the greatest errors that there is in Christendom lies today.

[28 : 11] Please get this point. There is not just one gospel in the Bible. And for a lot of people in a lot of places, when you say something like that, them's fighting words because they will come out of their corner screaming and yelling, you're crazy, what are you talking about?

There is only one gospel, there will only ever be one gospel, and that is, no, no, no, no, no. Listen, there is only one gospel that is valid and appropriate to be preaching today.

That's true. And that is the gospel of the grace of God. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. That's the good news. That's what we are supposed to be preaching today.

That's not what John the Baptist preached. He didn't preach the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. He preached that Jesus is the Messiah and he has come in answer to God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

He has come to be the king and he's going to establish the kingdom and I'm preaching to you the gospel of the kingdom. Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus and you will receive remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

[29 : 35] That was John's message. And you know something? That was Peter's message when he preached on the day of Pentecost. The very same message that John preached. That is not the gospel of the grace of God.

That's not what we preach today. So we've got two different gospels in the Bible. One that was valid for that day when this kingdom offer was being extended to Israel and they were viable to receive that king and the kingdom.

That was that gospel. gospel. And it was exclusively preached to the children of Israel. There is no indication that Gentiles came to be baptized by John the Baptist.

They didn't have a frame of reference for what John was teaching. And when John preached repent the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The eyes of every Jew lit up because that meant something to them.

That meant the fulfillment of a promise that God made to their father Abraham 1,500 years ago. But if you preached that message to an Egyptian, to an Assyrian, to a Babylonian, it would have fallen on deaf ears.

[30 : 46] It wouldn't mean a thing to them. They didn't know anything about that. John made it quite clear that the very reason that he came baptizing was that he might be able to introduce Jesus of Nazareth to the nation of Israel as their Messiah.

That is called the gospel of the kingdom. John never preached repent, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and his death, burial, and resurrection.

Nobody even believed then that Jesus Christ was going to die. Not even the twelve. And we read in the gospels, we read into it stuff that isn't there.

They never believed in, nor preached, nor taught death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. And even when Jesus told them that that's what was going to befall when they got to Jerusalem, they didn't believe that either.

And yet, 2,000 years later, we're still hung up in the same old problem where we just don't see the distinctiveness and the difference in these messages.

[31 : 58] Look at this. Let's go on here. In chapter 2, Galatians, but not even Titus, who was with me, though he, oh, though he was a great, what does that mean?

He wasn't a Jew. He was not a Jew. And, not being a Jew, he hadn't been circumcised. Because most Gentiles would not subject a little baby boy to circumcision, but if you were a Jew, you did. Common opinion among many of these, to whom Peter is going to be, or Paul is going to be speaking here, is that this guy, Titus, if he is going to belong to our group, he ought to be circumcised.

They devoted a whole chapter to this in Acts chapter 15, this issue of circumcision, and everything focused upon this controversial issue. Okay, here you've got non-Jewish people, and they embrace Jesus as the Messiah of the Jewish people, and the God of Israel as the true God.

don't these people have to become Jews in order to be one of their company? And the council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 said, no, no, it is not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be circumcised, and you will be saved.

[33 : 34] So, Titus was not circumcised. And you know something? Timothy is going to be half Jew and half Gentile. Gentile. He had a Jewish father, a Gentile mother, or the other way around, I'm not sure which, and Paul circumcised him.

Why would he do that? Because he was going to take Timothy with him, and they were going to minister to a Jewish constituency. And if Timothy had not been circumcised, the Jews would not give him the time of day.

The difference is incredible and understandable. It was because of false brethren who sneaked in to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus in order to bring us into bondage.

Do you know what that liberty consists of? Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, by grace through faith plus nothing. That's the liberty. No encumbrance, no other requirements, no other demands.

But we did not yield in subjection to them for even and our, we wouldn't give in to these people.

He's talking about bullies here. He's talking about spiritual bullies. You've got to be circumcised. Paul says, no, we're not going to allow that at all.

