

# The Difficult Sayings of Jesus #2 - What Everything is all about.

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[ 0 : 00 ] As indicated in the bulletin, the subject matter for today is what everything is all about, and I would agree that that does sound like a very ambitious undertaking, but it is not an exaggeration and it is not an overstatement.

It only makes sense that if Jesus Christ is who the scriptures claimed that he was and is, that when he came to earth he would come with the most important message possible.

And that he would accomplish the most important thing possible to make this most important thing a reality. That is precisely what he did, and that is what it is all about.

This is as big as the big picture gets. Several sessions ago we dealt with that subject matter, and it's going to be necessary for us to at least refer to it to one degree or another, but I want you to gain a perspective regarding this issue that I did not come to appreciate until I had been a believer for several years, possibly as many as 15.

Up until that time I had a great many questions and very few answers. Well, I still don't have all the answers. I've developed some new questions, but many of my old questions have been resolved, and it absolutely revolutionized my understanding and appreciation of the scriptures.

[ 1 : 31 ] If it will do half for you what it did for me, you will be grateful. This is in connection with a new series that we have engaged about the perplexing and strange sayings of Jesus Christ, because those sayings are going to be discovered to be couched in this subject matter of what everything is really all about.

We attempted to garner your interest with a few examples of the enigmatic statements made by Jesus. To most people, when they read these things, they are left wondering, why in the world would he say that?

That doesn't seem like a very becoming thing for Jesus to say. And as a young Christian, back in the late 50s, as I read my Bible, I too wondered about those statements, those enigmatic statements made by Jesus, yet I reasoned that if Christ said it, it must be right simply because of who he was.

It would be unthinkable for anything Christ said to not be right or in any way to be inappropriate. But I certainly was puzzled as to how they were right or why they were right.

And this perplexity continued for several years. It was not solved until I learned the principles that I am beginning to share with you.

[ 3 : 12 ] Right now. Recall briefly the examples we proposed in our first introductory message to this series.

First was in Matthew chapter 10, when out of a number of the disciples that Jesus had following him at the time, he handpicked 12 in particular, whom he was to promote, if you will, to the stature of apostleship.

And he gathered these 12 men around them, named in Matthew chapter 10, and gave them specific directions, such as, do not go unto the Gentiles, do not go to the Samaritans, confine your ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

In other words, Jesus was saying, limit or confine your ministry to your fellow Jewish countrymen. Don't go preach this information to anyone else.

Why in the world would he say that? Obviously, Jesus died for the sins of the whole world.

Obviously, he cares about all human beings.

[ 4 : 37 ] Why would he, why would he forbid them to go to anyone and everyone? And later, when you get to the end of Matthew's gospel, he says something almost equally strange and seemingly

completely contradictory.

Go into all the world. Preach the gospel to every creature. What's that all about? And how and what was it that brought about the change?

Then, there was the episode of the rich young ruler in Matthew chapter 19. This young man, obviously wealthy, came to Jesus and said, what must I do that I may inherit eternal life?

Jesus said, well, you keep the commandments. And he said, well, I've done that. I've kept all the commandments from my youth up. Is there anything left? Is there anything that I'm lacking? Jesus said, yes, there is.

You need to liquidate all of your assets. Sell everything that you have. And give the money to the poor.

[ 5 : 40 ] And come and follow me. That's a pretty stringent demand, isn't it? We are told that the young man went away sorrowful, obviously unwilling to meet that last demand because he had great possessions.

But is that a formula that we would give anyone today? If they ask, what must I do to have eternal life? Are we going to tell them?

Well, you have a house? Sell it. You have an automobile? Sell it. Take the money that you get from it and distribute it to the poor and follow Jesus.

And then you'll have eternal life. Why don't we? That's the message that Jesus gave. That's what he told the rich young ruler.

How do we square that? Does it bother you? It sure bothered me. Because I am committed to the authority and the integrity of Scripture, and if the Scripture is from God and is to be believed, things have to fit.

[ 6 : 57 ] They have to come together. There has to be a coherence to Scripture. God does not speak out of both sides of his mouth at once. There is congruity in Scripture.

There is unity in Scripture. And it does not, contrary to what many people will tell you, it does not have any contradictions.

But it sure has some places that look like it. And I've given you just a couple. There was another occasion, also in Matthew's Gospel, when the Canaanite woman came to Jesus.

