

Prophecy and Mystery Contrasted - Mystery 18

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] I'm not sure we'll recognize it when it comes because it may have been gone for quite a while. But at any rate, in deference to those dear folks who are part of our group or maybe would be part of our group if they were able to be here, we've been incorporating the whole service instead of the message only, as we used to do for many, many years.

So we trust that it will give those a little more of a feeling of being here because those who have been here in the past but are voluntarily absenting themselves now because they consider it the better part of wisdom with the COVID thing.

And I am not prepared to dispute their wisdom. I encourage them to act on their own volition and initiative. And we respect their absence.

They are taking responsibility for themselves, as we ask you to do. But anyway, for those who were here or have been here in the past, they can visualize all of this because they've been here and they know what it's like and it's easier for them.

But for those who've never been here who may be listening, and by the way, I learned just the other day that our Christianity clarified, and I wasn't even aware of this, but the folks who put on the broadcast on about 20 stations here in the United States informed me that Christianity clarified has been global for some time, and I did not know that, but it's on about three or four international networks as well, and there's no additional charge for it.

[1 : 42] So, of course, only English-speaking people can get the benefit of it, and how many there are we don't know, but we do know that there are huge numbers of people who speak English both in Africa, Asia, and Europe.

So wherever the word goes, it will do the job that the Lord wants it to do. So anyway, and back to this business of the recording, we've also been asked to look into streaming, live streaming, so that cameras would be involved and the entire service would be recorded and transmitted live as it happens so people could tune in that way.

And we have explored that just a little, but we are also persuaded, as the elders have discussed this, that the only way we could make that happen would be we would have to have sufficient personnel available who could man the equipment.

I guess I sound like a sexist, don't I? Who could apply their personhood to the equipment. Isn't that crazy?

I'm telling you. Anywho, and I think we would need, I think we would need probably a minimum of five or six people to be able to compensate for those who, for whatever reason, would have to be absent and couldn't be here.

[3 : 24] We would need them available as backup. And from what I've been told, learning this equipment and being able to utilize it is really quite simple, and it isn't difficult at all, and it doesn't take technical expertise or knowledge.

It just takes a little bit of willingness to learn, and the instruction can be communicated in probably a half an hour, and then you're on your own, and fly by the seat of your pants, and you're doing it. So we've got so far a couple of ladies who have come forward and volunteered to do that, but we need more than that.

So I'm prepared. If we do not get more volunteers to do that, I'm prepared to just let the thing drop and we'll continue on as we are. I've never been crazy about being on TV anyway.

But if we do get a number sufficiently that apply, then we will have to follow through with our commitment, and we'll do what we need to do and make the investment in the equipment and so on and just take it from there.

So just leave the thing with the Lord, and you do as you see fit. And if you're interested, talk to one of the elders or talk to me. And if you're not interested, then just forget it, and we'll forget it too.

[4 : 38] So that's where we'll leave it. Pray with me if you would, please. Father, we recognize it is a solemn occasion to be here and expose ourselves once again to what you have, because unto whom much is given, of them shall much be required.

And the more we learn and the more we know, the more we're responsible for. But we can't fault that, because that's the way you set it up, and that's what has to be best.

So we ask that we each may be willing and able to take whatever we learn here, be willing and able to apply it in whatever venue you see fit.

Thank you for the presence of each one. For those unable to be with us because of illness or inability physically, or protection from exposure to the virus, or whatever it may be, we pray your blessing upon them, wherever they are, that as the word goes forth, it will do in their hearts and minds what it does in ours right here.

And we continue to pray for our widows recently, and we think of Kitty in Texas and others who have been recently widowed.

[5 : 56] Think of Francis Arnold, and our hearts go out to these dear ladies because there are many of us who know what it means to lose a mate, and we know that the pain and the anguish is simply indescribable.

And we ask that you will undertake for them in ways that only you can and cause them to relish and look forward to the time when they'll be reunited with their loved ones, and not only with them, but united with the Lord Jesus.

We thank you for that sure and present hope that we have and for making it as clear and plain as you have. We look forward to your coming so that we can honestly pray and say, even so, come Lord Jesus.

Now for the business at hand and the understanding of it, we give it to you with thanksgiving in Christ's name. Amen. Here's a recent handout that I do hope you will avail yourself of.

Quite remarkable. We've been hearing a lot now about the cancel culture. People are just going crazy with this thing, you know?

[7 : 09] Cancel culture. And it has resulted in the tearing down or the desire to tear down historic statues and emblems and things that have been so dear and meant so much to this nation since our inception.

And there are those who would topple the statues of Lincoln. Can you imagine Lincoln being charged as being a racist?

It has, in our present day, it has become almost, it has become almost a weapon to call someone a racist.

And the person who is doing the calling very often may know there is not one shred of truth in it. But if you can make the accusation, there's likely to be somebody who will believe it.