[34 : 42] He would not roll over for them in order that the truth of the gospel might remain with you. But from those who were of high reputation, who's he talking about here? I think he's talking about the twelve.

Who were of higher reputation among the Jews in connection with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ at this time? Who were those of high reputation? It was the twelve. It was Peter and James and John.

They were the guys with the clout. They had the history. They had the credibility. They had the connections. They were those who were of high reputation. And Paul says, what they were makes no difference to me.

God shows no partiality. Well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me. That means they were not able to tell me anything that I didn't already know.

They were not in a position to enlighten me. And the reason they weren't is because Paul already had the light that they had and more.

[35 : 44] But on the contrary, and this verse is priceless. I just cannot get past the simplicity of it and the straightforwardness of it.

on the contrary, seeing that I, Paul, had been entrusted with the gospel, with the good news, to the uncircumcised.

And what's another name for that? Anybody? Yeah, Gentiles, the uncircumcised.

Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles. And he was the only one they had. The Jews had twelve apostles.

The Gentiles, who comprise all the rest of the world's population, had one apostle. And that was Paul. He was supposed to go to everybody.

[36 : 46] Jew, Gentile, everybody. And he did. I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter with the gospel to the circumcised.

Can you not see two different gospels there? There was a spiritual gospel message that was appropriate to those who were Jews.

They had an Old Testament frame of reference. They were familiar with Moses and the law and all of that. The Gentiles did not. They were pagans.

They were idolaters. They knew nothing about Moses and didn't particularly care to know. Paul had an entirely different message that he is going to give to these people who are pagans.

And it is the good news of the grace of God that you are justified by faith simply by believing in Jesus Christ and it has nothing to do with circumcision, has nothing to do with keeping the Sabbath, has nothing to do with offering animal sacrifices, has nothing to do with the special diet.

[37 : 58] None of those things were imposed upon Gentiles. But it was standard fare for the Jews. Do you not see a tremendous difference here? The good news in both cases, the good news focuses upon, centers upon, the person of Jesus Christ.

But from entirely different perspectives. You would not go into a synagogue, and I'm sure that Paul didn't. You would not go in, he would not go into a Jewish synagogue and preach the gospel that he would preach to Gentiles.

They'd throw him out. because it didn't include circumcision, didn't include any of those things we talked about. But those are things held very dear by the Jews.

You cannot possibly please God unless you do this and this and this. And those things are all found in the law of Moses. But Gentiles, believers in the body of Christ, are not under law, but under grace.

That was so little appreciated in the first century. And you know something? It's so little appreciated today. You would be amazed how many people do not understand, do not hear, and maybe have never heard the gospel of the grace of God.

[39 : 21] Amazing. I had one gospel that went to the circumcised. Peter had another gospel that went to the circumcised.

Paul went to the uncircumcised. Peter was to the circumcised. For he who effectually worked for Peter. Who is that? Who is this he he's talking about?

This is God. God is the he. He, God, who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised.

Did he? He sure did. He effectually worked in and through Peter on the day of Pentecost when he delivered that message and in chapter 3 when he continued the message and all the way up

through chapter 12 until Peter passes off the scene.

God worked through Peter and he worked effectually. And then he says he effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles.

[40 : 27] Peter's message bore fruit among the Jews. Paul's message bore fruit among the Gentiles, the uncircumcised.

And recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James, that's half brother of our Lord, and Cephas, another name for Peter, and John, who were reputed to be killers.

That's just another way of saying they were the big shots. These were the guys who were in charge. These were the pillars. These were the heavyweights, shakers and movers.

They gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. That means they put their blessing upon them. They acknowledged and recognized that Paul had a very legitimate ministry and calling to those people to whom we do not have a calling, and that is to the Gentiles.

They recognized the legitimacy of that, and they gave Paul the right hand of fellowship. That is their blessing. And again, I want to pose this question. If everybody here was preaching the same thing, why did Paul feel the necessity to go to Jerusalem and let these Jewish leaders in on what he had been teaching if he was teaching the same thing that they were?

