

The Jewish Final Solution to the World's Problem - Paul's Myster Information Will Be Updated, Part 2

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

- [0 : 00] We'll be looking at chapter 2 this morning of 1 Corinthians. And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.
- For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ. And Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.
- And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.
- So that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature.
- A wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away. But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery.
- [1 : 22] The hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory. The wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood.
- For if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But just as it is written, things which eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.
- For to us God revealed them through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.
- For who among men knows the thoughts of a man, except the Spirit of the man which is in him? Even so, the thoughts of God, no one knows except the Spirit of God.
- Now we have received not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God. So that we may know the things freely given to us by God.
- [2 : 54] Which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.
- But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God. For they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.
- But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct him?
- But we have the mind of Christ. I'd like to re-read verse 7, if we may, and then ask you to turn to Ephesians chapter 2, in preparation for the message for the morning.
- Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2 and 7, but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory.
- [4 : 23] This mystery, we have suggested, is also perhaps more understandably translated as secret. And this is that to which the Apostle refers repeatedly when he talks about the message that he is going to be giving, which is the mystery of Christ, or the mystery of the Messiah.

Because insofar as the Messiah is concerned, the Old Testament saints knew that one was promised, and one was coming. But they had absolutely no idea what the ultimate purpose of that Messiah would be.

Yes, it is to rule and reign in glory, but it is to do so by way of the cross. Because there could be no crown without the cross.

It is what happened on that cross that gave Jesus Christ the ability to purchase the rights to the crown that he one day will wear as king of kings and lord of lords.

It is this secret that was previously hid away in the heart of God and not revealed to anyone until Saul of Tarsus came on the scene.

[5 : 41] And when he did, he was perhaps the least likely individual in the whole world to receive this information because he was as opposed to Christ as anyone could be.

And yet, that's the very one, the risen Christ selected to impart this message. And it is called the mystery of Christ. In essence, it is not only Jew and Gentile in one body, but in essence, it's going to consist of this one being crucified, this act of crucifixion is going to be the very vehicle that God is going to use to reconcile the entire world to himself.

Who knew? Nobody. Who would have ever dreamed up something like that? Nobody. Unthinkable. Yet, that is the mystery of Christ.

And that's why Paul is going to say when he writes to the Romans, I'm determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Wow! That's the message. That's the gospel. That's the good news. Turn, if you would, to Ephesians 2, and I trust we will be there shortly.

[7 : 11] We're talking about Paul's mystery information will be updated. And what we have been saying right along is due to this progressive revelation of information, God revealing His plan and program to humanity in bits and pieces.

As the centuries roll on and as the scriptures are being written, more and more is being divulged from God to the writers of scripture and they are penning it.

And those who were living then have the beneficiary. They are beneficiaries of the updates that are coming. The Bible is a book that is filled with updates.

It is not static. It is not doctrine that is on hold. It is doctrine that is moving and developing. And, who would dispute that the most obvious progression is from animal sacrifices.

They aren't done anymore. They aren't required anymore. There was a time when they were. What happened? Well, things changed. God doesn't change.

[8 : 21] God is immutable. But God's program and God's methodology changes because man changes and his needs change. So, God in his grace often accommodates changes that are in keeping with humans' needs.

And we can be so grateful that he is gracious that way. And, of course, the greatest of all that he accomplished to meet human need is the resolution of human sin and the basis for its forgiveness through this Messiah.

that is the secret of the Messiah. God had never revealed it before until he revealed it to Paul.

And then, when Paul went about preaching this, the Jews, his own countrymen, one of his own, essentially rejected the message.

And I'm sure that a principal reason that they rejected it was that to them it was unthinkable. It was unthinkable. that the one sent by God to be the Messiah, the deliverer of Israel, should end up on a Roman cross, crucified?

[9 : 40] And you're telling us that he is our Messiah? That's crazy! They wouldn't entertain it for a moment. the thought of God's anointed, the rescuer, the savior of the nation Israel, dying on a cross that was put up there by the enemies that were occupying and inhabiting Israel at the time, and you tell us that we're supposed to believe in this one as our Messiah.