And you know what that does? That goes to show you how incredibly gullible John Q. Public can be, how uninformed it can be. And yet they know that that's a method.

[8 : 32] That's a way to get two people. I don't think there is anything that any politician fears more than being called a racist. And it doesn't make any difference what he may have done to eradicate that idea from his own behavior and portfolio.

They still sometimes are going to call you racist. And it's tragic. So the cancel culture wants to do away. And they're taking the name of Lincoln off of schools.

They're taking it off, you know, removing the name of Washington. Jefferson, Jefferson owned slaves. Take the Jefferson Heights. Take the name off. What this is all, listen.

What this is all about is in order to fashion and form a new direction for a country, you have to destroy or demean their history, their roots.

That's the way the human psyche works. When you no longer appreciate and have a love for where you have come from and how you got here, then your slate is relatively blank for us to program it the way we want.

[9 : 51] That is exactly what is taking place. And they've already got the first generation underway with what they have done in the educational system, particularly in academia, particularly in academia.

And the people that you saw in Minneapolis and in Seattle that were doing all of the burning and destroying and destructing property and all the rest of the vast majority, the vast majority of these are young people who are recently out of some of our finer, I put quotes around that, some of our finer upper institutions.

And they have been programmed with this garbage and they are acting it out. And they are out to change the world. That's the challenge that's been put before them.

And that's the challenge that has been put before those who are in power today. So cancel culture, cancel this, cancel that.

Will they take on the Lincoln Memorial? Will they take on the Washington Monument?

[11 : 09] Will they take Paris license to cancel it? Will they take Paris measures to cancel it? Will they take pretty quickly, go ahead. Will they walk through you? Will they take Paris little tightly and will wait there, they take Help Brady.

Will they take Paris here? Will they jump onto it? Will they leave Brazil at■■■■ to archives assistance for the JAKE Versuch tässä tähän■, the OPRA hin. Will they introduce people to the governo Manson tomorrow.

Will the new development center for the post put up well. When they begin early to achieve another Parfora cancel culture crowd won't touch this one. It's a recent publication. It's available in the literature rack. Pick up your copy when you leave. It's an article from Ken Ham, Answers in Genesis.

I'm sure you've heard of the so-called cancel culture. It's a movement in which people demand a statue be toppled or a name changed on an auditorium or other item because it's deemed racist. Or it's connected to a person who supposedly made racist statements or exhibited what is today believed to have been racist behavior in the past. And by the way, it doesn't make any difference it was 50 years ago. It doesn't make any difference it was 200 years ago.

Cancel them. Yet this month, this month, a man who popularized a belief that fueled racism resulting in extremely evil fruit will again be celebrated. Celebrated.

[12 : 48] So where is the cancel culture now? 150 years ago on the 24th of month of February, Charles Darwin published his second seminal work entitled The Descent of Man. This was released 12 years after his well-known Origin of Species, which proposed a mechanism involving natural selection to account for the origin of the various types of living creatures without God. At the end of that book, Darwin stated that he intended to apply the same ideas to man which he did in The Descent of Man.

The late Stephen Jay Gould from Harvard University said of Darwin's work, quote, Biological arguments for racism may have been common before 1859, but they increased by orders of magnitude following the acceptance of evolutionary theory.

And that's a statement made by one of the most prominent evolutionists that ever walked the earth, Stephen Jay Gould. Sir Arthur Keefe, an atheist anthropologist, shares some of those evil fruits, stating, to see evolutionary measures and tribal morality being applied vigorously to the affairs of a great modern nation, considered Germany of 1942, we see Hitler devoutly convinced that evolution produces the only real basis for a national policy of organized human slaughter.

That reminds me of that 1936 German Olympics, when the Fuhrer was in the stands as the host of the Olympics that were held internationally in Berlin that year, and that was the year that their Fuhrer really got frosted, because Jesse Owens, an African American, ran away with everything. How's that for an inferior race, huh? Ran away with everything, won everything he participated in, and of course it was supposed to be an inferior race, but nobody, I don't think anybody, told Jesse that he was inferior.

[15 : 25] He didn't know any better than to go ahead and win the race, multiple races, and Hitler was so incensed that he wouldn't even recognize it or stand when Jesse was awarded the gold medal.

He showed the stuff that he was made of. The main biology textbooks used in U.S. public school science classes in the early 1900s stated, quote, listen to this, listen to this.

This is in our kids' school books that paid for by taxpayer dollars and taught by our teachers in the school. At the present time, there exists upon the earth five races.

The highest type of all, the Caucasians. Aren't you proud? The Caucasians is represented by the civilized white inhabitants of Europe and America.

Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood, said, the practice of birth control raises us to a higher stage in the evolution of life.

[16 : 42] As each individual progresses, he helps to raise the human race in its evolution forward and onward to higher planes.