[41 : 56] That's exactly why he went and consulted with them. He wanted them to know what he was teaching and that it was not the same thing they were teaching.

And you know what they said? We got it, Paul. We hear you, and you're right. We agree. End of argument. That ought to settle it right there.

But amazingly, there are multitudes today who still do not see the distinction. And that's too bad. That is really too bad. This is very, very important stuff. And what this means, as we are going to see, and we are just on the threshold of breaking away from this because we're talking about Paul being the apostle of the gap.

Remember that? What is the gap? It all started with the 70 weeks of Daniel, back in Daniel chapter 9. And this is the backbone of prophecy. This is the nerve fiber of the whole prophetic plan and program of God is wrapped up in Daniel's 70 weeks.

[43 : 06] And we've looked at that time and again, and maybe we'll visit it again, but there are 70 weeks or 490 years involved. 70 times 7, 490 years involved.

And 489 of those 490 years have already passed. The 489th year of the 490 years ended when Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem.

The clock kept ticking and it ticked off 489 years and when it got to the crucifixion of Christ, the clock stopped. There is one seven-year period remaining.

149. We do not belong to the 489th year.

We do not belong to the 490th year. We don't belong to either of those. We are an entity that is sandwiched between we took off and began when the prophetic clock stopped.

[44 : 29] and what took off and began then is called the age of the Gentiles. Israel is set aside and this thing called the church age, the dispensation of the grace of God, is plugged right in the middle between the 489th and the 490th year.

So you've got 489 years coming this way and it stops. then the gap begins. We are the gap.

The gap is almost 2,000 years old. We are this gap and when the gap is closed, the rapture of the church takes place, the church is gone and week 490 begins and it will last for seven years.

We are in the gap. guess who is the apostle of the gap? Paul. He is called the apostle of the church age, the apostle of the dispensation of grace, the apostle to the times of the Gentiles.

Who else has that designation? Nobody. Nobody. Nobody. It doesn't mean that God couldn't have given it to several other people, but he didn't.

[45 : 57] He gave it to Paul. Paul didn't deserve it. He didn't ask for it. He didn't volunteer for it. Paul said, I was drafted for this job.

I didn't volunteer for this. Jesus Christ arrested him on the road to Damascus and revealed himself to him and it was a brand new thing and Paul was in shock for three days.

Couldn't eat, couldn't drink, couldn't do anything. He was a mess. He was terribly confused. When he understood that this one whom he had been persecuting was in fact the Lord of glory, changed everything, absolutely changed everything.

And Paul became the apostle to the Gentiles. This is a thing that had never before been prophesied. Nobody saw it coming.

Nobody expected it. There's no chapter and verse in the Old Testament that says anything about it. That's why it is called a mystery. And as long as we're here in the neighborhood, I want to close with Ephesians 3.

[46 : 58] We've spent a little time there before, but you've got to see this. Ephesians chapter 3, verse 4, well, verse 3, let's just jump in there.

Ephesians 3 and verse 3. He says that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery as I wrote before in brief.

And by referring to this, this mystery, when you read, you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ. Well, why did Paul have this insight? God gave it to him. He didn't have it on his own.

It was by revelation. And look at verse 5. Which in other generations? That means past generations, previous generations.

it was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in the spirit.

[47 : 56] And here is the gist of it, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

And later, he's going to be talking about the mystery of Christ and how that salvation has come, to the Gentiles because of the rejection of the nation of Israel.

And that's going to open up a whole new thing. And it's called the body of Christ, which Jesus is the head, members are the body.

It is a whole new thing. It is never prophesied. It is never predicted. It is never even hinted at in the Old Testament. And all of a sudden, it pops up here. Where did that come from?

It came from the mind and heart of God who had it tucked away within himself and had never revealed it before until this strategic time when Paul was converted on the road to Damascus.

