Through the Bible with Les Feldick, Book 5

Lesson One • Part I

Law – Weak and Beggarly

Turn to Galatians 4. Remember, we covered the allegory that Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was brought about by the energy of the flesh – God never told Abraham to have a child by the Egyptian slave girl, Hagar. But Isaac was the child of promise. As I’ve pointed out many times before, everything in the Old Testament was set up for our learning, and this is a prime example. Even as Ishmael was a child of the flesh, as opposed to Isaac, who was the child of promise. In the Book of Galatians Paul uses the allegory that Ishmael represented the "Law" which was fleshly (and here I’m expecting some flack!). Whereas Isaac, the child of promise, is indicative of the Age of Grace; the very Grace of God, based upon all the promises that He would form a plan of redemption. To refresh your memory, go back to the Book of Galatians. Here Paul quotes from Genesis:

Galatians 4:30,31

"Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son (Hagar and Ishmael): for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman (Sarah and Isaac). So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free."

Paul was writing to Gentile believers in the province of Galatia, who were being besieged by Judaizers. These Judaizers taught that Gentiles could not be saved unless they also kept the Law. Paul, however, was adamant that legalism could not be brought into Grace. This, then, is the reason for this allegory – that just as surely as Ishmael had to leave the whole area (God didn’t tell Abraham to build Ishmael a little tent next door so he could remain in close proximity), but rather, Abraham was to "cast him out" into the wilderness so there could be no contact between the two boys. The lesson is; that this is what we have to do with the Law and legalism in all its insidious forms. We have to be totally separated from it – we have to "cast it out." Remember, the Law was carnal; it was fleshly; it was weak (I know that will not go down easy with a lot of people because we know that the Law was spiritual, it was perfect and holy – from God’s point of view. But from man’s side, the Law was what we said above – carnal, fleshly, and weak!). Look back now at Galatians 4:9, and I’ll show you what I’m talking about. Paul wrote to the Galatian Gentile believers who had been saved by Grace, but who were being tempted to go back under the Law.
Galatians 4:9

"But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?"

Paul was referring to the Law. Look at Romans 8:2,3 where he says practically the same thing. Remember, Paul was writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit when he said, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." "The Law of sin and death" – does that sound like something very beautiful? The "Law of sin and death" was the Mosaic system!

Romans 8:3

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:"

The Scripture tells us that when it came to the Law from man's dire need and point of view, it was weak and beggarly! Now, because there are many people who don’t like the writings of Paul, even though the epistles of Paul are the very bedrock of our Christian faith, (I’ve even heard some say the letters of Paul shouldn’t be in our Bible!), let me show you another scripture where the apostle Peter referred to the Law in the same way. Turn to Acts 15:1. The setting for this passage is that Paul had been in Antioch, north of present day Beirut, on the corner of the Mediterranean Sea, ministering to Gentile believers. It was in Antioch where believers were first called "Christians" (Acts 11:26). When the Jewish believers in Jerusalem got wind that Gentiles were being brought into a relationship with "their" God, they got "all shook up!" So they sent men from Jerusalem all the way to Antioch to see if this was true! Was Paul, a Jew, really permitting Gentiles to claim they were saved without becoming proselytes of Judaism?

Acts 15:1

"And certain men which came down from Judaea (Jerusalem) taught the brethren (the believers at Antioch), and said, 'Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.'" Plain English. That’s what the Jewish believers from Jerusalem were trying to convince the Gentile believers at Antioch! Look further at verse 5. Paul was taken back to Jerusalem like a heretic, to be 'called on the carpet' before the church there.

Acts 15:5
"But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, (these weren’t the self-righteous Pharisees that we are most acquainted with in the Gospels. These were Pharisees who had come to believe that Jesus was The Christ, but who were still Law-keepers) saying, ‘That it was needful to circumcise them (the Antioch Gentile believers), and to command them to keep the law of Moses.’"

This wasn’t just a suggestion from the Jewish believers saying, "Maybe it will help the Gentile believers if they keep the Law." No! They wanted it to be a commandment! They were adamant about this as they came up against Paul, and instructed him to "command" them to keep the Law of Moses. There was a great controversy in the Jerusalem church over this. Though it doesn’t say so specifically in Scripture, I believe it went on for the better part of the day. There was a tremendous argument between Paul and the Jewish believers in Jerusalem. (Read Galatians 2 in your spare time, where Paul continues to say that the Gentile believers could not be forced to stay under the Law, for they were under Grace!) In Acts 15, Peter enters the controversy. I believe he’d been sitting back listening to everything being said (as opposed to the times in the Gospel accounts where he had been the primary spokesman). Finally, I believe the Spirit of God woke him up to speak out.

Acts 15:7

"And when there had been much disputing (there’d been a lot of argument), Peter rose up, and said unto them, ‘Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.’"

The very wording in this verse "Peter rose up" indicates that Peter had been sitting back listening, taking in the whole scene nonchalantly, while the others had been actively engaged in animated conversation and debate. But, he finally spoke out. He reminded them of the events recorded in Acts 10, events that had taken place nearly twelve years earlier, when Peter had been sent to the house of Cornelius. I believe that this was providential – this was the Sovereign God at work! God reminded Peter (and the others through him) of those special events when the first Gentiles were saved through Peter’s preaching. This is another good example of the situation we discussed a couple of lessons ago, when Hagar was sent back to the tent of Abraham and Sarah, before Ishmael was born, just to have to go through the same thing fifteen years later. Why? So we would have a New Testament lesson. This is the same kind of situation. God certainly wanted the house of Cornelius saved, but in the bigger picture, this was a preparation for Peter in Acts 15 to come to Paul’s defense by reminding the brethren that God had saved Gentiles by Peter’s preaching years before. Verse 9:
Acts 15:9

"And put no difference between us (Jews) and them (Gentiles), purifying their hearts by faith."

This was a tough thing for Peter to say! He was like every other Jew. He thought that Jews were God’s own people and that Gentiles were just "dogs," who could maybe get the "crumbs" like the Canaanite woman was able to do (Matt. 15:22-28). But here, Peter had to admit that there was now no difference between Jew and Gentile (as Paul had been teaching for years).

Acts 15:10

"Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"

We are continuing here to see that the Law was weak and beggarly. Peter calls the Law a "yoke," a "burden." It’s amazing how many people still believe that they can get to Heaven by keeping the Commandments – doing the best they can. This is why I feel I need to "raise my voice" to say that the Law was never given to save anybody. The Law was never intended to save even the Jew who was under it. We’ll see this in this lesson or the next. Turn to Galatians 5 where Paul uses exactly the same word to describe the Law.

Galatians 5:1

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty (as opposed to the yoke of bondage of the Law) wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

Just as soon as someone says that they are trying to keep the Commandments, they are placing themselves under this yoke of bondage. Another scripture says that if you are going to keep part of the Law, you have to keep all of it (James 2:10 !) If you are going to keep all of the Law, you’d better have a temple, a priesthood, an altar and a flock of sheep; because they are all involved in the sacrifices required by the Law. Just as soon as the Age of Grace came on the scene, what did God sovereingly have happen to the Temple in Jerusalem? It was torn down stone-by-stone by the Roman army; totally destroyed because the Age of Law had faded off the scene and the Age of Grace had commenced. But people are still trying to somehow go back to the Temple worship, even though it is a poor facsimile! They are trying to resurrect that legal system. But it is gone – the Temple is destroyed.
It will come back someday, but not until the Age of Grace has ended. Even now, Israel is all excited about rebuilding their Temple. They’ve got all the clothing for the priesthood made and hanging on mannequins. They’ve got all the utensils ready for the sacrificial worship. They’ve got young men trained and ready for the priesthood. The Jerusalem Post reported a few months ago that the red heifer was on some isolated farm in the countryside of Israel, ready to be sacrificed, so the ashes could be sprinkled in the new Temple when it is built, purifying it. It’s all ready! But the Church is going to have to go first! For now, we are not under Law, we are under Grace! Let’s pursue a few more verses about the Law. Turn to Romans 3. Paul makes the statement for the first time that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile. If you know your Bible, you realize that the mentality of the Jew, all the way through Paul’s ministry and even up to our day, claims that they are the only ones with access to God. To put the Gentile in the same position with them is an anathema! They couldn’t stomach that idea.

I like to point to verses in Acts (21:27-22:30) where Paul was addressing the huge Jewish crowd in Jerusalem that only a few moments before had tried to kill him. The Roman authorities had rushed in to rescue him, and then from a secure position on a stairway, they allowed him to speak to that audience. He spoke to them in Hebrew to get their attention, telling them of his qualifications as a Jew; of his persecution of the Church; of his conversion on the road to Damascus; and in Acts 22:21, of Jesus’ instruction to him to "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."

At that, the Jewish crowd went into an uproar and had it not been for the Roman authorities, the crowd would have torn Paul into pieces. The word, "Gentiles," they went berserk. That was the thinking of the Jews, and when Saul of Tarsus (Paul) said that there was no difference between the Jews and the Gentiles, the Jews were ready to tear him limb from limb! Can you now see why Peter had so many problems with reaching out to the Gentiles. I’ll point out later how Peter in his little Epistle (near the back of your Bible, just shortly before his life is ended in martyrdom), wrote, as Paul did in all his Epistles (II Peter 3:16) "...things hard to be understood...." If Peter thought they were hard to understand at the end of his life, you can imagine how he must have felt earlier.

Romans 3:19

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

Of all the peoples of the earth, there was only one group that were literally under the Law – the Jews. God didn’t expect the Gentiles to keep the Law or to have Temple
worship. There were a few proselytes who kept the Law, but I think that even a lot of them were not really true believers – they were kind of "hangers-on." But it was to the Jews that the Law was given. But look what follows the colon in verse 19, "...that every mouth may be stopped,...." Now, who does it include? The whole human race! Israel was under the Law, but the Law also condemned the whole human race, "...that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." That’s not sending you to Heaven! That’s sending you the other direction! This was the only purpose of the Law – to condemn mankind, to show man that he is a sinner and not fit for God’s Heaven, that he is a Law-breaker!

Romans 3:20,21

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Isn’t that plain English? Why can’t people see this? That’s all the Law could do – condemn! All it could do was show man that he fell far short of what God demands in righteousness.

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the prophets;.."

"But" always shows us the "flip-side." Whereas the Law condemns and proves everyone is a sinner, unfit for God’s Heaven, but now, the righteousness of God is manifested without the Law! Most people don’t like that, but that’s what The Book says! As I was driving up this morning in preparation for this program teaching, I was thinking how many people there are who somehow say, "I’m doing what my church teaches," or "I’m doing what my parents and grandparents taught." But think, how many of these people are going to stand before Christ, the Righteous Judge, someday and will say, "Lord, didn’t I agree with what my denomination taught," or "Didn’t I agree with what so-and-so said?" But the Word says in Romans 2:16 that every person is going to be judged "...according to my (Paul’s) Gospel." Don’t ever forget that!

We’re not going to be judged on the basis of "what I’ve been taught" or "I did the best I could" – we’re going to be judged on the basis of what we did with the Gospel!
Lesson One • Part II

Law – Weak and Beggarly

Go to Genesis 21 where we left off the lesson before last (the allegory of Ishmael and Isaac that we explored further in Galatians).

**Genesis 21:14,15**

"And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away; and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba." God had instructed Abraham to do this, remember. Hagar, with her son wandered in the desert of Beersheba, which is in the south of Israel, in the Negev.

"And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs."

The language here would seem to indicate that Ishmael was only a two or three-year old child. But we must remember that he actually was thirteen or better, so he was a pretty good sized lad. Most likely, Hagar said something to him such as, "Go sit in the shade of one of those shrubs," and she went a little way away from him.

**Genesis 21:16,17**

"And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, 'Let me not see the death of the child.' And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept." And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, 'What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.'" Remember, the "Angel of God" or the "Angel of the LORD" is always Jehovah; God the Son in another theophany, or appearance in human form.

**Genesis 21:18,19**

"Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation." Again, remember that most of the Arabs today came from the line of Ishmael.
"And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink." The provision from the human element was a bottle of water. That’s all Abraham provided. But notice God gave her a well! Isn’t that always the way? When we depend on the flesh, we get "a drop in the bucket;" but with God, we get wells of living water!

**Genesis 21:20,21**

"And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt."

Hagar, Ishmael’s mother, had originally come from Egypt? And notice where she went to get him a wife – back home. So there is a double connection for the offspring of Ishmael, who became the Arab nations to the nation of Egypt. We’ve pointed out, as we’ve reviewed the genealogies recorded in Genesis so far, that Egyptians are not true Arabs. But they are so closely related, that in political situations they usually work pretty well together. Let’s skip some intervening verses here where Abraham deals with Abimelech.

**Genesis 21:33**

"And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God." Remember that Beersheba is down in the southern part of Israel, or Palestine, down in the desert area. In the city of Beersheba they now have a shrine for the ancient well spoken of here that was dug by Abraham.

A few weeks ago we explained these names of God or Jehovah, God the Son. Abraham, from Beersheba called on the name of the LORD, or the name of Jehovah, the everlasting God. Although the English kind of leaves us "hanging" here, in the Hebrew, the "everlasting God" is "Elohim Olam." Here’s where things get a little bit more interesting if you dig below the surface. Abraham called on Jehovah (and remember, Jehovah is God The Son, The Christ of the New Testament!) Who is, to clarify, "the everlasting God." This fits beautifully with what we’ve studied in these last two lessons concerning the fact we’re not under Law, but under Grace. We see that God can do this from His very Name of Deity. He is "everlasting God." I’ve already mentioned the word "Elohim," which is the plural form of the word for "God," and this now states that He is the "Elohim Olam." This word "Olam" is translated out of the Hebrew, with three different meanings (yet are all pretty closely related). In Leviticus "Olam" is used to speak of "a specific time." The verse says that if the people want to redeem a piece of land, at that time, they have to do such
and such. So it speaks of a specific time. In another place, "Olam" is translated as "hid" or "hidden." To see this, turn to Psalms 10:1:

Psalms 10:1

"Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thy self in times of trouble?"

While in Leviticus, "Olam" was translated as "time," here in the Psalms, this same word was translated "h timed." So the word "Olam" here refers to something hidden, or more specifically, God’s being hidden from view. Let’s look now at Psalms 90, (and I’m trying to use these words within the context of one book so that we don’t have to spend a lot of time looking them up.), where this very same word, "Olam" is translated "everlasting." See verse 2:

Psalms 90:2

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting (Olam) to everlasting (Olam), thou art God." 

The everlasting God, then, as used in Genesis, is speaking of more than the God who exists from eternity past (before Genesis 1:1) through the end of the timeline to eternity future.

God from Everlasting to Everlasting

Eternity _________________________________ Eternity

past future

This is the God of Creation, the everlasting God. But, as the word "Olam" is used in these other Scriptures, it points out that God is not only from everlasting to everlasting, but also is a God Who is associated with time, and that within time, in His everlasting role as Sovereign God, He can hide things at His pleasure. This may sound at this point like a bit of "gobbledy-gook," but I’m trying to build my case. The God Who is from everlasting to everlasting is also the God of intrinsic time. Also, since He is Sovereign, He is fully able to either reveal everything within time or keep it secret. I know this is getting deeper than you may like to go, but I think it’s imperative to understand this premise, so that we can go to the timeline and show how there were times when God did not reveal, and there were times when He did reveal.
Go back to Genesis and come up through our timeline as we did when we started our study.

Initially, Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden, and we don’t know for how long. While they were in the Garden, God gave them no hint as to what would happen in the future. There were no prophetic statements that, by-and-by, something like this was going to happen. He simply chose to put them in time, and that was all. Then Adam and Eve sinned, and were driven from the Garden, and the next period of time runs from their expulsion from the Garden all the way down to the Flood. I like to point out that when Adam and Eve went out of the Garden, they entered a totally different situation than the one they had experienced in the Garden. In the Garden, they had no responsibilities but to enjoy their paradise. But when they came out, they had to labor for their livelihood under the curse. Everything was different! They had to work by the sweat of their brows; they had to work with sin around them; they had to deal with God regarding redemption; they had to bring blood sacrifices—everything was totally different. Then, because mankind went down, down, down, we come to the time when God decided He’d have to start all over, and so came the Flood.

Again, I need to point out that when Noah and his three sons came out of the Ark, the situation they found was totally different! All of the earth was different, from the atmospheric conditions on. Noah and his sons were then given permission to kill animals and eat the flesh thereof, which had not been allowed by God before. So it’s important to see that each time we come to the various breaks in time, entirely new sets of circumstances arise. So, after Noah and his family came out of the ark, they were instructed by God to set up a human government to maintain law and order (which had not previously existed). Then, about 175 years following the flood (because the people had been disobedient and had not scattered across the earth as God had instructed, but had congregated in the valley of Shinar at the tower of Babel), God confused their languages and caused them to scatter. And about 150 years following the dispersion from the Tower of Babel, God did something else which was totally different. He called out the man we have come to know as Abraham, through whose descendants He chose to work a different plan, while the rest of the world would go on in its own pagan ways.

Beginning with the Nation of Israel, Abraham’s descendants, God began to work in a totally different manner with regard to things being hidden or being revealed. From Genesis 12 forward, He began to reveal things to the Nation of Israel in great detail before they happened, and we call that prophecy. Everything that was to happen to Israel, God began to reveal beforehand—even to naming some of the people who would be involved such as Cyrus hundreds of years before they were born! He foretold the Cross, the Resurrection and the Ascension; He foretold the final seven
years of Israel’s tribulation called "Daniel’s 70th week." So, in contrast to the past in which He had kept things secret, God began to reveal the things that were to happen ahead of time to the Nation of Israel. In the New Testament, Jesus foretold the destruction of the City of Jerusalem; and the dispersion of the Jews which was to follow His Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension; and the establishment of the Church in the first part of the Book of Acts (see Luke 21). Then the Scriptures look forward to the seven years of tribulation (Jacob’s trouble referred to in Jeremiah), and reveals much about the end-times in the Book of Revelation.