How many times have we told you from this pulpit? That fallen man reasons with a warped intellect and a skewed logic. I don't know that there is a greater example of that than evolution or more destructive than evolution.

There are many more examples illustrating how the religion of evolution as proposed by Darwin has fueled racism, resulting in evil consequences such as the murder of millions by Hitler, the murder of millions of children by Planned Parenthood, and generations of schoolchildren being taught that Caucasians are the highest race.

Now listen, this teaching, this teaching maybe wasn't in your lifetime, but it sure has been in my lifetime. I well remember this.

And I well remember the picture produced by Ernest Haeckel, the German atheist who drew the sketches in all of the science books that went to all of the kids throughout the country.

[18 : 10] A picture of the evolution of man that started with an ape that stooped over a little monkey and it grew and grew and became upright and the next thing you know, at the end of the line, it turned into a human being.

And that garbage was taught under the name of, listen, under the name of S-C-I-E-N-C-E.

Man, that was science. That was science. How many times has science had to reverse itself over just the last 50 years?

Someone said there's nothing that's more out of date than a science book that's 20 years old.

Because science, science never gets to an end. Science never reaches a conclusion.

It's not supposed to. Because the word science means to learn. And when science has reached its end, we know everything.

[19 : 14] There's nothing more to learn. Which is kind of crazy because science really never goes out of style. We are ever learning. Ever learning. And as we learn new things, we have to discard some old things that we discovered weren't true at all.

But you know what? Once something is propagated as true and it comes from respected sources, particularly if they have a Ph.D.

after their name, what they say gets cast in stone and takes a long, long time to ever, well.

So where is the cancel culture when it comes to Darwin? Well, they revere him. You won't hear any of this crowd saying, we want to cancel Darwin.

If they ever do, I'd be persuaded to join them. But I'm not fearful of that. Or Margaret Sanger. You know, these people actually taught, these people actually taught that evolution, and by the way, this is the way, this is the kind of language they use.

[20 : 29] It's the same thing when they say, creationism is faith, but evolution is science.

And people believe that, especially if someone with respectable credentials utters it. People believe it. It's amazing that just, February 24 should have been a day of mourning, not a day of celebration.

So, you know, the canceling, it's all about selection. The cancel culture, it is selective canceling.

And when it comes to even enforcing the law, it is selective enforcement of the law, which is another name for corruption.

Corruption. If you are well enough placed, well enough positioned, you have enough knowledge of the right people, there isn't much that you can't get away with.

Someone has said that in the United States of America, justice has come to the position where justice is available for those who can afford it.

[21 : 44] and that's the way it's been for some time. So, I feel better now. Tuesday, men's Bible class returns to the former Collier's Restaurant.

We haven't been there for a year, but we will return and as announced in the bulletin, we'll be resuming with the epistle of James and all men are welcome.

Men and boys that are available are welcome. You don't need reservations. Just show up between 7 and 7.15. Waitress takes our orders at 7.15 and the study begins immediately following.

And then Wednesday, happily, we will return right here for those who are able to make it for our prayer meeting at 7 o'clock. And as regards the nation and its needs, do you think we still have something to pray about or is everything ship shape?

Okay. I'm being facetious, of course. So, we will be praying. And do you have something that is not in the bulletin that ought to be mentioned?

[22 : 49] Yes, Nathan? Come up here, if you would, because they can't hear you back. But one thing, I forgot to mention, the ladies were going to do a special. Oh, good. So, we can either do that before or maybe at the end of the service.

But the other thing I wanted to mention was, I mentioned last week Pastor Marv has worked on this Christianity Clarified series, which has got a lot of great content in it.

We've been working over the last few months to get it into podcast form, which is kind of the new way that people listen to things. And so, I wanted to let everybody know if you go to the website, the church website, you'll find a link for that.

If podcasting is something that you do or that you have friends who do it who might be interested, let them know. We're also getting it into some of the different directories for podcasts so that people can just search for it.

They don't have to go to a website or anything. They just search for it on their phones and they can find it. So, we got, we're on Google's directory now and we're working on Apple's. And we should, we, I think we got six, six volumes, six CDs already up and published.

[23 : 51] So, Nathan, I can't tell you how much I appreciate your expertise technically and willingness to do that. It's a big help. There's no way in the world that I could even think about it.

And I appreciate getting that out there. Podcasting, because I don't know how long it'll be. I just, I just hope it isn't interpreted as hate speech and gets canceled. Scott?

You mean the monthly one?

I plan to. We'll probably do that this month, but I can't say for sure. I have to talk to, I have to talk to Chris Bilo about that. We'll connect on that. Because she's the one that does all the work and the food preparation.

But my, my, my hope is that we'll be able to do that. But it won't be Tuesday. It'll have to be on a Thursday then. Because we'll be having the men's class on Tuesday. And that's been changed.

