

Prophecy and Mystery Contrasted - Mystery 11

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[0 : 00] Also, I would like to remind you that because probably most of us are not in a hurry to run out of church and get off to a feed bag at a favorite restaurant today, we may go a little long, but we will need to be done by 1130 because the disc can't handle any more content than that.

But we may have a prolonged Q&A session this morning and we will try to work that in. So ordinarily we would aim for 11 o'clock, but with this special situation that we're dealing with, there's no reason why we can't go to 1130 and still have everything on the CD.

But I do want to emphasize that if you finish listening before I finish speaking, feel free to peel off at any time you want. And you're welcome to do that. You have that flexibility.

And we are grateful. So if you would, please let us direct our attention to a little pamphlet that I mentioned at the nine o'clock service.

And oh, by the way, before I get underway, let me mention that the counterpart. The counterpart of prophecy that we engaged at the previous nine o'clock session.

[1 : 18] Is. Now to be considered and it is the mystery portion. The mystery is the counterpart of the prophecy and that we already undertook at nine o'clock.

Now at this 1015 hour, we are looking at its counterpart and it is referred to as the mystery portion. And as I did at nine o'clock, I made reference to this brief little ever so succinct pamphlet that Mr.

Stamm put out, one of his many items of legacy that he left behind that clearly and in such simple fashion sets forth the basic distinctions and differences between prophecy and mystery.

We believe both of these and both of these are essential for a full, complete picture and understanding. You need prophecy and mystery.

But. We are not living under both of them. We are living under one. And that is the mystery and prophecy has passed off the scene.

[2 : 27] But. It will return. It will return when God is finished with the mystery portion, because the mystery involves the church, which is the body of Christ.

And the time is coming. When we are going to exit the premises. As an entire body of believers. And it is called.

The catching away of the body of Christ or the rapture. And when we are gone. Mystery and all that involves mystery.

Is finished. The body of Christ will have been completed. And there will be a reversion to the prophetic portion and a return.

In huge proportions. Of the physical. Miraculous elements that so characterized prophecy before mystery came along.

[3 : 28] So that is very, very important to understand. The emphasis. The emphasis on the physical. As evidenced in the prophecy. Will now give way.

To mystery. And it is a gradation. From the physical. And the elemental. To the spiritual. And more advanced.

Paul tells us. In 1 Corinthians 1.22. The Jews ask for. Signs. What does that word signs mean? It means miracles.

It's the word semions. The word from which we get the word. Semaphore. If you're a sailor. You know what a semaphore is. If you don't. I'll take the time to explain it. But it means.

A sign. And in the case. Of the Bible. When it talks about signs. And the Jews look for signs. That means they required miracles. Expected miracles. Anticipated miracles.

[4 : 27] Miracles was the way. That the speaker. The speaker. Had a validating. His authority. And that is precisely. Why Jesus. Performed. The many miracles.

That he did. They validated. His claim. To be the Messiah. And then. Paul tells us. In 2 Corinthians 5. And verse 8. In reminding us.

That we are now. Under mystery. And. We walk by faith. Not by sight. What does that mean? When you walk by sight.

That means you operate. And function. On the basis. Of what you can see. And what is it. That you can see. Miracles. Miracles. You see.

The dead raised. And the lame walk. And sight be given to the blind. And demons cast out. These are all physical. Materialistic things. That can be witnessed.

[5 : 22] Through your sensory perception. And that's what the Jews. Were accustomed to. Because Moses. Was. Used of God. To perform a whole host.

Of miracles. I guess it would be safe. To say that the nation of Israel. Cut their teeth. On miraculous manifestations. From God. Beginning with the 10 plagues.

That led them. The Egyptians. To let them go. From Egypt. And. The drowning. Of the Egyptian army. And the parting of the Red Sea. And the manna from heaven. All of these things.

All of these things. Were designed. To reveal. To the nation of Israel. That their God. Was on the job. And was looking out for them.

And he gave them. Concrete. In your face. Examples of things. They could see. And hear. And feel. And eat. And taste.

[6 : 17] And touch. And experience. Those things. Are all in keeping. With prophecy. And with. Israel. In particular. Now however.

We are not to walk by faith. Or not. Not to walk by sight. But walk by faith. And the difference. Between walking by sight. And walking by faith. Is. When you walk by sight.

You walk on the basis. Of what you see. And what you experience. When you walk. By faith. You walk. On the basis. Of simply. Believing. What God has said.

No need. For miraculous. Demonstrations. Of this. Or that. Or anything else. What God is saying. What God is saying. To those who are walking.

By faith. Is this. Look. Can you just believe me? Am I worthy. Of your trust? Can you just.

[7 : 15] Accept. What I have said. And revealed to you. Just because. I have said it. Or do you have to be. Persuaded. By some kind of.

Miraculous. Manifestation. So you can look at it. And say. Oh. Okay. Now I believe. Is that what it takes? Can you believe God. Just because he is God. And he has been pleased.

To reveal himself. Through his word. That is. Walking by faith. And not by sight. And as we have said. So many times. More than anything else.