But through this prophetic time, when God is dealing with Israel, there is one thing that’s never mentioned – the Age of Grace. Not a word about His going to the Gentiles to call out a multitude of people for His Name. About that He was totally silent. This period of time which I’m calling the "Age of Grace" is an undetermined period. Back in Israel’s history, God would lay out his plan on a time-table. He told Abraham that 430 years following his call, Israel would come out of Egypt, and they did! He told them there would be 490 years from one Temple to the next. He told them that there would be 490 years from Daniel’s prophecy to the appearance of Jesus on Palm Sunday. All the way through Israel’s history there was a distinct time-table, and it was right to the letter. But, when it comes to the "Church Age" or the "Age of Grace" there’s not a single time element mentioned. This was to be an undetermined period of time, about which God chose not to reveal details according to His sovereign decree. Look at Romans. This is a passage that I fear few people know is in their Bibles.

Romans 16:25,26

"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:"

This is Paul writing to the Gentiles. And this period of time to which he refers (as well as everything that God is going to bring about during it), has been kept a secret from the beginning of the age! This is within the scope of the God Who is from Everlasting to Everlasting. He can do anything He wants! This is the God Who is from "Olam" to "Olam." He is not only the God of everlasting time, but He is also the God of time; He Who can hide things in time. This is exactly what The Bible said He did concerning this Age of Grace. Turn to Ephesians 3. I’m going slowly because these are concepts not easily absorbed, and we need to read the Scriptures carefully. Start at verse 1. This concerns the fact we are not under Law, we are under Grace, and only the Sovereign God has the right to make that distinction. But He chose through
the ages to keep secret the fact that there would be a time when men and women would be saved by Grace through faith plus nothing!

**Ephesians 3:1,2**

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation (administration) of the grace of God which is given me to you - ward:..." It was no longer for Jews only, but now Gentiles were included!

Earlier we showed that when God gave the Law to Israel through Moses on the mountain. Moses then came down to the people and gave it to them – so it came from God to Moses to the people of Israel. We have a similar analogy here. Paul had gone into the wilderness of Arabia (and I believe he was in Sinai), and as Moses received the Law, Paul received revelation of Grace, which had been kept secret since the age began.

**Ephesians 3:3-6,9**

"How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ); Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:'" When Paul referred to "other ages" in verse 5, he used the Greek word "Aion" which is synonymous with "dispensation."

(9)"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:" ‘Men’ in verse 9 is italicized because the translators added it. One more portion we need to look at is:

**Colossians 1:24-26**

"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery (secret) which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:"
The world can’t understand it! The unbeliever can’t comprehend it! But child of God, **tonight you can!**
Lesson One • Part III
Law – Weak and Beggarly

Turn with me to Exodus 19. In this lesson we are going to pursue the difference between Law and Grace. I have found that if there ever was any area of confusion among Christian people, it’s in this area. When they are able to recognize this difference, they become so excited about it that they admonish me to be sure to teach this difference between Law and Grace to others. In Exodus 19 we find that the Nation of Israel has come out of Egypt where they have been in bondage, and by virtue of the miraculous power of God they are able to cross the Red Sea and come to Mount Sinai. In Chapter 20, Moses went up onto the Mountain and received the Ten Commandments and the rest of the Law from God. When I refer to "the rest of the Law" there may be some confusion so we need to understand that "the Law" consisted of three parts:

The Moral Law commonly referred to as

The Ten Commandments

The Ecclesiastical Law which was associated with

The Temple worship

The Civil Regulations which governed how neighbor was to get along with neighbor and how they were to handle the various aspects of their society, such as how to transfer ownership of land; all intrinsic problems of a society were covered in The civil law

It is important that when we come across the word "Law" in The Bible, we need to determine whether or not the term is being used to cover all of the above aspects of the Law, or just a portion of it, such as the Ten Commandments. The text normally reveals the use clearly. In Exodus 19, we find Israel had not yet received the Law.

Exodus 19:7,8

"And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, ‘All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.’ And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD."
That’s **legalism**! You cannot have legalism without the flesh doing something. So Israel said, "Lord, tell us what you want us to do and **we’ll do it**!" Another Scripture passage we need to review is in Deuteronomy. I believe this is more or less a recapitulation of what was said in Exodus, since Deuteronomy is generally an analysis of what has gone on before. In this passage, the leaders of Israel are speaking to Moses and tell him:

**Deuteronomy 5:27**

"Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it."

Turn to Hebrews 11. Some of these things are just so basic we dare not skip over them! This is The Bible definition of faith, as it is laid out in the opening verses of this chapter.

**Hebrews 11:1**

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Faith is the very substance, the very core, of things hoped for; faith is the evidence of things not seen. When we get into areas of faith, we’re dealing in areas where you cannot use your five senses. You cannot touch them, you can’t put them in a test tube in the laboratory; faith is the area of the invisible; the spirit world.

**Hebrews 11:2,3**

"For by it (faith) the elders obtained a good report (I believe Paul wrote Hebrews, and here he is referring to those of the Old Testament times, the forefathers). Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

There’s no way to prove that the world was made in this way scientifically. **We must believe** that God made it this way, because God said that He did, and He expects us to believe Him. He spoke the word, and the universe came together.

**Hebrews 11:6**
"But without faith it is impossible to please him (God): for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a reverter of them that diligently seek Him."

We cannot please God unless we believe what He has said! I hope no one ever accuses me of promoting an "easy-believeism." In other words, "believe in the Lord Jesus, and you’re all right." I never teach that. When I talk about "believing" or "faith plus nothing," I’m talking about a belief and a faith that is so rock solid you can honestly say, "With all my spirit, I know that Christ died for me. I know that my sins have been forgiven because His Blood has taken care of them. I know beyond a shadow of a doubt He has risen from the dead. I have no doubt of these things. I know He did them for me!" When someone believes like that, and it has become "a power of God experience," it’s going to change his life! It is going to have such an effect that you don’t have to have a set of rules and regulations to guide your behavior. Right action will come from that power God has placed within you. But it has to start with faith! We have to believe it because God has said it.

The Law included the Ten Commandments which were set in stone. God didn’t see fit to put the Ten Commandments on a teddy bear that someone could cuddle up to. They were, instead, cut into cold, hard tables of stone, and were immovable. The Law could do nothing but condemn. It had no power whatsoever to help a man keep from stealing or from committing adultery. All the Law could do was say, "Don’t you do that!" or, "Do this!" Even the first commandment about love said:

Matthew 22:37

"...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God...."

Can you force anyone to love you? It’s impossible. Love has to spring from within. So it is with the Ten Commandments. They did nothing but stand in stark reality to convict and condemn. See how foolish it is when people say something like, "I’m doing the best I can. I’m keeping the Ten Commandments." That’s impossible! The "good" Jew, under the Law, as soon as he realized that he had broken one of the Laws, had to reach down into the second part of the Law to practice what God had said to do with regard to approaching God, and regarding worship. He had to do everything according to the instructions provided by God, according to the letter of the Law. For example, until Israel got into the Promised Land they had the Tabernacle as their place of worship. When they camped, the Tabernacle was at the center of the community, with three of the tribes camped on each side of it.

You’ll remember that the group that came out of Egypt, and camped at Sinai, was made up of from three to six million people. Consequently, the people who were on
the outer fringes of the camp were a long way from the altar contained in the
Tabernacle. Put yourself in their shoes for a minute. Suppose someone from the outer
perimeters of the camp had broken the Law. Maybe he stole something from his
neighbor. He knows that he’s broken the Law. He knows that the Law said, "Thou
shalt not steal", and because of that he has to do something to make the situation
right. But, he might think, it’s a long way from here to the priest and altar, so I’m
going to admit to God that I’ve sinned, and I don’t think that I’ll have to make that
sacrifice. So that’s what he does. He says, "God, I’ve broken your commandment.
I’ve stolen from my neighbor, but I don’t want to go all the way up to the Tabernacle
to make a sacrifice." According to the Law, was that man accepted? NO! Why?
Because he did not do what God said to do! He didn’t take the sacrifice to the
priest. That was works.

A second example. Let’s say that this same fellow commits the same sin, recognizes
it, and says, "My neighbor down the road had this same problem a few weeks ago. He
took a sacrifice to the priest and everything was all right. I think that’s what I’ll do."
So he does that. Now, was he accepted? NO! Why? Because he didn’t do it by
faith in what God had said to do. Do you see the difference? So either way, he could
go through some of the motions by faith, but if he didn’t do it exactly according to
God’s explicit instructions, he wouldn’t be accepted. But on the other hand, even if he
carried out God’s instructions to the letter, but didn’t do it in faith, he still wouldn’t be
accepted. That’s legalism. That was the Law! Let’s look at the timeline we used in
the last lesson.

We saw that God began to deal with the Nation of Israel through Abraham and all the
prophetic promises, and that Messiah came and was crucified. Now, we need to look
at the Book of Acts. This is where a lot of people end up in confusion. Many churches
work that, somehow, the "Age of Grace" started somewhere back during Jesus' 
ministry on earth as recorded in the Gospels; not that Jesus lived out His life and
worked His ministry under the auspices of the Law. Everything that took place in
the Gospels did so under the Law. The Temple was still going strong. Sacrifices
were being brought by the thousands. Whenever people would come to Jesus, He
would tell them to go to the priests and make the proper sacrifices. Remember the
ten lepers who were healed? Jesus told them to go show themselves to the priest
(Luke17:12).

When the rich, young ruler came to Jesus asking how to be saved, Jesus told him
to keep the Commandments. (Luke 18:18-23) Jesus meant that he should keep the
whole Law. If he broke a Commandment, he had to come by the prescribed way to
approach God. These things all happened under the Law, and Jesus labored under that
Law for the entire period of His ministry.
Let’s look at Acts 10. According to all the chronologists that I’ve studied (the men who have put a time element on Biblical events), Peter went to the house of Cornelius about eight to ten years after Pentecost. That’s a long time! God knew the heart and mind of Peter (which was correct under the Law), and when God wanted Peter to go the home of this Gentile, He knew He’d have to do something special to get him there. So, while the men were coming from Caesarea to Joppa to get Peter, God gave Peter a vision to prepare him to go with them. Otherwise, Peter never would have gone! Peter would never have gone to that Gentile home unless God had taken drastic measures. God showed Peter the vision of the sheet which contained all manner living things.

**Act 10:13,14**

"And there came a voice to him, ‘Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.’" Remember the time element – about ten years down the road from Pentecost when this took place. But what was Peter’s answer?

"But Peter said, ‘Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.'"

**Peter was a Law-keeping Jew.** He wasn’t going to eat anything that was not legally acceptable under the Law. Now, if that’s not enough to convince you, let’s look at verse 25. The men have reached Peter and have taken him back to their master’s house.

**Acts 10:25**

"And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him."

That should give you a good indication of how far from the truth this man Cornelius was. The passage had said earlier that he was a good man, he gave alms, and he prayed to God, but yet he was so ignorant of the true God that he fell down to worship a mere human being. Verses 26 and 27:

**Acts 10:26,27**

"But Peter took him up, saying, ‘Stand up; I myself also am a man.' And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together."

Try putting yourself in Peter’s shoes. **He was a Law-keeping Jew,** going into a strange area, and even worse, into the home of a Gentile. He was very
uncomfortable, even though God had made it clear to him that this is what he was to do. **Look what Peter said as he went in:**

**Acts 10:28**

"And he said unto them, 'Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."

Peter said in effect, "I’m not supposed to be here. But God . . ." Peter would have never gone there if God had not forced the issue! What I’m trying to show here is that even at this late date, these Jewish believers, such as Peter and the eleven, and all those who had come to believe in Christ, **were all Law-keepers.** This is hard for people to comprehend. Everything was still in the prophetic program. Christ had been crucified, buried and had ascended, but when we get into Chapter 3 of Acts, Peter was still expecting that Christ would come to set up His Kingdom in Israel with the believers. We’re now coming to a place of change. God was going to usher in something **totally different** than had ever been available to the human race before. He was about to initiate the "**Age of Grace.**" Let’s look at some of the basic tenets or doctrines of this Age of Grace. Turn to I Corinthians 15. Remember in the last lesson we looked at the passages in Romans and Ephesians, where Paul referred to the "**mystery**," that secret that **had been hidden** in the mind of God? **Now it has been revealed!**

**I Corinthians 15:1,2**

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel (not a gospel) which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain."

Do you see what that says? **It is by this Gospel that we Gentiles are saved.** Now verse 3:

**I Corinthians 15: 3**

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures;"

If you study Paul’s letters, you’ll see that he constantly refers to the **revelations** that he got from the **ascended Lord.** How the Lord revealed the new truths to him that
were never before revealed in the Scriptures. These truths were prophesied, but it was never revealed that Salvation would be for Jews and Gentiles alike.

*I Corinthians 15:4*

"And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures;"

Now, let’s see what Paul says about this very premise of Christ’s death, burial and Resurrection. Turn back to I Corinthians where Paul writes:

*I Corinthians 1:18a*

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;..."

We see that all around us, don’t we. People just don’t comprehend how someone who lived 2,000 years ago could have any effect on us today.

*I Corinthians 1:18b*

"...but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

That’s what I want you to understand. The Gospel is the Power of God! Let’s use an illustration. Let’s imagine a newly married couple, and the husband has put on the wall a whole list of do’s and don'ts for his wife; things she must or must not do if she is going to stay out of trouble. If she’s human, what’s she going to do? She’ll put up her own list for her husband. "If I have to do this, then you have to do that." That would be a marriage based on Law. "Thou shalt...Thou shalt not." Legalism! What’s lacking there? LOVE.

Now, let’s take the same couple that love each other, what are they going to do? They’ll do the same things that they would have written down, but it won’t be by command, it will be from hearts of love. This is exactly the difference between Law and Grace. Everything that God said "Thou shalt" does not now become permissive. It now becomes that which comes from within. In other words, the believer is automatically going to adhere to the things written in the Law. The believer is not going to steal; he’s not going to commit adultery; he’s not going to worship a pagan idol; and on through the Commandments. There is only one commandment that Paul does not reiterate as he does all the others.

*Ephesians 6:1,2*
"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)

Paul never says that we can now break the Commandments, or that they are no longer any earthly good. It’s just that **we are not under their demands** in worship and their condemnation. Once we recognize that, **"Yes, we were Law-breakers, we have broken the Law; but now in Christ we have become everything that the Law demands of us, but from an inward working power.** Look at:

**Romans 13:8**

"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."

Now, all you have to do is read the following verses in Romans 13. The Commandments are all listed there.
Lesson One • Part IV

Law – Weak and Beggarly

We’ve spent enough time on Law and Grace for now. These subjects will come up again from time to time. Turn to Genesis 22. Years had gone by and Isaac was probably a late teenager, maybe even twenty years old. God put Abraham to a tremendous test. Whenever I deal with new believers, I warn them that God is going to test their faith. We see it all through Scripture. Abraham was no exception. How do you think Abraham felt after years of waiting for a child. Ishmael finally came on the scene, grew into a teenager, and God told Abraham to send him away? Abraham loved Ishmael. This had to be excruciating for the old man. Then Abraham had his son of promise, Isaac. For nearly twenty years, he was deeply attached to him. What did God tell Abraham to do with him? Kill him! Imagine what Abraham must have gone through!

*Genesis 22:1,2*

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, ‘Abraham;' and he said, ‘Behold, here I am.'" I prefer the marginal notes use of the word "test" rather than "tempt." God does not tempt, but He does test His people.

"And He (God) said, ‘Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.'"

The reason I emphasize the word "only" in verse 2 is because as far as God is concerned, Isaac is Abraham’s only son. Ishmael didn’t count as Abraham’s son. The reason is that it is through the line of Isaac that the Nation of Israel and The Messiah were to come. So I want you to make special note of God’s reference to Isaac as Abraham’s only son whom He loved.

The mountain to which God directed Abraham we know today as Mount Moriah, in the heart of Jerusalem. On Mount Moriah stands the Mosque of Omar (I read recently the structure there is actually a shrine). When one enters the shrine, coming up out of what we would call the basement, is a huge rock around which the shrine was built. Supposedly, this is the rock upon which Abraham was to offer Isaac. The point I’m making is that Mount Moriah is the very same place in Scripture where Solomon’s Temple rested. So, everything in Israel is specific in time, in prophecy, in everything. And here we see that before the Nation of Israel was a reality, Mount Moriah had become a place of tremendous importance.
Genesis 22:3-5

"And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave (carried) the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him." In verse 4, underline the phrase "on the third day." This should immediately tell us that this is going to be a picture of Christ’s death, burial and Resurrection.

"Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, ‘Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.”

Underline "and come again to you(!)." What did Abraham know in his heart? He knew that even if Isaac’s life had to be taken, God would raise him from the dead so that he could come back with his father. That much Abraham knew and believed. This again, is the total picture now of what Christ would accomplish on the Cross. I believe we are perfectly correct to say that in this situation, Isaac is a type of Christ and Abraham is a type of God the Father. They exhibit the same love relationship, the same sacrifice situation that Jesus and God shared.

Genesis 22:6

"And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together." We have said before that Isaac was a young man of about twenty, and had certainly been witness to more than one sacrifice and order of worship for the ancients.

Genesis 22:7-9

"And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, ‘My father:' and he said, ‘Here am I, my son.' And he said, ‘Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?’" Amazingly, at this point, Abraham didn’t say, "Isaac, it’s going to be you!" Instead he said:

"And Abraham said, ‘My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: ’ so they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood."
For the ordinary, strapping eighteen or twenty-year-old, what would we expect his reaction to be? This was one situation in which the son could have easily whipped his father. But what do we see in Isaac? Complete obedience! Again, take this example 2,000 years into the future. When it came time for those Romans to begin scourging Jesus, and whipping Him, and pulling out His beard and crushing that crown of thorns onto His head, what could He have done? He could have rebelled. He could have thrown it all aside. Scriptures say He could have called down ten legions of angels. He didn’t have to go through all that! But what did He do? **In complete obedience to His Father,** He suffered at the hands of all those infidels and the raging religionists of His day, and He went to the Cross. **So it was with Isaac.** He obediently let Abraham bind him and lay him upon the altar.