That is the craziest thing I've ever heard. And you know something? To a great many Jews to this day, it's still crazy. They still don't see it.

They still reject it. And when Paul closes out the book of Acts, this is in the last chapter, for time's sake I'll not take you there, but you can look it up at your leisure. When Paul closes out the book of Acts in chapter 28, after a 30 year history of events unfolding in this book, Paul as much as tell the Jews who came to him in his own hired villa there in Rome and had these day-long discussions, and after hearing Paul, the text tells us that some believed and some believed not, and they went away arguing about it.

And the apostle Paul pronounced this kind of sentence upon Israel and indicated that this may well be your last opportunity, and you will not hear this, I am taking this message to the Gentiles, and they will hear it.

We here now are part of those Gentiles, and we have heard it, and we have believed it. Perhaps, all of us, I don't know.

[11 : 37] Or perhaps, there are some here who have yet to believe it and embrace it. But it is the only panacea that God has provided, and it is in the person of Jesus Christ.

So, we are committed, and we insist upon the principle that the Bible is a book of unfolding and progressing information, and where it is at the present time in this progression is at the dispensation or the administration of the grace of God, also known as the church age.

This is the age and the time and the people, the Gentiles, of whom the apostle Paul was called to be the special apostle to the Gentiles. And he is going to be provided with the latest update, and that's the message he's going to be preaching.

Determined to know nothing among you except that which I first of all received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, was buried, raised again, according to the scriptures. That's Paul's message.

He's got a fiddle that's got one string on it, and it's Jesus Christ and him crucified. And apart from that, nothing else matters.

[12 : 54] But, but, Paul's update is going to be, guess what, updated. Paul's latest revelation under which we are now living is called the dispensation of the grace of God, the administration of the grace of God.

And all that means is that in this particular administration, and let me explain what I mean by that because it isn't always clear, and I know people sometimes shy away from the word dispensation because they don't really put a handle on it.

A dispensation is a dispensing. I've used the illustration that when you go, when you go to school or in a factory, when you go to the dispensary, there's usually a nurse there and she dispenses.

She dispenses medication. She dispenses bandages. She dispenses all kinds of things. That's what a dispensary does. It gives out things. An administration does the same thing.

And an administration and a dispensation are synonymous. An administration is an entity that is in place that has charge of something that dispenses or administers information, rules, laws, all kinds of things.

[14 : 26] And we're all familiar with political administrations. And each time there is a change in Washington, D.C., from one party to another or in Columbus, Ohio or any other state or even in counties.

When one party is voted in and another party is voted out, it's a new administration that takes over. And they have different ways of doing things.

There are changes that they make. And some people think they're for the better and some people don't. And that's politics. And that's the way it is. But that's what an administration or a dispensation is.

It is a time when something is dispensed, administered, given forth, placed out there for people to consider, to respond to, to obey, etc.

That's the administration. We talk about the administering of justice. And that's what our courts are supposed to do. They administer, they dispense justice. So, dispensation ought not to be that hard to understand.

[15 : 28] And please, if you will, divorce from your thinking in your mind, a dispensation is not a block of time. It is timeless until that administration ends and another one begins.

That is exactly what happened with the Apostle Paul and the commission that was given to him to institute a whole new administration, a new dispensation.

And it is the dispensation of the grace of God. It is available to everyone. The animal sacrifice, the mosaic system that was set up by the Lord in the Old Testament, that was exclusively for Israel.

Exclusively for Israel. But the dispensation of the grace of God is to Jew and Gentile. Everybody.

And as you read back in the Old Testament with the institution of the law of Moses, the setting up of the sacrificial system, the priesthood and everything that went with it, what was there there for the Gentiles?

[16 : 42] Nothing. Absolutely nothing. If you were a Jew, you were into that. And you were a direct descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all of those things were for you.

What was available to the Gentile? Nothing. Well, what were the Gentiles? They were just pagans, idolaters. Paul tells us in Ephesians 2 that before those Gentiles in Ephesus to whom he writes after having been there and won them to Christ, he reminds them of what they were before and he says, before, you were without God, without hope in this world.

