

# Ephesians

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Date: 28 December 2016

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[ 0 : 00 ] And for starters, I would ask you to turn, if you would please, to Psalm 105. Psalm 105. Bear in mind that the Psalms we will be reading are approximately 3,000 years old.

Psalm 105. And what I would like to spend our time doing this morning is examining in more detail and emphasizing, if I might, the overall plan and program of God that he has designed from eternity past.

As particularly, it relates to the chosen people, the nation of Israel. They, of course, constitute the very hub of prophecy.

And this is a surprise to many Christians because the tendency for Christians is to think that Christianity, the Christian church, is that which constitutes the very hub of prophecy.

But it does not. It is Israel and the seed of Abraham that actually constitute the core of all of the plan and program of God.

[ 1 : 30 ] But I assure you that the church which is the body of Christ, of which we are all members by faith in Christ, is not in any wise shortchanged or given short shrift or somehow ignored or downplayed or anything of the kind.

It is not in any wise shortchanged or anything of God. It is just that God has a gigantic overall program. An overall program of which the church is a part, but not the main part.

And I say that because the overall thrust, plan, and program for God, for humanity, has to do with the restoration of a wounded, broken earth and the inhabitants thereof.

God's major plan evolves all around this concept of that which has been fallen being restored.

And the principal way that he has chosen to do that is through a Redeemer, whom we know, of course, to be our Lord Jesus Christ. And the principal vehicle that he has chosen to bring that Redeemer on the scene is the nation of Israel.

[ 2 : 56 ] And that's what makes them the catalyst. Now, in many respects, today's Jews do not even understand that. Now, there is some appreciation for it, of course, among the Jews who are referred to as Orthodox because they take their own scriptures, which is limited to our Old Testament.

They take it very seriously and they see that Israel is indeed the apple of God's eye and they understand that. But the Orthodox Jew constitutes a very small percentage of Judaism worldwide. And for the most part, Jews worldwide are primarily Jewish by heritage. And by tradition and more along those lines than they are a shared Judaism.

So, they do not really have a good firm handle on how strategic and vital they really are to the plan and program of God. But we who name the name of Christ certainly ought to know that because we have available to us the entirety of Scripture, not just the Old Testament, but the New, which comprises the rest of the story.

And it also comprises the end of the story. So, the nation of Israel is right at the very focal point of this. And by the way, when you take that idea into consideration, it ought not to surprise us that this tiny little piece of geography, no bigger than the state of New Jersey, is often referred to as a very controversial hot spot in the whole world.

[ 4 : 43 ] Right there. And, well, it should be. That ought not to surprise us at all. And I do think that for a serious Bible student, it doesn't surprise us. Because that's really predictable.

It is the subject of prophecy. And right at the outset, I want to try to make a distinction before I get too far into this. Because I think there is a very, very important separation that must be noted.

And that is that virtually all of prophecy has to do with these people, the nation of Israel.

They are the principal subjects of prophecy. Whereas the church, which is the body of Christ, is not. We have a separate and a different category from prophecy.

And ours is referred to as mystery. Prophecy and mystery. These are the two great divisions of the Bible.

[ 5 : 49 ] Where most people, especially most believers, make the distinction between the two great divisions of the Bible is between the Old Testament and the New.

Or the Old Covenant and the New. And by the way, I really wish that that word Testament had never come into being. Because it is so confusing to so many people. It ought not to be rendered that way, either old or new.

And I still use the term because it's a communicating word. Everybody knows what you're talking about when you talk about the Old Testament and the New Testament. But there is a term that describes it much more accurately.

And it will alleviate a lot of the confusion if we could just learn to think of it, even if we don't say it verbally. If we just learn to think of it in terms of Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

The Old Covenant has to do with the Law of Moses given to him for the people of Israel when he came down out of Mount Sinai.

[ 6 : 51 ] And that contained all of the writings of the Pentateuch, Genesis through Deuteronomy. And later, all of the Old Testament books were added to it.

This constitutes the Old Covenant. And if you want a really good commentary on this, read the book of Hebrews. Because it delineates and distinguishes between the Old and the New.

But the New Covenant, the New Covenant that God said he would make with the nation of Israel, is a covenant that has never actually been in force at all.