Now, if you know anything about a Canaanite woman, they were not Jews. They were pagans.

They are the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the otherites that the children of Israel were supposed to drive out of the land and never did.

Canaanite was native to the land of Canaan. Pagan, idolatrous, worshipped different gods, different idols, etc. But this woman came to Jesus, obviously because of his reputation and having heard what he had done for some others, and she besought him, saying, Sir, my daughter is grievously ill.

[ 8 : 19 ] She is demon-possessed. Could you possibly do anything for her? Could you heal her?

Could you make her well? I would be so grateful. Jesus said, It is not appropriate for me to take the food that has been provided for the children and give it to dogs.

Well, is that a nice thing to say to a lady who comes to you and respectfully asks your help?

You call her a dog, and you say, It would be inappropriate for me to give you what has been specifically provided and prepared for the children of the family.

And is this class warfare? Is Jesus making a distinction between Jew and Gentile? Calling the Jew the children and the Gentile or the Canaanite a dog?

Where was Jesus' political correctness? That would be insulting. And can you imagine our blessed Savior, meek, mild, gentle, compassionate, loving, caring Jesus, calling this woman a dog?

[ 9 : 50 ] And her daughter a dog? The woman could easily have turned in a huff, put her hands on her hips, and marched off and say, Well, I never, I've never been so insulted in all my life.

But she didn't. Apparently, she had a real mother's heart, Canaanite or no, who would not be denied.

And you know what she said? She agreed with him. What do you think of that? She said, True, Lord, true.

Would not be appropriate to take the children's food and give it to the dogs. But, don't even the little dogs get the crumbs that fall from the family table?

Jesus was taken aback and said, What? He didn't say this in so many words, but he could have said, Madam, you have a point.

[11:04] And, he healed her daughter. On other occasions, Jesus is going to say something like, when someone comes to him who is not of the stock of Israel, not a Jew, he is going to say, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

He was kind of taken aback by the confidence that some non-Jewish people had in him, and in his ability, and Jesus said, You know, these folks aren't even Jews, and they demonstrate a greater confidence and trust in me, and my ability, than what some of my Jewish countrymen do.

And, that, of course, will be the story of his life throughout his earthly life. All of these perplexing statements, make no sense at all, apart from understanding their cultural and historical backdrop. And, that is what is so often lacking, when people come to read the Bible. That's what was lacking in my case, as a young Christian.

I did not have a cultural, historical backdrop, against which I could see and understand those enigmatic statements that Jesus made.

[12:37] What do I mean by backdrop, or background? Picture this, if you will. You're going to a theater, and you're going to see a play, that is being put on.

A live play, live characters, etc. The backdrop, is the scene, or the scenery, behind the actors, that helps to explain what and why the actors are saying what they are saying.

If it is a pastoral scene, and the backdrop consists of a barn that is off in the distance, a fence rail, a pasture, a couple of cows out there grazing in the backdrop, that helps provide a setting for appreciating the kind of dialogue that the characters in the play will be expressing.

You know you're talking about an agricultural kind of scene. And that helps you to understand the statements they make, the questions they make, the banter that is going back and forth.

You've got the backdrop against which to put it. If it is an apartment scene, or if it is a battlefield scene, and off in the distance in the backdrop, you see a tank, and you see some soldiers in uniform, and you see a cannon, you can well appreciate that the conversation that will likely be taking place between the actors on that backdrop, will be radically different from the conversation in the farming scene.

[14:12] So you've got to have a mental picture of the cultural historical backdrop, against which Jesus made those statements. And if you don't have that, you will be forever in a quandary trying to make any sense out of what he said, or why he said it.

What provided the setting that evoked the sayings of Jesus Christ? Why did he say what he said? Why did he say, Don't go to the Gentiles.

Confine your ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Why did he say, Sell your possessions. Give your money to the poor. Come and follow me.

Against what backdrop was he saying that? And why did he say, It is not appropriate to take the food that has been provided for the children and give it to dogs.

Only if you understand this backdrop that we're talking about, can you understand those statements. And there are many, many more. But, beautiful thing is, once you get the backdrop, things start falling into place.

[15:26] And the more things fall into place, the greater the potential for more things falling into place. And the next thing you know, you are looking at the Bible in a way that a hand slips inside a glove.

