

The Difficult Sayings of Jesus

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[0 : 00] Thank you. I love that psalm. It just says so much in such a few verses. I really do appreciate it. And I would appreciate also your turning to Romans chapter 1, if you will, please.

We're going to consider a few verses at the beginning of the book of Romans and a few verses at the end of Romans. Then I have some introductory remarks, some propositions that I want you to consider in light of the message that will follow.

And in Romans chapter 1, Romans chapter 1, beginning with verse 1, I'm reading from the New American Standard.

Follow along with whatever you have. Paul, a bondservant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was born of a descendant of David, according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for his name's sake.

Now, what I want you to focus on with this brief passage here before we turn to Romans chapter 15, is the expression by Paul when he says in verse 2, which he promised beforehand.

[1 : 59] That is key. God is a promise-making, promise-keeping God. God is a promise-making, promise-making, promise-making, and if you will come back to the back of the book, Romans chapter 15, and look at verse 8 and 9.

Romans 15, 8 and 9. For I say, that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision, on behalf of the truth of God, to confirm the promises given to the fathers, and for the Gentiles to glorify God for his mercy, as it is written.

And then he goes on with an expression and pertinent material in regard to the Gentiles. So today, we are going to engage in new undertaking in the scriptures, and it is the subject of considerable confusion and perplexity.

I well remember, over 50 years ago, as a new believer, reading the passages that we are going to be talking about this morning, and saying to myself, scratching my head, that really doesn't sound like Jesus.

Does it? Is that something that Jesus would say? But he said it, and here it is, in black and white, or red and white, whichever.

[3 : 50] And how do you account for that? The only conclusion to which I could come was, I sure don't understand that, and that just doesn't sound like, but you know, I think all believers have a tendency to want to get God off the hook, so that he never says anything that maybe makes him look bad, or gives people wrong impressions, and we just kind of feel a need to come to God's rescue, or to make excuses for him.

What am I talking about? Well, we'll be there shortly, and we'll be in Matthew, but for now, in reality, these that are referred to as strange or perplexing sayings of Jesus, are not strange at all.

We might even expect him to utter such things, once you have a clear picture of what he really came to do. And what he really came to do involves a whole multiplicity of things.

Although, generally, we focus on just one thing in particular, and that is, we know why he came, he came to die on that cross for the sins of the world. Absolutely.

And there's no question, but what that is at the core of it. But this death of Christ, and what he intended to do, and what he accomplished when he came, is so much greater than that.

[5 : 28] The implications and ramifications of his death on the cross are just almost inexhaustible. And it is only against understanding this greater background that we can make sense of these seemingly strange sayings that Jesus uttered.

And it is the failure to understand why he came and its ramifications that leads to the perplexity about what he said.

Romans 1 and Romans 15 contain passages which we just read that clearly state that Christ came to fulfill the promises to the fathers.

And that clearly puts our subject matter in the realm of prophecy. And that is a really important point to understand.

Romans 1 and 15 contain passages that tell us Christ came to fulfill the promises to the fathers.

[6 : 41] And by the way, when the scriptures in the New Testament refer to the fathers, it doesn't mean fathers just one generation removed like you and I would use the term.

When we talk about our fathers, we're talking generally about the man who sired us, if you will, gave birth, gave life to us, one generation removed.

But when the scriptures talk about the fathers, it speaks of the aggregate of the founding fathers, principally having to do with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

More than anyone else, they are referred to as the biblical fathers. They are the patriarchs. And when the Hebrews use the term fathers, it means generations back and may include, in fact, all of their ancestry, in a plural form, the fathers.

So, Christ came to fulfill promises to the fathers. And we've looked at the Abrahamic covenant, and we've done this in particular on Wednesday evenings for our Olam Iba class, the eternal or everlasting hatred that depicts the rivalry and the origin of the rivalry between the Jew and the Arab.

[8 : 03] And we have seen there how the Abrahamic covenant has absolutely everything writing on it for the benefit of all mankind, not just the Jew.

You've got to understand that the Abrahamic covenant first spelled out in Genesis 12, and then confirmed in succeeding passages, not only multiple times to Abraham, but confirmed also to Isaac, and confirmed also to Jacob, and then to Jacob's 12 sons.