**Genesis 22:10**

"And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son."

And here we have that term again... "**The Angel of the Lord,**" God the Son. (I don’t want to call Him Jesus in the Old Testament, because the Scriptures don’t), but it is **God The Son, Jehovah,** the same Person, but in His Old Testament character.

**Genesis 22:11,12**

"And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, 'Abraham, Abraham:' and he said, 'Here am I.' And he said, 'Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.'"

Now, let’s relate this to the life of a believer. Do believers suffer? Some of them have gone through tremendous suffering, yet they have maintained the best attitudes and happiest dispositions that you can witness. Their suffering has allowed them to prove to God just how much they love Him. **The reason God brings times of testing and tribulation is to test our mettle.** What do a lot of people do? They get bitter and angry and rebellious.

But to the truly believing heart, when hard times come, God becomes all the more precious. This is a lesson we all have to learn. God is not going to let us escape problems, He is simply going to be our hope as we go through them. This same thing was happening to Abraham. God said to Abraham, "**I know now that you love me, because you were willing to sacrifice your beloved son.**" It’s the same way with God the Father, **we know that He loves us completely because He sent Christ to**
the Cross. The only things that put Jesus on that Cross were the love of God and the sins of mankind.

Genesis 22:13

"And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son."

You almost have to wonder whether Abraham was expecting something like this, when in verse 8 he said, "God will provide." It seems he must have known. God has never changed! So go back with me to Genesis 4. In the timeline we’ve shown in the last few lessons, we’ve seen that over and over again. The situations changed from man’s point of view; man’s responsibilities changed. But did God ever change? No! Never!

I believe in the dispensational approach to Bible study, because it’s the easiest way to understand Scripture. The best illustration I’ve run across is our own presidential administrations. I’m going to use Carter and Reagan because they’re probably the best two for comparison that I can think of. First, we had four years of President Carter. His administration reflected his own political ideology. Then came President Reagan, who was almost totally opposite in his approach to politics and so forth, which we experienced during his administration. But they were both laboring under the same Constitution. The Constitution didn’t change, even though the administrations did. Every time we get a new president, we get a new administration and things are going to change to some degree but the Constitution never does. It was the same way here in Scripture. Things changed drastically when Adam and Eve came out of the Garden; again they changed drastically coming out of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and going under the Law; it was far different coming out from under the Law and entering into the Age of Grace. But God never changed!

Back to Genesis 4. Here God was dealing with Cain. Remember that they didn’t yet have the Law, but God had told them that when their conscience convicted them of having committed a wrong, they were to bring a blood sacrifice to God and He would accept them. Abel did, and the Book of Hebrews, the faith chapter (11) tells us that "by faith, Abel brought the more excellent sacrifice." But Cain rationalized, saying to himself, "Why should I go some place to barter for a lamb, when I can make a sacrifice of the things that I have grown. If I make it beautiful and make the effort to go to God with it, I will be accepted." But he wasn’t:

Genesis 4:5,6
"But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell (Have you ever seen anyone get so angry that you could see it all over them? That’s the way Cain was, and God saw it). And the LORD said unto Cain, ‘Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?’ " The LORD (Jehovah) is saying, "Cain, can’t you understand how I want you to get right with me?" God is always anxious to have a sinner reconciled to Him, just by doing what God has instructed.

**Genesis 4:7a**

"'If thou doest well (if you bring me a blood sacrifice like Abel did), shalt thou not be accepted?...’"

Of course he would be! But Cain was evidently a farmer and had no access to sacrificial animals unless he’d barter with his brother Abel. Pride entered the picture, and Cain wasn’t about to do that. So God went one step further. Knowing Cain didn’t want to go through that kind of trouble, God told him, "Cain, I’ve provided a sacrifice for you," just like God did for Abraham in Chapter 22.

**Genesis 4:7b**

"'...and if thou doest not well (if you can’t bring a lamb on your own), sin (a sacrificial sin offering*) lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.’"

*I’m putting this translation in there, because in the Hebrew, the word used is identical for "sin" and "sin-offering." I think it was unfortunate that the translators did not make that clear. God is saying? "Cain, if you won’t or can’t bring a lamb sacrifice on your own, I’ve put one at your front door for you to use. It’s not going to fight with you. He’s going to be perfectly willing to have you pick him up and bring him to me for a sacrificial offering. All you’ve got to do is pick him up and bring him." God hasn’t changed! So now, let’s go back to Genesis 22. God providentially provided the ram, caught in the thicket; and Abraham apparently had no difficulty in getting the ram from the thicket to the altar. He had no help except, possibly, that of Isaac. Several lessons ago we went through some names of Jehovah, and made mention of this?

**Genesis 22:14-18**

‘And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh (The LORD who provides, or Jehovah the provider): as it is said to this day, ‘In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.’ And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of
heaven the second time, And said, ‘By myself have I sworn,’ saith the LORD, ‘for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son;...’ " Watch verse 17, and be reminded, you’ve seen this before:

"‘...That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;...’" Verse 18 is a repetition of the Abrahamic Covenant back in Chapter 12:

"‘And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.’" Unless we understand the Covenants in the Old Testament, it’s hard to comprehend what we talk about in the New Testament.

**Genesis 22:19,20,23**

"So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba. And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, ‘Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor;’" Remember, Nahor was in Syria north of present day Damascus.

"And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abraham’s brother." Rebekah soon will come on the scene as Isaac’s wife. Now look at an interesting tidbit in Chapter 23:1:

**Genesis 23:1,2**

"And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah." It’s interesting that Sarah is the only woman mentioned in The Bible whose age is given!

"And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her."

Though Abraham had the Middle East deeded to him in Chapter 15 by God, he still bought a tract of land to have a place to bury his wife. Verse 11, where Ephron the Hittite said to Abraham:

**Genesis 23:11-13**

"‘Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy
dead.' And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, 'But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there.'"

I think it’s interesting that Abraham is not satisfied with accepting a certain amount of acres free for nothing, even though he could have. He insisted on paying for it. I don’t know how much we can connect with this, but even in present day Jewry, when it comes to the burial of their dead, they are very particular. A few years ago they made a big furor about the things being built near, or over a Jewish Holocaust cemetery. In an article in the Jerusalem Post recently, a rabbi pointed out this same thing. He said, "Even today, we Jews are particular about where we bury our loved ones." I thought it was interesting that so much of the Old Testament record of the ancients remains true today. So they bartered; which they were both very good at – Arabs and Jews.

**Genesis 23:14-18**

"And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, 'My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead.' And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant. And the field of Ephron, which was in Mach-pelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city." In other words, Abraham paid Ephron for the field. It was surveyed and the ownership was legally transferred to Abraham. It wasn’t only Sarah who was to be buried there, but also Abraham, Isaac, and, I think, Rebekah were buried there.

**Genesis 23:19,20**

"And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Mach-pelah before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan. And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a buryingplace by the sons of Heth."

In our next lesson, we will be going for a bride for Isaac. Abraham is going to send his servant back into the land of his relatives to get a bride for his son, Isaac. But why go all that way when there are lots of eligible girls right at home? Abraham instructed his servant not to take a wife for Isaac from among the Canaanite women. But later on,
when Esau came on the scene, he married two Canaanite women who were a grief to Isaac and Rebekah. So, keep all these things in the perspective of Scripture, because God is preparing everything for the Covenant people of Israel. This is the way I like to look at the Nation of Israel today. They are in their land in unbelief, and, contrary to everything we think, they should be. But they are still under the sovereign will of their God, because God is watching out for Israel. They are still the Covenant people, and even back here, God had to watch who they would marry.
Lesson Two • Part I

Law and Grace: Time Line: Isaac

In the Book of Romans, the Apostle Paul, writes to the Gentiles:

Romans 15:4

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

When Paul refers to things "written aforetime", he was referring to the Old Testament. The reason we study the Old Testament is to pick up a background for all the doctrines that are going to come, especially those from the pen of the Apostle Paul. I like to bring out the intrinsic quality of Scripture; of how miraculously it all fits, so that we will have no doubts that we can trust it as the eternal, supernatural, miraculously written Word of God. Let’s go back to Genesis 24. In the last few lessons we were dealing with Isaac and Ishmael, and how Isaac was, in type, a picture of Grace; the son of promise. Whereas Ishmael was a son of the flesh, and was depicted by Paul in his letter to the Galatians as a picture of Law.

In Genesis 24 we have a study I’m reluctant to call a "type" because there is one part of the account that would break down with regard to a perfect type. Most of you know what a "type" is in the Old Testament – a perfect illustration of a New Testament truth. For example, we know that Abraham is so typical of the man of faith, that we can call him a faith "type." Joseph, in so many ways experienced the same things that were experienced in the life of Christ, so we can consider Joseph as a "type" of Christ in that Old Testament setting. The same applies here in Chapter 24. It comes close to being a "type," but because of one little detail, I will only call it a "good illustration." As Abraham is going to send out his servant to bring back a bride for his son Isaac, it is a perfect parallel of what the Holy Spirit is doing today to call out the Bride for Christ. So, this is the lesson I like to pull out of this chapter.

The only small part that breaks down is that the Gentiles, as such had not really been isolated as yet in Scripture, because Abraham was the father of the Hebrew race; and he was sending his servant back to his own kinfolk for a bride for Isaac. So, it isn’t like he was actually going to the Gentiles, as we know the Lord is doing today with regard to the Bride of Christ, the Body of Christ which is, for the most part today, Gentiles. Nevertheless, we'll look at this chapter with this parallel, using this illustration:
The role of the servant in this situation is totally in line with the role of the Holy Spirit today, and it’s important that you see this. We won’t take the entire chapter verse by verse because so much of it is repetitious, but we will hit the highlights.

**Genesis 24:1**

"And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things."

Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born, and Isaac was now well up in years, so Abraham was indeed old. In Verse 2, Abraham addressed his servant, and although that servant is not named here, earlier in Genesis 15:2 we found that Abraham had a servant named Eliezer of Damascus – no doubt this is the same man.

**Genesis 24:2**

"And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, ‘Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:...’"

This language throws a curve at us, and we think, "What in the world?" But all they were doing was practicing ancient customs written out by Hammurabi. This man was more or less a philosopher and law-giver in ancient Babylon. Until God called out the Nation of Israel, and began dealing with them, and gave them His special instructions in the form of the Law, most of the then-known world operated under the laws of Hammurabi. They were good, moral laws for the most part, but they certainly were not God-inspired, as we now find here in the Scriptures. So these things we think of as "odd," were just customs of those ancient days.

**Genesis 24:3,4**

"‘And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.’"

I believe this is a good time to stop and do a brief review of the nations of that area in Abraham’s time. In order to understand what Abraham was really talking about when he said, "Go back to my kindred," we need to remember from where he came. Let’s look at a map of this area:

If you recall, back in Genesis when God first talked to Abram (Abraham), that he and his father Terah made their way up along the Euphrates River into the area known as
Syria today. Terah and his three sons had made their way from Ur, down on the Gulf of Arabia, into Syria, to a place later known as Haran. Then, from Haran, after Terah died, Abraham came down into the land of Canaan where the Canaanites lived.

The whole Middle East is in the news nearly every day. If more people could understand that setting according to Biblical history, I think we’d have a lot less confusion even among our men in high places. Remember, that Noah had three sons, Ham, Shem and Japheth. We’ll take care of Japheth first, because he became the progenitor of what The Bible refers to as the "Goyim" and we have now put the term "Gentile" on that.

Later in history, the Goyim became the Caucasian people, or the Indo-European peoples as they are often referred to now. As we come down through Biblical history, we have come to use the term Gentile to mean any non-Jewish peoples. In order to get a good picture of this setting, we’re going to have to go way back to the three sons of Noah as illustrated in the family tree below:

**Ham** was the son upon whom Noah placed the curse, and he became the father of the Canaanites. We normally think of the Canaanites, as referred to in Scripture, as the peoples living along the shores of the Mediterranean in the land of Palestine (or Israel), and they were already in the land when Abraham came.

**Shem** is the son we are predominately interested in. From this line came the man Terah who had three sons, Haran, Abram (Abraham) and Nahor. These names are not all that important except that I want you to see how, in our own present day with all the troubles in the Middle East, it all goes back to these families. Haran was the father of Lot. Lot, in turn, had two sons by his own daughters, back at the time of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. His offspring from the two daughters were Moabites and the Ammonites. Now, just in case you wonder what I’m talking about, what’s the present day capital of Trans-Jordan? **Amman.** It all comes back to these same roots. They are still all part and parcel of this family line.

Nahor had a son named Bethuel, and he had a daughter named **Rebekah.** She’s the one we’re going to come to now in Genesis 24. He also had a son named Laban. Laban in turn had two daughters named **Leah** and **Rachel.** Now, is it starting to fall into place?

Let’s look at Abraham’s family. First, he had a son by the Egyptian slave girl, Hagar, named **Ishmael.** Then he had a son by his legal wife, Sarah, named **Isaac.** Then after Sarah died, he took a wife named Keturah, and she had a son, among others, from whom came the Midianite nation. If you’ll remember your Biblical history, the Midianites were the people to the east. When Moses fled to the desert after leaving
Egypt the first time, he married the daughter of the priest of Midian. I’m only pointing all this out to show how all these families are intertwined with the exception, of course, of the Canaanites, because God specifically said that they were not to marry Canaanites. Let’s move on down. His mother being an Egyptian, Ishmael in turn married an Egyptian woman. The Egyptians, of course, came from Ham, so we have a connection between this line of the offspring of Ishmael to the Canaanites and the Egyptians. That’s why I mentioned several lessons ago that even though the Egyptians are not true Arabs, the Egyptians and the Arabs are always acting like next-of-kin.

We know that Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Esau, in turn went right back and married two Canaanite women, which the Scriptures say were "a grief of mind" to Isaac and Rebekah. Jacob, on the other hand, went back to his father’s family, marrying Leah and Rachel. From those two marriages, we have the twelve sons which become the twelve tribes of Israel. From the tribe of Judah came King David, then King Solomon. From Solomon the genealogy splits and on one side we have the genealogy of Mary, which is the bloodline that goes all the way back to Adam and Eve. On the other side, we have the line that led to Joseph, who, of course, was not the blood father, but he was the legal father of the Lord Jesus. So, you see, everything just fits perfectly all the way down through these lines, and God is in complete sovereign control. Let’s move on now in Genesis 24. Remember, that all of these families in the Middle East except for Japheth’s, are all inter-related. That’s why they have such a hatred for each other – they are all blood relatives. There’s just no denying it.

**Genesis 24:3b-5a**

"'...thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.' And the servant said unto him, 'Peradventure the woman will not be willing . . .'"

I believe this is will be a picture, illustration, or parallel of God’s calling out the Body of Christ from among the Gentiles. God the Father has sent the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is moving among the human race, wooing them, presenting them with the plan of Salvation. Even though God is sovereign, one of the things that is hard to reconcile is the question, "Is God absolute in whom He chooses? Does everyone else not have a chance? How does it all work?" I think what you have to do, is put the questions into an awareness that it’s not either one or the other. What I’m talking about, of course, is whether it is totally the sovereign choosing of God ("the chosen" is used, or "the elect" is used, "predestinated" is used); or, over against that is the free will of man. Way back in the time of the reformers, Calvin was of the persuasion that we are chosen. Then those who abused Calvin’s teaching went so far as to go overboard and say, "If you’re chosen, there’s nothing you can do about it. If
you’re chosen, no one has to do anything to win you, you’re in. If you’re not chosen, you’re out." I maintain this approach is rather ridiculous. But, you see, at the time of Luther and Calvin with that approach, along came a man by the name of Armenius, and I’m sure you’ve all heard about the Armenian view. This expressed the opposite persuasion, that God had nothing to do with choosing. It’s all up to the free will of the individual. That’s the other extreme.

What we have to see is what verse 5 indicates – there has to be a willingness, but on the other hand, as you go through this chapter you can see that God definitely had His hands on the whole situation. Everything fell into place, and the servant was amazed. When he got up to Syria, he asked God, "the girl who is to be the one, let her, when I ask for water, say, ‘not only can you drink, but I’ll water the camels also.’" And that’s the way it happened. The very first girl that came along was the one! Now, how are we to reconcile this. Keep your place in Genesis and let’s turn all the way back to I Peter, because this thing about the sovereignty of God and the free will of man are with us all the way from Genesis to Revelation. So, we might as well reconcile it early on.

1 Peter 1:1,2

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."

"...Elect according to the foreknowledge of God..." that’s the secret to understanding this whole doctrine. Why can God chose some and not others? Because it is **foreknowledge**! Because He knows what an individual will do with His particular offer of Salvation. Way back in Genesis, why did Rebekah come to water the livestock and meet Abraham’s servant at just the appropriate time. Obviously, it was the sovereign working of God, there’s no doubt about it! But, she was also willing. And why was she chosen? Because God knew she would be willing.

Why are some of us saved, and our friends and loved ones not saved? Not because we were special or better, but God in His foreknowledge could see what we would do with the offer of Salvation, as Paul said in Ephesians 1:4. I know this verse has thrown a curve at a lot of people, but, hopefully, this will satisfy some of your questions. It isn’t that some are left without a chance, and God has put His finger on certain ones; but, rather, God in His foreknowledge knew what every individual would do in the exercise of his or her free will and then He could pick.

*Ephesians 1:4*
"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love:..." Why did God choose us? Because He knew what we would do. That was in His foreknowledge.

We’re not going to be able to finish Chapter 24 in this lesson, but let’s go back to it and get as far as we can.

**Genesis 24:5,6**

"And the servant said unto him, ‘Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?’ And Abraham said unto him, ‘Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.’"

I think the key word in these verses, to understand what the servant was talking about, is the word 'again.' Since this is, as I believe, a picture of the calling out of the Body of Christ. All through the Book of Hebrews we find the word *once.* This Christ died *once;"* "This He did *once;"* over and over again! What is being implied here? Christ is not going to come back a second time to go to the Cross. That was accomplished one time. Nothing can ever cross that over, so the emphasis here is, "Beware that you don’t take my Son back there again!" We’re not going to repeat something that’s been done once before.