[48 : 59] And then he engaged in a period of instruction for three years, getting the information that he needed that enabled him to write the letters that he wrote and have the revelation that he had.

this is not a difficult thing. And I'm embarrassed to tell you that for the first 15 years of my Christian life, I never saw this, never heard it.

And when I did, all I could say is, how did I miss that? How did I miss that? It's right there in black and white. It is so obvious. You just read the verses and they just don't sink in.

You just don't see it. But when some people came along and started pointing these things out to me, it was a blockbuster revelation. And what this means, bottom line, bottom line, what this means is this.

The methodology, the plan of action, the modus operandi that we are supposed to be engaged in today is following the directions that are provided to us through the apostle Paul that constitute the update.

[50 : 16] We are to obey our most recent orders and those are found in the Pauline epistles. They are not found in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And what Paul writes in his epistles do center around and upon the person of Jesus Christ taking nothing from him but magnifying him in every way.

But it is an updated revelation and when Paul said henceforth we know no man after the flesh that means now we don't know Christ after the flesh anymore. Why? Because he doesn't exist after the flesh anymore.

He is the risen Lord of glory with a glorified body and that's the Christ whom we serve now. It's not the Jesus who was here on earth. Granted, they're one and the same, but he had undergone this incredible transformation whereby he moved from Messiah to Israel to the Savior of the world. Before Jesus Christ died on that cross, he had not paid for the sins of anybody. But when he did, that became the issue.

And it is incredible. this is what gives us the gospel of the grace of God. It is amazing. I want to make a clarification on something that was said earlier when I misspoke.

[51 : 43] I made reference to the fact that there were 489 years and that should have been 483 years. I was thinking of the one unit of seven years, but I referred to it as just one year when it should have been a unit of seven years.

And the correct number is 483 years. The gap began at the end of the 483rd year and it stops there. And then the remaining seven years will constitute the seven year period of tribulation.

And those seven years added to the 483 years will make a total of 490. Sorry for the misspeaking and I trust that this will clarify it.

Pray with me please. Father, we are so thankful. Despite the fact that it took us years to see this, we are so grateful that we have come into this truth, that we are able to understand and see the distinctions and the importance of them, and that our marching orders, the last words that you have given to the church, is not found in the gospels, were given to Israel.

It is found in the writings of the apostle Paul, whom you raised up, how that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

[53 : 17] salvation, and it is all predicated upon what happened on the cross and is applied to believers on this side of the cross, not the other side.

We are so thankful for the distinctions, for all of the implications that are found in it, and we want to understand them better so that we can achieve maximum benefit and blessing from understanding the gospel of the grace of God that you've made available to us through this chosen instrument, the apostle Paul.

We are so thankful. We ask that you will use this material today to pave the way for greater appreciation and understanding of what you are about and how you are working in the lives of believers today.

And Father, if there is anyone here who has never placed their faith and trust in Jesus Christ, we pray that you might be pleased to weigh heavily upon their heart even now in this closing moment.

And dear friend, if this happens to be your position, this is an opportunity for you and the privacy and the quietness of your seat right where you are to make a very conscious, deliberate decision.

[54 : 35] that you want to put your faith, your trust, your confidence, your reliance in the only one who is worthy of trusting, even the Lord Jesus.

Would you make that your prayer even now? You will. God will hear you and God will save you.

Say, Lord Jesus Christ, I believe you are my substitute.

to be my substitute and I want what you accomplished in your death to be applied to me. I want your righteousness because I know mine is inadequate.

Thank you for dying to save me. I want to put my faith and my trust in you as best I know I know how right here and now. dear friend, if you make that your prayer today, tell somebody so they can encourage you or feel free to talk to me after we dismiss.

I'd love to share some literature with you and be of encouragement to you. Thank you so much, Father, for yourself and this glorious gospel. still, for us understood and appreciated as much as we would like, but we're relying on it.

[55 : 48] Thank you for it in Christ's name. Amen.