This Abrahamic covenant is the very underpinning for God's plan and program for the blessing and eternal benefit of the entire human race.

It is all wrapped up in the promise that God gave to one man, Abraham. It is utterly impossible for me to exaggerate the importance of that.

And so many people think, well, that's just about the Jews. Well, no, no, it isn't. It's about all of humanity. When God said to Abraham, through you and your seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed.

[9 : 28] And we tend to limit that pretty much to the messianic fulfillment of Christ's coming. And there's no question, he is the principal reason why all nations are blessed.

Because all nations have been able to participate and to partake of the benefits made available to them through the death of Christ on that cross.

But that's just the tip of the iceberg. There is so very much more. And we are going to see how that unfolds in this particular segment on the difficult sayings of Jesus.

Keep that in mind that this is a prophetic linked subject. And if you lose sight of that, you'll never understand the sayings of Jesus.

And prophecies regarding Gentiles. And when we talk about Gentiles, we mean everybody else that is not a Jew.

[10 : 28] It includes everybody else that is not a Jew. It includes Muslims. It includes Catholics. It includes Protestants. It includes everybody who isn't a Jew.

It includes the Japanese. It includes the Chinese. There isn't anybody who isn't included in this. It is all of the balance of humanity. In fact, we could say, biblically speaking, that humanity, all of the human race that has ever lived from the time of Abraham.

Because, and I say from the time of Abraham because before Abraham, before Abraham, there was no Jew and no Gentile. There were just people.

All of humanity. This is from Adam through Noah Noah until you get to Abraham. Because, it isn't until the selection of Abraham and the establishment of him as the father of the faithful that what we know as Judaism actually began to exist.

And, did not exist as a national entity until it was birthed over 400 years after Abraham in Egypt when God brought them out as a nation.

[11 : 55] That's when we could say they were actually nationalized. So, bear in mind that until the time of Abraham, there are no Jews and there are no Gentiles. They're just people.

Just a mass of humanity, however many there were. And then, with the beginning of Abraham and God selecting him for this special favor and as the Messianic line perpetuates that began, actually began with Adam and then goes through Seth and then moves on down and comes through Noah and then through Noah's son, Shem and then on through till you get to Abraham.

That's when we would call what we would call Judaism actually began realizing that the Ten Commandments of course that were to guide Israel and the law that Moses gave didn't of course occur until Exodus chapter 20.

So, that's when things really begin to gel for this nation of people when they have this covenant the Sinaitic covenant and the covenant of Moses and of the law etc.

that's when what we now know as Judaism really came into full flower. So, everybody else in all of the human race everybody else is Gentile.

[13 : 24] So, these are the two main classes of people in the Bible the Jew and the Gentile and Paul does make a reference to there being a kind of a third but it's not really a full-fledged legitimate third class of people when he talked to the Corinthians and he said giving none offense to the Jew nor the Gentile nor the church of God.

But the church of God is kind of like a quasi-third entity in that the church of God is still made up of Jews and or Gentiles.

So, it's a third group but in a way it's a group that consists of those of the first two groups because the church of God cannot be comprised of anything but Jews and or Gentiles.

We know today it is far far more Gentile populated than it is Jewish populated but it wasn't that way in the beginning because in the beginning shortly after the death burial and resurrection of Christ it was strictly Jewish.

Jesus was a Jewish Messiah while he came for the whole world he came to the Jewish nation and even though they rejected him and this favor this blessing passed on then to the Gentiles as the Jews withdrew more and more there became fewer and fewer Jews who were embracing Jesus as the Messiah and more and more Gentiles so now we end up today of course many centuries removed with a huge preponderance of Gentiles in the body of Christ and now it is a Jew who is almost considered an oddity in the body of Christ because you know some Jews who are true believers in Jesus as the Messiah but you don't know a great many because there aren't that many so it is just reversed from what it was in the beginning when it was almost exclusively Jewish and by the way let me just insert this as an item that can bring enormous understanding to the whole subject on the day of