The New Covenant has never been begun. It has never taken root. It has never taken hold. And the reason for that is, God said, when he established the New Covenant, in Jeremiah...

Well, let's go there for you. Keep your place in Psalms. I hadn't planned to do this, but we probably should. Let's go to Jeremiah. Jeremiah 31. I think we've touched on this before.

[ 8 : 00 ] But we need to at least look at it. Jeremiah 31. Verse 27.

Verse 27. Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and with the seed of beast.

And it will come about that as I have watched over them to pluck up, to break down, to overthrow, to destroy, and to bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, declares the Lord.

In those days, they will not say again, the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. Everyone will die for his own iniquity.

Each man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth will be set on edge. And by the way, these are Eastern idioms, and we haven't time to go into them now, but they are quite remarkable. Verse 31.

[ 9 : 11 ] Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

And you've got to keep in mind that when Jeremiah wrote this, the nation of Israel had already been divided. They were two nations. The north had already seceded from the Union and had pulled away from the twelve tribes, and they constitute the ten northern tribes.

And they are referred to as Israel. The two tribes that remained loyal to the Old Testament covenants, etc., were Judah and Benjamin.

And Benjamin is the smallest of all the tribes, but Benjamin is so strategic because Jerusalem is located in the tribe of Benjamin geographically.

And Judah is that which kind of surrounds it and is much, much larger than Benjamin. So that constitutes Judah, and the northern ten tribes are referred to as Israel.

[ 10 : 29 ] Actually, the whole twelve tribes altogether is Israel. But for purposes of understanding the text, you have to make that distinction.

And this is exactly what Jeremiah is talking about here, when he says that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, declares the Lord.

Now, it ought to be intuitively obvious that the covenant that he is talking about here is the law of Moses, the old covenant. And he is saying that this covenant I gave to them, and they broke it.

You see, a covenant is like a pact. It's like a contract. And the two parties enter into this covenant. And each is bound by his integrity and by his word to maintain the terms of that covenant.

And we won't deal with how that was done. It's back in Genesis 15, I think it is. We can go there if we have to, but we won't.

[11:50] So, he is predicting this new covenant. Now, bear in mind, at the time Jeremiah wrote this, it was, of course, the old covenant that was in existence.

And he was writing from that backdrop. The new covenant of which Jeremiah is speaking would never be heard of again until the night that Jesus was betrayed.

He addressed his apostles, and he took the cup, and he said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

And this bread is my body which is given for you. Now, what Jesus did then and there is he officially initiated, extended, if you will, the deity part of that covenant when he died on the cross.

That provided the basis for the establishment of the new covenant. Now, we mentioned before, I'm sure in times past, how that the old covenant was ratified with animal blood.

[13:14] Remember that? They took the blood of the animals and Moses took a hyssop branch, a hyssop branch from a tree and dipped it in his blood and sprinkled the blood on the commandments, on the law, and then he sprinkled blood toward the people.

And that signified the two parties, God and the people, agreeing, both signing on to the terms of the covenant, which actually would consist of Exodus 20 on through the Pentateuch, through the book of Deuteronomy.

So, bear in mind that when Moses came down and presented the law to the people, their response was, all that the Lord hath spoken will we do.

That was their way of saying, Moses, you tell God, he's got a deal. We'll sign on. We agree to that. We're partners together in this covenant.

And that's the covenant that Jeremiah is talking about here. The covenant that he gave when they came out of Egypt. My covenant, which they broke repeatedly.

[14:34] So, this new covenant is one that is going to have qualities to it that will not depend upon the faithfulness of Israel.

Because what Israel proved in their disobedience and in their breaking the covenant, what they proved as a microcosm for all humanity is that man just cannot obey God in and of himself.

He is a rebel at heart and in his fallenness he is rebellious toward authority even the authority of the creator. And they're fracturing that covenant and by the way they did this so many times in so many ways in so many generations and we've been through some of this in the Old Testament and it talks about their idolatry and they're going a-whoring after strange gods and strange deities and all the rest of it how they were sucked in to the apostasy of their neighbors around them and God would raise up judges and they would judge them and there would be a spanking for Israel and then they would cry out to God and repent and God would restore them and then they'd go through the cycle again.

That's a picture of humanity and these people did not do that because they were Jews. You need to understand that. They did that because they were humans and we're all made of the same stuff. We are all rebels at heart self-seeking and self-serving and their response to the law that God gave is to break it over and over and over again.

