

Prophecy and Mystery Contrasted - Mystery 10

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[0 : 00] Once again, our Father, we find ourselves facing the Word that you have provided for us, and as we examine it and what it sets forth, we pray for a spirit and appreciation of understanding the text, the implications thereof. We are so grateful that you have not left us in the dark.

You have provided all that pertains to life and godliness and incorporated it in this book. And you've made it available by the hundreds of millions in multiple languages all throughout the world, and we are a blessed people for it. So we ask that as we engage the content this morning, you will use it to stimulate, inspire, and educate, edify whatever you know the need in each and every heart to be. You are capable of meeting it. We continue to uphold our nation before you, and our leadership of it. We ask that wisdom may be the portion of those who are in positions of responsibility, whether president or governor or Congress or whatever their responsibility may be.

We recognize that we are facing dire and tumultuous times in our nation today, and there are many things taking place that we could not have envisioned just a short time ago.

So we ask that wisdom will prevail and that courage as well as direction may be the order of the day. Thank you once again for those stalwart individuals, men and women, who have taken it upon themselves to put themselves at risk by wearing the badge and the uniform.

[1 : 48] We pray that you will undertake for them, give them a renewed sense of purpose and importance, because they are extremely vital to our way of life and the existence of this nation as we know it.

So we ask that you will undertake for them, refurbish them with your power, with your strength and your wisdom, we pray. Deliver us now from the flesh.

Enable us to see what the Spirit of God has to reveal to us. In his name we pray. Amen. Because it was not at all practical to provide some kind of a Q&A; for the 9 o'clock hour, since we were so largely scattered, even more so than we are right now, we will try as best we can to work in a Q&A; for this session, because the material we're dealing with is so critical, and if there are questions out there that are on your minds by all manner of means, we hope you will ask them, and we will do our best to provide you with a biblical answer for them.

We are continuing a kind of back-to-back series, whereby the 9 o'clock hour focuses primarily on the prophecy portion of Revelation, and what that involves.

We spend a great deal of time at the 9 o'clock hour relating to the subject of the kingdom and its various aspects, and that material has been recorded, and it will be available as well as the material from this session at the 10-15 hour.

[3 : 29] Both of these CDs will now be provided back-to-back in a holder that contains two CDs.

One will be the 9 o'clock hour, the other will be the 10-15, and the reason we are doing that is because it is really highly beneficial for those who hear this content, if you can get both sessions, because each is radically different from the other, but needs to be compared with the other, and if you want the best enlightenment that is available on the subject, it will be necessary for you to get both of those, or to hear both of those, but if you are not here for both, it would be to your advantage to make yourself available to both of these hours, the 9 o'clock and the 10-15, and they, of course, will be available, as we mentioned, at about 10 or 15 minutes after the service dismisses.

You can stop by the church clerk office and pick up your copy there. They'll be available on the shelf at the bulletin board. So in just looking and perusing this little pamphlet that we provided you and encourage you to keep in your Bible, and there are copies of it available in different places, it distinguishes between prophecy and mystery, and it does it in such a clear, succinct way that I am advocating that you make yourself available to these because it's very, very important, and although both of these are really essential, and both of them are a legitimate part of the written

record called the Bible, they are prophecy and mystery, and the two are radically different. But if you do not see and understand the differences, you will have great confusion in trying to make sense of much that is in Scripture. But once you see and understand the distinctions and the differences, it just, someone said, it just makes the Scriptures fit like a hand in a glove, and that's a good way to describe it.

So, we are apprised of both of these, but we are living only under one of them. And if you do not know which one you are living under, you're already in trouble.

I can promise you that. We are not living under prophecy. We wholeheartedly believe it and endorse it, but we are not living under that aspect.

[6:10] We are living under what is referred to as the mystery. We believe both of them. Both are essential. Neither makes sense without the other, but we are not living under both of them.