God wants to be. Believed. You honor him. When you trust him. When you believe him. No. You don't have all the answers.

Of course not. None of us do. That too. Is where the trust comes in. We are persuaded. That God does all things well. So for the body of Christ. It's time.

[8 : 11] That we get out. Of grade school. Where we're dependent. On things physical. That you could hear. And see. And touch. And be evidenced. By the miracles. Christians need to grow up.

And you grow up in Christ. By focusing on. And walking in. The word that he's provided. Simply because he's provided. And let me inject this now.

Let me reflect back. Just a little bit. On the kingdom prophecy thing. Because this is really. Really important. Okay. So long. As the kingdom of heaven.

Coming to earth. Was viable. Like that which Jesus. And the twelve preached. So long as that was available. To Israel. As an ongoing possibility.

So also. Were those ingredients. Or components. That accompanied it. That demonstrated it. The miracles. The manifestations.

[9 : 08] The physical miracles. But when the possibility. Of the kingdom. Being realized. Was withdrawn. Because of Israel's.

Repeated. Rejection of the kingdom. And rejection of the king. Eventually. Eventually. God was saying. To Israel.

All right. Your opportunity. Is gone. It's passed. You have forfeited it. It is no longer. Available to you.

And it will not be available. Until. The fullness. Of the Gentiles. Comes in. And this is Romans 11. When Paul says.

Brethren. I would not have you. To be ignorant. Regarding this. That blindness. This is a. Moral. Spiritual blindness. That blindness. Has happened.

[10 : 01] In part. To Israel. The Jewish people. But notice. If you will. He says. In part. It hasn't happened. To all Jews. But Jewry.

In general. Has been. Spiritually. Blinded. By their unbelief. Until. The fullness.

Of the Gentiles. Is come in. That means. Until. The Gentiles. Have had. Their run. Of the show. And when that will be.

Is when. Jesus Christ. Comes. And puts an end. To the rule. And the reign. Of the Antichrist. And defeats. The armies. Of Armageddon. And establishes.

The kingdom. Of God. Come to earth. Then. Then. All Israel. And by the way. Then. There will not be. That many.

[10 : 56] Of Israel. Left. It will be. A much. Much. Smaller number. Because. During. The seven year. Tribulation. Period. The Antichrist.

Will succeed. In eliminating. Two thirds. Of the Jewish people. Worldwide. And those who remain. Are referred to. As the remnant.

And they will be. Receiving. Jesus. They will be. Pleading. For the one. Whom. Their ancestors. Rejected. To return. And save them.

And he will. And then. All Israel. Will be saved. That will be. The Israel. That exists. At the time. So. What I'm saying. And what we really. Need to keep in mind.

Is that. From a. Standard. Operating. Procedure. Miracles. Physical. Miracles. And manifestations. Belong.

[11 : 50] To prophecy. To Israel. And the day. And age. Of Israel. This does not mean. God cannot.

Choosing. God. He chooses. At any time. He chooses. Whether it's. The church age. Or whether it's. Mystery. Or Israel.

Or whatever. I am not putting. God in a box. And say. Listen God. This is the time. Of mystery. Not prophecy. You can't do any. Miracles. This time. No. God can do.

Whatever he wants. Whenever he wants. All I am saying. Is. From a base. Of standard. Operating. Procedures. In other words. From the norm. From the norm. There was a time.

When miraculous. Manifestations. Were the norm. They were expected. They were anticipated. They were believed. They were experienced. And in virtually.

[12 : 44] Every one of those instances. It involved. Israel. The nation Israel. This is why. The Jews require a sign. They've been accustomed to it. But.

When you come over to. Mystery. Where we are to be walking. By faith. And not by sight. It is not. Miracles. That are standard.

Operating procedure. And when I say. Standard operating procedure. I mean. As a general rule. Miracles were in vogue. In the prophecy. And as a standard.

Standard procedure. They are not in vogue. Here in. Mystery. In the church dispensation. And all we're saying is. Miracles. In our day and age.

Under the body of Christ. In the mystery. Are few. And far between. But. When the church is gone. And the 70th week.

[13 : 39] Of Daniel begins. My. Oh my. There is going to be. Such an outpouring. Of miraculous. Manifestations. Good. And evil.

Are going to. Flood the globe. And there will be. Great deception. That will result. From much of it. So. A lot of this. Will be miracles.

That will actually. Be brought to pass. By the antichrist. As you read. In the book of the revelation. So. All I'm saying is. We are now living. In a time. In the body of Christ.

Where. Miracles. Miraculous manifestations. Are not. The order of the day. But. They can still occur. Anytime. God wants to perform one.

His hands are not limited. He can do whatever he wants. Whenever he wants. So. If you keep those. General principles in mind. It will help a lot. In Acts chapter 2.

[14 : 34] Here is where there's a big. Big. Area of difficulty. And it. It deals with one. What I call. One of the faulty assumptions. And that is.

That. In Acts 2. It is commonly believed. That this is the birthday. Of the church. And I pointed out to you. That it is a church. But it is not the church.