**Genesis 24:7**

"The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father’s house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, 'Unto thy seed will I give this land;' he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.’"

The land that he was speaking of was Canaan, and the LORD’s angel was, of course, Christ in his Old Testament personality, as we’ve discussed before.

**Genesis 24:8**

"'And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again.'"

We come back to this again! As the Holy Spirit moves through the human race, particularly among the Gentiles in this Age of Grace, He is calling out a people for His Name, (and we’ll be discussing this more thoroughly in our next lesson). No one
is ever forced! It is all based on the free will of the individual. But never forget, **God has foreknowledge of who will respond.**
Lesson Two • Part II

Law and Grace: Time Line: Isaac

Turn to Genesis 24. We were drawing a comparison of the sending out of the servant for a bride for the son, Isaac, as a parallel of the work of the Holy Spirit today in calling out the Body of Christ. We will finish this chapter and then go to the Book of Psalms, Chapter 2. So look now at Genesis 24:10. As we saw in our last lesson, the servant made a covenant or oath with his master, Abraham:

**Genesis 24:10**

"And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor."

Let’s look at the map of this area on page 36 again.

Abraham was a wealthy man with tons of silver and gold and flocks and servants. No doubt this servant, which I assume was Eliezer, took a pretty good sampling of all that wealth, making his way into Mesopotamia. As this map shows, it wasn’t that far, as we Americans think of, in miles. Everything in the Middle East is very compact; but for that day, and going by camel, it was still a good long journey. Eliezer went up to Haran, the area from which Abraham had come earlier, and where his old father, Terah, had died.

**Genesis 24:11**

"And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water."

It’s interesting that we in America can’t quite comprehend women coming more and more into the work force. It’s kind of against our ethics. But it’s the way it’s always been. I can remember way back when I was a kid and missionaries would come back from Africa with their old 8mm movies. They showed the African men sitting outside their huts drinking their homemade brew and getting drunk, while the women were out in the fields doing all the work, the grinding, and the cooking. So I have known that women have been more or less the slaves of the men for many, many centuries. And that was so in Haran as well. It was the women who drew the water, took care of the flocks. I suppose the men just sort of sat back and acted as overlords. That was the situation the servant found when he brought his camels to the well of water, and he made a prayer in verses 12-14.
**Genesis 24:12-14**

"And he said, ‘O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, "Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink;" and she shall say, "Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also:" let the same be she that thou has appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.’"

The servant laid out a fleece before God. He basically said, "Lord, when a girl answers in that way, then I’ll know she’s the right one." I always think of the Book of Ruth. Remember when Naomi had lost her sons and ended up with two daughters-in-law? One stayed in Moab, but Ruth came back with her to Israel. The word is used that Ruth "**happened**" to end up in the right field – one belonging to the next of kin to Naomi – when she went to labor in the harvest field. That word "**hap**" or "**happened**" means more than that.

I was talking to a man not too long ago, and said to him, "I wish you luck." He answered, "Les, in the life of a believer there is no such thing as luck." He was absolutely correct. God is in such complete control that we can honestly say that everything that happens is in His hands. This next verse makes it so plain:

**Romans 8:28**

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

It was the same way here. It just "**happened**", but not really, that Rebekah was the girl to make the first approach. When the servant asked for water, she responded exactly as he had asked God for her to do. She came on the scene in verse 15.

**Genesis 24:15**

"And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor," Let's refer to the family tree on page 37 again.
"And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her, and said, ‘Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.’ And she said, ‘Drink, my lord,’ and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, ‘I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.’"

What did the servant know? She was the right girl! She was eligible and had all the physical attributes that caught his attention. After all, these people were just as human as we are. So she hastily drew the water and he knew that she was the one! Now verses 26-29a.

**Genesis 24:26-29a**

"And the man (Abraham’s servant) bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD. And he said, ‘Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master’s brethren.’ And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother’s house these things. And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban:..." Laban will come on the scene later in Genesis when we start dealing with Jacob. Remember, it was Laban for whom Jacob worked for his two wives, Leah and Rachel.

This young man, Laban, came running out, and I like verse 30 because all these people were so human. I think a lot of times people get the idea that these Bible characters were somehow a cut above the human. But they were not! They were just as human as we are. So when her brother came running out:

**Genesis 24:30**

"And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister’s hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, ‘Thus spake the man unto me;’ that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well.’ What did he see? The wealth that this man represented. I’ll bet that when he saw them his eyes bugged out and he thought "Wow! What in the world is my little sister getting into?" He was all for this arrangement when he saw the wealth that was involved.

**Genesis 24:31a**

"And he said, ‘Come in, thou blessed of the LORD (Jehovah);’"
I always have to remind the people I teach that when these pagans speak of the Lord and of God, it isn’t that they themselves were actual believers, or that they knew Jehovah. You must remember that all the people who lived in this Middle Eastern environment were saturated with paganism. Even these relatives of Abraham, the children of Terah, were idolaters.

Soon we’ll come to the episode where Jacob, his wives and children had left for Canaan (long after this particular time), and, suddenly, Laban came running after them looking for his family gods — the idols which Rachel had secretly brought with her. So because all these people were idolaters, take it with a grain of salt when they use the name of Jehovah. They were using that Name, not because they knew Him, but just as another name of another god, and they realized that He was the God of Abraham. Then word passed to the girl’s father that this servant of their relative, Abraham, was looking for a bride for Isaac, and Rebekah seemed to be the one. We won’t go through all these verses, but if you’ll read it later, you’ll find that even though the servant does all he can to win this beautiful girl, she had to make the final decision. After they’ve had their feasting, and getting acquainted in the house of Rebekah and her family, it all boils down to her making the choice.

*Genesis 24:57,58*

"And they said, 'We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth.' And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, 'Wilt thou go with this man?' And she said, 'I will go.'"

She made the final decision. It’s the same way with Salvation today. The Holy Spirit can woo; the Holy Spirit can convict; but God will never take someone by the nape of the neck and force the issue. I often say I am certainly not against evangelism, but I am against arm twisting, because that falls down into the energy of the flesh. Salvation has to be totally the work of the Holy Spirit. Too many times other things enter in, and people are almost forced to make a false decision. Then, years later, people wonder what happened that that Christian is bankrupt spiritually. I’m afraid they’ve never had a true experience, because it was approached in the wrong way. But here, Rebekah was given the choice and she said, "I will go."

*Genesis 24:59*

"And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham’s servant, and his men."

So they took off from way up in Syria, heading back down to the land of Canaan. Now we’ll pick up the husband-to-be. The man who is representative of Christ,
Himself; who is allowing the Holy Spirit to do the wooing and the winning of those who come into the Body of Christ.

**Genesis 24:62,63a**

"And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south country." Isaac lived south of Jerusalem, down in the Negev, in the area of Beersheba. Beersheba is still a bustling city of about 300-400 thousand in that same area of Israel.

"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide:..."

Now, there are a lot of commentaries that have differing opinions regarding this word *meditate.* Some think he just went out to think things through, while others think that he was thinking about the servant bringing him a bride. But I think that the crux of the matter was found back in Chapter 23, when a very important person in his life, his mother, died. I think what happened here was that Isaac was mourning the loss of his mother, and had gone out in the field to contemplate that loss.

**Genesis 24:63b**

"...and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming."

Now, all of a sudden his grief and his loneliness had turned to joy; to expectation. His bride had come. What I want you to understand, is that Isaac, who had been living down south of Jerusalem in the desert, had left his home and the tents of Abraham. And somewhere between "the far country" from which his bride was coming, and his home, there was a meeting. What was the lesson? It will be the same way when Christ calls His Bride home. He’s not going to immediately call her to Heaven, but He’s going to leave Heaven and meet her part way. We’ll look at that probably in our next lesson. Anyway, Isaac had left home going part way toward Mesopotamia, and suddenly saw his ride coming.

**Genesis 24:64,65a**

"And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, ‘What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us?’"

I’m sure she had a pretty good idea who the man was, but Scripture does that so often! How many times have I pointed out to you that Jesus, when He wanted to get somebody’s attention, would ask them a question. He knew the answer! And way
back in the Garden of Eden, God didn’t have to ask, but He said, "Adam, what have you done?" I think the Scripture does that just to give us time to think, so she said, "who is this?" She knew! Oh, this was her husband-to-be, her fiance as we call it today.

**Genesis 24:65,66**

"And the servant had said, ‘It is my master;’ therefore she took a veil, and covered herself (That was a Middle Eastern custom). And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done."

I want you to picture these things. Isaac and Rebekah had just met, and the servant explains to Isaac how miraculously this whole thing had come together. "There’s no doubt Isaac, that this girl is God’s choice for you." So Isaac had no doubt that this was, indeed, God’s choice of a wife for him.

**Genesis 24:67**

"And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death."

As I’ve pointed out before, The Bible never tells a wife to love her husband, but it does say, "**Husband, love your wife.**" And here it is: It doesn’t say that Rebekah loved him (although we know that she did), but it began with Isaac loving his wife. Now, this is why I think he had been meditating over his mother’s death. He was comforted by the whole new experience that came into his life. That vacuum that his mother had left was suddenly filled by his new bride. Now let’s go to Psalm 2. We won’t be able to finish all that I’d like to do concerning this Psalm in this lesson, but perhaps we can be prepared for the next part of our study, and that is **"how is the present day Age of Grace pictured as the calling out of a Gentile bride for God the Son, for The Christ?"**

The only way we can understand the language of the Apostle Paul regarding the calling out of the Bride, is to get an even better understanding of the Old Testament program. Here is where we have had so much confusion over the years throughout all Christendom. There is so much difference between the Old Testament program and the Age of Grace, that nobody really knows what to believe, or why, or how. So, we’re going to take some time now to outline the Old Testament program. The reason I’m emphasizing this is because nowhere in the Old Testament, or well into the New Testament, is there a single hint that there would be a Gentile wife of Christ. Everything was Israel. Israel was to be the bride of Jehovah.
In the Book of Hosea, Hosea was actually instructed by God to go out and marry a "woman of the street", and take her home to be his wife. But it wasn’t very long until she was back out on the street with all of her multitudes of lovers; and by the end of the book, she had been restored and was back in fellowship with her husband. That was the beautiful picture of Israel. Even though she had been an idolatrous nation, always chasing after other gods all the way through the Old Testament, we know that the day is coming when Israel is going to be restored, and all her adulterous past will be put behind her and forgotten. But we have another analogy, and that is "The Bride of Christ." Let me show you the verse in II Corinthians. There are probably some who don’t agree with me that the Church is the Bride of Christ, but you don’t have to. I just teach it as I see it and the way that I am most comfortable. Turn to II Corinthians 11:1, where Paul begins:

**II Corinthians 11:1**

"Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me."

That’s how I feel sometimes, when I begin to teach some of these things that I know the average believer has never heard. I have to say, "Bear with me, because sooner or later I’ll show you that this is actually what the Scriptures say." Paul was writing to the Corinthian church, a Gentile church.

**II Corinthians 11:2**

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Paul said, I have gotten you engaged to one husband, that I may present you (that is, the Body of Christ) as a chaste (pure) virgin to Christ.

All the way through Paul’s letters he makes reference to Christ as the head and the husband, and the Body of Christ is the virgin Bride. That is why Paul is always admonishing believers to live a life of purity, a life of separation, because we are not to be the adulterous wife of Jehovah as Israel was. Let’s turn back now to Psalm 2. This is an outline of the Old Testament program. Like the rest of the Old Testament, as well as in the Gospels, in this Psalm there is no hint of this "mystery", this secret hid in the mind of God of this Gentile Bride of Christ, or the Body of Christ. Everything had been promises made to Israel.

**Psalm 2:1**
"Why do the heathen (Gentiles) rage, and the people (Israel) imagine a vain thing?"

That word, "vain" is probably best defined as Solomon used it in Ecclesiastes 12:8, when he said, "'Vanity of vanities,’ saith the preacher;‘ all is vanity.'" It’s just an activity of uselessness. This is what the Scriptures are asking. Why do Israel, and the heathen world alike, constantly exercise for nothing? Let’s go on.

**Psalm 2:2,3**

"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers (of Israel) take counsel together, (Jews and Gentiles) against the LORD, (Jehovah) and against his anointed (Christ—the anointed One), saying,...” Why do the rulers of this world and Israel reject The Messiah?

"'Let us break their bands asunder (the control of the Godhead, that’s why the plural pronoun is used), and cast away their cords from us.'"

In other words, they’re rejecting God in their affairs. Remember when Israel was presented with Christ by Pilate, what was their reply? **"Away with Him, we’ll not have this man to rule over us!"** Pilate carried it out; the Jews abandoned Him; and the whole human race fell under the guilt of the Crucifixion, because the rulers of Jews and Gentiles alike rejected him and said, **"Crucify Him!"** They had cast off every opportunity of God’s being able to rule over them. After all, that’s why Christ came, wasn’t it? He came to be their King, and was presented as their King, but they continued to reject Him and finally, actually, put Him to death.

**Psalm 2:4**

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision."

They can never outdo God! God is going to have the last word. The word derision is best summed up as "total confusion."
Lesson Two • Part III

Law and Grace: Time Line: Isaac

Let’s turn to Psalm 2 where we left off in our last lesson. Remember, we’ve been talking about Abraham sending his servant to the far country, up into Syria, to get a bride for his son, Isaac. We brought out the point that this is a beautiful picture of the Holy Spirit working in this present age calling out a Bride from among the Gentiles for the Son, Christ Jesus. The reason that I like to use this illustration, is that Isaac had left his home tent and was out in the field some distance from home, when he met his bride coming from the far country. I think this is a perfect illustration of how Christ will leave Heaven and will call the Bride up to meet Him in the clouds of the air.

Before we get into the regular teaching, we have some requests from our television audience to sometime lay these things out on a timeline. Before I do that, I always like to make clear the understanding of the Old Testament program, in which there is no hint of this "Church Age." The Old Testament program was always God’s plan for Israel, and this is best laid out in outline form in Psalm 2. That’s the reason we are going to point this out, and how this program was interrupted and God went to the Gentiles to call out a people for His Name; and how He will one day come back again to finish this Old Testament program.

Psalm 2:1-3

"Why do the heathen (Gentiles) rage, and the people (Israel) imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers (of Israel) take counsel together (Jew and Gentile), against the LORD (Jehovah), and against his anointed (against The Christ, or Messiah), saying, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.'"

Now that took place at the rejection of Christ at His Crucifixion. The response of God the Father in Heaven was that He would laugh:

Psalm 2:4

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them (the nations of the world) in derision (confusion)."

The word used in the Gospels, as Jesus foretold these days, was "perplexity", and we are seeing that in our own times. Nevertheless, this was all looking forward to the
coming of Christ and His rejection. The very first word of Verse 5 is a time word – "then." In other words, after the nations had come to a place of derision:

Psalm 2:5

"Then shall he (God) speak unto them (the nations) in his wrath (not in His Grace!), and vex them in his sore displeasure."

The Psalmist is talking here about the Tribulation – that terrible period of time that is going to come on the world, but will be especially directed against the Nation of Israel. Then immediately following this period of wrath and vexation, which all of the Scriptures designate as seven years, in verse 6, God says:

Psalm 2:6

"'Yet have I (God) set my king upon the holy hill of Zion.'"

We can probably illustrate this in kind of a timeline. We are coming out of the Old Testament, and I like to start with the call of Abraham and his Covenant. We move on then to the coming of The Messiah, and Israel rejects and crucifies Him according to Psalms 2. After his rejection, He would ascend (see Psalm 110). Normally, people don’t think of the Book of Psalms as being prophetic, but there are many prophesies in the Psalms. Psalm 22 foretells the Crucifixion, and Psalm 110 portrays His Ascension to the Father’s right hand:

Psalm 110:1

"The LORD said unto my Lord, 'Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.'"

The word "until" is a time word. Jesus was to sit at the Father’s right hand – but not forever – "until" God made His enemies His footstool.

Psalm 110:2-3

"The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth."

All these verses tell us is that after this rejection of The Messiah, He would ascend unto the Father’s right hand. Then there would come an indeterminate period
(according to Psalm 2) until the nations would reach a point of derision, and then would come that period of wrath and vexation which we know from Daniel and others is a period of seven years of Tribulation. Then back in Psalm 2:6, God says:

Psalm 2:6

"'Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.'"

And The King is always associated with the Kingdom. There is the Old Testament program. After you come out of the Old Testament chronology of Israel’s history, The Messiah comes on the scene and is presented as Israel’s King, whom they reject and crucify. He ascends, and the next thing on the agenda is the Tribulation.

It’s so clearly laid out here in Psalm 2.

Psalm 2:7

"'I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, 'Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.'"

The word "Son" is capitalized and we know that it refers to Christ. I want also to define the word "begotten." It does not refer to Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem, but rather to His Resurrection. That is made so clear in Acts and in Romans 1:4, where Paul explains it so succinctly. I believe we can delegate the line of thought found in Psalm 2:8 to the Father, where He says:

Psalm 2:8,9

"'Ask of me, and I shall give thee (the Son) the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.'" When Christ returns and sets up His Kingdom, it will not be just in the Middle East, but it will include the whole world.

"'Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash (break) them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.'"

This, of course, He is going to do after His second coming at the Battle of Armageddon, when the nations of the world will be removed from the scene.

Psalm 2:11,12
"Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

Again, we have the reference to God the Son. Now, in order to understand all that this little chapter is and is not saying, we know that at Christ’s Ascension (Acts 1:9-11), Peter and the eleven knew this Old Testament program. They knew that the next thing on the agenda was the coming in of seven years of wrath and vexation. Then they expected the return of Christ back to Jerusalem in order to set up His kingdom. (This is where a lot of people, church-going believers do not understand that, according to the Old Testament program, it was to unfold in this manner.) The King would set up His Kingdom, and as soon as it was established and He was ruling from Jerusalem, then the Jews could go into all the corners of the world to evangelize the Gentiles. That was to be Israel’s role (See chart on page 74).