We're living under one of them, and that is the mystery. So, to repeat an old phrase that I hope you have ingrained in your brain, and we'll never forget it, all of the Bible is for us, but not all of the Bible is to us.

And you've got to make a distinction, as Miles Coverdale says, not only what is written, but of whom and to whom, at what time, with what circumstances, considering what goes before and what follows.

And we'll be looking at Miles Coverdale a little later on. In connection with making that valid distinction between prophecy and mystery, I would ask you, first of all, to turn, if you would, to Romans chapter 9.

Very familiar portion. We will not spend much time here, but it deals with the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and it is absolutely fantastic material.

[7:18] I'm sorry, did I say Acts? I meant Acts 9, not Romans. Acts chapter 9 will be in Romans later. Acts chapter 9, and the conversion account of Saul of Tarsus, which he recounts personally, by way of personal testimony, two other times in the book of Acts, but this is the one that was actually first.

This is the actual one, and it is in Acts 9, and we will begin, if we may, with verse 10. I want to abbreviate this somewhat, but I want to show you how we are going to begin with a really radical difference here.

In verse 9, or verse 10, I'm sorry, Acts 9 and verse 10. Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias, and the Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias, and he said, Behold, here am I, Lord.

And the Lord said to him, Arise, and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas, for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying.

And I've often wondered, what do you think he was praying about? I think he was praying about the same thing that Cornelius was praying about in Acts chapter 10.

[8:46] We won't turn there, but he was the Roman centurion, and he was praying, and an angel appeared to Cornelius and said, Cornelius, your prayer has been heard by God, and here's what you are to do.

You are to send men to the city of Joppa and inquire after a certain man named Peter. Bring him here, and when he comes, he will tell you what you need to know.

It's a beautiful kind of thing that I think the context establishes because the angel said, Cornelius, your prayer has been heard. What do you think he was praying about?

I think it is pretty axiomatic that he was praying for light, for information, for understanding. He was wondering what all of this means regarding Jesus of Nazareth and the Messiah and all the rest.

The angel did not, perhaps could not, tell him, but directed him to send for Peter and Peter would tell him. So there was an answer to prayer. And here, Saul is praying.

[10:00] What do you think Saul is praying about? I think he was praying about the same thing. This man has been in shock. I mean emotional shock for three days and three nights.

Hasn't eaten anything. Hasn't drunk anything. He has been absolutely stunned. Just traumatized. Can't get over it.

The vision he saw, it really was Jesus. The bright light. The others saw it. They heard a voice. I heard it was Jesus. He's resurrected. He's alive. What this means is I've got this thing all wrong.

I consented to the stoning of Stephen. I even cheered them on. And I was wrong. How could I have been that wrong? How could I? And what?

The man's desperate. And someone has said, when worse comes to worse, you pray. Unfortunately, that's often the last resort for a lot of people.

[11:02] I remember hearing about a group of politicians one time who were struggling over an issue that they were trying to resolve. And someone suggested, maybe we ought to just stop and pray about this.

And one of them said, has it come to that? Wow. Are we that desperate? I mean, well, sometimes, you know, sometimes we are.

Sometimes we will use every ace in the hole we can come up with. Every possibility that we can come up with other than to resort to maybe we ought to address God.

Reminds me of the Continental Congress when they were meeting and trying to resolve some issues regarding the Constitution. And they were wrangling and they were at odds.

And you know politicians, they're always having diverse opinions and ideas. and it wasn't any different with the Continental Congress and these men were all arguing one on one side and one on the other and they couldn't reach a conclusion.

[12:05] And of all people to suggest it, and I've never been able to understand this, it came from Benjamin Franklin.

It was Franklin's suggestion and the thing that makes that so curious is that Franklin was a deist. D-E-I-S-T A deist. Do you know what a deist is? A deist by definition is someone who believes that God created everything and wound it up just like you would wind up a clock and then he took hands off and backed off and just let it run without any intervention or involvement at all.

He created and then he dissociated himself from it and let it go. Which simply says that the Almighty has no involvement in the affairs of men.