Your state was really miserable. But now, but now, what does it mean? He means, but now, since Jesus Christ died reconciling the world to himself, you who were far off are included.

God has made a way available for non-Jews as well as Jews. The gate is thrown open to everybody.

That's why it's called good news. So, we are in this church age dispensation of grace and it we have also identified as the gap because when this parenthesis, this gap that we are in, which Paul is our apostle, when the rapture of the church takes place, the gap is gone, removes.

[18 : 15] And then, that which was back here, which was the kingdom and Israel, and that which is future, going to be pulled together as if the gap didn't even exist. Because the gap and those who occupied the gap will be gone, will be in glory.

The rapture will have occurred. And then, a new dispensation will be underway and what Paul and what Paul had to share will be as passé as the gospels in the Old Testament are passé to us now.

So, you can see the movement is involving. Each administration has its own features that are distinct from the other. When John the Baptist was preaching, and Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles, their emphasis was on the kingdom.

You can't miss that. It's splattered all over four gospels. It is repent, repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, the kingdom of God is at hand. That was their message. That was a singular message.

That was the only message they had. It was the only message they were supposed to have. And they preached it. It was what John the Baptist preached, and it was why he baptized thousands of people who came out to him.

[19 : 22] And they were all Jews. All Jews. And they repented of their sin, and they were baptized to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

And this is Peter's message in Acts chapter two on the day of Pentecost, and again in Acts chapter three. And the center of that, the core piece of that, was the law of Moses.

Christ responded to the law of Moses. He made it very clear. He didn't come to destroy the law. He came to fulfill the law. All that Moses has prescribed, you are to do. Christ was a loyal, observant Jew who kept the law of Moses in every respect.

But under grace, does the law of Moses have some binding quality upon us? No. No. Why not?

Because we're not under law. We're under grace, Paul says in Romans chapter six. This is just, this is brand new stuff. Animal sacrifices were the core of that kingdom message under the Mosaic economy.

[20 : 28] what is it under the grace of God? It isn't animal sacrifices. It's the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The final, ultimate sacrifice. Under the Mosaic law, it was the Sabbath.

You had to keep the Sabbath every seventh day. Keep it holy. You couldn't do this, you couldn't do that, you couldn't do anything else on the Sabbath. Well, where is the Sabbath for Christians? We don't have one.

Every day is the Lord's day. Seven days out of the week is the Lord's day. We don't make a distinction between one day and another, and this is what Paul is addressing in Romans chapter 14.

So we're not into Sabbath keeping, nor are we charged to be. And circumcision, if you were a Jew, and you were a male, and you were born on the eighth day, you would be circumcised.

That made you a child of the covenant. And if you didn't have the flesh of your foreskin cut off on the eighth day, you were not a bona fide Jew. Didn't make any difference if your mommy and daddy were Jews.

[21 : 31] If you weren't circumcised as an eighth day as a baby boy, you were not a Jew. Where is that for the body of Christ? And a lot of men can be glad for this.

Our circumcision is spiritual. What is that? Paul talks about that in Colossians chapter 2, and he says, listen, fellas, he says, this is a circumcision made without hands.

See the contrast? It was made with hands. When that little eight-day old baby boy was circumcised, the man who did the circumcision had a pair of hands, and that's what he circumcised him with.

But we have a spiritual circumcision that is made without hands. It's not physical. It is spiritual. And then, water baptism was very much part and parcel of the message.

If you claimed to believe John's message, and you repented of your sin, but you were to say, well, actually, I don't want to be baptized because I don't think it's necessary.

[22 : 39] You were not considered to be an authentic believer at all, because if you believed the message, the water baptism was part of the message. You couldn't take part and leave part.

This is what they were committed to do. It was to go into all the world, and who were they looking for? They were looking for Jews in the dispersion, Jews who had scattered, Jews who had left Israel because of business, because of family, because of persecution.

They had left Israel, and they were scattered all throughout the Mediterranean world. And the twelve were said, you are to go to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world, and you preach this gospel, gospel of the kingdom.