That is the body of Christ. It is a church. That is made up. Of an assembly of believers. All of whom are Jews. And they come together. And there are 3,000 of them.

Who are saved. Or. Who. Who come to. Repentance. And belief in Jesus. As the Messiah. And. They are baptized. With John's baptism.

They are. Not. In the body of Christ. They are believers. They are Jews. Who are believers. Under. The prophecy. Administration.

[15 : 29] And. They are a church. Because they are called out assembly. There are 3,000 of them. Called out from that larger group. But they are not to be confused. With the church. Which is his body. And that is.

Believers. In this dispensation. Or in this administration. Of grace. And there are a lot of different churches. In the Bible. And they're translated church. The Israelites. That came out. Of the land of Israel.

Are referred to. In Acts. I think it's Acts chapter 7. Where Peter. Or where Stephen. Is giving his testimony. And he refers to Israel. Coming out of Egypt. As the church in the wilderness. Well we don't think of them.

As being a church at all. We think of Israel. As being a nation of people. But you wouldn't call them a church. But they are. They were. They were. A called out assembly. Which is exactly what the word.

Ekklesia means. And I don't want to belabor the point. But we told you in Acts. I think it was Acts 19. Where a. A crowd of people. In Ephesus. They didn't even understand.

[16:27] What they were doing. They flooded into the. Into the Colosseum. And they were going to give. The Jews. And the believers. A rough way to go. And they are referred to. As a church. As an assembly.

And yet. They are not at all. What we. So there are different churches. And we are in the church. Which is the body of Christ. And that church. Did not come. Into being.

Until. God. Melded together. Jews. And Gentiles. And put them. On one level.

Made no distinction. Between them. Whether they were Jew. Or Gentile. Whether they were male. Or female. Whether they were slave. Or free. That is the church.

That is his body. And it is described. In detail. In Ephesians. And in Colossians. And it is mentioned by Paul. In other places. So when you talk about the church.

[17:23] You've got to understand. What church are you talking. In other words. Let me put it this way. You have to make. A distinction. Between the churches. You have to. Rightly.

Divide. The churches. There are certain things. That go with. The church. That is the body of Christ. And there are certain things. That go with the church.

That was the assembly. Called out of Israel. Including the miracles. And everything. That accompanied them. And there were certain things. That went with that motley crew. In Ephesus. That came out.

To cause trouble. And to get into. What was going on there. And that was completely different. But they're all church. They're all church. They're all ecclesia. Is the way the word is rendered. So it just points out once more.

How utterly important. It is. To rightly divide. The churches. You've got to separate. This church. From this church. From this church. From this. Otherwise. If you put them all together.

[18:18] Good grief. What do you have? You've got a conglomeration. That is just mass confusion. And nothing fits. So. Keep that in mind. If you would please. In Acts chapter 3.

We have the incident. Of. Peter. And John. And the man healing. Who was blamed. Lame from his mother's birth. He was the beggar.

And he is healed. And I want you. To turn to that. If you would please. In Acts chapter 4. This is one of the most. Stunning. Passages. And frankly. Frankly.

You will look far and wide. To find. An illustration. Of. The evil.

That a human heart. Is willing to go to. In order to deny. Truth. It is just amazing. And you know what? Listen. We see some of this today.

[19:16] In our very own culture. As we speak. It is. Unbelievable. The lengths. That some. People. Are willing.

To go to. When it comes. To the truth. In fabrication. Lying. Misleading. Simply because. They stand.

To gain. Power. From doing it. And we've got a perfect illustration. Of that. Right here. In Acts chapter 4. This. This is amazing.

Verse 13. I'm going to just jump in. Because it's. The contrast is remarkable. Verse 13. Acts 4. They observed. That is. The leaders. The chief movers.

And shakers. The religious establishment. They observed. The confidence. Of Peter and John. You know. They spoke with boldness. And when Peter stood. And these people.

[20 : 10] On Pentecost. They said. What is this? Well. These guys. They've drunk new wine. They're intoxicated. Peter stood up. Said. Hey. No. These men are not drunken. As you suppose. It's only the third hour of the day.

This is that. Which was spoken of. By the prophet Joel. And Peter spoke with boldness. Listen. This is the same guy. Who couldn't crank up enough courage.

When confronted by a meek little Jewish maiden. That accused him. Of being one of Jesus friends. And he didn't have the guts. To say. Yes.

I'm one of his disciples. I'm one of his apostles. You want to make something of it? No. He caved. Cowardly Peter. Caved. And here. He's standing up with confidence.

Because the spirit of God. Has made this difference in his life. And they understood. That they were uneducated. And untrained men. They were marveling. Began to recognize them.

[21 : 06] As having been with Jesus. What a compliment. What a compliment. Hey. Has anybody. Has anybody ever suspected. From meeting you. And talking with you.

That you've been with Jesus. Just asking. And seeing the man. Who had been healed. Standing with them. They had nothing.

To say. In reply. It wasn't that they didn't. Want to say something. But they couldn't open their mouth. Because the evidence. Was overwhelming. And it was right before them.