[16:17] The new covenant is going to be different. Well, let's go on and read it. Yes. Question there real quick. At the end of 32 it says I was a husband under them.

Would that be a reference to the bride or bridegroom or a husband would seem to reference a wife that's already in a relationship? Exactly. Exactly.

And this is what Hosea is really all about too. Hosea sets forth a picture where God tells him that he wants him to go and marry this woman who is an adulterous woman.

She's a prostitute. And on the surface that looks very unfair and unjust and very overly demanding of God from our human point of view.

But I can assure you Hosea is not complaining about it. And trust me he's very happy with the whole situation. And what God did through Hosea and through Gomer's unfaithfulness is he created that relationship as a kind of human prototype of how Israel had disobeyed him and been unfaithful to him.

[17:30] And as he writes through Hosea he says not only Hosea but other portions as well he addresses Israel and says listen I took you unto myself I clothed you I fed you I provided for you what treachery did you find in me that gave you any grounds for going after these other deities and

other pagan idols etc.

I was a faithful husband to you and you played the harlot. Well this is again this is the picture not only of Israel this is the picture of humanity this is the way we are and only only by the institution of what is provided here is that going to change.

In verse 33 he says but this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days declares the Lord I will put my law within them and on their heart I will write it and I will be their God and they shall be my people and they shall not teach again each man his neighbor and each man his brother saying know the Lord for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them declares the Lord for I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more thus says the Lord who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar the Lord of hosts is his name if this fixed order and the fixed order he's talking about is the sun that shines by day and the moon by night and the stars by night that's the fixed order and he says if this fixed order departs from before me if the sun the moon and stars cease to be then the offspring of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever in other words

God has a love affair with the nation of Israel whereby wonder of wonders he finds them irresistible though they continually prove themselves unworthy of his love this whole thing and the basis for it working is never due to the faithfulness of a nation or to the faithfulness of individuals it's due to the faithfulness of God he's the only one that can really be counted on and he is going to make supernatural provision for the nation of Israel here and what we are very dogmatic about and very insistent about and sometimes I get quite excited about this is that this remains in perpetuity God has not

God will not God cannot turn his back on Israel because he is sworn by his own allegiance to be faithful unto Israel despite their unfaithfulness to him so this is never a relationship that exists on the basis of merit it is one that exists on the basis of grace and this new covenant which is being predicted by Jeremiah is that which Christ instituted with his own blood as opposed to animal blood and I want you to consider this now when Peter delivered his message on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 he was in effect quoting saying that this is what Joel the prophet prophesied hundreds of years ago and this message that he was presenting to the nation of Israel was that they had crucified their Messiah and yet

[ 22 : 00 ] God remained willing and able to receive them again to himself if only they would repent of their sin and embrace this one whom they earlier rejected now many people did of course all of those who received Jesus as their Messiah and by the way when the Jews believed on Jesus as their Messiah had nothing to do with identifying with the death burial and resurrection of Christ that was not part of the formula and this is an important distinction that must be made when John the Baptist came on the scene and began preaching the kingdom of heaven is at hand repent and believe the gospel it was the gospel of the kingdom that he was preaching and it did not include the death burial and resurrection of Christ and yet I would be the first to admit that speaking prophetically there is something there

I do not think John understood it at all but God used him to utter the words and they are unmistakable behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world I am satisfied completely John the Baptist had no idea what he was saying because later on John is going to have serious doubts as to whether Jesus is even the Messiah and he's going to call that into question and the twelve had no clue whatever that Jesus was going to die on the cross and pay for the sins of the world and that was the furthest thing from their mind and this is why I have real difficulty with preaching evangelistic messages from the gospels if you want to do that by way of application that's okay I don't have any problem with that at all John 3 16 is an excellent example but if you're going to preach it from the standpoint of interpretation you're out of bounds because it isn't there it just isn't there and even when

Peter preached in Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost he did not preach the death burial and resurrection of Christ for sins what he preached was a message of indictment and condemnation and blame for the nation of Israel you have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain the Lord of glory and he charged them with the death of their Messiah but the whole concept of death burial and resurrection being applied to human beings for the forgiveness of sins traitor and those cómo and that will cause him to say things like I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified So that becomes the very core message for Paul.