[24 : 52] So, I'll let you know. There's plenty of time though for March. Marie? Yes. Marie needs to meet with the elders' wives for just maybe five minutes right after we dismiss in connection with an upcoming shower that she needs your input on.

And is there anything else? Okay. We'll enjoy some special music. Ladies, come right here. Come right here. Thank you.

My faithful Father, enduring friend, your tender mercy's like a river.

With no end, it overwhelms me. Covers my sin.

Each time I come into your presence, I stand in wonder once again.

[26 : 41] Your grace still amazes me. Your love is still a mystery.

Each day, I fall on my knees. Cause your grace still amazes me.

Your grace still amazes me. O patient Savior, You make me whole.

You are the author and the healer of my soul. What can I give you?

Lord, what can I say? I know there's no way to repay you.

[28 : 18] Only to offer you my praise. Your grace still amazes me.

Your love is still a mystery. Each day, I fall on my knees.

Cause your grace still amazes me. Your grace still amazes me.

It's deeper, it's wider. It's stronger, it's higher.

It's wider, it's stronger, it's stronger.

[29 : 32] It's higher than anything. My eyes can see. Your grace still amazes me.

Your grace still amazes me. Your grace still amazes me.

Your grace still amazes me. Your grace still amazes me.

I have long before.

Your grace still amazes me. Your grace just is able to place. Your grace is in front of you. Yours may be blessed. There's no prayer in charge.

[30 : 46] Your grace still we call upon Elgins. truer words could not be spoken or sung.

You know, over the past few years, the song Amazing Grace has become quite popular. It's been sung in a lot of places, a lot of countries, even foreign languages.

And we, of course, are truly grateful for everyone who sings it every time, anywhere. But at the same time, I have to ask myself, I wonder how many people who sing that song and enjoy it actually understand what it's saying, what it means.

And it's hard for me to conclude that many of them do. I suspect that it may be a breakthrough moment for some, but for all too many, I fear that it's probably just a song.

You know, just a song. And when you hear those words, Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.

[32 : 08] I wonder how many people there are that say, well, I'm glad I'm not one of those. You know, that's the tendency of human nature, is to think ourselves better than we are.

And that's just, that's just the way we are. We, when, when Adam and Eve were created and in fellowship with God, God was their focus.

God was their center. God was their world. And when they rebelled against him and sinned, their focus turned away from God to themselves, inward.

And man has ever since been a self-centered human being. That is the cause of all the conflict in the world.

It's the cause of conflict in a marriage, in a family, in a neighborhood, in a country, in the world.

[33 : 22] That's the cause of conflict. We all tend to be that way. And only regeneration can change it. And even then, even then, it still leaves you with the capacity, with an old nature, and you can still be self-centered.

I wonder how many self-centered Christians there are. Wouldn't it be something if everybody, if every believer who's self-centered had to walk around with a big S on their forehead?

Well, you don't have to worry about that because God's too gracious to do that. But we all know, you know, it's the source of conflict, really. And it's, one day it's going to be put away.

And what we are studying is the time between that and what is coming, which is remarkable. And we've shared this little, I wouldn't even call it a pamphlet.

It's just like a half a sheet of paper. But it's one of the most valuable things you'll ever look at. And I've encouraged you to avail yourself of a copy and to give some to others and keep it in your Bible because it is so concise, very concise, very simple, very brief, very simple, but it pointedly reveals the distinctions between prophecy and mystery.

[34 : 43] And this is what we're talking about in the morning service at 9 o'clock. We dealt with the subject of prophecy. And then in the 10-15 hour, we're talking about the issue of mystery and what that means and how it is affected and implemented.

And for that, I would ask you for at least a few minutes to turn to Acts chapter 9 and we'll be looking at the very earliest time of the birth of mystery.

And I'm not real sure exactly when that began, but I know with whom it began. And in Acts chapter 9, we've got the conversion account of Saul of Tarsus and it is one of the most stunning, remarkable things, world-changing thing that ever took place.

And I'm not going to belabor the conversion account. We've talked about it before, but I want to begin with verse 19 of Acts chapter 9 and show you some very important things.

And you need to always keep this in mind as you're reading anywhere in the books of Acts, in the Acts of the Apostles, as you read anywhere, you need to constantly remind yourself that those 28 chapters that you are reading represent actually as many years as it took for that time to transpire.

[36 : 15] Now, I wish it were as simple as saying every chapter represents one year, but it isn't that way because some of these chapters we have difficulty establishing exactly what year it was.

But what I'm saying is the whole of the book of Acts consisting of 28 chapters took about 30 years for that content to transpire.

And you need to remember that because it only takes about 30 or 45 minutes to read it. But it took a long time to live it. It took 30 years. And when you keep that in mind, it helps a lot.