You are amazed at the congruity of it, the cohesiveness of it, the singularity of it, how that even though it is 66 books, 1500 years in the making, there is an unmistakable connection, so that everything in this book is connected to everything in this book.

I want to give you that backdrop. Beginning today. Let's go to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 1. Matthew, chapter 1. We are not going to read the first 16 verses.

You scan over them and you understand why I am not going to read them. But the first verse tells us that it is the book of the genealogy of Jesus, the Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

[16:57] There is about a thousand years between the words Jesus Christ, the son of David, and Jesus Christ, the son of Abraham.

From Abraham to David is approximately a thousand years. From David to Christ is approximately a thousand years.

So, we've got a setting here that provides for us a revelation as to who Jesus Christ was.

And it reveals his pedigree. This is his genealogy. And that is very, very important that it be established. In verse 20, we are told about the source of his human origin.

That is, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

[18:08] That is the source of Christ's human origin. We read earlier, however, that he was born as the son of God without an origin because he always was from time past.

And then, in verse 21 of the same chapter, we are told why he was born. She will bear a son. You shall call his name Jesus, for, because, it is he who will save his people from their sins. That's why he was born and why he came.

And verse 22 and 23 also tells us that he came in order to fulfill prophecy. All of this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which translated or being interpreted means God with us.

Now, let me, well, let's see. I'm already running behind.

[19:40] So, let's eliminate selectively what we can and let us go to Matthew chapter 2 and I want you to simply note the break between 2 and 3 because it is simply a chapter division, but it is very critical that you understand what's taking place.

And if you want, this would be an excellent place to mark your Bible because there is something very significant that happens between 223 and 3.1. And what happens is this.

28 years. 28 years has lapsed between the end of chapter 2 and the beginning of chapter 3. Chapter 3, something very startling is beginning to occur. It is something that the Jewish people could not have imagined, had no idea how it was going to come about, but it is beginning to develop.

And it starts with one very strange, peculiar individual. His name is John the Baptizer.

[21:05] And we are told in these first few verses that John came preaching in the wilderness of Judea saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Kingdom of heaven at hand? What did this mean? This was John's only message. It was as if John had a record that was broken, and everywhere he went, he preached this same thing.

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. the king is coming. The Messiah is near.

Now, when you read, let's go over to the end of chapter three. And the end of chapter three records the baptism of our Lord.

Lord, and the reason that is so significant is because that's when Jesus was introduced to the nation of Israel as their Messiah.

[22:21] And John says that's the reason that he came baptizing, that Jesus might be made manifest to Israel. This is what John meant when he stood there by the banks of the Jordan River and saw Jesus coming down that road.

And Jesus was John's cousin. John was six months the senior of Jesus. His mother was Elizabeth and Zacharias.

And when John sees Jesus coming, he says to all the people who are gathered there, Behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

And here came Jesus to be baptized of John. And in doing so, he was identifying himself with the faithful, loyal remnant of Israel.

Those who were in tune with God and who were anticipating God fulfilling his promise through the coming of a Messiah greatly responded to John's message.

[23:29] This was what they had been waiting for their whole life. And now John was on the scene proclaiming this. And as the people stood there submitting themselves to John's baptism, they could be classified as the believers.

Those who believed John's message and received John's message, and they were baptized by John. However, there were those who did not. And they consist of largely the scribes, the Pharisees, and I'm sure there were common people as well who did not believe the message. But we are told that they rejected the counsel of God against themselves, not being baptized of John.

So here John is introduced as the official Messiah, the promised one that Moses and the prophets said should come 4,000 years earlier.

Peter. And now John is here saying he's here. This is it. This is what we've been waiting for. He is the one, the Messiah, the anointed one, the long expected one.

[ 24 : 45 ] Then when you come to Matthew chapter 4, we see Jesus being subjected to Satan's temptation. And this was important because before he began his earthly ministry, he had to establish himself as being morally fit for the task ahead.

What is it that qualifies this one to be the savior of the world? Who exactly is he? And how does he differ from everybody else?

the temptation to which Satan was going to subject him would prove that. And when Christ came through that temptation, all three phases of it, without having been subdued by satanic influence, but came out of it valiant and strong, remaining pure in every way, he thus qualified himself with the moral fitness that would be needed for the task that was ahead.