But it wasn't the message for the twelve. And what I am saying is, that new covenant for which Christ died to provide, and he confirmed it, he initiated it the night of his betrayal, has never been implemented.

It has never been put into force. It has never been acted for. Why not? Because the significant party of the second part has never signed on to it.

[ 25 : 41 ] They remain a loop from that. Who is the party of the second part? It's the nation of Israel. Peter was as much as inviting them to do that in Acts 2.

And then again in Acts 3. And their response was the same as it was when they ordered him handed over to Pontius Pilate. They rejected him.

The rejection intensified until it culminated in the stoning of Stephen. And Stephen was stoned by the elite core leadership of the nation of Israel, the Sanhedrin themselves.

They physically threw the stones that ended Stephen's life. So where is the new covenant? It isn't. It's in obedience. It's in obedience. The basis for the institution of it has been made. That's what the death of Christ was all about.

[ 26 : 40 ] That's where he paid the full price to initiate the new covenant. But it has never been received. It has never been acted upon by the nation of Israel.

Now the time is coming when they will. And that's what Jeremiah 31 is all about. But so far, the new covenant is held in abeyance. Someone says, well, and this is a popular view.

Well, what God has done is he has permanently set aside Israel. And he has brought in the church as a replacement to Israel.

And we are fulfilling the new covenant. No, we aren't. And the reason I say that with such emphasis is the new covenant, like the old covenant, these belong to prophecy.

And prophecy does not belong to the church. Why not? We are mystery. We are that second contingency that is completely different from the first.

[ 27 : 53 ] First, we have a different kind of relationship with our God that is not based on the old covenant. And by the way, I trust that you understand that you've been a grace long enough to know that we Gentiles are not under the old covenant.

The law of Moses never have been. Never have been. And the scriptures make that quite clear that the law was given strictly to the children of Israel while they were in the land.

Never was given to Gentiles. And yet there are tons of Gentiles today who think they are living under and are obedient to the old covenant. And all you have to ask them is, does that include your sacrificing of animals?

Well, no, we don't do that. But you see, the whole thing begins to fall apart. We are not the objects of either the old or the new covenant. We are a completely different game altogether.

We are the body of Christ. We are the spiritual body of Christ. We are not old covenant. We are not new covenant.

[ 29 : 05 ] We are the mystery. And being the mystery, that means we just came on out of nowhere. And it began when, and we're not going to go there, but I would encourage you to do this at your leisure because you'll get the full scoop right there.

Read Ephesians chapter 3 verse by verse carefully and you'll see exactly what I'm talking about.

This whole thing called the mystery, the body of Christ, was never, ever revealed before to anyone. No one had a clue. It isn't prophesied in the Old Testament. You won't find it there. It just isn't there because it isn't supposed to be there. And when God sprung this thing, and I use that word because it's about the only word I can think of.

When God sprung this concept of the mystery, the body of Christ, on Saul of Tarsus, and gave him the responsibility of communicating that message to Gentiles.

Called him to be the apostle to the Gentiles. Think of that. He called a Jew to be an apostle to the Gentiles. Well, actually the Jews were supposed to be a light to the Gentiles all along, clear back in the Old Testament, but they weren't.

[ 30 : 28 ] And when Paul began preaching this message, it was so dramatic, so dynamic, so different, that he met with terrible, tremendous opposition, especially from the Jews.

Because if there was anything that characterized the Jewish people from the time God called them out of Egypt, it was their separateness.

Their being distinct. I've called you to be a holy people. That means a separated people. You are to be separated from all of the other people because I, the Lord your God, am holy.

And you are to be holy, separated like I am. And the Jew, that became, that became a matter of pride to the Jew. They did everything different from everybody else.

Beginning with the fact that they recognized one God and one God only. Wow! That's really new. You've only got one God? Yep. Just one God. He's in charge of everything.

[ 31 : 36 ] Well, that in and of itself separated them from everybody else. And then, of course, the Sabbath and the dietary restrictions and all the rest. All of those things were designed to make the Jew different from everybody else.

That was part of the divine program. And now, Paul is coming on the scene and saying, Where there is no difference for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

There is neither Jew, nor Gentile, nor bond, that is slave, or free, or male, or female. All of those distinctions are done away with.