[15 : 42] Pentecost an exclusively Jewish audience attending a Jewish feast in a Jewish temple area and the whole thing was if we could just get our Pentecostal friends to understand that they would see why they don't have to try and duplicate Pentecost or believe themselves to be a new one this was a holy Jewish thing and it isn't until you get all the way up to the tenth chapter of the book of Acts when we have the first non Jew embrace Jesus as his savior he was a Roman army officer by the name of Cornelius and when he came to faith in Christ there were Jews who didn't want to let him in they didn't want him in because well he's not a Jew he's not circumcised he's not one of us and the thinking was almost in order to believe in Jesus as your messiah and as your savior you had to be a Jew well the apostle

Paul certainly gave the lie to that because he was raised up specifically to be the apostle to the Gentiles that was a switch and you know that in and of itself was enough reason for a lot of Jews to hate him because they saw him as a turncoat they saw him as a low level scumbag someone who once held the high office of being a member of the Sanhedrin and what a turncoat he has become he is going to Gentiles and what's more he doesn't even tell them that they have to be circumcised oh such heresy can you kill that guy kill him and that of course is what they tried to do all because of this Jew Gentile confusion and you know something still exists in a lot of circles so if you understand some of these historical dynamics it can open up the Bible in a way that is just incredible at least that's what it has done for me so prophecies relating to Gentiles will be realized only in connection to the prophecies regarding

Israel being fulfilled that is key let me say that again prophecies regarding Gentiles will be realized or fulfilled only in connection to the prophecies regarding Israel being fulfilled and I know I'm pounding on this with a pretty consistent hammer and I will continue to do so as long as I think there is one of you that doesn't understand this Israel is the key they are the key they are the core they are the hub they are the heart and it doesn't make any difference whether we like it or not whether

we accept it or not what makes the difference is that is the mind the plan and the program of God he chose Israel they are called the chosen people for nothing and the gifts and calling of God are without repentance he has not has

God cast away his people whom he foreknew God forbid says Paul he still has at the heart of his plan and program what he plans to do through the nation of Israel albeit they're completely uncooperative they're completely insensitive to this whole thing and they go about their practicing of a modified Judaism I say modified because they're not offering animal sacrifices they're not keeping the feasts as they did in the Old Testament and they there's there is no way in the world that Jews today can be the Jews that they were in Moses day because they just don't have the wherewithal and it completely escapes them so even though they don't recognize that the Jewish people today as a people are in a kind of spiritual limbo they are just there and they are still the people of the promise living in judicial blindness and unbelief blindness in part

Paul said is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in and we can be glad that it is just blindness in part because if it were complete judicial blindness it wouldn't be possible for any Jew to be saved but we all know there are messianic Jews who have come to faith in Christ so let me say this again prophecies regarding Gentiles will be realized only in connection to the prophecies regarding Israel being fulfilled Gentile involvement is very vague compared to Jewish involvement the Jew is the key to it all Israel is paramount in the plan and program of God and Israel is the key element in the entire field of prophecy and you know I cannot help believe and this is just a Wiseman opinion and it may not be worth much but

[21 : 21] I think it certainly fits the facts the Jew has received unparalleled persecution hatred vilification for centuries this has gone on for centuries from the early centuries even Augustine who is regarded as one of the church fathers and obviously was a very brilliant man he just railed with all kinds of invective against the Jew and so did Martin Luther Martin Luther whose mind was sheer genius was used to pen multiple volumes of writings that would fill a five foot wide shelf on your bookshelf and be mindful he wrote those things with pen and quill on poor paper under poor conditions and poor light and everything else and he wrote things and said things about the

Jewish people that turned out to be such an enormous embarrassment to the Lutheran denomination that as late as the 1990s they offered an official Lutheran apology to worldwide Jewry for the things that their founder had said about them and that's an indication that political and religious correctness was coming on you know they felt that they needed to do that so all kinds of invective and criticism has been hurled against the Jews and of course it was capped off in our generation with the Holocaust and Adolf Hitler's views regarding Aryan supremacy where he actually cataloged the Jew as a sub human species and that's how they could justify persecuting them and treating them as they did because they weren't even fully human can you imagine such idiocy in the 20th century such stupidity coupled with such arrogance as to say that these fellow human beings were not really full-fledged legitimate human beings certainly not like the Aryan super race so they were targeted for extinction and had he had his way about it he would have completed the job but do you know