So immediately we are told in verse 18 that there fell from Saul's eyes something like scales. He regained his sight. He arose and was baptized.

And may I suggest that was probably the most responsible, predictable thing that he could have done because it was a demonstration of something that had happened inside of him and he is now expressing that outwardly.

[37 : 22] And may I also say there is absolutely no reason at all to divorce this water baptism of Paul from John's baptism.

This is John's baptism with which he was baptized. The same that John used when he baptized Jesus. The same reason that he used it when he baptized thousands of others.

It was in connection with the coming of the kingdom of heaven and so on. He received his sight, was baptized, it took food and was strengthened. And we read now, for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus.

Now you've got to remember, these disciples that were at Damascus were the very people he had come there to arrest. Wow, what a switch that is.

I mean, he's sitting down at a meal with these people and they're sitting there looking at each other and Saul is saying to himself, wow, I came here to hogtie these people and take them in chains back to Jerusalem.

[38 : 31] And he was, he was a hundred miles away. Jerusalem is a hundred miles from this place. I came there to take them back in chains and make them stand trial.

And we've already thrown a bunch of them in jail because they are Jews who embraced Jesus as their Messiah and we know that's all a lie and we know that they were nothing but a cancer that was growing on Judaism.

And I had to help stamp it out. And that's what he was all about with this persecuting. Now he's eating with these people, fellowshiping with these people that he'd come there to arrest.

For several days, he was with the disciples who were at Damascus and immediately, wow, immediately, he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues saying, he is the son of God.

This thing was so vivid and so fresh in Saul's mind. He couldn't think of anything else. He couldn't speak of anything else. He was so overwhelmed by that Damascus Road experience and the reality of it.

[39 : 37] He's committed to telling everybody. And all those hearing him continued to be amazed. Well, ladies just sung about that, didn't they? Continue to be amazed.

And anybody, anybody who is not amazed, really amazed, by the grace of God in their life, simply has not experienced it.

There's no other possibility. If you're not amazed by God's grace, you just don't understand it. All those hearing were continuing to be amazed and were saying, is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?

But Saul kept increasing in strength. What kind of strength do you suppose that was? I think it was spiritual strength.

Now, there's probably some physical involved as well because, remember, he'd gone three days and three nights without eating anything. He'd probably kind of emaciated. But as he takes food and his body is strengthened, his mind and heart and will, I think, are strengthened as well.

[40 : 54] Increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Messiah.

When it says that he confounded them, it means they didn't know what to do with his arguments.

This man and his statements and his accusations dumbfounded them, perplexed them, left them saying to themselves, how are we going to answer this?

What opposition can we come up with? How can we defeat this man and his arguments? How can we prove that he's lying? How can we prove that he's crazy? How can, what? They just, they don't know how to handle him.

And you know something? People who are purveyors of a lie always have a problem dealing with truth.

They always do. Because it already conflicts with what they want to establish or what they believed. And when many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him.

[42 : 12] Here once again, common ploy. When you can't put down the argument, put down the man who has the argument. They did that with Stephen.

Now they're trying to do it. They already did it with Jesus. Did it with Stephen. Now they're trying to do it. Paul. Do you see what's going on today?

Do you see what's going on today in what are supposed to be America's citadels of intellectualism? The American university.

Do you see what's happening there? the cancel culture there? When conservative speakers are invited to come in to speak, as has been the case many, many times, and you see these people on

television all the time, they are met with rudeness, with threats, with shout downs, with the inability to speak because they won't let them speak.

They start chanting. They start jibing. And the administration is put under pressure to deny them access, to not let them in.

[43 : 28] It's crazy. It's what's going on. And listen, I've heard it being talked about as they don't want to hear the opposite of point of view.

And that's true. And the reason they don't want to hear it is because they can't refute it. They can't deny its logic. They don't have a comeback for it.

So you have no choice but to shut them up. Don't let them speak. Because if they do, think of how many people will be turned away from our position to their position.

This is as old as the hills. Nothing new about this. So they plotted to do away with him, but their plot became known to Saul, and they were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death.

Think of that. They had people stationed, stationed at all of the exits of Damascus to give the word if Saul of Tarsus ever approached any of those gates to leave the city, put out the word and let us know, and we'll have a crew there, and we'll do him in right on the spot.

[44 : 35] But his disciples took him by night and led him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a large basket. You've seen those.

Sure you have. You've seen those large baskets in Indiana Jones, haven't you? Yeah. Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark had these big baskets in there.

I'm sure they weren't the same baskets, but you get the idea. Beautiful. When he'd come to Jerusalem, now remember, Jerusalem, Jerusalem is about a hundred miles to the south of Damascus, so he's a long way from home.

You don't get in the car and drive there in two hours, you know. This is a long hike, and it took several days to get there either way. So when he came to Jerusalem, he tried to associate with the disciples there.