Turn to Isaiah 42. I think my problem is trying to get across in a couple of hours what I’ve learned in 20 years, and of course, that’s impossible. But if I could just help people to see all these things in a clear cut way it would erase so much of the confusion that I think reigns supreme. In Isaiah 42:1 it is referring to the Old Testament program. God expected Israel to receive her King, get the Kingdom set up, and the Jew to go out and evangelize the world.

**Isaiah 42:1**

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment (rule) to the Gentiles."

Turn now to Isaiah 49:6. I’m not exhausting the Scriptures on this subject by any means. I’m just picking out a few verses that are more clearly stated than others.

**Isaiah 49:6**

"And he said, ‘It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my (God’s) salvation unto the end of the earth.’"

Always examine a verse. Who was the "thee" who was to be a light to the Gentiles? Israel! This was to be Israel’s role. We’ll take it a little further, so turn to Chapter 59. When I speak in days to come of God dealing with the Jew only – and He has been
ever since the call of Abraham up until we get well into the New Testament – it’s Jew only, with exceptions.

**Isaiah 59:20,21**

"'And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, (a mountain in Jerusalem) and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob,’ saith the Lord. ‘As for me, this is my covenant with them,’ saith the LORD; ‘My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed,’ saith the LORD, ‘from henceforth and for ever.'" In other words, we are already looking at eternity. Now go to Chapter 60.

**Isaiah 60:1**

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee."

Again, He was talking to the Nation of Israel. When their Messiah appeared He told them that "**I am the light of the world,**" and had Israel believed Him, they could have gone out and told the world. I’ll show you that in just a moment.

**Isaiah 60:2**

"For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee."

The darkness that was to cover the earth was a spiritual darkness; even Israel would be under that darkness.

**Isaiah 60:3**

"And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

Those are all promises to Israel according to the Old Testament program – that even after they’d rejected and crucified their Messiah, their King, He would ascend until the Father had made his enemies his footstool. This would be during that time of derision, which wouldn’t have been long; then would come the wrath and vexation of the Tribulation; Messiah would return and set up His Kingdom; Israel would be the apple of His eye, and would be the very center of all activity with regard to bringing
people to a knowledge of God. Now, turn over to the Book of Jeremiah 23. These are all verses that point out the fact that Israel was promised, not only The King and the Kingdom, but that they would be the vehicle to bring the pagan Gentiles to a knowledge of Israel’s God.

**Jeremiah 23:5**

"'Behold, the days come,' saith the Lord, ‘that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.’"

Note that the words "Branch" and "King" were both capitalized so they refer to **Christ The King**. Note also, that He is going to be King in the earth – not just in Heaven. That will be the time when He returns to set up His Kingdom; when He will rule and reign over the whole earth.

To confirm what I told you a few moments ago about Israel’s being the evangelists, turn to Zechariah, the next-to-the-last book in the Old Testament. Zechariah 8:20. Don’t lose sight of everything that was in the Old Testament program. There would be the wrath and vexation. There would be the destruction of the nations as recorded in Daniel chapters 2, 7, and 9. That would take place when He would return to Jerusalem; destroy the nations that still survived after those terrible seven years of Tribulation; and then the earth would be restored to the condition of the Garden of Eden before man’s fall. (Isaiah 51:3, Ezekiel 36:35). Remember, Zechariah wrote about 500 B.C.

**Zechariah 8:20-23**

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; ‘It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, "Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. (23) Thus saith the LORD of hosts; 'In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying,' 'We will go will you: for we have heard that God is with you.'"

Lock verse 23 into your computer! This is talking in light of the Old Testament program – that as soon as The King and Kingdom were in place, the nations of the world would be funneled to Jerusalem which would be the very abode of the God of Israel, and all the Gentiles could be blessed by coming to a faith in Him.
Zechariah 8:4

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; ‘There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age.’"

Note that the Gentiles were to come, not just from all nations, but from all languages, dialects, tongues and tribes – they were all to come to the Jews to go with them to meet their God. This is what Jesus had drummed into the disciples, and contrary to what most of us have been taught, the Great Commission in Matthew 28 was with this Old Testament program in mind. There had, as yet, not been one word spoken – even from Jesus to the twelve – of a period when God would set Israel aside, take away their Temple, and go to the Gentiles with the Gospel of Grace. So, as you read through the Four Gospels, keep this in mind. This Old Testament program was what Jesus was talking about, everything that had been promised to Israel with regard to His being their King. Of course, the disciples had no idea that He was going to be crucified. Turn to Luke 18. I remember one time I was teaching a week of classes. After one session, a young couple came up to me and said, "Wait a minute! Are you saying that Peter didn’t preach Christ crucified?" My answer to them had to be, "How could Peter preach that, when Jesus had not yet gone to the Cross, and Peter didn’t even know that He was going to!" Look at Luke 18:31-34. I can safely say that 90% of the church members don’t know that these verses are in here!

Luke 18:31

"Then he (Jesus) took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, ‘Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.’"

He was saying that everything that had been written about Him in the Psalms and the prophets: that He would suffer, be crucified (Psalm 22) and buried, and after three days rise from the dead. That He would ascend (Psalm 110); that He would come back after the years of retribution (Tribulation) to set up His Kingdom – they should have known all that!

Luke 18:32,33

"‘For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles (Rome), and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.’"
You know that these are exactly the things that happened! See Luke 22:1-24:8. Now don’t stop here. Look at verse 34:

*Luke 18:34*

"And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."

Even those twelve disciples who had been with Jesus for nearly three years, and were now ready to head to Jerusalem to wind everything up – didn’t understand anything of what He said because it was "hid" from them. If you recall, a couple of lessons ago I used the Hebrew term "Jehovah Olam." I told you that in that word Olam was a definition of something being hidden? That was exactly what God had done with what we call the "Church Age," as we showed on our timeline. In this passage, they had no understanding that He was going to die – that He was going to go to the Cross!

Look now at John 20. Scripture shows us as plain as day that even after Jesus went to the Cross, they still didn’t know that He would rise from the dead. We won’t take time to read all the verses here, but as a background, on the day of the Resurrection, Peter and John had been told that Jesus was no longer in the tomb—that His body was gone. So they ran to the tomb to see for themselves. I think that Peter was a big, old rugged fisherman, whereas John was probably more athletic. Consequently, John reached the tomb first, but he was timid and reluctant to enter. Peter, on the other hand, just rushed right in (remember this tomb was a cave – not a hole in the ground!) and they came to the conclusion that something supernatural had happened.

*John 20:8,9*

"Then went in also that other disciple (John), which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw (the evidence) and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead."

Peter and John hadn’t believed in Jesus’ Resurrection (even though they had been told), until they saw for themselves! And not only did they not believe, but also, most of Christ’s followers! Now wasn’t that plain?
Lesson Two • Part IV

Law and Grace: Time Line: Isaac

In our last lesson we studied how that the Old Testament, and even Jesus’ teaching in the Gospel during His ministry on earth, gave no indication of what we have come to refer to as the "Age of Grace." Peter and the eleven, when they were sent out prior to the Crucifixion to preach, never preached Christ crucified! They didn’t understand that He was going to have to go to the Cross for us! They had no indication of anything other than the Old Testament program (illustrated above) as we saw in Psalm 2. We said last lesson, that though Jesus told them clearly that they’d be going to Jerusalem; that He’d be put to death and would rise again on the third day; they comprehended it not. They had had no idea that He was going to die; and after He was dead, they had no idea that He was going to rise again. Else, why weren’t they there that Sunday morning. The only one that did show up at the tomb that morning was Mary Magdalene, and she certainly wasn’t there to see if He’d come out of the tomb! She was there to carry out the custom of anointing the body with spices and so forth. So they had no indication, even after three years of Jesus’ earthly ministry, of His pending death, burial and Resurrection, which is the very heart of our Gospel today. We have to realize that they did not preach Christ crucified, buried and risen from the dead.

Turn to Acts 1. We’ll continue that theme for a while. The eleven (Judas Iscariot, of course, was gone and his spot had not yet been filled by Matthias) were all meeting on the Mount of Olives, and Jesus was about to ascend, as Psalm 110:1 had said He would. The Father had, in effect, said to Him, "Look, they’ve rejected You, they won’t listen to You, so come sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool." The "until" there referred to the time when God would send Christ back to be The King of Kings.

Acts 1:6

"When they therefore were come together (the eleven and Jesus), they asked of him, saying, ‘Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?’"

Note the use of the term "restore again?" in that verse. Those eleven men were remembering David and Solomon’s glory, and they were wondering whether Israel at that time would have a kingdom like unto Solomon’s. Their question was appropriate. But why would they have the kingdom uppermost in their minds? Let’s look briefly to the Gospels for the answer now, even though we will be studying them in depth at a future time. Turn to Matthew 19:27. In this passage, the Twelve are still part and
parcel of Jesus’ earthly ministry. I often think of those times in Scripture, as we’ve already seen in Genesis, when Abraham had received all the promises of God, but had not yet seen them fulfilled, and he finally got to the place of saying to God, "Yes, but how do I know?" Here in Matthew 19, Peter was doing much the same thing:

**Matthew 19:27**

"Then answered Peter and said unto him, ‘Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?’"

They had left their families and fishing, or other businesses, to become part of Jesus’ ministry, so this was a logical question for him to ask. He wasn’t talking about Salvation. They knew they had that. But Peter’s question concerned the idea of, "Lord, what more is in this for us? What does the future have for us?" Now look at Jesus’ answer in verse 28:

**Matthew 19:28**

"And Jesus said unto them, ‘Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’"

In this case, Jesus was specifically talking only of the eleven, since He already knew what Judas was. The term "regeneration" refers to remaking something that already has been over and restoring it to its original condition, just like it was before. So what He was saying, was that when the time comes that the curse is lifted and the Kingdom set up; when the earth is restored to the condition it was in at the time of the Garden of Eden, prior to man’s fall; then Christ will sit on an earthly throne and rule His kingdom in glory. The disciples, also, would sit upon twelve thrones ruling or judging the Nation of Israel. Do you think Peter and the others ever forgot that? Not for a moment! This was uppermost in their thinking. Now, let’s go back to Acts 1 and look at verse 6 again in the light of what we just saw in Matthew:

**Acts 1:6**

"When they therefore were come together (the eleven and Jesus), they asked of him, saying, ‘Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel (so that we can rule the twelve tribes)?’"

How did Jesus answer him? Does He upbraid him for not realizing that He was talking about something way out of this world? No! Again He answered them with the perfectly legitimate statement, saying in effect, "It’s not for you to know when, but
the time is coming. You’re still going to rule the twelve tribes of Israel, but it’s not for you to know when."

Acts 1:7,8

"And he said unto them, ‘It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.’" Verse 8 starts out "But" – in the interim until it becomes a reality,

"‘But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.’"

"You shall receive power(!)..." That’s the whole idea of the Holy Spirit’s coming on the day of Pentecost – to give the Jewish believers the power to continue the ministry that Jesus had been accomplishing for three years – signs and miracles beyond human understanding. That sounds to us very much like what we call "The great commission" back in Matthew 28. From this we have gotten the idea that as soon as Christ ascended here in Acts 1, and the Holy Spirit came down in Chapter 2, that these Jews would begin going around the world preaching the Gospel. Did that happen? I guess not! Let’s go to Acts 8. Please realize that this is just an overview, rather than an in depth study. I am trying to set the stage for going back to our analogy of Isaac’s bride and Christ’s Bride – the outcalling of the Gentile Body of Christ. Acts 7 gives us the story of Stephen’s martyrdom, and of Saul of Tarsus egging the persecutors on:

Acts 8:1

"And Saul was consenting unto his (Stephen’s) death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles."

We need to get a time frame in here. This is about seven or eight years after Pentecost. A heavy persecution was going on against the assembly of called-out, believing Jews who believed that Jesus was the true Messiah. They were, however, still deeply entrenched in Judaism; they still practiced the Law; they still worshipped in the Temple; but they were also a set-aside group who had recognized their Messiah and put their faith in Him.

Look at those last three words in the verse; "except the apostles." If those men who had been with Christ for three years couldn’t understand the Word of God and their commission, who could? But they did understand, and that was why they "sat
tight" in Jerusalem. Seven years had elapsed since that commission, but they were still in Jerusalem, rather than being out among the Gentiles. All the other Jews had been scattered because of the persecution, but those twelve men stayed in Jerusalem. But why? Let me give you an illustration. A few years ago I had some meetings and I went alone at first, but near the end of the week my little wife came to join me. I was to meet her at the bus depot, but the bus was late. Right across the street from the depot was a coffee shop and I really wanted some coffee. But I knew that just as soon as I went over there and got some, the bus would come and I wouldn’t be there to meet her. As I was sitting in the car mulling all that over in my mind, I thought of this verse.

This was exactly the state of mind of these men. They weren’t about to go down to Cairo or Rome or anywhere else, because they were convinced that just as soon as they’d leave Jerusalem for someplace else, The Messiah would come again, and they wouldn’t be there to meet Him. So, in spite of all the pressure of that horrible persecution, they stayed on in Jerusalem. This was not contrary to the Word of God, because Peter understood that he had no ministry to the Gentiles until Israel’s King was in place. This is kind of hard for some folks to swallow, and I know it took me a long time, even from the Word, to be ready to pass it on, but once you see it, The Bible just opens up clear as a bell. You can see that Peter and the eleven saw that they couldn’t go out and evangelize the Gentile world until the Kingdom had come to fruition. Now to Acts 11:19 and we’ll back up what I’ve just said.

Acts 11:19

"Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto Jews only."

The ones "...which were scattered...." refer to the ones we’ve already talked about in Acts 8:1. The Antioch referred to here was the one north of present day Beirut, Lebanon. Notice that they preached the Word only "to the Jews." Even seven years after Pentecost, nobody was going to the Gentiles. The Word is so plain. But why hadn’t they gone to the Gentiles? Because the Old Testament program was the only plan they knew.

Now, look at what happened in Acts 9. Saul of Tarsus (Paul) was converted on the road to Damascus, where he was headed in his religious zeal to persecute the church – to stamp out the followers of the "imposter" Jesus of Nazareth. Saul was going to wipe them out at any cost, but on his way there, he had that confrontation with the ascended, glorified Lord of Glory. Look at verses 11-15 where Christ talks to Ananias – that believing Jew in Damascus.
Acts 9:11-15

"And the Lord said unto him, ‘Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.’ Then Ananias answered, ‘Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:"

"'And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, ‘Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:'"

God hadn’t forgotten the Gentiles. He did know that Israel wasn’t going to fulfill that Old Testament program, because she was continually rejecting The Messiah. So God said, "I’m going to do something totally different! We need to remember that the "Age of Grace" was predominately for the Gentile, even as the time before was predominately for the Jews, but the Jew was not locked out of Salvation during this time. So some could be, and have been saved.

Acts 9:16

"'For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.'"

Look down to verse 20. This Saul of Tarsus, having just realized who Jesus really was – the God that he had thought he was serving by persecuting the followers of Jesus – this same Saul in verse 20, goes to preach Christ in the "synagogues." He was still "Jew only!" He had no idea that God was going to go the Gentiles with a different program. All he knew was the Old Testament program. Remember, it was almost 100 years after Christ before the New Testament began to come together. And even then, it didn’t come together as a canon of Scripture for another three to four hundred years. At this point in time, there was no New Testament written. All they had was the Old Testament, but they really knew that Old Testament, and they knew that program. They knew the promise of The King and the Kingdom, and that was when Israel could evangelize the world.

So, as we see in verse 20, Saul went straight to the synagogues to preach. But he didn’t know any more about the death, burial and Resurrection as God’s plan of Salvation, than Peter did, back before Jesus was crucified. We must understand this. Remember, faith is taking God at His word, but you can’t take Him at His word until He speaks it. You can’t assume what He’s going to say. We must wait until God gives explicit instructions; then we can take it and believe it. So, here was Saul of Tarsus,
filled with wonder to know that the One whom he thought was a blasphemer and imposter was, indeed, his Jehovah, and that He had died and been raised from the dead. What he was preaching was that Jesus truly was The Messiah.

If you’ll read on, you’ll find that God took supernatural means, immediately, to get Saul out of Damascus. There came a threat on his life, so that he had to be let down over the wall of the city at night in a basket, to escape. And we saw a few lessons ago, in Galatians, that Saul then went down to Mt. Sinai in the Sinai peninsula (we think), because he says that he went down to Arabia, and in another place referred to it as Sinai in Arabia. There, he spent three years alone with his ascended Lord, and God poured out on that man all the doctrines that were to go out to the Gentiles – totally new and totally different doctrines. This is why he used the language he did in his letters. Paul was specifically commissioned to go to the Gentiles, as we’ll see in the following verses.

Ephesians 3:1,2

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation (administration) of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, [How did Paul get it – to give to us? By revelation!] Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.)"

That’s the difference between revelation and instruction. When one is instructed he is taught by another human being. Paul never claimed to be taught by anybody. He received everything by revelation. Go now back to Acts 18:

Acts 18:1-3

"After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome); and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he (Paul) abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers."

I like to compare Paul’s working with Aquila and Priscilla to that of a group of ladies around a quilting frame. While they are quilting, they are talking, visiting, discussing. I believe the same thing happened with Paul and his friends. While they were sewing
on that tough, old canvas, Paul was telling them all about what God had revealed to him – laying it all out for a purpose. Turn to verse 24:

**Acts 18:24,25**

"And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures (the Old Testament), came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John."

This is why I wanted to use this as an illustration. This man had been taught, probably in a seminary. But his education was limited. He, too, knew nothing more than the Old Testament program. He hadn’t heard of the Gospel of Grace, but look what happens.

**Acts 18:26**

"And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. 'How could Aquila and Priscilla teach this learned man anything? They’d been with Paul, and look what Apollos was gentleman enough to do – listen! He learned from two "little lay people.""