That is what is incorporated in what is commonly called the Great Commission. And do you know something? A lot of Christians haven't picked up on this, and I'm sorry to tell you, for the first fifteen years of my Christian life, I didn't pick up on it either, because all I heard was a standard party line of believe and be baptized, and that's what they said in the Bible, and it just sounds logical to me, but when they were sent, they were sent to preach the gospel of the kingdom and to baptize water, H₂O, that was part of the message, and if they left that out, they wouldn't be preaching a complete message, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

That's what they were commissioned to do, and that's what they did. John did it, Jesus and the Twelve did it, and those who went preaching this gospel of the kingdom baptized, and it was called John's baptism, and it was strictly Jewish, because the message of the kingdom of heaven coming to earth did not mean anything to people who were not Jews.

[24 : 39] They didn't even know about it. They had no interest in it. It was foreign to them, but it was in the heart and mind of every Jew, and that's what they lived for and longed for and anticipated was the coming of that Messiah, and God's man, whoever that will be, is going to fix everything, and then Jesus came on the scene.

This water baptism gives way just like physical circumcision did. This water baptism gives way to spirit baptism.

baptism. That's what Romans 6 tells us. As many of you, as we're baptized into Christ, have identified with Christ, and there's no water there. This is a dry-cleaning baptism. And this is what the apostle Paul meant when he said, there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

He's talking about his dispensation as opposed to the way things were before. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. Well, what is that one baptism? baptism. It's the same baptism of which Paul is speaking when he says, for by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, no water involved, and have all been made to drink of one spirit.

This is brand new stuff. It was new 2,000 years ago, and let me tell you, it's still new today to a whole lot of people who are stuck in the Gospels with John's baptism, and they've never recognized the update.

[26 : 24] Sometimes, if I ever work up my nerve to do it, and I don't want to be unkind, but I wonder if you feel that way about physical baptism, do you feel that way about physical circumcision?

But, moving right along. So, that was for Israel alone, but this new dispensation is for Jew and Gentile, and if you are in Ephesians chapter 2, I just want you to look at this and see if we can point out some contrast to you that I think are kind of electrifying, at least they are for me.

And if you want to follow the general outline of Ephesians, which I recommend is Sit, Walk, Stand, and I'm not original with that, I think it was Watchman Nee who came up with that probably 50 years ago, where he breaks down the letter to the Ephesians, the six chapters into sections of two, chapters one and two, have to do with sit.

That talks about your position in Christ and what that position is. And then in verses three and four, he talks about our walk and in verses five and six, he talks about our stand.

And all of these are incorporated in this letter to the Ephesians. So I want you to just look at those to whom he is speaking here and addressing as we start out with Ephesians one and verse one.

[27 : 51] It is Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God to the saints, that is, the separated ones, the holy ones who are in Christ, at Ephesus, who are faithful in Christ Jesus.

So that identifies his audience there. He is writing to believers. And the apostle Paul never writes to unbelievers. He has no jurisdiction over unbelievers.

And he recognizes that. He says, for what have we to do with those who are without? In other words, we have no jurisdiction for those who are not in the body of Christ. They do not belong to us spiritually, and we have no right to try to control them or pass laws or anything like that.

So he's talking to the saints and those who are faithful in Christ Jesus. And when in verse 2 he says, grace to you, he's talking about these same people, these same identified saints. And here he includes himself and those who are with him in his missionary journey.

In verse 3, when he uses the word us, you plus us, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places. In verse 4 he continues with us.

[28 : 56] In verse 5 it is us. In verse 6 it is us. Verse 8 us. Verse 9 us. In 11 it is we. Same thing. In verse 12 it is we.

And then he's going to swing back and forth from you and we to us and you and we to us. He's talking about and to them and he's also sometimes including himself and the company who is with him.

And in chapter 2, when he opens this, he reminds them of their true state, which we've already touched on. Verse 2, verse 1. And you. You.

And the you in verse 2, I'm sorry, the you in chapter 2 and verse 1 is speaking of the same people who are the saints in verse 1 of chapter 1.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins. In which you formerly walked according to the course of this world. According to the prince of the power of the air.