These were the people, these were the people that were no doubt friends and relatives of those that he had already arrested earlier before he left Jerusalem to go to Damascus to get these guys and bring them back.

[45 : 50] And of course, they're scared witness of him. They know his reputation. They don't have a clue what's happened to him in Damascus, but they get the word. They get a rumor. I'm sure that's what some considered just an unfounded rumor that Saul of Tarsus was converted to Jesus the Messiah in Damascus.

And most of those fellow Jews in Jerusalem would say, yeah, right. Yeah, sure he was. They didn't believe it for a minute. They were afraid of him, not believing he was a disciple.

But Barnabas, great guy. Barnabas was his encourager, took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road and that he had talked to him and how that Damascus, he saw, had spoken out boldly, not timidly, boldly in the name of Jesus.

And he was with them moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord. And he, can I just stop here a minute and say something?

If you cannot or are not willing to speak out boldly on behalf of the Lord Jesus, just be quiet.

[47 : 26] Okay? Your timidity may do more harm than good. When you speak out boldly, you are speaking from a point of personal knowledge and assurance.

People do not need to hear you say, I kind of think or, now, don't get me wrong, I could be wrong about this, but people don't need that.

Let the redeemed of the Lord say so or just keep quiet. He was with them moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord and he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews.

the Hellenistic Jews are every bit Jewish, but they are Jews who had been greatly influenced by Grecian thought and Grecian culture and they had adopted a lot of ideas from the Greeks, mostly which were pagan and not worth imbibing, but they were.

And they were attempting to put him to death. But when the brethren learned, these are Saul's new fellow Christian Hebrews, they're all Jews, a whole bunch of them are Jews, not a Gentile among them, they're all Jews.

[49 : 00] When the brethren learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus. Now here's the story and it's a very simple one, a very short one.

Saul of Tarsus was making such a ruckus, creating such waves, telling people, telling people about his Damascus Road experience about Jesus Christ being who he claimed he was and people were believing it.

People were signing on. And for everyone that did, it just angered the Jewish religious establishment all the more because as far as they were concerned, these people were being duped.

And it was their responsibility to look out for them and protect them, et cetera. And of course, they were protecting themselves as well. And it wouldn't be long until the decision was made, Saul of Tarsus has got to go.

Well, some of those friends of Saul's who had been among the converted, you see, all of this is intertwined. We're talking about friends, neighbors, and relatives all together in this community comprised of some who are totally convinced Jesus was the Messiah living right next door to those who were totally convinced he was not.

[50 : 27] And you've got the same thing within families and within communities. It's a time of chaos, really. We had a similar situation here with the Civil War and affections for the North and for the South.

And we had families divided over that. And it was not at all unusual for someone living in the North to have a relative fighting for the South. Only this was a lot more intense in the first century because the community was a lot smaller and everybody knew everybody and we're talking about divisions created in families and workplaces and neighborhoods and communities and all of this ruckus is going on and this is why I say this first century this first century is the most volatile confusing chaotic time ever in the history of humanity.

Everything was in an upheaval and Jesus the Messiah was smack dab in the middle of it and everyone was on one side or the other. It's an amazing thing.

And when word got to these people who were friends of Saul's they come to believe him and they were fellow Jews as well they heard they heard that a contract had been put out on Saul and they took it upon themselves they went and they confronted Saul and they said listen the word on the street is out you are a marked man we've got to get you out of town fast and Saul agreed to go with them and if you look at where they were in Jerusalem they're going to put him on a ship back to his hometown in Tarsus and they're going to have to travel 80 miles to get to that seaport to put him on a ship and they will be sailing he'll be sailing from there and he'll be going back to his hometown of Tarsus from which he came and we are not told exactly how long he's going to be there and we are not told what he did while he was in Tarsus we are not told about local boy makes good does he come home is he preaching the gospel in Tarsus scriptures are simply silent we don't know my personal opinion is

Saul being who he was having experienced what he did there is no way in the world that he could go back home to his hometown and not tell those people what he knew and who he knew in the person of Christ there's just no way he could not do that I suspect that that's exactly what he did how long he was there we don't know but what I would like you to realize is that in verse 31 kind of interesting so the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria and by the way what church is this this this is a church and the text uses the word church and we're not going to go into it now but there are several different churches that are mentioned in the Bible and the fallacy is in seeing the word church and thinking that it always means the same thing because it doesn't but we'll deal with that later the church throughout all Judea

[54 : 01] Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace it's kind of funny they got rid of the troublemaker see they got rid of the guy who was causing all the ruckus and they're being built up and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit it continued to increase and it talks about Peter's ministry and down into chapter 10 and Cornelius' vision etc and chapter 12 and then when we come over to chapter let's see what do I want here yeah let's go to chapter 11 chapter 11 and keep keep in mind now these years are not flipping by as fast as the pages were turning chapter 11 let's read about in verse 19 this is this is truly remarkable stuff and and I want you to understand how critical it is that you see there is virtually no non-Jews involved in these early years they simply are Jews