These constituted Jesus' credentials to function as the Messiah. Baptized by John, the spirit of God descending on him as a dove, the voice from heaven, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, and then the temptation, 40 days and 40 nights, after which he emerged utterly victorious. Now, he is ready for the job at hand. And it will commence with three or three and a half years of preaching and miracles and communicating through towering discourses that he is going to deliver to the common people.

[ 26 : 47 ] people. What do you think Jesus is going to be talking about more than anything else? He is going to be talking about the most important thing in all the world.

He is not going to mince words. He is going to get right down to business. And what Jesus is going to be talking about is what everything is all about.

this phrase, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, is so jam-packed with significance, everything that doesn't come under that purview is relatively insignificant.

This concept, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. What is this kingdom? Why is it so important? And, if Jesus came to bring it, where is it?

What happened to it? Don't tell me this is it. No, this is not it. The difference between John and Jesus is that John was preaching about the one who would bring the kingdom.

[ 28 : 10 ] Jesus was saying that he is that one. Now, I have a couple of questions that I want to get on the record so you can be thinking about these because it's tremendously significant.

How can we account for neither Jesus or John the Baptist ever explaining what they meant? by the kingdom or the kingdom of heaven.

They never defined it. They just said the kingdom of heaven is at hand. On many occasions, Jesus is going to say the kingdom of heaven is likened unto this or likened unto that and he gives several illustrations by way of a parable.

But nowhere is it ever explained what the kingdom actually is. So how can we explain that there is no explanation of the kingdom?

Neither is there ever any question posed to them about the meaning of the kingdom. can you not see some grizzled old Israelite sidling up to Jesus and stroking his beard and saying, now, now, Jesus, you've been talking a lot about the kingdom of heaven coming and about you being the Messiah and the kingdom this and the kingdom that.

[ 29 : 45 ] What exactly do you mean by that? what is this kingdom thing that you're talking about? Would you clarify that for me?

We don't find any such references like that. Maybe it would help a lot if there were some and Jesus would have simply responded by saying, well, what exactly I mean by the kingdom of heaven is thus and so and thus and so and just spell it out.

Wouldn't that just simplify everything? That would make it a whole lot easier. But he doesn't do that. John the Baptist never does that either.

Paul the Apostle never does that either. If this is such an all-fired, almighty, important issue as I'm making it out to be, the least they could have done was define it.

And why didn't they? It could only be that no explanation was necessary because everyone knew full well what they meant.

[ 31 : 00 ] If I were to say to you, I looked outside and there was a tree growing, a large film tree, and it was just filled with birds.

How likely would you be to say to me, Marv, what do you mean by tree? What do you mean by birds?

And then wait for me to give you an explanation? I think not. Because you already know what a tree is, and you already know what birds are, and there's no need for anything that is so obvious and so

well known to be defined or explained.

And that's my point. Nobody ever asked the question, what do you mean by the kingdom of heaven is at hand? And nobody ever defined, what I mean by the kingdom of heaven is thus and so and thus and so.

Nobody ever did. Because everybody, who was anybody, already knew. They cut their teeth on this concept. They were taught this from the earliest age.

[ 32 : 17 ] If you were a Jew, now, here's the problem. If you were not a Jew, if you were not of the seed of Abraham, there is good likelihood you hadn't even heard of the kingdom of heaven, much less know what it means.

It would be like a foreign language to you. But, if you were the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, you better believe you knew what the kingdom of heaven was.

You knew what circumcision was, too. No questions needed. No answers given. Everybody knew it was as common as it could possibly be.

What would the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven? What would that mean to the Egyptians of Jesus' day? Nothing.

Not a thing. Wouldn't register with them at all. They would just have a blank look on their face. What are you talking about? The kingdom of God? What's that? If you were a Syrian or a Babylonian or a Canaanite, roll right off your back just like water off a duck's back.

[ 33 : 41 ] No frame of reference, no understanding, no appreciation, no inquisitiveness, you wouldn't even know enough to ask an intelligent question about it. Because this is family business.

Who's the family? The seed of Israel. You mean to tell me that Israel and the Jews are the only people that matter? They're the only ones who are important in this whole thing?

in this context, yes. That is precisely correct. Yes. They are the only ones that matter.

That is exactly why Jesus said don't go to the Gentiles. Don't go to Samaritans. Confine yourself to the lost sheep of the house of Israel because they are the only players in this game.

get that and you've got a lot that most people don't have. It has to come through Israel.