And when they ordered them. To go aside. Out of the council. You see. These. Hoi polloi here. The crowd. The elite. The ruling.

The ruling class. Of. Of Israelites. Chief priests. Pharisees. Scribes. Etc. They've got to come up. With some kind of game plan. And they've got to discuss.

[22 : 04] What they're going to do. How they're going to handle this. Because it's terribly embarrassing. They're in the temple area. And there's a huge crowd. Gathering there. So what are they going to do? Here's this guy.

Standing in front of them. Who hadn't walked a day. In his life. And now he's leaping. Up and down. Jumping around. Looking at his legs. He's hugging Peter. And then he goes over. And hugs John. And they don't know what to do.

So. They tell Peter and John. You know. You. You. You men stand over here. And he called his. Little cabal together. And he's. We've got to have a conference. You wait there.

We'll get with you later. And they call them together. And in verse 16. They said. What are we going to do with these men? The fact.

That's an interesting word to use. The fact. That a noteworthy miracle. Has been. Taken place through them. Is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem.

[23 : 01] And we cannot deny it. Are they saying. If there was any way in the world. That we would deny this. We would. But we can't.

Because everybody knows that it's true. And would look like a bunch of jerks. If we try to deny it. And say that it didn't happen. But all we can do. And we can. We can do this. We can do this.

This is how we'll handle it. In order that it may not spread any further. Among the people. Let's warn them to speak. No more to any man in this name. And then they motioned to them.

And said. All right. Come on over here. Come over here. And Peter and John. And they come moseying over. And the apostles. And they summoned them. They commanded them.

Not to speak or teach at all. In the name of Jesus. And Peter and John answered. And said. Well. That's something that you're going to have to decide with God.

[24 : 02] As far as we're concerned. We cannot stop speaking. What we have seen and heard. So no. We will not be silenced. And they didn't know what to do with him.

They couldn't physically malign them. Because they threatened. The people were threatened them. They were afraid. The text in verse 21 says. They couldn't find any basis to punish them.

Because on account of the people. Because they. Were all glorifying God. What happened? In other words. These were the common. Ordinary. Everyday. Joes. Who could see and understand the significance.

Of what happened. And all of these religious big shots. Who ran the show. Were completely in the dark. This is amazing. And the text goes on to say.

Well. The text has already said. That if we could deny it. We would. What a sad. Sad commentary. On humanity. In chapter 5. We've got another miracle.

[25 : 03] And what is it with all these miracles? Well. I'll tell you. It's still the time of prophecy. And what that means is this. And this is really. Really important. Hope you get this. The kingdom opportunity.

And offer. That Jesus. Was making to Israel. Even before they crucified him. Is still available. It has not been canceled.

It is still available. That was the message. In Acts 2. And again. In Acts 3. And Peter says. God has done his part. Two things. Folks.

There are two things. Necessary. For the kingdom of heaven. To come to earth. Number one. Jesus has to die. For the sins of the world. Well. He already did that. And when Peter.

Preaches this message. In Acts chapter 3. He's saying. Two things. One of them. Is God's part. And he already did that. Israel. The ball is in your court.

[26 : 01] And now your part is. You need to repent. And believe what God did. In his part. Are you ready to do that? Israel never did. But that does not mean.

God is then saying. Okay. It's finished. No more promise of the kingdom. Israel. You cannot have the kingdom. It's withdrawn from you. Forever. Permanently.

You've sold yourself. And the kingdom is gone. No. No. It continues. It continues. In chapter 3.

In chapter 4. And the proof positive. Of the ongoing availability. Of the kingdom. Is. Miraculous manifestations.

Were still the order. Of the day. They go. With the kingdom. That's part of it. It's materialistic. And the kingdom of heaven.

[26 : 53] Coming to earth. Is earthly. Material. It's involving. This globe. The kingdom of heaven. Come to earth. Is not to be confused. With heaven. Where God dwells.

Where Jesus ascended to. When he left. In Acts chapter 1. And they watched him. Go up into heaven. The kingdom of heaven. Coming to earth. Is physical. Material. And earthly. And it involves.

Principally. Israel. And. As long as that kingdom. Is available. Miraculous manifestations. Will be a part of it. When you see the miracles go.

And they're no longer available. As standard operating procedure. Neither is the kingdom. It has passed. It has been shelved.

It has been laid aside. It has been interrupted. And the mystery. Which nobody ever even. Imagined in their wildest dreams. Has been brought in.

[27 : 51] From the mind and heart of God. To replace it. And it is called. The church. The body of Christ. Completely different. In Ananias.

In Sapphira. In chapter 5. What do we find there? Well that's. That's a miracle. I mean really. When. When Ananias. And Sapphira. Lied. To the apostles.

About the money. That they had given. Peter. Demonstrated. The power. That God had given. To the apostles. And instead of.

Raising somebody. From the dead. He told. Ananias. To drop dead. Well. I guess you'd say. That's kind of like. Healing in reverse.

But. That's exactly what. And you know what. In all due respect. I think Ananias. Was probably a believer. He was probably a believer. And his. His wife probably was also.