I am convinced and this is where the Wiseman opinion comes in that it is satanic involvement that is behind a lot of this persecution of Israel and of the Jew if you look at the rulings and the decisions of the United Nations regarding the nation of Israel over the last 50 years you'll find almost every one of them to be contrary to the interests of Israel almost every one of them without exception there isn't anybody in the UN that stands with Israel apart from Uncle Sam we are about the only ones and when the scriptures say I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you that is part and parcel of it and I really do think that Satan has some appreciation some understanding of how God plans to use the nation of Israel and the Jew in the latter days and he is doing everything and anything that he can to put the Jewish nation and people in as bad a light as negative a light as possible and I am convinced he is behind a lot of the anti-Israeli the anti-Semitic flavor that's going on out there

I think when the big wrap up comes we'll see that intensified in many ways so keeping that in mind and knowing the strategic nature of Israel understanding it will enable you to understand these enigmatic sayings of Jesus that we plan to consider and I'm not going to actually undertake them this morning but I'm going to show you by example what I'm talking about and where they are and we'll give them a detailed analysis in future sessions and the first one is in Matthew chapter 10 and those of you who have been here for a while will find this familiar territory but as I've often said 90%

of preaching is just reminding people of what they already know anyway so that's what I'm going to do Matthew chapter 10 early on in the ministry of Christ he was here on earth as far as we know for about three to three and a half years during which time he conducted this earthly itinerant ministry and we read in

Matthew 10 having summoned his twelve disciples he gave them authority over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness this now the names of the twelve apostles are these the first Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother and James the son of Zebedee and John his brother Philip and Bartholomew Thomas and Matthew the tax gatherer James the son of Alphaeus and Thaddeus Simon the zealot and Judas Iscariot the one who betrayed him these twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them saying do not go in the way of the Gentiles and do not enter any city of the Samaritans but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel now let me just stop right there and inject a few questions why do you suppose this was why do you suppose he is so selective as to whom they should not minister and to whom they are to confine their ministry some people for some reason or another just don't see any problem with all with that

[28 : 09] I see a huge problem and the reason I do is because words mean things words mean things do not go to these people why not doesn't Jesus love everybody why does he want these people left out and how do we square this with Matthew 28 which is commonly referred to albeit erroneously but still commonly referred to as the great commission go ye into all the world preach the gospel to every creature well what happened to don't go to the Samaritans don't go to the Gentiles confine your ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel I have a real problem with that and you know I did for a number of years I would read commentaries on it what others had said about it and got little or no satisfaction other than the general agreement yes it sure is a problem well we don't know why that is and some took a stab at it one way or another but it wasn't until after

I had been a believer for probably about 15 years that I discovered that there were some others who had a problem with it too and they started finding some answers well that really piqued my interest because I am convinced that if the Bible is the word of God and if it is accurate there has to be a cohesiveness about it things need to fit and when they don't fit something is wrong it is not acceptable to me for there to be one God and one originator of one Bible and for it to say one thing in one place and something else in another how do you compute that this by the way this is precisely what gives people the idea well you know there are contradictions in the Bible says one thing in one place and something else in another well you know they're right it does and how does that make God look changeable fickle inconsistent or what the Bible has to be true to itself things have to fit they have to come together we don't have just a discombobulation of sayings here that just really don't make any sense and just pick out your favorite passage and what sounds good to you and what comforts your heart and what inspires you and just go with that and forget about the rest of it that you can't make fit well that's not very satisfying to me not at all I've got to know how it fits and

I'm not going to rest until I'm able to satisfy intellectually my own thinking about that and it needs to make finished Mad inspire about We got intellectual standing has to be that which feeds the emotions and the feelings. We need to feel good. We need to feel secure. We need to feel comforted. But we need to feel those things for the right reasons. Because there is fact that backs it up. There is understanding and comprehension that backs it up. So that our faith and our feelings are built on fact, not on fluff. The fluff will last about as long as you get to the parking lot and it's gone. Things have to fit. They have to come together. And you know, they do. And it is beautiful to behold. It is so stimulating, spiritually and intellectually. There is absolutely nothing that can compare with the satisfaction that is derived from understanding truth. From grasping truth that enables you to plug it in there. That enables you to see how these things coalesce and come together. Get a handle on that. It will sustain you, boil you up, put unction in your gumption. It's just amazing what it does for you. How it stimulates and satisfies intellectually. I cannot tell you how much mileage I have gotten out of this.