But what is prayer other than asking the Almighty to please intercede on our behalf? And of all people to suggest that, it was Benjamin Franklin.

[13:32] And they called upon one of the local clergy who was also a member of the committee to lead them in prayer. And here these austere gentlemen whom we call founding fathers of our nation, many of them knelt in prayer and they were led in prayer.

And shortly thereafter, the breakthrough was realized and the issue was resolved and they went on. So, after three days and three nights sitting there in that chair shaking his head, holding his head in his hand, replaying and replaying and replaying, Saul prays.

And I have no idea what he prayed, but I'll tell you what I think I would have prayed if I had been Saul. I would have prayed something like, oh God, I don't understand this.

I cannot figure out what is happening. I'm just having so much trouble processing this, understanding this.

I realize that was Jesus. I saw he was resurrected. He's got to be the Messiah you sent him. I don't know what to make of it. I don't know what to do.

[14:52] I'm just at a loss. Please, help! And God told Ananias, I want you to go find Saul of Tarsus.

He's praying. And that's exactly what's going to happen. And verse 12 says, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight. Ananias, answered, Lord, I've heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to thy saints at Jerusalem. This guy's got a reputation. He's brutal.

I mean, he's really, he's really something. And he has authority from the chief priest to bind all who call upon your name. And the Lord said to him, I know, I understand all that.

Yeah, yeah. But you go, for he, this Saul of Tarsus, is a chosen instrument of mine to bear my name before the Gentiles.

[16:03] Now, let's just stop right there. Do you have any idea how significant that is? To bear my name before the Gentiles? is this risen, ascended Christ, is this the same Christ that three years earlier told his twelve apostles, don't go to the Gentiles.

Confine your ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. What's going on here? Why the change? What is it about the Gentiles now?

Before, they were on the outside. Now he is saying, he is a chosen vessel to go to the Gentiles. Not only that, but he's going to be designated the apostle to the Gentiles.

And as far as we know, he will be the only apostle so designated to go to the Gentiles. My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.

Now let me ask you, who all does that incorporate? If you take the Gentiles, and who are the Gentiles?

[17 : 30] The Gentile is anyone who is not a Jew, anyone who is not a direct descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is a Gentile. We're all Gentiles here.

The likelihood is probably every one of us in this congregation is a Gentile. You may have some Jewish blood in you, but we're all Gentiles. So when you take Gentiles and Jews and put them together, what you have is everybody.

No one left out. Everyone. And then when you throw in the kings, you're talking about status among people. These are the rulers, the shakers and the movers, the kings, the royalty, the decision makers.

So literally, Paul, the apostle, is called to be the apostle to everyone, the whole world. And, as I mentioned before, it's going to be a tough sell.

One of the reasons that Paul is going to have difficulty, and he will have a lot of difficulty, and all of that is anticipated, none of it is a surprise to the one who called him, and none of it will be a surprise to Paul, who will be on the receiving end of it, that his apostleship is going to be very suspect.

[18 : 55] One reason is because he was not one of the twelve. If you were to go, which we will not do, but if you were to go to Matthew's Gospel, chapter ten, you will see Jesus call each of the twelve apostles, and he gives them authority to cast out demons, to raise the dead, to heal the sick, and so on, and there are twelve of them, and they are all named, and he told them he wanted them to go forth in teams of two.

By the way, I don't know if you realize it or not, but if you've ever had a Mormon knock on your door, you will find that there are always two of them. They're trying to be scriptural.

Well, they may have a scriptural approach, but they do not have a scriptural message, but nonetheless, that's where they take the idea from. In going two by two, just as Jesus sent them out, and they come with the full credentials and authority that Christ gave them.

They did not have this power. He didn't choose these twelve because they were special, because they were particularly gifted. They weren't. They were a bunch of what you would call everyday ordinary people.

About half of them were fishermen, and they were under trade that way. These were just run-of-the-mill people. They were not outstanding. They were not intellectuals. They were not wealthy. They were just what we would call ordinary Joes.