[28 : 47] That's why they were involved. With this group. I cannot say that for sure. But I'm. I say that because. Believers. Even though. One can be. A believer in Christ. And are going to be in heaven.

When they die. They can still. Be capable. Of doing some really. Stupid things. And even sinful things. In this. Human body. That we live in.

So we've got a miraculous. Manifestation here. In Acts chapter 4. In Acts chapter 5. When Peter used. The authority. And the power. That had been given to him.

And the 12. And Ananias. And Sapphira. Dropped dead. And in Acts chapter 7. We have the stoning. Of Stephen. And I don't.

I cannot give you. A conclusion. About this. Because I don't have one. Because I don't know. And. And I'll just. I'll be very frank. With you now.

[29 : 40] And. And. And be as upfront. As I know how to be. Regarding. Exactly. When. Did the church. Which is the body of Christ. Begin.

Well. The majority opinion. Is. That it began in Acts 2. That that was the birthday. Of the church. That's what most people believe. That's even what most Christians believe. But. Those of us.

Of the. Grace persuasion. Simply do not see it that way. Although. I must admit. That. There was a time when I did. As the new believer. And then. Some feel that.

It began. With the stoning of Stephen. In Acts chapter. Seven. And that. That is a position. That I took. For several years.

And the reason I did. And the reason I did. Was because. Of. Who the principles were. That were. That were involved in the stoning. It was the Sanhedrin.

[30 : 39] This was the council. Sometimes it's translated council. But the Sanhedrin. And the council. Was made up. Of. Seventy. Of the most.

Distinguished. Honorable. Men. Of high reputation. In all of Israel. They comprised. The Sanhedrin.

And it was presided over. By the high priest. And so far as Judaism. Was concerned. This was as authoritative.

As you could get. And when they. Tried to. Answer Stephen's arguments. About Jesus being the Messiah. We are told that they.

Could not resist. The arguments. And the statements. That Stephen made. His arguments. For Jesus being the Messiah. Were just too compelling.

[31 : 33] And they couldn't answer them. So they. Went out. And hired a couple of. Ne'er-do-wells. And bribed them. To actually. Give testimony.

That they had heard Stephen. With their own ears. Blaspheme God. And blasphemy. Of course. Was. A death penalty. For the Jew. So they hired these guys.

And they swore. Under testimony. That they had heard. Stephen blaspheme God. The. Pronunciation. Of execution. Was given. And these men. These men.

Pushed. And pummeled. And dragged. Stephen. Out of the city. To the stoning pit. Where they. As the most. Austere. Respected individuals. In all of Israel. These were the shakers.

And movers. Of Judaism. They. Engaged. In physically. Stoning. This man. Stephen. To death. And. I ask you now.

[32 : 30] Where was the. Miraculous. Deliverance. For Stephen. Why didn't God. Rescue him. Where was the miracle.

Here for Stephen. And when. When we come over to. Well. Acts chapter 10. This is.

This is. This is really. This is amazing stuff. I tell you. This. This book of Acts. Is just so loaded. In Acts chapter 10. I'm sorry.

We won't. We won't go to Cornelia. But Acts chapter 12. Acts 12. Peter's arrest. And deliverance. He's arrested. Put into. The prison.

And we are told. In verse 6. That Peter. Was sleeping. Between two soldiers. Bound. With two chains. And guards.

[33 : 26] In front of the door. Were watching over the prison. Now. I would say. If there is ever. An ironclad. Prevention. For escape. This would be it.

I mean. They had. They had Peter. A covered light. You couldn't believe. And. That all changed. Because. An angel. Of the Lord.

Suddenly appeared. And a light. Shone in the cell. And he struck. Peter's side. And roused him. Say. Get up quickly. His chains. Fell off his hand. Hey. What are these guards doing? They're there.

Peter's chained to them. There's another guard. Outside the door. Guarding the place. So that nobody could get in. And nobody could get out. But. That's not a problem. For an angel. Here. We've got a manifestation.

Of a miracle. On Peter's behalf. Whereby he is rescued. From what would have been. An execution. And he is brought safely. To his friend's home.

[34 : 20] There in the chapter. In the balance of chapter 12. And he is rescued. So here. We've got another. Miraculous manifestation.

But the question. I want to ask you now. Is. Where was Peter's deliverance. Years later. When he is going to be.

Arrested by the Roman authorities. And confined. Tradition says. And I don't know. If he was really there or not. But tradition says. That he was confined. To the Maritime prison.

Where he was summarily. Crucified. And the tradition says. That he. Did not feel himself. Worthy to be crucified. As his Lord was. And he asked his Roman.

Crucifixion squad. If they would please. Crucify him upside down. And the tradition says. That they did. Where was his deliverance.

[35 : 14] He was delivered from the jail here. Where was his deliverance. At the end of his life.

May I suggest. That that time. Had already passed. And the kingdom was no longer available. And the miracles that accompany it. Was no longer available either. And Peter.

Was executed. Jesus. Saw to it. That the prison doors. Were opened. When the earthquake took place.