**Acts 18:27**

"And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia (part of Greece), the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:"

How could Apollos have helped those "Grace believers" without having been taught the things of Paul? He couldn’t have! Now then, for comparison purposes, go back to Galatians 1. This was Paul’s account of where he got his information.

**Galatians 1:11,12**

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

He didn’t go back up to Jerusalem after his conversion and say, "Hey, fellows, teach me everything you know about this Jesus, since you were with Him for three years." No, he says he received it by "revelation of Jesus Christ." There’s the difference
between revelation and instruction. So, Saul knew nothing about the Gospel of Grace until God separated him down to Sinai and gave him, by revelation, the great new doctrines of Grace that would go to the Gentiles. Next time we’ll show you on our timeline how these things were pushed out into the future to make room for the "Age of Grace."
Lesson Three • Part I

Parenthesis and Dashes: The Interruption of
Old Testament Progress: Introducing Paul

Last time we were together, we went from Genesis 24, the calling out of a bride for Isaac. Abraham, the father, sent his servant up into a far country to his original kin folks, to find a bride for Isaac. We likened the servant to the work of the Holy Spirit in calling out the Bride of Christ. I said we would be jumping from Genesis 24 into the New Testament; to follow up this illustration of how God has now sent the Holy Spirit amongst, primarily, the Gentiles. However, some Jews are being saved. But it’s primarily the age of the Gentiles. A Gentile Bride for God The Son. And so, in order to really explain how that all came about, I went back to Psalms Chapter 2. We put up a timeline – that from the call of Abraham in Genesis 12, we’re under the Abrahamic Covenant.

About 490 years after the call of Abraham, we had the call of Moses and the Law. So, Israel goes under the Law, then in Daniel Chapter 9, God says 490 years are determined upon your people Israel. I also emphasized earlier, how during the Old Testament, during the program of prophecy, God would tell everything long before it happened. That’s what prophecy really is. He would say to Abraham, in so many generations they would be down in Egypt, but He would bring them back. That was prophecy. And then He foretold their Babylonian captivity, that they would be 70 years in Babylon. And He foretold that Cyrus, The King of the Medes and Persians, would send a decree to put them back into Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. Everything was laid out ahead of time and that’s why we call it the prophetic program. In that prophetic program, there is not one hint of the Church Age. The Church Age is just not in there, because God had a reason.

Several weeks ago we used the term Jehovah El Olam. El Olam is translated in some places as Everlasting, or the Everlasting to Everlasting God. It is also translated as the God of Time, and in another place, the same word is translated hid, and hidden. Also, I emphasized that even though God lays everything out to the Nation of Israel, openly and prophetically, yet God has seen fit by Him being Jehovah El Olam, to hide and keep hidden the Church Age. So I went back to Psalms Chapter 2, the last few weeks we have been together. And this is the way it unfolds:

You come out of the Old Testament; The Messiah appears; He’s rejected by Jew and Gentile alike; they crucify Him. Then Psalms Chapter 2 says, after that he would ascend and be seated at the Father’s right hand. Now, we know that
the **Holy Spirit came down** (that’s not in Psalms 2, but it’s in other references which we will see in a moment). Then Psalms 2 says the next thing that would happen would be the **wrath and vexation of the Tribulation**. We get the seven years of the Tribulation from Daniel, and we’ll be looking at that, hopefully, in the next few lessons. And then Psalms 2 says that after the wrath and vexation, "Yet have I **sat my King on the Holy Hill of Zion.**" Here we have The King and the Kingdom. That’s the Old Testament program just laid out so beautifully. But not a word of the Church Age. What we want to do now, is follow some of these Old Testament references, and pick up one where Jesus gave one little hint. He didn’t tell us what He was doing, but we can now see that He was giving a hint. We can pick that up in Luke Chapter 4. But, before we go there, go back to Isaiah 61:

Isaiah 61:1,2

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;"

If you will look at those scriptures carefully, you have that same line of prophecy. Let’ look at it once again. "**He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted.**" That all took place at the First Advent. Now he comes down to verse 2, "**To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.**" When did He do that? **During His earthly ministry.** He tried to tell Israel who He was, and **He performed all his miracles to prove who He was.** And what did Israel do? **They rejected Him.** Now go on in verse 2, after the word "Lord," there is a comma. "**And the day of vengeance of our God;**" Now, what is he referring to? **The Tribulation!** Just like Psalms calls it **wrath and vexation,** Isaiah here calls it the vengeance, or the day of vengeance of our God; **There again you have a semicolon .**

What’s the next statement? "**To comfort all that mourn;**" Again, what’s he referring to? **The Kingdom!** When you read the beatitudes in Matthew, always remember that Beatitudes are primarily the description of the atmosphere, or the climate of the Kingdom. It’s when the Kingdom comes in that the **poor will be blessed,** and the **meek will inherit** the earth. He also said blessed are they that **mourn,** for they shall be **comforted.** Here it is. Those that He has come to comfort are those that are mourning in the verse of the beatitudes. Now, keep your hand in Isaiah 61, because we are going to come right back for a comparison. If you will turn to Luke Chapter 4, where Jesus is in his early earthly ministry. Here, we find Jesus up in the area of Galilee, and just a few miles west of the Sea of Galilee is the town of Nazareth. This is where Jesus grew up and it’s still a tourist attraction today:
Luke 4:16

"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And He (that is Jesus) came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day.

Now what does that tell you? He lived under the Law, and He kept the Law. "...And (he) stood up to read." It was customary when a visitor would come into the synagogue, one of the ministers would bring him a scroll, and the visitor would have the honor and privilege of reading Scripture. You need to remember, all they had was the Old Testament, and it wasn’t in book form, it was a scroll. So they brought him the Book of Isaiah. And when He had opened the book or scroll, He found the place. When you see the word "found" what does that tell you? He looked for it. In other words, he didn’t just open the book and start reading.

Luke 4:17-21

"And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, 'This day is this scripture fulfilled in you ears.'"

Back to Isaiah 61. He’s God and knows from beginning to end. So Jesus knew exactly where to stop in this verse in Isaiah.

Isaiah 61:2

"To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, (in Luke, He stopped and sat down – But, what’s the punctuation mark in Isaiah? It’s a comma – it's not the end of the sentence. Now read on) and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn."

Why did He stop where He stopped? Because Jesus knew that this Old Testament program was going to be interrupted at some point in time, shortly after His Ascension. The day of vengeance would not come in, the Kingdom would not come in until some later day. We will now show from some other portions of Scripture, that
this prophetic program stopped. I like to point out, or use the analogy of God’s Time Clock, that everything has been on schedule. In fact we’ll go back right now and pick this one up. There was to be 490 years of God dealing with Israel before The King and the Kingdom would come in. These 483 years culminated with the Crucifixion, and then God’s Clock stopped right there. And it won’t pick up again until it’s time for the Church to be completed; and the bride is complete, and then He can bring in those final seven years.

Come back to Psalm Chapter 2. We’re going to show how over and over (and I’ve picked out a few of the plainest ones) the Old Testament program was interrupted. And interrupted for the purpose of calling out the Bride of Christ to complete the Body of Christ. To take it out of the way, and then continue on with this prophetic program. Let’s go to Psalms 2. Come down to verse 3, where leaders of the Gentiles and the Jews have rejected Christ's offer to be their King and set up the Kingdom. Instead they say:

Psalm 2:3-6

"Let us break their bands of asunder; and cast away their cords from us." In other words, what did they tell Jesus? We’ll not have this man to rule over us. Verse 4 continuing:

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision," Verse 5 continuing:

"Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion."

Right in between verses 3 and 5, you can put a parentheses in your Bible with a dash between it (−), because here is where the Old Testament program is going to be interrupted. The wrath and vengeance and vexation did not happen at Christ’s first coming. It stopped short. Now, if you don’t mind marking in your Bible, I always have people put a few references in their margins, then they can share it with someone else without going through a concordance. So, in the margin here in Psalms Chapter 2, and with that (−) between verse 3 and 5, mark that if you don’t mind. The next one will be in Psalm 118 verse 22:

Psalm 118:22

"The stone which the builders refused (−) is become the head stone of the corner." "The stone which the builders refused;" Who was that?
That was Christ – He’s always the Rock and Stone of Scripture. When did they reject Him? When they crucified Him. And then the next one-half of the verse says "...is become the head stone of the corner." Now, He is not the Headstone of the Church, He is the Head of the Body, which is the Church. But His Headstoneship refers to what? – His kingdom, which is still future. So make your parentheses right between the word refused and the word, is. The last half of that verse has never been fulfilled. The next one we go to is a very familiar one. It is in Isaiah Chapter 9 and, especially at Christmas time, if you have ever listened to Handel’s Messiah, here is where that great Hallelujah Chorus gets its theme – from Isaiah 9:6 Watch carefully, and by the time we get a few more of these (–) you will be able to see them before I even mention it.

Isaiah 9:6

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: (–) and the government shall be upon his shoulder."

What government? The Kingdom! So, where are you going to put your (–)? Right after the word given. That happened at the First Advent. The promised Son came to the Nation of Israel. He came unto his own, and His own refused Him. So, the last half of that verse is interrupted and hasn’t happened yet. If everything that was spoken of in prophecy was fulfilled up to here, could it be the Word of God and this not be fulfilled? Of course not. It’s still going to happen, because He said it would. And He had the prerogative of interrupting it, and we’ll soon see how. From Isaiah Chapter 9, let’s go to Daniel Chapter 9. Here is that great prophecy, the one Jesus referred to in Matthew 24. When He says, when you see that which was spoken of by Daniel the Prophet – well here it is:

Daniel 9:26

"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, [crucified] (–) but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

That is, the people out of which the Anti-christ will one day come. We now know that was the Roman Empire. Daniel can’t speak of it because it was still prophetic in his time. But, we know he was talking about the Roman Empire that destroyed the Temple. Out of that Roman Empire shall come the prince. Now where are we going to make our parentheses? It’s going to be "after Messiah has been cut off."

Daniel 9:27
"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week..."

That’s the Tribulation. That didn’t take place at Christ’s first coming. It’s been postponed. The next one is Joel Chapter 2. And here, of course, we have the introduction of the coming down of the Holy Spirit in that Old Testament program. Although it wasn’t listed in Psalms, here it is in Joel:

**Joel 2:28**

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,"

Always remember these prophets of the Old Testament were always writing to what people? **The Jew.** Now, when did the Spirit come down upon the Nation of Israel? At Pentecost! The Holy Spirit came down and this is the prophecy of it. "...**your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions...**" This all took place at the advent of the Holy Spirit there at Pentecost in Acts 2. Then Joel, verse 29, is still referring to it:

**Joel 2:29,30**

"And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. (–) And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come."

Did that happen? No! That’s the Tribulation. So, you see, you put your parentheses between verses 29 and 30. Everything in 28 and 29 took place at His first Advent, in the remaining verse it didn’t; it’s still ahead. Let's come on up through your Old Testament, all the way to Zechariah Chapter 9 and drop in at verses 9 and 10:

**Zechariah 9:9,10**

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. (–) And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." When did that happen? At the First Advent. You know how, on Triumphal Sunday, He came riding in on that little young donkey.
Zechariah 9:10

"And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: (what’s that?...the Tribulation – Armageddon) and he shall speak peace unto (who? The Gentiles, or) the heathen: and his dominion (His kingdom) shall be from sea even to sea, (it’s going to encompass the whole world) and from the river even to the ends of the earth."

Where are you going to put your cut off? Right between verses 9 and 10. Verse 9 all happened at His first coming. Verse 10 is still future. So, there’s an interruption. Now, let’s go into the New Testament and into Luke’s Gospel Chapter 1 – and here’s the announcement of the birth of Christ:

Luke 1:31,32

"And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. (-) He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father, David."

Where are you going to put your parenthesis this time? Between 31 and 32. Of course He was born, and of course they named Him Jesus, but, in His first Advent, did He assume the throne of David? No! Is the Scripture lying? Of course not! It didn’t take place, but it’s going to. Let’s go all the way into the Book of Acts, Chapter 2. While you’re looking for Acts Chapter 2, I should have told you to keep your finger in the Book of Joel, and maybe some of you did. But, if you can still find Joel, find it quickly, because Peter is going to quote from Joel, like Jesus quoted in Luke from Isaiah. And what I want you to see is that Peter did not have the omnipotent insight that Christ did, so he couldn’t stop at the right place. He didn’t know that this program would be interrupted. Peter preaches it as if this is all coming. Peter has no idea of a Church Age. Acts Chapter 2? And you know the account there:

Acts 2:15,16

"For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.( It’s only 9 o’clock in the morning.) But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel."

Now, when he says, "...this is that....", what is he saying? Peter is saying, what you’re seeing take place in our lifetime, what you have just experienced in His ministry; His Crucifixion; His Resurrection; and now the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, is what Joel was talking about. It’s all coming right according to prophecy and
Peter could see this whole thing. He knew that the next thing on the agenda would have to be the Tribulation and then the return of Israel’s King and the Kingdom and, as I pointed out in our last lesson, then what could Israel do? Oh, then they could go out and bring the Gentiles to a knowledge of their God. But Israel rejected it. Jesus knew in Luke Chapter 4, where to stop, because that last half of the verse would not be completed until much later. Peter goes right on through it and doesn’t know the difference. Let’s read it now from the Book of Acts:

Acts 2:17-21

"'And it shall come to pass in the last days,' saith God, 'I will pour out of my Spirit (that is the Holy Spirit), upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:...'" (–)

"'...And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke, The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come; And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'"

Why didn’t Peter stop in the middle like Jesus did? Peter didn’t know! So far as he was concerned, this was all that he knew.
Lesson Three • Part II

Parenthesis and Dashes: The Interruption of
Old Testament Progress: Introducing Paul

Turn to Acts Chapter 7. In our last lesson, we were talking about the Old Testament prophetic program, how that over and over the Old Testament laid it out. At the particular prescribed time, Christ would come; He would be rejected; He would ascend; the Holy Spirit would come down, and then would come the seven years of Tribulation, and then Christ would return and set up His Kingdom. But, we know that historically, that didn’t all happen. There was nothing that was part of the Tribulation. After the Holy Spirit came down, the Old Testament program just came to a halt. God’s Time Clock stopped. Now, we’re going to try and show you, coming through the Book of Acts (and again this is not an in depth study of Acts, but rather, we’re just going to kind of skim it), how this program is going to be interrupted. This last part, from the Tribulation on, will be shoved out into the future. It is still future, and in that interim, God has, by way of the working of the Holy Spirit, been calling out a people for His Name.

To pick that up a little bit, let’s jump into Acts Chapter 7, and remember this is about seven or eight years after Pentecost. Peter and the 11 have been preaching their hearts out to the Nation of Israel, knowing that they could never go out into the ends of the earth and preach the Gospel, until Israel had first been converted. But, Israel is not converting. She is going more and more in the opposite direction. Now, in Chapter 7, we find Stephen, who is not even one of the Twelve. He’s one of the seven deacons that was appointed by the Twelve to take care of the mundane things of the church. But, Stephen is pointed out in this chapter as a man full of the Holy Spirit. Over and over it tells us he’s a man full of the Holy Spirit. He brings Israel to the place of realizing that through all of their history, God has been preparing them for the coming of their Messiah and they missed it. And so, he just comes down hard on them. And if you will come down to verse 51, where he accuses the nation (and he’s talking only to the Jews), Stephen says:

Acts 7:51,52

"Ye stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One;..."
We went through this in a previous lesson. Someone brought up a question about the unpardonable sin. I always tell people not to worry about the unpardonable sin. That has nothing to do with us in the Gentile age. That was God dealing with Israel because when God sent Israel the prophets, what did they do with them? **They killed them.** Then, according to the parable that Jesus gave of the vineyard let out to husbandmen, who refused to listen to the servants sent to receive the crop. Finally, the lord of the vineyard said, "Well, I’ll send my son; surely they’ll listen to him. What did they do with the son? They killed him. That was the rejecting of the Father and the Son and now what are they going to do with the Holy Spirit? I think that’s in Acts Chapter 7; Israel is having the opportunity, now, to listen to, and come under the influence of, the **third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit; and what did they do? They stoned him** (that’s Stephen). We pick up where Stephen is approaching Israel, by way of the work of the Holy Spirit, and he says, "...*they have slain them which shewed before the coming of the Just One; of whom you have been now the betrayers and (what’s the word?) Murderers!" It’s as plain as you can put it. They killed Him.

**Acts 7:53-56**

["You" (is implied)] *"who have received the Law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. And when they (the Jews of his audience) heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, (and here it comes again) being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and (he saw) Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And (he) said, 'behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man Standing on the right hand of God.'"

We always think of Him as seated at the right hand of God. But, the Jew also knew that if He was anywhere, He was to be seated. For Him to be **standing**, that implied that He was ready to return. The Old Testament spoke of it, that He would sit at His father’s right hand until His enemies were His footstool, and then one of the Psalmists said to the Nation of Israel, "**then He would arise.**" In other words, He would stand and He would be ready to come and deal with His people. **And the Jews caught it.** And so, when Stephen says, "I see him standing on the right hand of God," then... **when they heard that,** "...*they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord. And cast him out of the city and stoned him and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet whose name was Saul.*"

We are now going to see a change of operation. And here’s Saul – being introduced as the persecutor (he’s been heading it up) of these Jewish believers. It was a terrible persecution and so vicious that when you come down to Acts Chapter 8, verse 1, it
Saul was consenting unto his death. And, at that time, there was a great persecution against the church...." Now, we have to be careful how you use that word, church. The Greek word is ecclesia. And all it means in the Greek is a called out assembly. And so, what you have to learn to do is use the word according to its setting in the text. Is it talking about, for example, the crowd at Ephesus, when they went into the amphitheater, and they had a mob rule and said, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," – the same word is used to describe them. They were in ecclesia. They weren’t a religious group or godly group. They were an ungodly group. That would be translated now, church. Theirs was simply called an assembly.