[29 : 53] And in verse 3, he says, among them, we too, all of us, ourselves included, formerly lived in the lust of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

But, something dramatic happened to change all of that. And you know what happened? It was an update. And the update is, but God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us.

That is, Jew and Gentile. This incorporates everybody. Even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved. We've got an us in verse 6, and an us repeated in verse 6, and in verse 7, it's us. In verse 8, it is you.

He's reminding them. In verse 10, we are his workmanship, that we should walk in them. And look at verse 11. Remember now, he is writing, these people at Ephesus, they live in a city on the Mediterranean coast that the apostle Paul visited on his second missionary journey.

[31 : 12] He spent quite a bit of time there. In fact, he spent more time at Ephesus than he did anywhere else, and he won a number of people to Christ and established the church there. Then he moved on to do the same thing in other places.

After a while, he writes a letter back to those people to see how they're doing and to give them additional information. That's what this letter is all about.

This is a letter to the people who lived in Ephesus. They knew Paul personally. He had won them to Christ and had established their church. Now he is writing back to them, see how they're doing, tell them what's going on, tell them what's happening in his life.

And in verse 14, I'm sorry, verse 12, well, verse 11, okay? Therefore, remember. Now, they already knew this, but he says he wants them to remember.

Sometimes the most profitable thing we can do is to sit down and just start remembering where you were outside of Christ and what happened and what changed and what's happened since.

[32 : 26] Peter, in one of his letters, says, I'm writing you these things although you already know them, yet I want to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.

Sometimes it's good to just sit down and recollect over where you've been. Remember, formerly, you, the Gentiles in the flesh.

These are dogs. That's what the Jews called them. Dogs. Why did the Jews call Gentiles dogs? One reason was because just like a dog, they'd eat anything.

They would eat pork and sausage and you name it, they would eat anything. So they called them Gentiles, they called them dogs, and sometimes they called them uncircumcised and that was not intended to be a compliment.

Remember when David went out against Goliath? Remember a statement that David made? There's this little punk kid, what was he, 14 years old, going up against Goliath?

[33 : 31] And he's got a lot of moxie and he says something to the effect, who is this uncircumcised giant, that he would come out and defy the armies of the living God.

What did he call him? This uncircumcised slime bowel. That's what he is. And that's the way they looked at them. That's the meaning of circumcision.

If you weren't circumcised, there's no way that God could have any favor for you. So look at what he says in verse 11. Gentiles in the flesh who are called uncircumcision by the so-called circumcision, which is performed in the flesh by human hands.

Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ. Before I came to you and preached to you the gospel of the grace of God and gave you a savior that you could embrace, where were you?

you were separate from Christ, excluded from the common wealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

[34 : 44] That was your true estate. That's where you were. But now, here comes the update, but now in Christ Jesus, you who formerly were far off, have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

And that's just another way of saying you have been brought near because of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as a substitutionary sacrifice on your behalf.

Wow. This, folks, this is the essence of the secret that was hid in God from eternity past and never revealed until Christ revealed it to Saul of Tarsus, and he began preaching it.

This is the mystery of Christ. This is a glorious gospel. He himself is our peace, who has made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in his flesh the enmity, which is the law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in himself he might make the two, who are the two, Jew and Gentile, into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both, that is, Jew and Gentile, in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

And he came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near. For through him, we both, Jew and Gentile, have our access in one spirit to the Father.

[36 : 34] So then, you, Gentiles, to whom I'm writing this letter, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom this whole building, now here he's using an analogy of a building, being fitted together.

He uses two different analogies, two different metaphors. One is a body, and one is a building. And they're both appropriate because they're both illustrations, and he's trying to make a point. And the point that he's making in calling this the body of Christ is simply this.

Visualize, if you will, in your mind's eye, a body, a body that is under construction, a body that is not complete, but a body that is in building. Now we know that bodies don't come this way, except, you know, when they're in utero, they are being built into a full-fledged person to be born, born, but think in terms of a human body that is not complete.