[20 : 29] And Paul talks about that when he writes to the Corinthians, how that not many mighty among you were chosen, not many wise, and so on, but God has chosen the ordinary things of the world, and so on, and so on.

So here, Saul of Tarsus is designated Johnny come lately as an apostle. He refers to himself as one born out of due time.

In other words, it looks like he's late arriving. Where did he come from? Who is this guy anyway? Saul of Tarsus. And what, pray tell me, is this message that he is preaching?

You've got to be kidding me. Do you hear what this man is saying, and to whom he is saying it? And that will take us to Galatians. So let us go there, please. First, we want to establish something that is taking place in the life of this man, Saul of Tarsus.

Galatians chapter two. We're just going to have to jump in and avoid some of the chronology that went before and start with verse one of chapter two of Galatians.

[21 : 48] Then after an interval of 14 years, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also. And it was because of a revelation that I went up.

And what he means here when he says this is, it really wasn't my idea to go at all. It never occurred to me to do that. But the God who revealed to me my calling and my ministry is the one who revealed to me by revelation that I am to go up.

And that's why he says he went. Because of a revelation that I went up and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles.

Now right here we need to park for just a moment because there is something that seems a little strange. It would have been a lot simpler if Paul would have simply said I submitted to them the gospel period.

I submitted to them the gospel. But he says the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles.

[23 : 21] Now if he had just stopped there with I submitted to them the gospel and the word gospel simply means the good news. Everyone I think most everyone would have interpreted that to mean well he preached to them the gospel that had always been preached from the time there was a gospel.

The good news. There's only one gospel isn't there? After all that's what Paul is preaching is just the gospel. gospel. But he's very careful that the reader not be able to make that mistake because he clarifies it by saying the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles. it's good news among the Gentiles. What good news had the Gentiles been getting up to this time? Zero.

No good news. No gospels. Who are these people Gentiles? They're everybody who's not a Jew. And the thing that characterized virtually all of them was they were all pagans. They were all idolaters. They were all worshipers of many deities. They had all kinds of bizarre ideas and beliefs. And none of them had any confidence or faith in the God of Israel.

[24 : 52] The only true God there was. There was no good news for the Gentiles. There was no gospel to the Gentiles. There was no message to the Gentiles. They were just out there engaging in their idolatrous practices, their adulteries, their fornication, all the rest of it, all the nine yards, just an extremely wicked, evil group of people devoted to licentiousness and immorality and you name it.

Now these people are to be recipients of a good news. But what was the gospel prior to the time that Paul came on the scene?

What was the good news that was preached to anybody? It was the good news about the kingdom. It was the good news, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

And to whom was that gospel preached? Only to the Jew, exclusively, only to the Jew, forbidden to go to the Gentiles. Poor Syrophoenician woman, a Gentile woman, appealed to Jesus one day and said, Sir, my daughter is grievously ill.

She has, I think it was the one with the demon, and would you minister to? And Jesus said, it is not meet to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs.

[26 : 26] What? What a terrible thing for the Son of God to say to this poor woman who was there on behalf of her injured child? Dogs?

You knew, of course, that Jesus was not politically correct, didn't you? The dogs, it's a nasty term, but it was a common expression that Jews had regarding anyone who was not a Jew.

They called them other derogatory names. One of the favorite names was they called the uncircumcised. If you were a Jew, you, of course, were circumcised.

That made you a Jew. If you were uncircumcised, you were a heathen. You were pagan. You were an outcast. You were a nobody. You were the scum of the earth. And as I told you, the typical Jewish prayer on rising in the morning was, O God, I thank thee that thou hast not made me a Gentile.

or a woman. How you like them apples, ladies? I thank you that you have not made me a slave, a Gentile, or a woman.

[27 : 45] That was the standard Jewish prayer in rising in the morning. And here is this dear woman who is desperate about the health of her daughter, and he says, it's not appropriate to take the food.