Jews and Jews and Jews only and remember the first Gentile that we know of the first non-Jew that came to faith in Jesus as their Savior as their Lord was that Roman army officer in Acts 10 by the name of Cornelius and when he did it caused a big uproar caused a big uproar among the Jews simply because he wasn't a Jew and even so the poor man was at God fear he had already embraced the God of Israel as being the only true God but he wasn't a Jew he wasn't a proselyte he hadn't been circumcised but he'd given money put his money where his mouth was so we read that in verse 19 those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose in connection with Stephen now that was back in chapter 7 when Stephen was executed by the Sanhedrin for the same reason that they wanted to execute Paul they could not defeat his arguments they couldn't put down his claims they couldn't answer them satisfactorily they decided to kill him and that's exactly what they did with Stephen so the great persecution arose and the text says that they made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone but there were some of them men of Cyprus and Cyrene who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also preaching the Lord

Jesus now these Greeks appeared to be Hellenists they were called Hellenists because the word the word for Greek in the English language is Greek but in Hebrew it's the word Elaine Elaine we would spell it E-L-L-E-A-I-N Elaine and that word means Greek in Greek Greek but in English it's G-R-E-E-K and these Greeks these were Jews who were with a Grecian background many of them had grown up in Grecian dominated areas Greek philosophy Greek thinking and all that because Greek influence and thought architecture and everything else was leading to pack and was the thing in the Mediterranean world and even the Romans recognized that Greek was the language of culture

Rome was the language of military and law that was the big thing about Rome and we still use all kinds of Latin words for law and for medicine but Greek was the thought the culture etc and that was the distinction speaking to Jews only but there were some of them men of Cyprus and Cyrene who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also preaching the Lord Jesus and the hand of the Lord was with them and a large number who believed turned to the Lord and the news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem and what they're hearing is what?

Greeks? Believing on Jesus as the Messiah? I can't buy that that wouldn't be the case and this is why some believe that these Greeks were not just Hellenists but they were bona fide Greeks or Gentiles and that gives some credence to that because this is something that came up with them that created their doubt and they hear this at Jerusalem now you got to remember Antioch Antioch in Syria it's clear out of the country Antioch Syria is a foreign country and Antioch is far removed from Jerusalem and it takes a long time for word to travel between the two of them but we are told that when the news about these people in Antioch coming to faith in Christ reached the church and that is the Jewish church because that's all that existed at the time at Jerusalem they were perplexed about that they didn't know if it was a rumor they didn't know if it was true or if it was untrue and they appointed

[59 : 58] Barnabas and they said Barnabas go up to Antioch and check this out find out what's going on up there and bring us back a report and Barnabas says okay and he takes off and we are told that when he came and witnessed the grace of God he rejoiced and began to encourage them all that is the people there at Antioch with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord for he was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith and considerable numbers were brought to the Lord and he left for Tarsus to look for Saul why why he is being in Syria long ways from Tarsus it was years ago that Saul was put on a ship back to his hometown and nobody heard anything from him and he's been there in Tarsus for all these years now I want to throw a number at you that really is important and you've got to keep it in mind

I want you to think of this in terms of the development of Saul's ministry from the time he was converted in Acts chapter 9 it would be a full 14 or 15 years before he would ever take his first missionary journey I remember how stunned I was when I learned that because putting it together as a new convert and realizing that Saul began preaching the gospel right there in Damascus where he was saved and started confounding and got in trouble for it and he did the same thing in Jerusalem and I just assumed that he was ready to go on that first missionary journey and he probably set sail real or no no it was 14 to 15 years can't give you an exact number before he ever took that first missionary journey meanwhile during those years most of the time he was spent back in his hometown of Tarsus and we assume that he was evangelizing there but we don't know

because the record is silent and the text says that he left for Tarsus to look for Saul and when he found him and by the way alright let's go back let's go back to Acts chapter 9 keep your place there we'll be back back there in just a moment

Acts chapter 9 and look if you will at verse 14 we're just going to jump in the middle of this this is after Saul's conversion and Ananias is sent to him to give him this message to receive his sight and so on and Ananias says verse 13 Lord I've heard from many about this man how much harm he did to the saints of Jerusalem and here he has authority and the chief priest to bind all who call upon him but the Lord said to him go for he Saul is a chosen instrument of mine to bear my name before the Gentiles now look at that he even put the word Gentiles first in the Greek language when a word is to be emphasized in a sentence that is used it is put at the first of the sentence put at the front of the sentence that is what gives it its importance it is used for we might put it in capital letters or italics or some way make it stand out but in Greek the word is put at the beginning of the sentence even if it doesn't make sense grammatically for it to be there they put it there anyway because they want to emphasize how important it is this is the thing that's important in connection with what's coming and we are told that before