And it wasn't realized until I had been a believer for about 15 years. I was just beginning to think there were no answers to this. And I know that, well, let's look at another passage.

[34 : 13] Chapter 15, still in Matthew. Come over to chapter 15. And verse 21. This is another. Jesus went away from there and withdrew in the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman came out from that region. Now, what would you say would be another word for

this Canaanite woman? Anybody? Gentile. You better believe it. Not only a Gentile, but a real pagan Gentile. This is a Canaanite. This daughter is a descendant of the people who lived in the land of Canaan, otherwise known as Israel. And they are among the Hivites, the Gergesites, the Perizzites, the Amorites, and all the otherites when the children of Israel came into the land. This woman's ancestors were there among them. These were pagans worshiping idols and every kind of debauchery that went with it. She was a

Canaanite woman. She came out from that region and she began to cry out saying, have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David. Now, that's a strange thing for a Canaanite woman to be saying. She almost sounds like a Jewish woman. David didn't mean anything to the Gentiles, unless you happen to be a Philistine. Then he was an enemy like Goliath. But I want you to notice what Jesus did. In verse 23, he did not answer her a word. How else would you translate that? I would say Jesus ignored her, acted like she wasn't even there. Now, right away, I have problems with that. Because I see Jesus as kind, compassionate, attentive, courteous, all of these positive virtues. Where do we get off with the

Savior? Ignoring this woman? Doesn't give her the time of day. Doesn't answer her at all. You know how we would translate that? Rude, with a capital R. Can you assign rudeness to Jesus Christ? Christ. Boy, I can't. So, we feel a need to cover for him, don't we? To keep him from looking bad. So, what are we going to do with this? I didn't know what to do with it. So, do you know what to do with a verse when you don't know what to do with a verse? You just ignore it and you go on to the next verse. And you say, I don't know what the answer is to that. And I know it doesn't look good. But Jesus being who he is, it has to be okay. But I don't know how it's okay. And I don't know why it's okay. I just know that because he is who he is, it has to be okay. Because it's impossible to assign anything wrong to Jesus. But I sure don't know what's right about it. So, we just kind of back off from it. And we don't know what to do. She kept asking him. This woman would not be ignored. [37 : 52] She's persistent. And the disciples came to him and kept asking him, saying, send her away. Get rid of this woman. She's bugging us. Tell her to hit the road. Get her out of here.

She's shouting out after us. And Jesus said in verse 24, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Well, how do you like them apples? Doesn't it sound like he doesn't even care about anybody else? He only cares about the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Nobody else even matters. He said, I wasn't sent to them. I was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But she came and began to bow down before him. This is a pleading woman.

Begging. Groveling, if you will. And she falls at Jesus' feet because she is desperate.

Lord, help me! And he answered and said, it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. Now, you talk about rudeness. Insult. Here, this poor woman comes to Jesus, obviously convinced as to who he claims to be, acknowledges that by what she is asking of him. And he refers to her as a dog. Children's bread. Throw it to the dogs. What would the children's bread be? He's not talking about real bread, is he? The kind that you serve a dinner?

[40 : 12] No. He's talking about truth. Truth that he came to communicate. But to whom did he come to communicate it? Israel. Israel. What about everybody else? No. Israel. Israel. And today we are on a huge fairness kick. Everything has to be fair. Well, this sure doesn't qualify. Can you call this fair? I can just see people today, particularly some of the pundits, say, that's not fair.