In Acts chapter 16. With the Philippian jailer. And the doors fell open. And all the prisoners were free. And was a miraculous deliverance. And the Philippian jailer.

Was saved as a result of it. And it was clearly. A manifestation. Of a miracle. And may I suggest. That. That indicates.

[36 : 11] That. Miracles were still. Standard. Operating. Operating. Procedure. And God. Sent one. Performed one. On behalf of Paul. And Silas. When they were in that prison. But wait a minute.

What's going to happen later. When Paul himself. Will be confined. To the Mamertine prison. The dungeon in Rome. And he writes this letter.

To young Timothy. Probably the last letter. That Paul ever wrote. And he tells Timothy. That the time of his departure. Is at hand. Paul is saying.

He knows. He's going to be executed soon. And he will be with the Lord. Where was his deliverance? Why didn't God rescue Paul? I mean.

He did. At Philippi. Sent an earthquake. Opened the door of the cells. He was free. Philippian jailer got converted. Where's his miraculous deliverance here?

[37 : 10] He's going to be executed. Paul is going to have his head cut off. Where is the angel. Sent from God. To prevent that. Where is his rescue?

What's happening? What's going on? Things are changing. Don't you see that? The standard operating procedure. Is changing. The time of miracles.

And miraculous manifestations. And divine interventions like that. Although they still can happen. They are no longer standard operating procedure. They are rare. This is not the day and age of miracles.

I'm not saying miracles can happen today. I'm sure they do happen. But I'll tell you what. They are few and far between. They do not happen as a matter of course.

When the doctor tells you that you have cancer. And you've got three months to live. There is a very good likelihood. That you're going to die. And not be delivered miraculously.

[38 : 09] But. But. We all know. There are people walking around. Who are supposed to be dead. And the doctors gave up on them. And they're still alive and kicking.

And nobody knows why. And the doctor shrugs his shoulders. And says. I don't have a medical explanation for it. All I could. It must be a miracle. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know.

So God can do whatever he wants to do. But. But the point is. This day and age. Is not to be characterized. And is not characterized. By miraculous manifestations.

And when they happen. They are very. Very rare. And the likelihood is. If a death sentence has been pronounced on you. Chances are you're going to die. Better than that. Than that you won't.

And that's. That's living under this present administration. That's the way it is. In Acts of. Well we are. I just want to give you one more. And then we'll open it for some Q&A.;

[39 : 07] In 2nd Timothy chapter 4. This to me. Just grabbed me one day. And I thought. I need to run this by. Folks. I think I've probably told you before.

But if I haven't. It's. Good content. 2nd Timothy. Chapter 4. Paul is. Concluding.

Writing his last words. And in verse 18. He says. Well let's. Let me. Let's start with verse 16. All right. Verse 16.

2nd Timothy 4. Remember Paul is writing as a dying man. To his young protege Timothy. And he says. At my first defense. No one supported me.

But all deserted me. This is by the way. Is part of the things that Paul. Was going to suffer. That the Lord told Ananias. I will show him what great things. He must suffer for my name's sake.

[40 : 03] And being deserted by your friends. Is a kind of emotional suffering. That Paul had to go through. And even then. It's beautiful. It's even. Even then it's beautiful.

Paul says. They all deserted me. May it not be counted against him. You know what that's. What's that the equivalent of saying. Father forgive them. They don't know what they do.

Forgive them for deserting me. It's reminiscent of what Jesus said on the cross. And what Stephen said in the stoning pit. May it not be counted against them. Paul's saying. I'm not holding any grudges.

But you know what. The Lord stood with me. And strengthened me. Really. Really. Really Paul. The Lord stood with you. And strengthened you. And why didn't he deliver you.

Why did he allow your head to be put on that chopping block. Well. He showed me the things that I must suffer. And this is one of them. And he strengthened me.

[41 : 02] In order that through me. The proclamation might be fully accomplished. And that all the Gentiles might hear. That I was delivered out of the lion's mouth. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil deed.

Including this one. Because sometimes God delivers from death. And sometimes he delivers through death. And he will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory forever and ever.

Amen. Oh. Timothy. Say hi to Priscilla. And Aquila. And to the household of Onesiphorus. And Erastus. Erastus.

Remained at Corinth. Otherwise he could probably be with me. But he's still at Corinth. And Trophimus. Trophimus. I left sick.

At Miletus. And the question that automatically pops into my mind is. What do you mean you left Trophimus sick at Miletus? Why didn't you heal him?

[42 : 01] Why didn't you lay hands on him and heal him. So he could go with you. That's an interesting question. Isn't it? And it just may well be.

My suspicion is. That that time is over and done with. That's past. And yes. God could have enabled Paul. To lay hands on Trophimus.

And heal him. So he could go with him. But apparently it wasn't part of the divine plan then. And I think that it was probably because. Standard operating procedure for miracles had passed.

And the kingdom opportunity was no longer available to Israel. And neither were the miracles that tended to accompany it. So. All right.

I'm not finished. But I quit. So I want to entertain any questions or comments you have. Now we've got a few minutes before this CD is going to run out. So you feel free. Oh, I did.