Gentiles and kings and who's last sons of Israel who is at the top of the list for Paul's target it's not Jews it's Gentiles he's never called the apostle to the Jews he's called the apostle to the Gentiles the twelve were the apostles to the Jews listen words mean things don't just write over them don't just slough them off words mean things especially when they're found in the word of God they mean things and the fact that he is called to be the apostle to the Gentiles that was incredible in itself because they didn't have any apostles and the Jews the Jews automatically believed God didn't have any interest in Gentiles dumb dogs pagans who cares about them they are the off scouring of the earth God doesn't care anything about it's it's the Jew that is the apple of his eye and as the Jew awakened in the morning he would repeat that prayer

God I thank thee that thou hast not made me a woman a slave or a Gentile and that was a standard prayer many Jews offered and back in our chapter back in chapter 11 again when Barnabas sees what's going on and that these people who are coming to faith are Gentiles Barnabas says wow that's right down Saul's alley I've got to find him got to find Saul he's got to get in on this and he sets sail and he goes all the way to Tarsus I don't know if he had an expense account or not maybe he went on his own money but he gets there and when he does we are told that when he had found him in verse 26 he brought him to Antioch this is Antioch of Syria not Antioch of Pisidia that's going to be one of the stops that Paul make on his missionary journey but this Antioch and by the way [66:18] I'll let you in on a little secret probably most Christians don't even know that the real crux the real basis the real nerve center the real nerve center for Christianity in the first century was not Jerusalem it was Antioch Antioch in Syria interesting by the way we have a college located not far from here that is named Antioch and let me tell you you could not find a more distant meaning or definition of anything to do with Christianity than what you would find in Antioch College because it is professively humanistic atheistic and just about every other about everything but theistic so it is kind of ironic that it is called Antioch and we are told that he found him he brought him to Antioch it came about that for an entire year wow what a year that must have been they met with the church and taught considerable numbers and the disciples were first called

Christians in Antioch not Jerusalem but Antioch and the word literally means Christ ones Christ ones or ones belonging to Christ and the term Christian was born it was hatched here at Antioch in Syria and now I want you to turn over to chapter 13 and verse 1 now there were at Antioch in Syria long ways from Jerusalem by the way in the church that was there prophets and teachers Barnabas Simeon who was called Niger Lucius of Cyrene Menaeus who had been brought up with Herod Tetrarch and Saul and while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting the Holy Spirit said I just looked at the clock I shouldn't have done that the Holy Spirit said set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them then when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them they sent them away so being sent out by the Holy Spirit they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus and when they reached Salamis they began to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews and they also had John as their helper this is John Mark and when they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos they found a certain magician a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus now we've got to terminate this because our time is gone but this is going to develop into something really really major and we will see and all I want to leave you with is this thought there is an enormous tremendously

significant time of transition that has taken place and it is getting underway it has just started with the conversion of Saul of Tarsus and this transition is going to include primarily this it is going to consist of a movement away from things

Jewish to a movement of things Christian it's going to move from an emphasis on the Jew to an emphasis on the Gentile and what is going to add even more to the confusion is along with adding to the emphasis on the Gentile it is also going to bring along the Jew and add the Jew to the Gentile so we're moving from things just Jewish to things that are Jewish and Gentile in one body a concept never imagined before in anyone's wildest imagination because these two entities had always been separate had always been separated there was nothing the Jew prided himself more on than his separation from Gentiles and now this new dynamic is putting them together unheard of unthinkable Tebby would say the milkman remember and fiddler in the root would say impossible unheard of unthinkable that's exactly what was happening it is the most dramatic time it is a volatile time it is a time of confusion chaos upheaval people didn't understand what was happening it is a remarkable time and in this Israel is going to continue down the road of apostasy and the Gentiles are going to continue increasing in number who are coming to faith in Christ and out of this Judaism that is going to become defunct Christianity will be born in an organized way and it will eventually become the Roman Catholic Church that will be the expression of Christianity in the early days and how they will get there from

[72 : 20] Judaism is a remarkable story in and of itself and we'll spend more time with that later but for now we must dismiss thank you for your kind attention pray with me if you would please loving father we recognize that we are into territory that is so tremendously important so valuable for our understanding of your plan and program not only for this first century but for our century and for the end times that are rapidly descending upon us we look to you for clarity and wisdom and understanding of the text thank you for those who are here eager to hear the truth and we pray for a facility of expressing it pray that you will allow us to separate any error from it and allow us to enjoy the continuity and the preciousness of the word of God and all that it means for us in Christ's name we pray amen thank you you are dismissed don't forget your hand