In other words, I'm not supposed to give the message that I have to those who are unable to receive it, meaning Gentiles. And this dear lady came back and said, true, I understand that, sir, but even the dogs, even the little dogs, don't they get the crumbs that fall from the table of the master? And Jesus was taken with that. And I'm sure with the heart of a mother, and he was moved by that. And he made an exception, and he healed that woman's daughter.

But understand, if you will, she was not a worthy recipient. She was a dog. She was a Gentile. Now, when Paul is talking here about a gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, where did you get that? The gospel as it existed up to that time, as we talked about in the nine o'clock hour, was the gospel called the gospel of the kingdom.

[29 : 05] And that was not for Gentiles, that was for the Jew. That's the gospel that was to be preached by the twelve, and they preached it, and John the Baptist preached it, and Jesus preached it, and it all had to do with the kingdom of heaven coming to earth.

That was the gospel that had been preached. That was the only gospel that had been preached. That was the good news that had been preached. And you're not going to preach that message to

Gentiles.

They have no frame of reference for that. It is the Jew, it is the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that had become so steeped, and so embedded in the concept of the Messiah.

And when the Messiah comes, he will establish the kingdom, and it will be the kingdom of heaven come to earth, and righteousness will prevail, and Israel will be freed of all of its enemies and encumbrances, and the earth will be restored to its original pristine state, and the Messiah will be ruling and reigning, and Israel will be the lead nation of the world, and it will be wonderful.

That's the message that was preached to the Jew. That's the message the Jew longed and waited for. That's what John the Baptist was talking about when he said the kingdom of heaven is at hand. [30 : 22] It's right around the corner. How so? Here comes the king, and he's going to do his thing, and he raised the dead, and he cast out demons, and he gave sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, and performed miracles, and changed water into wine.

He brought all these kingdom conditions with him, but it is all Israel, Israel, Israel, Israel. Get that through your noggin. That is essential.

It's all about the Jew. Listen, this is why the Jew is so critical to the plan and program of God. This is how he's going to affect it.

It will be through Israel. Israel will be the spearhead nation, and guess who the point of the spear will be? Yeshua HaMashiach.

Jesus, the Messiah. That's the message that had been preached. That's not what Paul the apostle is preaching to the Gentiles. They don't know anything about the kingdom.

[31 : 30] They have no interest in that. That's a foreign language to them. What Paul is preaching to the Gentiles is completely different. It's still good news, and Christ is still at the center of the good news, but from that point on, it's all different.

And he says, I preached the gospel that which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation for fear that I might be running or had run in vain.

What is that all about? Well, let me explain it. He's going to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is where the twelve are headquartered. The twelve are the shakers and movers in the kingdom.

The twelve were the ones who were the focus. They were the spearhead at this time. They were the ones who confronted the rulership and the establishment. They were the ones who were threatened by the elite to be silent.

They were the ones who were actually flogged because of the message they preached. They were the ones who said, we cannot keep silent because of what we know and hear. We've got to teach this. They were the ones and they were the ones to whom Paul is going to speak.

[32 : 50] They're there. This is headquarters and he's going up to the headquarters denomination there in Jerusalem and he says that I did so privately.

In other words, he requested a specific audience with the twelve or however many there were. he wanted to do this privately and the text says to those who were of reputation for fear that I might be running or had run in vain.

And that word in vain means to no end or to no good purpose or we would say that I might that I've been running for nothing. What's that all about?

What is it that he's trying to clarify here? He readily recognizes he has been preaching something really different than the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

What he has been preaching completely omits that and focuses on the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ, his resurrection from the dead, and eternal life given to those who believe in him and trust him.

[34 : 11] That is not the kingdom message. That's not repent for the kingdom of heaven as at hand. That's a completely different message. I mean radically different.

God this is exactly why Paul is consulting with the twelve, the hoi polloi of the whole organization and running by them what he is telling those who are Gentiles, who are not Jews.