Stephen, in Chapter 7, speaks of Israel as being the church in the wilderness. Now, you know the Church wasn’t on the scene when Israel came out of Egypt. But what was Israel? A called out assembly. So be careful when you get into the actual Church Age, and what we call the Church. Paul almost always identifies it as the Body of Christ, which is the Church. Or the Church, which is His Body. See the difference? This assembly of course, is Jewish believers at Jerusalem. And it’s rightfully called a 'called out assembly.'

Acts 8:3

"As for Saul, he made havock of the church, (or these called-out Jewish believers) entering into every house, and haling men and women (and) committed them to prison."

In other words, Saul was just so intent on stamping out anyone who was following this Jesus of Nazareth. Why? Saul was a tremendously religious man. He had been taught at the feet of Gamaliel, the greatest rabbi of the day. Saul of Tarsus honestly thought that Jesus was an imposter, a blasphemer. And the best thing that could happen to Israel was to have everything connected with Jesus stamped out and put out of memory. So he was what we would call today, a religious zealot. A fanatic to the extreme. But, he thought he was doing his God a favor. The reason I’m painting this kind of picture of Saul of Tarsus, is because we’re going to see in Chapter 9, this man as the one who is going to literally turn the world inside out. All I wanted to show you in chapters 6, 7, & 8 was the introduction of him. In fact, I was encouraged that one of our national news magazines, U.S. News and World Report, had a lead article on some of the men who had been most influential in changing the direction of human history, by one way or another. And believe it or not, one of the men that they listed was the Apostle Paul. And they gave Paul the credit for being the instigator, or the beginning, of Christianity as we know it.

Now, most will just say that Jesus was the one who started Christianity. Jesus is the foundation of it, no doubt! Yet, who built upon that foundation? The Apostle Paul!
And so, I was encouraged that there are a few people starting to recognize that Christianity would not be where it is today had it not been for the Apostle Paul, the previous Saul of Tarsus. So this religious fanatic, trying to stamp out anything that had to do with Jesus of Nazareth, is met in Chapter 9 on his way to Damascus.

Acts 9:1,2

"And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."

You have to remember that when this scripture refers to the synagogues, that this is all Jew. Gentiles didn’t worship in the synagogues. There may have been an occasional proselyte, but not very many. And so, he wants to go to Damascus where he can bring those Jewish followers of Christ in His earthly ministry, and in His Messiahship, and bring them, it says, bound unto Jerusalem.

Acts 9:3,4

"And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven. And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

God is sovereignly working to interrupt His Old Testament program in order to make room, to call out a Bride, a Gentile Bride, for the Son. That’s why we are taking all these references and taking the time to digress from the Book of Genesis for a few lessons.

Acts 9:5

"And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

It was Saul who said, "...Who art thou, Lord...?" Now, I hope I’m not violating the Scripture, and I certainly don’t think I am, when I say that there was only one Lord, so far as a religious Jew of Christ’s day; and who would that have been in the Old Testament? Well, Jehovah, wasn’t it? Now, I like to think that Saul of Tarsus, religious fanatic that he was, when he saw that intense light come from Heaven, and heard the voice from Heaven, who did he immediately, naturally think it was? Well, Jehovah. That’s the God that he knew intricately, he thought. That was the God
he thought he was serving – the God of Abraham – Jehovah. So, I like to think that when Saul saw all of this happening, he just cried out, "Who art thou Jehovah?" And now, look what Jesus (or Jehovah, if you please) answers: "And Jehovah said, I am Jesus." Can you get just an inkling of how Saul must have felt when he heard the very person that he thought was a blasphemer, and an imposter, and somebody that he had to stamp out, tell him that He’s Jesus? I think Saul, as we know he did, just melted. He was converted on the spot:

Acts 9:6a

"...Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?..."

There was no more argument or debate. He suddenly realized that he was dealing with that Jesus that he thought he hated, and recognized Him for Who He really was - The Jehovah of the Old Testament. That’s why I’m always teaching back there. Never lose sight of the fact that Jehovah, God the Son in the Old Testament, is Christ in the New Testament. There is no difference in their personality. The only difference is He has become flesh, and has become, as Paul says in Colossians, "...the image of the invisible God,..." But, it’s the same person. And Saul sees it; he has no argument and his immediate response is, "...Lord, what would you have me to do?..." You know the rest of the story. Let's go to verse 10:

Acts 9:10-15a

"And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, 'Ananias.' And he said, 'Behold I am here Lord.' And the Lord said unto him, 'arise, and go into the street which called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth. And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.' Then Ananias answered, 'Lord I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.' But the Lord said unto him (Now watch this – this is before Saul even has come out of his temporary blindness, and the Lord tells Ananias) Go thy way (in other words, don’t argue with me, just go do what I tell you): 'for he (Saul) is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before (who?) the Gentiles,..."  

If you have any idea of how the Jew felt about Gentiles, turn with me, if you will, to Chapter 22, just to get an idea of how the average Jew, at that time, felt about Gentiles. You should keep in mind, the Jews were steeped in all of this. They were steeped in the Covenant that God gave Abraham, and in the Law that God had given
to Moses. And even thought they didn’t understand much of it, yet they did realize that they were a chosen, Covenant people and that the Gentiles had no part in that relationship. Now, let’s look at verse 17 of Chapter 22, where Paul, as we now call him, is addressing again, a tremendous Jewish crowd there in Jerusalem. He’s explaining, as best he can to his Jewish cohorts, how that God had showed him who Jesus was and he rehashes again, his conversion experience and now he comes down to verse 17:

*Acts 22:17-22*

"And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance: And (I) saw him (this Jesus) saying unto me, 'Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they (the Jew) will not receive thy testimony concerning me.' And I (Paul) said, 'Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.' And he said unto me (Jesus now), 'Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.' And they gave him audience (they listened to him) unto this word, (what word? – Gentile! And when he as much as breathed the word 'Gentile,' look at what happened) and then lifted up their voices, and said, 'Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.'"

That was the mentality of the Jews of that day. And they weren’t all that far wrong. Now, go back to Acts Chapter 9. And, of course, Saul ends up under the roof of Ananias and in verse 17 says:

*Acts 9:17,18*

"And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.' And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized."

(And of course, that was right in line with the Jewish program that began with John the Baptist.) Then Paul received food.

*Acts 9:20*

"And straightway, he preached Christ (where?) in the synagogue..."
He didn’t go out into the Gentile marketplace and approach Gentiles. He goes to the synagogue. **He is still Jew only.** He goes to the synagogues and he preaches Christ, that He is the Son of God, who died for me and rose from the dead? That's not what it says, is it? That’s what a lot of people think it should say. But does Paul, or Saul, know anything of a Gospel based on death and Resurrection? **No!** Just to show you how this was in perfect alignment with that which has been on the scene ever since Christ’s first appearance, or even John the Baptist, go back with me to Matthew’s Gospel, Chapter 16. Here we have Christ having almost finished His three years of earthly ministry. The Twelve had been with Him almost constantly, and it’s about time to go up to Jerusalem and be approached for the Crucifixion. At this point, they are still up there in the area of Caesarea Philippi, north of Jerusalem:

**Matthew 16:13-16**

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they said, 'Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some Elias; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' But he saith unto them, 'But whom say ye that I am?' And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art The Christ, the Son of the living God.'" Who died for me and rose again? No! That’s not what it says. So, what does Peter know? That Jesus is The Christ, The Messiah, The Son of God. That’s all he knows. Now, was Jesus satisfied with that answer? Of course He was – that’s all that Peter could know up to that time. Now, read on:

**Matthew 16:17**

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed are thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Now, turn to Acts Chapter 8. This, of course, is taking place before Saul’s conversion in Chapter 9. That’s an important fact to remember. In Acts Chapter 8, Philip has been up to Samaria. He’s been preaching there that Christ is The Messiah. The Holy Spirit directs him down to the South in Gaza. He runs across this Ethiopian eunuch, who has been to Jerusalem, to worship there (verse 27):

**Acts 8:29,30**

"Then the Spirit said unto Philip, 'Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.' And then Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, 'Understandest thou what thou readest?' You know the account, how
Philip explained to this Ethiopian eunuch who Isaiah was talking about. Go to verses 35 - 37:

**Acts 8:35**

"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him"

Christ crucified? No! He preached unto him 'Jesus.' He doesn’t preach Christ crucified. That's what I want people to see. We assume so much. Now, when you get into Paul’s writings, what does Paul say? But, we preach Christ crucified. You see, they can’t do that yet, because it hasn’t been revealed as Gospel. And so, Philip is in perfect accord with even what Peter understood, that Jesus was The Christ: "Then Philip opened his mouth,...and preached unto him Jesus..."

**Acts 8:36,37**

"...and the eunuch said, 'See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?' And Philip said, 'If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest..." Now, look at the eunuch’s confession of faith. ...And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'" Who died for me and rose again? No! "..that he is the Son of God." And that was their profession of faith. They understood who Jesus was. Now, come across to Chapter 9, Here we find Saul has received his sight. He’s been baptized right in accord with all the rest of them:

**Acts 9:20**

"And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God."

Could God let Saul, later known as Paul, go and preach that message? Of course not. That wouldn’t be the Gospel for the Gentiles.

**Acts 9:21,22**

"But all that heard him were amazed, and said, 'Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?’ But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the (Who?..the) Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is (the) very Christ."
What is Saul leaving out? **Anything concerning the Crucifixion and Resurrection.** He’s just simply proving from the Old Testament that this is the promised Messiah. Now, look how God sovereignly enters in. He can’t leave Saul there under those circumstances:

**Acts 9:23-25**

"And after many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him." Now, what is old Saul going to have to do? He’s going to escape, and we know what happened:

"But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket."

And now he must flee. Where does Saul go? You would normally think that since the Twelve disciples had been with Christ for three years and knew Jesus and his ministry, most people would think that Jerusalem would have been the logical place to go. It would have been logical for Saul to have gone back to Jerusalem, and said, *"Hey fellows, fill me in. Tell me everything you know about The Christ so I can go out and preach."* But does he? No, the Scripture makes it so plain that’s the last place he would have gone. So where does he go? He goes down to Mount Sinai in Arabia. We are going to see that Saul is providentially moved from Damascus. He is not permitted to go to Jerusalem to the Disciples. He goes down to the desert to Mount Sinai, and we’ll see in Galatians what happens.
Lesson Three • Part III

Parenthesis and Dashes: The Interruption of

Old Testament Progress: Introducing Paul

Now back to Acts Chapter 9. Remember Saul of Tarsus, that religious zealot. He was nothing but a renegade, and was doing nothing but upsetting everything. So get rid of him! Or at least punish him severely. Instead, what does God do? He saves him! What do you call that? **Grace!** That’s what I want you to see. That is why he is not only the apostle of Grace, but also the epitome of Grace. If anyone was deserving of nothing, it was Saul of Tarsus. **Are we any different? Isn’t that exactly what we were before we were saved?** We were rebels; we were lost; we were condemned. But what does God do? He saves us by His Grace. But, as we saw in the last lesson, Saul of Tarsus went straight to the synagogue and preached that Jesus was The Christ. There was no mention of the power of the Resurrection, or His having fulfilled the Law, by His death on the Cross. Then we noticed God had to providentially get Paul out of Damascus. He hadn’t gone up to Jerusalem.

What about in Chapter 9 verse 26, where it said that Saul had come to Jerusalem. Verse 25 said they let him down the wall. Now, you have to know your Scripture and know how to study. Because Paul says so clearly in Galatians that he did not go to Jerusalem until a long time later. So what you have to understand is that between verse 25 and 26, **is probably a three year gap in time.** I’ll go back to Galatians to pick that up. This is probably one of Paul’s earlier, not earliest, epistles, and I like to compare Galatians with the Book of Romans. It’s fundamental, and is the very rudiment of our Grace Age doctrine. Yet it does not get into those higher levels of Church standing as Paul finally brings about in Ephesians, Colossians, and so forth. But, here in Galatians he’s going to start the very rudiment of our Christian period of Grace.

**Galatians 1:1-6**

"**Paul, an Apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)**" Look at the change in language from what Peter and the Apostles have been saying compared to what Paul now writes. What is he already emphasizing? **The Resurrection.**

"**And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ** (always watch your punctuation marks). **Who (speaking of Christ) gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world,**
.according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:" Notice how he doesn’t say they were called into the Law, but Grace of Christ, and he said you’re going to (what’s the next word) ‘another’ – a different gospel.

Galatians 1:7,8

"Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." Let’s look at that word, pervert. In other words they had been taking the Gospel and had been perverting – or adding to it. And, in our day and time, they do both. They add to and take away. It’s sad to say, but oh listen, this is strong language in the next verse:

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

That’s very strong language. In verse 9, he repeats it. Every word Paul writes in his Epistles is as inspired by the Holy Spirit as any other portion of Scripture. This is God speaking through this man to us. And he repeats all this in verse 9. Let’s look at it:

Galatians 1:9

"As we said before, so say I now again, 'If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.'"

"As we said before, so say I now again, 'If any....'” (now, the word 'man' is italicized and what does that mean?...It’s been added by the translators so it’s not in the original. I like it better left out.)

"...If any preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Let’s go back to I Corinthians 15 and pick up what Paul calls his Gospel. Or, as I pointed out several lessons ago in Romans 16:25, Paul calls it the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which had been kept secret since the age began. What is that mystery Gospel? That which was never revealed until it came to the Apostle Paul. Well, here it is in I Corinthians Chapter 15:1-4. Simple? Absolutely. So simple a five-year-old can understand it and yet so complex we could live to be a hundred and never comprehend it. It is just both extremes. But here it is:
"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve."

I Corinthians 15:1-4

Look what he says: "I declare unto you THE GOSPEL." Now the article, the, instead of the article "a," designates what? One. That’s what I want you to see. There’s only one Gospel! I sat with a fellow several years ago at a football game in which our kids were both participants. We got to talking about some of these things and I was aghast. He said, "You know, I look at this religion bit sort of like our cow paths out in our pasture. They come from every which direction down to that pond, where they can get their water. And that’s the way it is with all these churches and religions. They’re all coming from a different direction, but they all come to get that same drink of water." Imagine! Here in The Bible Belt, a man who has been in church all his life, making a statement like that. I couldn’t believe it. There aren’t 15 different paths to Heaven. There are not so many different ways to approach God. The Bible says there is ONE WAY! And a Moslem has to admit that it’s the only way. A Hindu had better admit that it’s the only way. And everybody else had better admit it’s the only way, because IT IS the only way. And yet we’re so glib and ready to say, "Oh well, if that’s the way you want to believe, that’s alright." You know, I have heard people even in my own denomination say that. Listen, there’s an eternal lake of fire waiting for such people.

I’ve said through the years, if Christians were as adamant and energetic as the Communists were when Communism was taking over the world, we would have made an impact. Because when a communist got off work, where would he go? To party headquarters and give the rest of his day to the party to enhance communism. What are Christians doing? We’re sitting on our seat and most of us are just blase. I don’t believe in a militaristic Christianity. Not by any means. I know that we can’t force these things on people. But listen, most Christians today could care less about their neighbor. And I suppose I’m as guilty as anybody. But oh, listen, the Gospel is the only Gospel and it’s up to us to let the world know what it is. Let’s look further at these verses in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 15. In verse 1 Paul says, "I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand (positionally):..." We stand in our assurance of Christ’s presence in our lives, and we also stand in the assurance we are His in the life to come. It’s positional. "By which also ye are (what?...) saved."
Years ago (I hadn’t been teaching very long) we were having our coffee break. One of the ladies sat next to me and said, "I wish you wouldn’t use that word, ‘saved.’" I replied, "Why not?" And she said, "Well, it sounds like such a narrow word." I said, "What would you prefer I use?" She replied, "Well you could use 'converted;' there are a lot of things you could use without using the word saved." I picked up my Bible and went through Paul’s letters – and over and over what does he say? Saved!!! It’s the preaching of the Cross that is to those who perish, foolishness. But to those of us who are saved, it’s the power of God unto Salvation. So, 'saved' is a Scriptural word and Paul uses it over and over. It is just another English term from the root word, ‘salvation.’ We use it in everyday language. If someone is in dire straits financially, and all of a sudden he has a rich uncle die who leaves him all of his estate: what would you say about the guy’s financial affairs? "Oh, it was his salvation. He was saved from bankruptcy." And that’s the way the word is used here. We are saved from the eternal doom that is waiting for us if we do not believe.

Now I Corinthians 15:2. "By which also ye are saved, if you keep in memory (and that just simply means if you know and understand) what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." In other words, you have to know what you believe. You can’t just hope that God thinks that you know. You are supposed to know! And then he says, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received." (We’re going to go back to Galatians in just a moment.) And where does he receive this Gospel? From the ascended, glorified Christ. Let’s go on: "...how that (and here comes the Gospel) Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures..." Now, what scriptures is Paul referring to? Old Testament! All of this was promised in that prophetic program, that Christ would die. Psalms depicts his burial, his Resurrection. Psalms 110:1 says of his Ascension, come sit at my fathers right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.

It’s all back there, so Paul can rightly say that all this is according to the Old Testament Scriptures. Looking at verse 4 again: "And that he was buried,..." Christ was really dead! He didn’t just go into a swoon, like some would like to say. He didn’t just go into an unconscious state. He died, and that was the reason for the three days and three nights in the grave - to prove that his death was complete. "...that he was buried and that he rose again the third day,..." and it, too, was what? "...according to the scriptures." It was foretold that these things would happen. Now, this Gospel then, was unknown to Peter and the eleven. Let’s go back, again, to Luke 18. This is what I want people to see. This was not always known. It was kept secret as long as this Old Testament program was still on the scene. This reference, again, is to Jesus in his earthly ministry, and they’re just about a few days from Jerusalem and the Crucifixion.

Luke 18:31-34
"Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again." You can’t get any plainer than when He told them that on the third day He would rise again. That’s just as plain as you can get it. But, let’s read the next verse:

"And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."