[42 : 58] Somebody asked a question about. About the security of the believer. And I would say this. That. And what this is often called is.

Is once saved, always saved. And it. It's a controversial issue. Among. Well-meaning Christians who. All of whom love the Lord.

And as I've often said. You've heard me say over the years. That. Every Christian. Including yours truly. Has wrinkles in their theology. Because we don't have everything right.

And we don't have everything straight. And that's because of our humanity. And when we get to heaven. We're all going to get straightened out. And some of us are going to need a lot more straightening out than others.

But. As long as you are right. About Jesus Christ. Who he is. Why he came.

[43 : 58] What he did. Why it matters. And you have put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your personal sin bearer. That's what matters.

And. If you are wrong. About Jesus. It doesn't make any difference what you've got right. It's to no avail.

So Jesus. Accepts us with all of our flaws. And wrinkles in our theology. With all of our lack of understanding. With all of our sometimes downright stupidity.

And disobedience. He accepts us because he loves us. And he paid the price. To buy us. And. When we get to heaven.

Like I said. Everybody's going to get straightened out. One of the big objections. In fact. In my estimation. The thing that.

[44 : 58] Will do more. To answer the issue of the security of the believer. Than anything else. Is an understanding. Is an understanding. Of what grace is. And how it works.

And why. It is as it is. And once you really get a firm handle on grace. The security of the believer is a settled issue. But I can understand why people.

Are confused by it. And why some even. Deny the security of the believer. And for many of them. For many of them. It is related to that age-old question.

That I've asked. In that little CD. That we put out. About being sure of heaven. And when people are asked. Are you sure that you're going to heaven. Or is heaven your home. And. And nowadays.

Nowadays friends. I wouldn't be surprised. If nine out of ten people. That hear that question. Wouldn't answer with. Well I hope so.

[45 : 52] I hope so. And they can't say. That they know so. And the reason they can't. And one. I've had more than one person. Tell me this. Well you can't know that.

You can't know that you're going to heaven. Until you die. And find out. And then. Then you find out. Well. You will find out then. That's true. But.

What if you don't make it. It's too late to do anything about it then. And if you can. If you can have the assurance.

That comes from knowing Christ. Nothing provides more peace. And security. And serenity of soul. And confidence in your Christian living. Than knowing that you are secure.

In God's love. And. Perhaps the biggest objection. That people have. To the security of the believer. Is I've. I've even heard some say this.

[46 : 46] And perhaps you have too. Oh well. You're saying that. Once you're saved. You're always saved. It doesn't matter how you live. You go out. Live like the devil. And you're still going to heaven. And they see security of the believer.

As a license to sin. That suggests that you can live any way you want to. And it doesn't make any difference. Because you're eternally secure. So. Sky's the limit.

Do whatever you want. And that's a kind of libertinism. That the scriptures do not support at all. The Bible. The Bible. And the security of the believer. Does not promote.

Loose living. A true understanding of grace. And the security of the believer. Results in a desire. To live a life that is pleasing to the Lord.

And honoring to him. And it doesn't mean that you're always going to succeed. But came across this. Just yesterday. Marie and I were having our devotions. And reading in this little book.

[47 : 42] That Mr. Stamm left behind. One of his many items of legacy. Two minutes with the Bible. And by the way. Grace. I've got a whole stack of these. On the table back there. That we were resupplied with our order.

And the only problem now is the church is closed. People can't get in to get them. But they are there. And this is marvelous. And it really deals with this issue that we're talking about. For July 30.

When we were reading this. And it's called. Seated in heaven. God sees every believer in Christ as already in heaven.

See what the Bible says about this. In Ephesians 2. And by the way. This is. Mystery truth. What I'm sharing with you now.

Has no part in prophecy. Does not belong to prophecy. This is mystery stuff. This is for the body of Christ. And it says. But God. Who is rich in mercy. For his great love. Wherewith he loved us. Even when we were dead in sins.

[48 : 42] Has quickened us together with Christ. By grace you were saved. Now listen. Listen. Listen. And has raised us up together. And made us sit together. In heavenly places.

In Christ Jesus. What? How is that? I'm seated right here in my basement. Talking to you.

I'm not seated in the heavenly. And the scripture says. As far as God is concerned. It's a completed package. You are already. Seated with him.

Listen. Before. Jesus. Died on that cross. He was the Lamb of God. Slain before the foundation of the world.

And. Before. We were ever born. As believers. We were. In Christ. Like that old spiritual down south goes.

[49 : 36] That they sang. Were you there when they crucified my Lord? That means. Are you in Christ? Were you there when he raised up from the dead? Yes.

If you were in Christ. You were. That in the ages to come. He might show the exceeding riches of his grace. And his kindness toward us through Christ. Most sincere believers.

This is Mr. Stam now. He said. Most sincere believers. Poorly taught in the word. Are concerned about getting to heaven. But as far as God is concerned.

They're already there. They have been made accepted in the beloved. Ephesians 1.6. God has given them a position in Christ. We are well aware that most of God's people know little about this experientially.