It's got parts of it missing, and that body is being added to every time someone anywhere in the world comes to faith in Jesus Christ, they become a particle of that body that is under construction.

creation, and we don't have any idea what part of the body we are. This is just a metaphor, remember? The body is being constructed, and when the last person who is going to be saved in the dispensation of the grace of God in the church age comes to faith in Christ and is added to that body, then the body is complete.

[38 : 26] for imagination and metaphor sake, think in terms of the body is all complete, the body is all finished, except it's bald.

Now, John, you and I can identify with this. This body is bald. It's all complete, except for that. However, day by day, moment by moment, a hair is being added to that body.

And I'd like to believe that God is going to go with a full head of hair. All right? So, the hairs keep being added, and each believer, each new believer is a hair. This one's from China, this one's from India, this one's from the USA, and this one's from Canada, and they all have a hair.

And lo and behold, the last hair is put in place, and the body leaves. The rapture has taken place.

The body is complete. The dispensation of the grace of God is over. It's done. Time for another update.

[39 : 43] This one will have been completed. Or, the analogy of a building. Building block, brick, whatever. Christ is the foundation.

Christ is the foundation. Guess who was the first stone to be added to that foundation? Yep.

Paul, the apostle, was the very first one. And he refers to himself as a pattern, a template, a model of those which were to come.

He is the first one to be built upon this new foundation of the pure grace of God. Christ is the foundation.

Paul is the first stone. And every believer that is added is another stone in that building. And when the stone is the last one to be completed, the building is gone.

[40 : 48] some say, well, which is it? A building or a body? It all depends on what your metaphor is. We're just using illustrations here. These are just something to think about.

This is what Paul is talking about to try to get the point across. And he uses the body because we're all familiar with that. And he uses the building because we're all familiar with that. We can identify. And that's what he's doing as an illustration.

It is a beautiful, beautiful thing. And look at chapter three. Verse two, verse one.

We've been in this chapter before, but it ties in so beautifully. I just want to read it to call it to your remembrance. For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus, for the sake of you Gentiles.

Indeed, you've heard of the stewardship. That's just another word for administration. It's not a word for dispensation. stewardship. Paul was a steward of the grace of God. That means he was a manager.

[41 : 46] God put the apostle Paul in place as the manager of the household of the grace of God. And he is managing. How that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery.

As I wrote before in brief, in that verse nine of chapter one, where he mentioned it. And by referring to this, when you read, you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in the spirit.

And this apostles here is plural, because Paul wasn't the only apostle. He was the first one who was the apostle to the Gentiles of the grace of God, but he wasn't the only one. Barbraus was an apostle too.

And so was Silas. And so was Timotheus. And so was Epaphroditus. And there were others. But the one who was leading the pack, the chief apostle of this dispensation, is Paul.

And be reminded, it wasn't Paul's idea. He didn't sign up for this job. He didn't volunteer for this. He didn't submit a resume. Christ drafted him.

[43 : 09] And after he revealed himself to him, Paul became so enamored with this person of Jesus Christ that all he wanted to do was serve him, whether by life or by death.

Didn't make any difference. Let's read on here. This is incredible stuff. To be specific, to nail it down, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body.

And where were they before? Without God and without hope. And what was left to these Gentiles, by the way? Same thing that's left to Gentiles today, without Christ.

What's left to them? If you do not embrace the grace of God, there is nothing left for you but the justice of God.

Now, that's a pretty sobering thought. The justice of God, trust me, is something you don't want anything to do with.

[44 : 19] Because the justice of God means that you will get exactly, precisely, what you deserve. And I sure don't want that.

Those who do not embrace the grace of God have nothing remaining to them but the justice of God. Now, listen, there's nothing wrong with that.

And the reason there's nothing wrong with it is because it is just. Is there something wrong with people getting what they deserve? Is there something wrong with that?

No. Isn't that what we expect from our judges when someone stands before the law court? Don't we want that judge to dispense justice?

If the party is guilty of a crime, we don't want an excessive sentence. We want a sentence that fits the crime. And if somebody is committed and guilty of petty thievery, 50 years prison term doesn't fit the crime.