He's raised up to be the apostle to the Gentiles. What's he saying to these Gentiles? What's the message that he's giving them? He wants to make sure they understand fully what he is preaching and he wants them to sign off on it.

Because if they were to oppose him, think of what that would do. If the twelve rose up and said, now listen here, this Paul claims to be an apostle and he claims to have a different message for the Gentiles, well we don't buy that.

That's wrong. He shouldn't be preaching what he's preaching. And he shouldn't be preaching it to the Gentiles anyway. No, no. Do you see the confusion and the conflict that would have been raised?

[35 : 27] And who were these twelve? Listen, these twelve were recognized as the authority of Jesus. Because these were the twelve that he chose. And everybody knew that. Everybody knew they were the twelve apostles.

Peter and Andrew and James and John and Matthew and Thaddeus and so on. They knew that. They were established. They were well known. And if these twelve should say, you're preaching what?

Well, we're not going to sign off on that. We're not going to okay. No, no. Do you realize if they had done that, what effect that would have on Paul's ministry? You realize what a headache that would have been?

So what happened? Let's read on. I did so in private to those in reputation for fear that I might be running or had run in vain.

Are these guys going to support me or are they going to oppose me? And then he says, but not even Titus who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

[36 : 32] now, I'm not going to stop there, even though I'm tempted, but it was because of the false brethren, false brethren, who are these?

I'll tell you who they are. This is the same crowd that put in an appearance in Acts chapter 15 at the council of Jerusalem that were saying, except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved.

Gentiles, it's all well and good that they have embraced Jesus as the Messiah and as the Savior, but they've got to be circumcised.

in effect, in effect, they were saying, they've got to become Jews. And Paul is saying, no, no, no. The message that I preach is a message of grace. It's not a message of you have to do this and you have to do that. It is a message of pure grace.

[37 : 49] Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Plus, nothing. Are you kidding me? If you know anything about evangelism, you know that today that's still a hard sell.

False brethren sneaked in to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. Into bondage to what?

To the law. To the law. To the law. To the law. The law says six days, circumcised, seventh day, Sabbath, diet, kosher food, no animals, no bottom feeders, no shrimp, no pork, no, all of that is part and parcel of what it meant to be a Jew.

and Paul is saying this has got nothing to do with that. What I am proclaiming is something that completely bypasses Judaism altogether.

Well, how in the world can that be? How could God have anything to do with that? The law of Moses, the law, the law, the law, the law is good and righteous and holy.

[39 : 13] Yep, it sure is, but it is given to humans who are not, and that's the problem. That's why a gospel of grace is needed if anyone is to be saved.

For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight, period. So if you're banking on the law, honey, you're sunk.

You don't have a prayer. That's why Jesus came. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, in the likeness of sinful flesh, sent his son to do for us what the law could not do.

The law cannot redeem, the law cannot justify, the law cannot save. All the law can do is condemn. The law says, guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty. Oh, wretched man I am, who can deliver me from this body of death?

That's all the law can do, is condemn. My, oh, my. What Jesus did when he died on that cross, he took that writing, that certificate of ordinances that was against us and he put it out of the way.

[40 : 48] And that veil in the temple was ripped from top to bottom and God was saying to the whole world, I'm through with all of this.

You can come to me through the one who is the new and living way, the veil that is to say his flesh and you come through Jesus.

Wow. That is something. So, Paul would not yield to the circumcision thing and the reason he wouldn't is listen, if he would have said concerning Titus, okay, let's circumcise him, you know, it's

not that big a deal.

Well, it is a big deal to Titus, I can tell you that. But let's go ahead and no, no, had he done that, had he caved on that issue, the results would have been disastrous.

He would have compromised everything. We'll talk later about why he circumcised Timothy, an entirely different situation because his mother was a Jew. So, he says, we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

[42 : 09] But from those who were of high reputation, what they were makes no difference to me, he wasn't concerned about their status, God shows no partiality, well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me.