Sure. Well, and you know the woman doesn't even dispute it. She doesn't even say, who are you calling a dog? I don't have to stand here and be insulted like this. No, this woman is so desperate. She is not even disputing what he says about her. In fact, you know what she does? She actually seems to agree. She said, yes, Lord. But even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said to her, oh, woman, your faith is great. Be it done for you as you wish. And her daughter was healed at once. Well, now, despite all the perplexity and the seeming rudeness and everything else that accompanied it, we would have to say it has a happy ending. And Jesus, did he actually make an exception here? Of course he did. He stepped out of bounds deliberately in response to this woman's confidence in him, which obviously really impressed him. And he responded. But what are we going to do about his initial response and the language that is used? That is all resolvable. And I want to close with this last one in Matthew chapter 19.

If you'll come over just a couple of pages. And what I would like for you to do is just let these things germinate in your mind, if you would, over the next week. And we will tackle them head on.

And I am just excited to bring you what I have learned and discovered because it just makes things fall into place. Just bang, bang, bang, bang. Just one after another. And you have in store for you what they are now calling some aha moments. You know when that little light bulb comes on? Oh, so that's it. That's why. That's how. That's when. Yeah, there's a lot of those ahead. And I want to share them with you. Verse 16. Matthew 19. One came to him and said, Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life? And he said to him, Why are you asking me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments. He said to him, which ones? Which is a pretty stupid question, too. Be specific. Can you narrow them down?

[43 : 58] Do you know how many there were? Six hundred and thirty three. No wonder this guy said, which ones did you have in mind? So Jesus said, well, you shall not commit murder. You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother. You shall love your neighbors yourself. Young man said to him, all these things I have kept. What am I still lacking? And Jesus said to him, if you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor and you shall have treasure in heaven and come follow me. Now, are you going to tell me that this is the gospel? What is good news about that? Sell everything you have, give it to the poor and come and follow me. Anybody here interested? That's what it says. And today, of course, we answer this by saying, well, what Jesus is talking about is the spirit. You're supposed to have a spirit of giving and a spirit of sacrificing. So the next time somebody hits you up for a loan and they're desperate, you say, I'm not going to give you any money, but I want you to know I'm giving you the spirit of the spirit of the money. Go meet your mortgage payment with that. It's just not going to fly, is it? So we back out of this because we say, well, well, this man had a problem and his problem was covetousness and hanging on to his wealth. And Jesus knew that. So he hit him in his sore spot, knowing full well that the man would not be willing to comply. And then he would reveal to the man what his real problem is.

Well, I don't deny the reality of any of that so far as what Jesus knew about it. But the problem is it really is misleading to those of us who read this 2000 years later when it doesn't say that's what Jesus had in mind and that's what his motivation was all along. It just tells him to go and sell his possessions and give to the poor and you'll have treasure in heaven. Anybody who preaches that today would be correctly labeled as a serious, dangerous heretic. That's work salvation. There's no grace in that.

And there is no grace in that. There is no believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and now shall be seen. That's not coming out here. And we see a reflection of this in Acts after the day of Pentecost when those who had lands and goods sold them.

Sold their property, sold their real estate, liquidated all their assets, brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. Now those of you who want to go and do likewise, meet me in my office right after we dismiss.

[47 : 37] Bring the deed to your house so you can sign it over to the church and bring the title to your automobile so you can sign that over too. But you're not going to do that, are you?

Isn't that what the text says? Don't you want to follow Jesus? Isn't that what he said to do? Sure is. How do we square this?

Apart from understanding the word of God as a progressive revelation, which is doctrine on the move and developing, apart from understanding that concept and understanding what is prophecy and relates to Israel, and what is mystery and relates to the church, apart from those concepts, I submit there is no possibility of reconciling these things.

All you can do is shrug your shoulders, scratch your head and say, well, I don't know, the answer is going to be in there somewhere, but I don't know where it is. Well, I say this, not arrogantly, and not boastfully, but humbly, I know where the answer is.

And I'm excited about sharing with you what I have learned. Thank you, Father, for this time to enjoy together. Thank you for the marvelous, wonderful way that the word of God is put together.

[49 : 07] Thank you for its cohesiveness and for its non-contradictory nature. We pray that as we engage this study, you will use it to enlighten and encourage and stimulate each one of us.

For thus, the Lord has given this word, and we bless you for it in his wonderful name. Amen.