And everybody is on the same level. Are you kidding me? You mean we spent all of these years with the sacrificial system and the priesthood and the Sabbath keeping and the kosher diets and all the rest of it?

And now you're saying all of those things are obliterated? That's crazy! And they tried to kill him for preaching it. Eventually, he was put to death.

[ 32 : 49 ] Maybe not for preaching that, but he was put to death because the political situation in Rome and the persecution that was going on and all the rest of it. But this was so dramatic and so dynamic.

And he received opposition wherever he went. And the Gentiles heard it gladly. Remember, Paul, I think it was in Acts 13, said to the Jew, he had a Jewish constituency.

And everywhere he went, he preached to the Jews. He always went to the synagogue and preached to the Jews because he had a love for his brethren. He said, I can wish myself a curse from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertains the adoption and the glory and the covenants and all these things.

I could wish that I myself were a curse from Christ for the sake of my brethren. He never lost his burden for his fellow Jewish countrymen. And they never lost their hatred for him.

And now he's proclaiming this message that says there is no difference. They're all on the same plane. And this new thing is called the body of Christ.

[ 34 : 04 ] And Paul said that God has broken down the middle wall of partition that divided us. And those of you who are familiar with the Jewish temple on the Temple Mount, there was a huge court, a barricaded court that surrounded the temple.

And it was made of wood. And it was about three, four feet high. And it was called the court of Israel. And there was another court called the court of the women.

And then there was a smaller court called the court of the priests. And they kept getting smaller and smaller. And outside around the largest perimeter, there was a huge courtyard with a fence in between.

And it was called the court of the Gentiles. And if you were not a Jew, you were allowed into the court of the Gentiles.

But God help you, if you step out of the court of the Gentiles into the court of Israel, if you went behind that barrier, you were subject to death on the spot.

[ 35 : 15 ] And any Jew could take your life because that's where you're not allowed to be. That's the court of Israel. That's sanctified territory. And you, as a non-Jew, are desecrating that.

And the penalty is death. And this is what Paul is talking about in Ephesians 2 when he says that God has broken down the middle wall of partition that separated us, making of twain, that is, Jew and Gentile, into one new man.

And this was all unplanned, unannounced, unprophesied. God just sprung it. We're told in Ephesians 3 that it was hid in the heart of God, that it was never before revealed to anyone until Saul of Tarsus came along and God designated him as the apostle to the Gentiles.

Scott? What would be the purpose of a Gentile going into the court of the Gentiles? Why would they even do that? Well, probably just for social concourse or possibly for economic reasons.

There was a lot of buying and selling that went on in the area. And it may have been a strictly business type thing. But at any rate, they were not allowed into the court of Israel.

[ 36 : 39 ] And they knew that. And they took that very seriously. No, nobody. You don't go in there. You don't go in there. And the same way, the Jewish men in the court of Israel, they did not enter

the court of the women.

And nobody but the priests entered the court of the priests. Each of these segments were designated as their area. And it was off limits to everybody who didn't belong there. That was just part of the separation that God had designed.

Is that a penalty for entering any of those areas or just for the Gentiles? That I don't know. I don't think the penalty was death for that because they were still Jews. But no self-respecting Jew, no self-respecting Jewish man would even think about going into the court of the women.

And no Jew would even think about going into the court of the priests unless he was a priest. These people took their religion seriously. Sometimes they took it so seriously that they ended up nitpicking all the fine points of the law.

And this is one of the things that Jesus contested them about when he said, you strain out a gnat. [ 37 : 53 ] You know what a gnat is? It's bothersome little creatures that are just so tiny. And if one should happen to fall into your cup of wine or drink, you would strain it out.

You strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. Which is a way of gross exaggeration, of course. It's hyperbole. Nobody's going to swallow a camel. But he says that for a fact.

He's saying you spend all of your time nitpicking these minute little details that don't amount to a hill of beans. And you spend all of your energy and time arguing about these things.

And you ignore the weightier elements of the law. Such as love your neighbor as yourself. Those you just set aside. Caring for your parents. You just ignore those.

John? The court of the Gentiles. Would there be proselytes there, say like Ruth and Rahab, that were wanting to worship the one truth?