But God says that as far as he is concerned. They are already in heaven. And this is what matters. As Christ took our place on Calvary's cross. God now sees us in Christ.

[50 : 33] At his own right hand. The place of favor and honor. This is why the Apostle Paul says to believers in Christ. If. And it should be translated since. This is A with the indicative in the Greek.

Since you then are risen with Christ. Seek those things which are above. Where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above.

Not on things of the earth. For you are dead. And your life is hid with Christ in God. What? That's God's perspective. That's the way he sees us.

You see so many believers. So many believers. Are robbed of the joy and the security and the peace that belongs to them. Because they see salvation as being.

Not. What shall I say? Not an issue of quality. But an issue of quantity. How righteous do I have to be?

[51 : 34] And how unrighteous can I afford to be and get by with and still squeak by? And the answer is. You cannot afford even one smidgen of unrighteousness to your account.

Because if you do. You're sunk. God has but one standard. It. Character.

And that's perfect. So where are you going to get? Not a quantity. But a quality. Of righteousness.

That is perfect. You get it from the source. And the only source that has it to give. Is Jesus. And when you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

He. He. Places. His righteousness. Not on you. But in you. He imputes it to you.

[52 : 39] So that it becomes part of your being. You are in Christ. And that is. That is the ultimate.

God can do nothing more for you than what he has already done in Christ. So your salvation. Dear friend. Is not based on how much of this. And how much of that.

And how little of this. It is based on what kind. You either have the righteousness of Christ. Or. You have your own righteousness. Which Isaiah describes in chapter 64.

And I think it's verse 6. That all our righteousnesses. Are as filthy rags. May I assure you dear friend. God does not want your filthy rags.

When you come to Jesus Christ. And put your faith and trust in him. You are cleansed. Pardon. Forgiven. Freely. Forever. Fully. And he robes you.

[53 : 37] In a robe of righteousness. That is Christ's own righteousness. That is something. To shout about. That provides the basis. For security.

For stability. And it provides the basis also. For evangelism. And preaching the gospel. And when you tell somebody. What you need to do. Is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you shall be saved. And somebody says. Well is that what you've done? Yes. Are you saved? Well I think so. I hope so. If I don't mess up too bad. I'm saved. If I don't blow it.

I'm saved. If I hang on until the end. I'm saved. Nonsense. You call that good news? Is there any way you can pass that off as good news? Good grief Charlie Brown.

Good news is Christ died for my sins. And I am in him. I didn't deserve to be in him. I don't deserve to stay in him. That's what makes grace grace.

[54 : 33] And it's called good news. And there's nothing in the world like it. My oh my. Well. If you had questions. I'm sorry.

Terry. We got just a few minutes left. Just a few. We have. Okay. They all go around the same issue. Are there biblical references?

To show that. We do have. You know. Once we're saved. We're always saved. Where did the phrase fallen from grace come from?

And if we don't fall from grace. Is that a license for believers to sin? So I mean. They all revolve around the same issue. Okay. I'll tell you what.

It deserves a better answer than what I can give it in the next three or four minutes. So why don't we commit ourselves to opening with this.

[55 : 30] In our next session. And that will be the 1015. Not the nine o'clock. But the 1015 session. We will deal with that issue. Of the security of the believer.

And if you are getting. Your information for salvation. Either from the Old Testament. Or from the Gospels. You may find yourself on very shaky ground.

Because the security that the believer enjoys. In the dispensation. Or the administration of the grace of God. Is not that of prophecy. It is that of mystery.

And that makes a huge huge difference. So we will look at that. And I think we'll be able to shed some light on the subject. And we'll take that up.

And we'll open with it for our next 1015 session. One week from today. And our time is just about going. I don't want to run right down to the bare bone minute. But we're close to it.

[56 : 27] Is there something else? Is that satisfactory Terry? The rest of you. Can we do that? That's wonderful. Question. Are we going to do Wednesday evenings?

No. All church functions are canceled until further notice. That includes Wednesday evening. That includes the men's class. Tuesday morning at airport cafe.

And when we can get this thing together. And it all depends on how pervasive this latest outbreak. So we'll relate to numbers or people at grace who have been laid aside due to this virus.

All of those things will come into play. And the elders are going to have to put our heads together pretty soon. And we'll see what we can come up with. And appreciate your prayers on behalf of our board of elders as well.

All right. Let's close with a word of prayer. Father, it is a privilege to be able to look into the word that you've provided and to draw from it these things that are so enlightening and so comforting to our souls.

[57 : 38] And we recognize that there's legitimate differences of opinion out there. And we believe that they are held by sincere believers in good faith. And we want to respect the opinion and the person of those even with whom we may disagree.

But we pray that you will give us a spirit of enlightenment and understanding and compassion one for another in the body of Christ. Because as mentioned before, we all have our flaws in our theology.

None of us is as complete or as thorough as we would like to be. And certainly none of us are as knowledgeable as we would like to be. So we look to you for future enlightenment and information.

We bless you for this time to share together with fellow believers in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.