[45 : 36] That's not justice. That's overkill. We want justice. Three months in the local pokey would be better. The justice has to fit the crime.

And God dispenses justice wherever he does not dispense grace because that's the only commodities there are. One is what you deserve. The other is what you don't deserve.

You can have the one you don't deserve. And the reason you can have it is because Jesus Christ picked up the ticket to make it available to you. He died for your sin in your place so that you can escape the justice of God and drink deeply of the wells of grace.

Have it your way. Which do you want? Pretty sobering, isn't it? Of which I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of his power.

To me. In other words, Paul's saying to me. Can you believe this? Can you believe it? This was given to me? The very least of all saints was this grace given to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ and to bring to light where was it before?

[47 : 05] It wasn't known. It wasn't in the light. It was shrouded, hidden away in the mind and heart of God and never revealed.

And now Paul is saying, and God called me to bring it to light. No wonder this man felt so privileged. He was.

What is the administration, the dispensation, the doling out of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things in order that, this is a purpose clause in the Greek, it means to the end that, the manifold or the variegated wisdom of God might now be made known through the church, body of believers, that building that's being constructed to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.

Who are they? They are the angels, the cherubim, the seraphim. They are the angels that have fallen. And as I said to the fellows in our Thursday morning class, we believers who comprise the church age, the dispensation of the grace of God, we are players on God's team.

And I'll tell you what we are. We are the B team. We human beings, we are the B team. We are the JVs. And the first string is the angelic beings who have not fallen.

[48 : 37] This is Michael and Gabriel, and who knows how many other thousands of angels. They are the A team. We are the B team. And God is going to use the B team to defeat the fallen angels of the A team.

This is the resolution of the angelic conflict, and it predates, it predates Genesis 1, 1. This goes all the way back before there was a heaven and an earth ever created, before Adam and Eve, before the garden of Eden, before all of that.

This goes all the way back. And this is what God has in mind. He brought matter and time into existence and put human beings here and made a way for them to exercise their volition and to fail in it and to fall and then to provide the Redeemer to reconcile those fallen ones.

this is incredible stuff. This is what this is all about. We tend to think we are the people.

We are the main players. No, we're not. No, we're not. We are privileged players. We are redeemed players. We are exalted. We enjoy a position in Christ, and that is incredible.

[50 : 05] But there is something yet that is even above and beyond us, and that's the angelic sphere. And in the very next section that we plan to develop, we're going to see how this is going to start working out here on planet Earth, and we've got to work in the Russian invasion of Israel and what is going to be involved there because I really do believe that that is prior to.

Well, we'll just leave it there. Okay? Sorry, I've taken all your time, and I don't have time for Q&A; but maybe we can do this. If you have questions, jot them down, and next week, maybe we'll open with Q&A.;

Would you remind me of that, Marie? Okay. Next week, we will open with Q&A; and if you have any questions you'd like to submit in writing, you'll get a better answer. If you do, drop them in the offering box. And if you fill out the sheet about the financial seminar by Dave Ramsey, if you would like to participate in that, check that if you would.

Slide the day that you want, drop it in the offering box as well. And I promise you, we'll take time next week for Q&A, and I'm sorry we don't have more time today. Would you stand, please? Father, we've talked about a lot of things that still are very unclear to us, but the things that do have the clarity are really magnificent, and we are so pleased that you have been willing to divulge this material to the extent that you have.

And while we recognize there are a lot of things here that we miss and still don't understand, yet what we are able to comprehend just swells our heart with gratitude and thanksgiving to you for it all.

[51 : 53] We serve a God who is absolutely indefinable, and we are glad that you are the God you are. If there was anything about you that we could change, we wouldn't.

Thank you for being the deity you are, and thank you for making available to us a coveted position of being in Christ simply by acknowledging, admitting, taking ownership of our sin, and thanking Jesus Christ for paying the penalty for that sin.

and then as an act of our will, simply embrace this wonderful one as our Lord and Savior. Thank you so much for that incredible privilege.

We bless you in his name. Amen.