[ 34 : 46 ] It has to be via Israel. It has to involve Israel. No ifs, ands, or buts about it. Now, once Israel participates, once they are online, then everything by way of blessing and fulfillment flows out from them to all the other nations of the earth.

But we aren't there yet. Israel isn't there yet. Israel, as a national entity, remains completely uncooperative with the plan and program of God.

So, where is this old, tired, weary world? We're right here in limbo. Generations come, generations die, mayhem goes on, fratricide, homicide, you name it, murders, wars, killings, death, disease, poverty, it just goes on and on and on because this is not the kingdom of heaven.

This is not what has been promised. But why is the Jew so strategic in this? Because God said so. God chose the Jewish people.

they did not deserve to be chosen any more than anybody else. But as I've often said, if God is going to use anybody, he has to use somebody.

[ 36 : 33 ] And he chose Abraham. And called him away from his pagan homeland and his pagan relatives into a land that he would show him.

And this land is the promised land, the chosen land, to be indwelt and occupied by Abraham's descendants, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants.

And that's who's in the land today. Israel is the key. I wish to God more Christians understood that. It would make the Bible just absolutely come alive. And let me tell you, Christians are in no way slighted by this.

When you give the prominence to Israel and the way it figures in the whole scheme of things, Christians are not slighted in the least. We have our own identity as the body of Christ.

[ 37 : 43 ] We are a mystery that is not referred to in Old Testament times. It's not revealed in the Old Testament at all. It's not a subject of prophecy. We just popped up seemingly out of nowhere.

And our existence is due to the disobedience of Israel. Because it was in the setting aside of Israel by God because of their unbelief that he brought in a whole new entity called the church which is the body of Christ.

Not to be confused with Israel and not to replace Israel but as a secret never before revealed. And the essence of it is Jew and Gentile together in one body.

God having broken down the middle wall of partition that had forever divided them and he eliminated that. So we are all children of God by faith in Jesus Christ whether we are Jew or Gentile.

It is an amazing concept and once you understand it you will be like me and saying I don't know how I missed that. I don't know how I missed it for so many years.

[ 38 : 57 ] I'm embarrassed that I didn't see that. There it is right there in scripture. Why didn't I see that? Why didn't I put that together? So what is a kingdom?

A kingdom is a geographical physical piece of land often referred to as a country where a monarch such as a king or a queen reigns or rules.

That's a kingdom. And I want you to turn quickly to a couple of references because we need to understand how the scriptures refer to this concept.

And the first one I want you to look at is Psalm 145. Just a verse there. Psalm 145 but it is a verse pregnant with meaning.

Psalm 145 and verse 13. The psalmist said, Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and thy dominion endures throughout all generations.

[ 40 : 12 ] Now it ought to be intuitively obvious that the mentioning of this kingdom here by David the king a thousand years before Jesus Christ was born couldn't possibly be the same kingdom that John the Baptist was referring to when he said repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

That means the kingdom of heaven is near. It's close by. He didn't say it's here. He said it's close. It's near. But a thousand years earlier David the psalmist says thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and thy dominion endures throughout all generations.

What is that? That we call the universal kingdom. There is no time and no place where the universal kingdom has not existed and it will never cease to exist.

the universal kingdom is that sphere or rule or reign over which God is king.

There isn't any place anywhere at any time that he has not been king of that kingdom. Just call it the universe if you will and the universal kingdom is a pretty good name for it.

[ 41 : 45 ] It has always existed. It is that over which God exercises authority and that's everybody everywhere and everything at all times. That's the universal kingdom.

Then another reference is in Colossians 1. We'll not turn to it. Let me quote it for you. This is the spiritual kingdom and it consists of no physical geography but it is immaterial.

Well, what is a spiritual kingdom? It is a kingdom that has no physicality. It is spiritual. Hard to get your brain around that, isn't it?

We tend to think in terms of physicality. We're just driven that way. We are physical beings that occupy space and time and we just tend to think of but that which is spiritual has a reality that cannot be experienced by the senses.

You can't see it, hear it, touch it, taste it, or smell it. But it exists. It is that of the spirit.

[ 42 : 59 ] And we are told in Colossians 1. 13 and to the best of my knowledge this is the only reference where it is used speaking of Christ and it says of God the Father and it says for he delivered us from the domain or the sphere of darkness that of course is a moral spiritual darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son.