In other words, what he's saying is that the twelve apostles, the guys who were in charge of this conference and who were the leaders in Jerusalem and et cetera, he's saying they couldn't add anything to my knowledge, they couldn't give me anything update, actually, he had update information to give them, because he had received a later word from the ascended Christ.

On the contrary, I love this verse, this is amazing, on the contrary, seeing, understanding, recognizing, that I, Paul, had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised.

Now, that's a beautiful thing, and I'm sure that just had to take an enormous load off of Paul's mind and shoulders. They recognized, they acknowledged that he, Paul, had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised.

They didn't challenge his apostleship, his calling, his credentials, or his charge. They acknowledged it, and I'm sure that Paul was going, glad to hear that.

[43 : 37] I'm glad these guys are on board with me, because it would have been tremendously difficult if they were fighting me on this, and saying, Paul's not an apostle, and he doesn't have the right message, and don't listen to him.

No, no. They did not understand, and listen, one of the reasons, this is beautiful, this is just beautiful, one of the reasons they were on board was because of who was there among that twelve, and you know who one of them was?

Peter. Peter. He talks about being with Peter earlier here in Galatians. Peter was there in the twelve, and Peter was the one who got the vision of the sheet let down from heaven, wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts, clean and unclean, and God said, what thou hast, what I've cleansed, don't you call common or unclean, and he recognized when he went to the house of Cornelius, God was doing something really strange and wonderful to Gentiles.

Cornelius was a God fearer, but he was still a Gentile, and he had a whole household of servants, and they were all Gentiles, and God sent his Holy Spirit to descend upon them, and they spoke with languages they had not learned, just like he did to us on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, and Peter was forced to acknowledge the authenticity of it, and God was behind it, and he went ahead and had them baptized with John's baptism, just as he should have under those circumstances, and it was all legitimate, and Peter had to let that sheet down three times, God had to do that three times before Peter got the message, stubborn man, and then finally it dawned on him, he says, oh, and then when he went back home, he was still stunned, he still can't figure out, what's God doing, these are Gentiles, what's God doing, he told us not to go to the Gentiles, to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but Cornelius and those with him, what's this all about anyway, and Peter is awestruck by it, he's confused, he can't figure out what's going on, understandably so, and when he gets back to

Jerusalem, he checks his cell phone, and he sees that there is a message there, an urgent meeting of the other apostles, and they want his presence there, so he hastens over to the meeting place, and he goes in and they said, Peter, we just want you to know that there is the awfulest rumor that is circulating around here, and we know that it isn't true, Peter, tell us that it isn't so, because the word is out that you actually went into the home of Gentiles and even sat at table with them and had a meal with them, and we told those people who told us that, that can't possibly be, Peter would never do a thing like that, tell us, Peter, that it isn't so, and Peter's, uh, uh, uh, well, it's true, it's all true, and he explained the whole thing about the sheet, and about the reception, and when he told them about

[47 : 10] Jesus, the spirit of God fell on them, and those people spoke in languages and communicated in languages they had not learned, just like he did to us on the day of Pentecost, and then Peter says, and what did you want me to do?

What did you expect me to do? Tell God he can't do that? And the people said, well, blow me down. What is this all about?

What is happening here? there? And you read on in the text in chapter 11 of Acts, and it says, this is beautiful, it's beautiful, it says, then they held their peace, which means they backed off of Peter and rebuking him, then they held their peace and they said, then has God also granted repentance to the Gentiles?

Can that be? These were not Jews. God is doing something with the Gentiles? Really?

What on earth is happening? You see why we say the book of Acts is transitional. There is stuff happening here, developing, changing, and if you don't follow the change, you'll never understand it.

[48 : 38] So, the fallout from this is, verse 9, recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas, Cephas is another name for Peter, this is Peter, James and Peter and John, who were reputed to be pillars.