[ 38 : 53 ] Oh, sure. They weren't Jews. Sure. Oh, absolutely. And they were not allowed in the Jews. They had to go to them. No, no, no. If a Gentile, if a Gentile became a proselyte, well, there are two levels here.

First, there is three levels, actually. There's a Gentile. A Gentile is as non-Jewish as you can get. And for those who were sympathetic to Israel and embraced the concept of there just being one God, and that was very unusual because you've got to remember, particularly during the time of Christ, so much was given over to paganism.

And if you knew anything about the Romans and the Greeks, they both had multiple gods. They had gods for everything. And if you, as a Gentile, came to the conviction that you just don't buy all of these multiple gods, and you know what?

I think the Jews really have the right idea. I think the Jewish God is the only God that there is. And if you, as a Gentile, came to that position, you were referred to as a God-fearer.

And the best commentary on that, I think, is Acts chapter 10, which we won't take time to go there, but I know many of you are familiar with it. This is a wonderful account of this man who was a Roman army officer named Cornelius.

[ 40 : 26 ] And he was a centurion. He had 100 Roman soldiers at his command. And he is referred to as a God-fearer. And he was one who gave alms to the temple, to the Jewish people.

He supported them financially. But a God-fearer was all he was. And this man, obviously, was praying for light. Praying for information.

And he lived in the Roman garrison in Caesarea, Caesarea by the Sea. That was the Roman headquarters. And by the way, the Roman headquarters was not in Jerusalem.

It was in Caesarea. And the only reason that Pilate was in Jerusalem when he was, because it was at Passover time, and he knew that the Jews often get frisky and rambunctious around their national holidays, so they would dispatch extra troops into Jerusalem to keep down riots and things like that.

But the real quarters was in Caesarea, and that's where Cornelius was stationed. And he is referred to as a God-fearer. And an angel appeared to Cornelius.

[ 41 : 34 ] I'm just giving you a short version now. Angel appeared to Cornelius and said, Cornelius, your prayer, God has heard your prayer. And now here is what you are to do.

You are to dispatch some men, and I think he sent four. You are to dispatch some men to the city of Joppa, which is right on the coast where Caesarea is.

It's right up the coast or right down the coast. I don't remember my jar of it. And he says, And you inquire for a man named Peter. He's living with Simon the Tanner.

And Simon the Tanner, of course, had a business going, and he tanned hides. And he was located right on the shore where he'd have an abundant supply of water because the tanning business required that.

And I can only conclude that Cornelius must have been praying for light, for information, because the angel said, You go and send for this man Peter, and when he comes, he will tell you what you need to know.

[ 42 : 42 ] And I've always thought it was interesting. Well, why didn't the angel just tell him? Apparently, angels don't have access to the story of redemption. They do not have an appreciation for that.

But he knew that Peter did, and Peter would come and tell Cornelius what he needed to hear. So Cornelius was a God-fearer. But that still meant that he was not allowed in the confines of Israel. However, if he were to become a proselyte, how many of you remember Sammy Davis Jr.? African-American entertainer, wiry little guy about 5'4", had magic feet, a great voice and everything.

You know, he was a credit entertainer. He used to hang around with a pack rat with Frank Sinatra and those guys. He was a proselyte. He became a Jew.

You go to the rabbi, and you take your courses of instruction, and you have to be circumcised. Now, for a man, that is not a small thing.

[ 43 : 48 ] No pun intended. That's a big deal, you know. And yet, once you take the course of your instruction, and you submit the circumcision, then you are accepted into the community of Israel as a full-fledged Jew, just as if you were born Jewish.

You are accorded all the rights and privileges that any Jew would have. But these people are rare, and I don't know if you know anything about Judaism or not, but they actually discourage proselytism.

I've heard that before, and I've even heard it from a rabbi, that they will actually make an effort to talk a Gentile out of becoming a proselyte.

Because, well, one put it this way, they just don't know what they're getting themselves into. And I suppose, given some of the Jewish history and the persecution and everything they've suffered, there could be some truth to that.

So, what we're saying is that these two entities, the nation of Israel and the church, which is the body of Christ, constitute two entitlements entirely different programs that, at least in my estimation, will eventually become one.

[ 45 : 13 ] And I know that there are grace people who disagree with me about that, and they insist that the distinction is going to remain forever. And some have the idea that Israel has promised the land here on earth, and this is where they're going to be, and this is where the kingdom of heaven is going to be.