People who are not in Christ have no clue but the truth of the matter is they are dwelling in moral spiritual darkness.

In addition to that they are spiritually dead but they don't even know it. And if you were to try to tell them that they would say I don't know what you're talking about I'm very much alive I eat and sleep and walk and talk but we're not talking about that kind of life.

The human being has a human spirit within them where the real person lives and that human spirit if it is not regenerated by the spirit of God it is dead to God it is not alive it is dwelling in spiritual moral darkness and the extent of the darkness is realized when you consider that they don't even know it they are completely clueless have no idea that they are really alienated from God and were you to try to tell them they would say something like well I'm a nice guy I never did anything too bad I'm granted I'm not perfect but I'm better than a lot of people and on and on they have no idea what their true state is but Paul tells us that God has a spiritual kingdom and that when you receive Jesus Christ as your personal savior it is just as if God picks you up out of this crowd called the world and he moves you over here to this crowd which is made up of the body of

Christ and it consists of all believers of all times whose faith and trust is in Christ regardless of their race or their color or their ethnic background and he puts you down in this group he transfers you from this kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear son which is the kingdom of light that's the spiritual kingdom this is the only place in my knowledge that the Bible uses that term or speaks with that kind of understanding and there's one kind left and that's the kingdom of which Jesus was speaking and the kingdom of which John the baptizer was speaking when they said repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand and that is called the mediatorial kingdom or the messianic kingdom this is the kingdom that will be presided over by the

[ 46 : 23 ] Messiah the anointed one this anointed one is going to come out of Israel that's why Israel is so important they are going to be the people who will produce the Messiah this tiny little insignificant nation this nation now tucked away there in the mid east outnumbered on all sides by people who hate it the ratio of Arab to Jewish population is 33 to 1 how do you like those odds 33 to 1 and yet this nation as disobedient as they have been as undeserving as they have been these remain

God's chosen people and they are going to provide the catalyst through which God is eventually going to bless all of the world because it is through thee Abraham through you and your seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed but do you realize Israel itself has not even come in for that blessing yet and this is precisely why the rest of the world hasn't either because it's going to start with Israel start with the Messiah start with the first coming but what happened first coming did not materialize into what one might anticipate

Israel embracing Jesus as the Messiah accepting him as the Messiah nationally claiming him as the Messiah then God can say all right now that Israel is on board we will move and extend this blessing to all the nations of the earth but Israel never got on board they still aren't they are so wrapped up in their tradition they have forgotten what they are all about and what they are all about more than anything else is to be the vehicle through which the Messiah will come and the ultimate vehicle through which all the nations of the earth will be blessed do you see why I call this this is what everything is all about this is what the first coming is all about this is what the promise of the coming is all about this is what

Abraham Isaac and Jacob ultimately are all about this is what the first coming is all about this is what the second coming is all about this is what the tribulation period is all about it is the restoration of the world Jesus Christ is promised to come and to be a restoration he is going to restore he is going to fix things do you realize I'm sure you do we live in a terribly broken world things are not right they're not even close when Christ rules and reigns he is going to reverse the effects of the curse which bring death disease rebellion war rumors of war everything ugly and everything negative and he is going to turn this planet into a virtual utopia he will rule and reign this is what we're moving to this is what everything is all about all we are now is just en route we're just on the way we are not there we don't know how close we are but this is where we're going this is God's ultimate objective it's to fix things and we sure do need fixing don't we let's pray father as wonderful as this whole plan of redemption and restoration is so much of it escapes us because as we examine the scriptures we often see only what we're looking at and are often unable to connect the dots and understand the significance get that big picture in mind and we realize that it is against this kind of backdrop that Jesus spoke and uttered words that just seem completely incomprehensible because he had this background and so many of us are lacking it we ask that as we continue to engage this study you will use this preparatory and introductory material to help provide a background for us against which we can see and understand how and where all of these many players fit together thank you for having mapped all of this out in the councils of eternity past and thank you for making your son and the state of

[ 52 : 33 ] Israel key players in this program we enthusiastically look forward to how you are going to bring all this to pass and we know that you do all things well so bless you for designing this great plan and as an individual and as a church we want to be in place to be in cooperation with you in any and every way that we can in Christ's wonderful name we pray amen