That means they're the big shots, the reputations. They gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, and they as much as shook hands with him and said, hey guys, welcome aboard. God bless you. We appreciate what you're doing. We understand your calling, and that we might go, that is, Paul and Barnabas, that we might go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised, which is another word for Jews.

So we've got a delineation of labor here. Paul is going to be the apostle to the Gentiles, and the twelve are going to continue with their ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Now, can you not see that there are two different gospels here? There are two different elements of good news. One is for the Jew, that is, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and the other is for the Gentile, which is, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and now shall be saved.

[50 : 23] do you see why it is almost axiomatic that there will be confusion that will surface here? It's ready-made.

But listen, if you're going to have progress, you've got to have change. There's no way in the world you can have progress without change. Progress is change, and sometimes the change is difficult, sometimes it's perplexing, sometimes it's confusing, but it's necessary.

If you're going to make progress, you've got to have change. And they ask us to remember the poor, the very thing I also was eager to do. Now I want to close with taking you to just two other references, and one is in, well let's take both, actually there are three, but I'm just going to take you to two, and one is back a few pages in Romans chapter two, fabulous, fabulous passage.

Romans chapter two, and verse 16, this is just remarkable. Paul says, beginning with verse 15, that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, a conscience bearing witness, their thoughts all of accusing and defending, on the day when according to my gospel, why didn't he just say according to the gospel?

gospel? He said, my gospel. Why did he say that? Because he did not want to be misunderstood.

[51 : 59] If he just said the gospel, he knew immediately people would think in connection with the gospel that had been proclaimed, and the only one that had been proclaimed up to the time Paul came on the scene, and that was the gospel of the kingdom.

That's not what Paul's preaching, and he wants to make sure that everybody understands that.

They are according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

This was the gospel that Paul preached. It had nothing to do with circumcision. It had nothing to do with the law. This is why Paul said, you are not under law.

You are under grace. And what he is saying here is, listen, this is a whole new ballgame. But if you insist on hanging with the old, that this is the way we've always done it, and this is what we've always believed, and you reject what Paul is saying because it is new, and he's not one of the twelve, then you're going to have confusion and contention.

And what, pray tell me, do you think much of the book of Acts is all about? It's confusion and contention. So, you've got an introduction now to the ministry of Paul, and we are going to conclude, and next week, I hope you will do this.

[53 : 28] If you have questions that have risen in your mind, either about the nine o'clock hour, or this 10-15 hour, I hope you would maybe not trust your memory any better than I trust mine.

Jot them down, be prepared to ask them, or drop them in the offering box, and we'll be glad to entertain that. And right now, before we close with a word of prayer, I want to have something

special. Is that going to work?

Back by popular demand, Malachi. I was so taken by what this young man did, and I felt sorry for the grace people who weren't here last week to hear it and see it.

So I've asked for a repeat performance, and I think you will appreciate it. Thank you so much. And I'm going to sit down here where I can be a better part of the audience.

Psalm 20 The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble.

[54 : 41] The name of the God of Jacob defend thee. Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion. Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice.

Selah Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfill all thy counsel. We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners.

The Lord fulfill all thy petitions. Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed. He will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.

They are brought down and fall, but we are with and stand upright.

Save Lord, let the King hear us when we call. Psalm 20. One word.

[56 : 00] Priceless. Stand, would you please? Thank you, Father, for the morning that we've enjoyed together. We trust it's been enjoyable as well as enlightening.

Thank you for all that you've been pleased to reveal in the order in which you put it. And thank you for the remarkable man that you called to whom you told he was being called to suffer many things for what he would be called to do.

We're so grateful that he was willing to pick up and take that mantle and wear it and do with it the job that he did. And we are beneficiaries. our prayer today is that each and every one here has a firm grip on the doctrine of justification by faith that we are saved by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ apart from any human works or any aspect of the law that it is solely on the basis of believing the substitutionary death of Christ for our sins.

We are happy recipients of that gospel and we want to proclaim it wherever and however we can. In Christ's wonderful name. Amen.