It's going to be a restored planet. It's going to be here on earth. And the church has never promised the land like Israel is. The church has promised our citizenship is where?

It's in heaven. So, we're going to be in heaven, they're going to be on earth, and there the twain shall meet. That just doesn't seem right to me.

And I don't, I just don't think it's going to be that way. I think there's going to be an amalgamation of both, and an appreciation, and a mutual admiration society. And there will be no jealousy, and no barriers between them.

And one of the things that I base this on, is, and maybe this is, maybe this is kind of flimsy, but I think it's a solid enough hermeneutic that at least it satisfies me.

[ 46 : 16 ] That when we are caught up to be with the Lord, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. To me, that says only one thing.

We're going to be where He is. And I don't think He's going to be here on earth, ruling and reigning in Jerusalem, from the throne of David.

And we're going to be in heaven, wherever that is, geographically or how far away. That, to me, does not constitute being with Him. And some think that we're going to have the ability to go back and forth.

That may well be. Listen, when we have a glorified body, it is not subject to the limitations of space and time. In the same way that Jesus' resurrection body was not subject to the limitations of space and time.

So, I just don't see any reason for maintaining, and let me go to 1 Corinthians 15 for just a moment. Boy, I apologize because I haven't even gotten to where I was going.

[ 47 : 25 ] But you know, that's more typical for me than not. So, anyway, you ought not to be surprised. In 1 Corinthians 15, where am I?

Let's begin reading with verse, well, let's just jump into verse 25, all right? For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

This is speaking, I think, of the millennial reign of Christ. And the last enemy that will be abolished is death. Boy, that's sure good news, isn't it?

We've got a funeral coming up where death has claimed another of our beloved believers. But time is coming when death is going to be put to death.

John Owen, great English Puritan, preached a sermon. I read the length of it and it took me about an hour and a half to two hours to read it. I don't know how long it took him to preach it.

[ 48 : 40 ] But it was called The Death of Death in the Death of Christ. A lot of theology in that title. The Death of Death in the Death of Christ.

So, the last enemy that will be abolished is death. For he has put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he says all things are put in subjection, it is evident that he is accepted who put all things in subjection to him.

And when all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself also will be subjected to the one who subjected all things to him that God may be all in all.

and I think this speaks of a kind of oneness that is going to materialize when that time comes and there will not be, I believe, any distinction between the body of Christ and the Jew.

Maybe maintain and I know that the twelve apostles are going to judge the twelve tribes of Israel and it would appear that believers are going to have areas of responsibility assigned to them here on the planet.

[ 49 : 47 ] I have no idea what that's going to consist of, who's going to be doing what or in charge of what, but I can assure you that the one who will be administering all these affairs is quite competent to handle the whole thing and it will not be a problem to him.

So I just don't see these distinctions as being maintained, nor is there, I think, any necessity for them. So, boy, we've already shot our time.

Any questions or comments? Anyone? Feel free. If we've done nothing more, if we may... So where is the new covenant? It isn't.

The new covenant remains in limbo in the same way that a restored, regenerated Israel remains in limbo.

Where are they now? Israel as a nation is set aside temporarily in unbelief until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in.

[ 50 : 49 ] And according to Romans 9, 10, and 11, the time is coming when all Israel will be saved. And we've looked at that in Ezekiel 38 and 39 in connection with the invasion of Russia that's going to take place.

So, boy, there's a whole lot here, isn't there? I mean, this, we've just, we haven't even scratched the surface. Maybe we've scratched the scratch on the surface, but there's a lot more.

Anyone else have any thoughts or comments? Feel free. Okay. If we are clear on prophecy and mystery, we will have covered some really important material.

And I think that these, these are very important distinctions that need to be maintained. So, I sure do appreciate you being here. And the Lord willing, we will be here.

Did we settle on the fourth Tuesday or the last Tuesday? We talked about that. The last? Okay. So, it'll be the last Tuesday in March. And I hope you'll be able to join us then.

[ 51 : 54 ] And we will continue on with our investigation of prophetic themes. And you're welcome to help yourself to whatever is of interest to you over there to see these.

Thank you again for being here. March what? March 28. Okay. Good Lord willing and the creep don't rise.