"And they...." (the Twelve) understood, how much? None! They understood none of these things, and this saying was hid. You see, there’s that word – it was 'hid.' It wasn’t time for God to reveal these things, because He was still approaching Israel on this ground. And they had no idea that He was going to die and be buried, and rise again and ascend, and to turn to the Gentiles in Grace. That was so totally beyond them. That’s what I said a few lessons ago, Peter didn’t have the foggiest notion of what the gospel of Grace was all about. Now, let’s read on. "...and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken." Now, lest someone says we’re just using one verse, on your way back to Galatians, let’s stop at John’s Gospel, Chapter 20. You all know the account of Peter and John running to the sepulchre after Mary had told them that He had risen. They couldn’t believe even Mary's account, let alone that they understood it before. And so, they come running to the tomb to check it out. They finally went into the tomb, and saw the evidence that, indeed, He had supernaturally been raised out of that tomb.

John 20:8,9

"Then went in also that other disciple (that is John), which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, (the evidence) and then believed." Until then he wouldn’t have believed.

"For as yet (they’ve been with Christ for three years – these disciples should have known the Old Testament.) But it says, they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." How can you get any plainer? They had no idea of this coming about of what Paul calls, his Gospel. Go to Galatians and we’ll chase down the scriptures that show how God is all of a sudden, through this one man, going to reveal a change in the program.

He’s going to interrupt it right after the coming of the Holy Spirit, and the Tribulation does not come in. Instead, we’re going to have the introduction of the Age of Grace. Remember I had you put the parenthesis and dashes in some of those other
scriptures. But now comes the Age of Grace, what we call the calling out of the Body of Christ, or we’d better refer to it as the Church Age. I’m getting more and more definitive on that use of the word, Church, because few people understand the Church is the Body of Christ. Granted, the local church is certainly a God-given entity. But not everyone who is a member of a local church is in the Body of Christ. Every church I’ve ever known has a mixture of believers and unbelievers. But there are no unbelievers in the Body of Christ. That’s something God is in control of and you can’t get into the Body of Christ unless you have experienced Salvation and the Holy Spirit places you into it. We’ll see that in coming moments. Now, back to Galatians. Paul is defending his apostleship:

_Galatians 1:10_

"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I see to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

In other words, you can’t be both. You cannot be a servant of Christ and yet please men. I found that out, and I think most believers find it out also. I’ve come up with a little cliche that I’m sure is original to myself, at least I’ve never heard it or seen it in print. And that is this: "That when it comes to the things of the spirit, the majority is always wrong!" Why do I say that? Well, when you came down to Noah’s ark, what went in to the ark? The majority or the minority? Well, a mighty small minority.

All through the Scripture, even the Old Testament and God's dealings with Israel, what was the percentage of the Jews that were genuine believers? Precious few. Elijah thought he was the only one. And, of course, he wasn’t that far off. But nevertheless, God said he had 7,000. How much is 7,000 out of probably 6 or seven million? That’s about 1%. It’s just a drop in the bucket. And so, all the way through, even during Christ’s earthly ministry, how many believers do you think there were by the time he was through after three years? I tend to believe, and I stand to be corrected, and I may be wrong, but according to Acts Chapter 1, the believers in the immediate area of Jerusalem, numbered how many? 120! That’s all. And we have nothing to indicate there were more than that. They all came together and gathered in that upper room. I’m talking about the area of Jerusalem. I’m not talking about the rest of Israel.

But even after Christ’s three years of earthly ministry, the majority of Israel still said he was an imposter. They were wrong. And you come all the way through the last 1900 years or so, and for the most part, the majority of mankind has rejected the Gospel and that means what? They’re wrong! So, always rest on the fact that if you’re going to be a true student of Scripture, you’re going to be a child of God;
you’re going to be in a mighty small minority, and it’s getting smaller all the time. Now, let’s go back to Galatians.

**Galatians 1:11**

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man."

Paul says, what I’ve got, I didn’t get from man. But, how did he get it? **By the revelation of Jesus Christ. The Ascended Lord. The Resurrected Lord.** That makes all the difference in the world! Let me go back to another verse. I always have to take them as I think of them. Go back to II Corinthians 5 to a verse I dare say, 90% of even good Bible students and Christians, do not understand.

**II Corinthians 5:16**

"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more."

"Wherefore..." in other words, because of the Gospel, "...henceforth know we no man after the flesh,..." Who do you suppose he’s referring to? **He’s talking about Christ in His earthly ministry.** Just look at it. "Wherefore..." because Christ died and rose from the dead. Now, while His earthly ministry was one of "Jesus going about doing good..." — and it's good to know about Bethlehem, about His miracles, about His suffering, about all that took place; we must note carefully that that is not what is required for Salvation. What's required for Salvation is: **believing that this Christ, this Son of God, The Creator God went to the Cross and died for our sins and arose from the dead.** See the difference?

Now, read on, and here’s why I know he’s speaking of Christ and His earthly ministry — this next statement: "...yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh;" Now, what do you think he is saying? Let's reconstruct. Saul was, no doubt, about the same age as Christ. As near as I can discern from Scripture, he was probably contemporary with Christ in age. He was probably 30 or 35 when Christ was crucified. Which means that during Christ’s earthly ministry, Saul of Tarsus was in the very prime of life. Do you think that even though he never indicates that he met Jesus face to face, do you think for a minute that this religious Jew didn’t know everything that was going on in Israel? Of course he did! He knew all about Jesus and about all that He was doing. And that’s what gave him such an attitude of rebellion. He wanted to stamp it out. Now, read on: "...though we have known Christ after the flesh (I’ve known about him in his earthly ministry), yet now henceforth (in other words from His Resurrection on) **know we him no more.**"
Back in the early 70’s when I was still teaching up north, I had a large class of college age young people every Saturday night. We’d just pack them in – about 45 or 50 kids on the living room floor (not in our home – another lady hosted them). I had a lot of people who came out of the "Jesus Movement", the hippy days. Do you remember them? They talked "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus", but they knew nothing about Jesus. They knew nothing of the Gospel! And do you know why? Just what Paul says here: We're not saved by knowing His earthly ministry, but by His death, burial and Resurrection.

And again, let me repeat what Paul says, "...we preach Christ crucified." Here’s where we have to understand that our Gospel is not based on His earthly ministry, nor on His miracles, nor signs and healings. Our Gospel is based on the fact that He died, He paid the sin debt, He defeated death and Hell, and Satan, and He rose victoriously from the dead and now He can proclaim that His life can be our life. And because He rose from the dead, we have already risen from death spiritually. And one day, if we live long enough, and the Lord tarries long enough that we die, we’re going to be resurrected to a new life. But, I think it’s getting close enough that we don’t have to worry about the cemetery. I think we’re just going to go up one of these days. I honestly think it’s getting that close.
Lesson Three • Part IV

Parenthesis and Dashes: The Interruption of

Old Testament Progress: Introducing Paul

Let’s pick again in Galatians. We’ll eventually get back to Genesis 24, but this is just
an extension of that chapter, where Abraham sends the servant up in to a far country
to get a bride for his son Isaac. Remember, we made the correlation that this is a
beautiful picture of God sending the Holy Spirit out among the Gentiles to gather
a Bride for His Son, which of course is the Church. So what I’ve been doing for the
last couple of lessons, is showing how this Old Testament program that we found in
Psalms 2 and various other places of the Old Testament, would be interrupted, and it
would be actually brought about through the conversion of the Apostle Paul. And
then, would follow his revelations of these great doctrines of Grace that you’ll
find no where else in Scripture. And this is why there is so much confusion.

I had a young man tell me recently that I was the first one that hadn’t taken all The
Bible, put it in a blender, turned it on high, and then dished it out and given
everybody indigestion! I said, "Now, that’s hitting the nail on the head, because
that’s what most of them do, you know." They mix it all up, and then they wonder
why people can’t keep from throwing up. But all you have to do is just keep it in it’s
progressive revelation as all these things unfolded in God’s own time and under His
sovereign Grace. Then The Bible will just become so exciting. It is so much easier to
study and understand. I think of all the hundreds of people I’ve had in my classes over
the last twenty years, not one would disagree with me on that. It’s when you begin to
keep all these things in their rightful place instead of mixing them, that there isn’t any
confusion.

We’ll eventually get back to Genesis, but for right now we’ve got to get to where the
Bride of Christ is actually brought on the scene. Several have asked if we wouldn’t
delineate a little bit more about end-time things. So, since we’re back in the New
Testament, and we’re dealing with the Church Age, we’ll probably take one lesson to
go into the Tribulation and the Rapture, and the actual return of Christ. We won’t do it
in depth or detail, but we’ll lay it out enough that hopefully, you’ll be able to
understand it.

Come back to Galatians Chapter 1, where Paul has defended his apostleship. We
explained in the last lesson what Paul’s Gospel is. That it’s all centered on the
death, burial and Resurrection of Christ, the Son of God, Israel’s Messiah. And
then in verse 12:
Galatians 1:12

"For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

For I never received it of man. In other words, as I pointed out, he never went back to Jerusalem, and checked in with the disciples. "...neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." We can see that everything Paul teaches and writes, came directly from the ascended Lord in glory. I’ve had people kindly say, "Wait a minute Les. You say that we go by what Paul says, I always thought we go by what Jesus said." That, of course, would be in the Gospels. Well, wait a minute. Everything that Paul writes, is what Jesus said (By revelation). But it’s what Jesus said after his death, burial, Resurrection and Ascension. And it’s just as if you made a will 5 years ago, and today you make a new one, and tomorrow you die. And now they bring both wills before the court. Which one is valid? The last one, because it’s what you spoke last!

This is the way we must look at Paul. Paul’s revelations are from the ascended Lord, whereas the Gospels are talking about Christ during His earthly ministry. And as I always remind people, please remember that during His earthly ministry He was living under the Law. He was ministering to a people under the Law. And so, everything that he taught was in that flavor. Now granted, we can go back and study the Gospels, and we can get a lot of moral applications. It’s certainly nice to know the things that Christ did (his compassion for example), and I have no problem with that. But you won’t find the Gospel back there, because He hadn’t died yet; He hadn’t shed His blood; He hadn’t risen from the dead.

Galatians 1:13

"For ye have heard of my conversation in times past (or my manner of living) in the Jews religion...."

I’ve made it evident over the past few years that I detest the word religion. I hope nobody ever calls me religious, because Christianity is not a religion. But, now, you see, Paul uses the word in a bad light. What does Paul think of the Jews religion? Just exactly as he implies – it’s what made him like he was. It made Paul a hater of The Messiah, The Christ.

Galatians 2:14

"And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."
What’s the key word? **Tradition.** Oh listen, that’s one of the most dangerous words in the Christian community. Tradition is sending millions to a lost eternity. Let’s be on guard that we don’t just subscribe to something because that’s what Dad believed. How do we know that what they believed was right? **We’ve got to come back to The Book.** I always tell people that what I say doesn’t count. But you can say, "Les says to look at such and such a verse." I don’t mind that. But don’t ever ascribe anything to what I say, or what any other human being says. **We have to rest on the Word of God.**

**Galatians 1:15**

"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace...."

Remember I emphasized last week, when Saul was on the road to Damascus, he was a total enemy of Christ. Instead of zapping him off the scene, Christ saved him! **Now, that was Grace.** And Paul recognized that all through his writings.

**Galatians 1:16**

"To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:...."

"To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen (Who?...The Gentiles and Heathen, not amongst the Jews so much, but among the Gentiles.); immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:...." When we were in Acts Chapter 9 last lesson I told you there had to be about a three year gap between those two verses:

**Galatians 1:16**

"Neither went up I to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus."

Where did he go? Into Arabia. Now, the reason I put Sinai along with Arabia is because in Chapter 4 – you might want to turn there with me for a minute – in verse 25, he uses the term Mount Sinai in Arabia. Putting two and two together, you'll come up with the fact that here in Chapter 1, when God sovereignly drove him out of Damascus, He sent him down into the desert of Arabia to Mount Sinai. And I like to make the analogy, as I’ve done in programs of the past, that just as surely as God gave the Law to Moses, and Moses took the Law down the mountain to Israel,
so God gave to the Apostle Paul at Sinai the doctrines of Grace. Paul tells us in Ephesians that we Gentiles have what we have, because he (Paul) gave it to us.

_Galatians 1:18_

"Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and

abode with him fifteen days." After three years: that’s where I get that Paul must have spent about three years at Mount Sinai, where God revealed the tremendous truths of this Age of Grace.

_Galatians 2:1_

"Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also."

Now, fourteen years after, see how time is unrolling. Just get this idea: from Pentecost to the sermon of Stephen was about seven years. Then, within a year or two of that, you have Saul’s conversion. Then within the next year probably, Peter goes to the house of Cornelius. We are then about twelve years after Pentecost. Then Paul goes down for three years to Sinai. And then he comes back up into the area of Cilicia. And so fourteen years after all of this has taken place, he comes back to Jerusalem in Acts Chapter 15, and we call it the council in Jerusalem. That’s where they called Paul on the carpet for preaching Salvation to the Gentiles. Please turn to Acts Chapter 11, where you want to remember that the Jews have been under intense persecution, which was brought about by the old Saul of Tarsus. They were forced to flee. You might want to go back and look at Chapter 8. I don’t like to say things without letting you see it in Scripture:

_Acts 8:1_

"And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles."

Saul was consenting unto Stephen’s death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the assembly at Jerusalem: and they were all, every Jewish believer. I’m a stickler for words in Scripture, because I don’t think the Holy Spirit would permit a word to come in that is used loosely. And so I think, when it says that they were all, it meant all. So they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except who?... the apostles... do you see that? We pointed that out
recently. But we are prone to forget, everyone does. They all scattered except the apostles; and here it is eight years after Pentecost, and they are still in Jerusalem. Alright, come on over to Chapter 11, where we were. Come down to verse 19. This the verse that virtually blew my mind several years ago. I’ve mentioned more than once, that I wasn’t raised in the teaching that I now teach. And this is one of the verses that opened my eyes. I was of the same mindset that Christianity began back there with John the Baptist. I don’t know what we thought. But, I had always had it all mixed up, too, you know (I already see some heads nodding). I never differentiated, but this verse hit me one time and I thought, this tells me something. And what does it say?

Acts 11:19

"Now they that were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but the Jews only."

Now, when he speaks of "preaching the Word," which Word did they have? The Old Testament, that’s all. And so they preached that Christ was The Messiah from the Old Testament; and they preached the Word to (and look at the next word) "...none but unto the Jews only." Now isn’t that plain. Many people get the idea that as soon as Christ left the scene, the twelve went all over the world preaching the Gospel. No, they didn’t. They stayed in Jerusalem and even the believing Jews that were scattered, because of the persecution, preached to nobody but Jews. They had no idea that God was going to go to a Gentile. That was anathema to them. Now read on:

Acts 11:20

"And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus."

Now, they’ve come to Antioch and they’ve scattered away from Jerusalem and all through parts of the Mediterranean. Some have come to Antioch, where they spoke unto the Grecians, or Greeks. It wasn’t unusual to speak to Grecians because they were Jews who were living in Greece, or at least speaking the Greek language. But Greeks speaks of Gentiles. That’s what I want you to see. So, you see now what God is sovereignly doing? Even these Jews who had been forced out of Jerusalem, have now come up as far as Antioch and without their even realizing what’s going on, God is beginning to cause Gentiles to be interested enough to listen to what these Jews have to say. Now read on: "...preaching the Lord Jesus." There’s still no reference
to the death, burial and Resurrection, because they didn’t understand that either yet, **but at least they are approaching these Gentiles.**

*Acts 11:21,22*

"And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch."

Now, what do you suppose the Jewish people of Jerusalem thought? "Hey, what in the world is going on here? They can’t be talking to Greeks. This is our business." And then they sent Barnabas to check this whole thing out.

*Acts 11:23*

"Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."

When Barnabas saw the Grace of God, he was glad. Most Jews wouldn’t have been, but Barnabas was special, as you’ll now see:

*Acts 11:24*

"For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord."

When he says **much was added unto the Lord**, that included Greeks too. Now, here’s where the Holy Spirit moves in a special detail. The Gentiles are being approached and showing interest; and many are even believing, **which I would still call the Jewish message, that Jesus was indeed The Messiah of Israel.** What does Barnabas understand has to be done? **There’s only one man for the hour and who is that? Paul.** So what does the next verse say?

*Acts 11:25,26*

"Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."
Note how it says that Barnabas went to seek Saul and how he found him. See how this all fits. He went up into the area of Tarsus, which is not that far, and I can just see Barnabas going up and down the streets of these cities, along that river valley, asking if any had seen Paul. And then he finally finds Paul. And look at what he says in verse 26: "And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch." And they stayed for a whole year, teaching this group of Jews and Gentiles. And these disciples, or believers, were called Christians, where? Not Jerusalem.

I’m so amazed that every writer that I read, even great men all over; they all refer to those Jewish believers at Jerusalem as Christians. The Bible never does. Just think about that. The Bible never calls those Jewish believers Christians, from the time of John the Baptist, all the way up until Paul. But all the theologians do. The Christians there at Jerusalem. I don’t know where we get it. Because you see, it wasn’t until Paul came on the scene and began to expound on the Age of Grace, based on the death, burial and Resurrection, that The Bible says those people were Christians. Those Jewish believers, I maintain, were not in that category. They were not like these Gentiles. They were called Christians first there in Antioch. If you’ll come down to Chapter 15, you'll see Paul and Barnabas have now come back from their first missionary journey up in Asia Minor, and they’ve established churches. Gentiles have been saved. Now, before we go to Chapter 15, let’s jump over to Romans Chapter 11. Here in Romans Chapter 11, these three little chapters in the middle of the book are dealing with the Nation of Israel. And now look at what Paul says in verse 11:

Romans 11:11

"I say then, 'have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.'"

When he says "...have they stumbled that they should fall?...", he is speaking of the Nation of Israel. In other words, are they cancelled out of this Old Testament program. Is God all through with the Jew? What’s his next statement?..."GOD FORBID (or banish the thought): But rather through their fall..." Through their rejecting their Messiah and crucifying him, through their fall, Salvation has come to whom?... The Gentiles! Now, do you see it. You can’t get it any plainer. Israel rejected it, crucified Him, and by so doing, they brought about God’s plan of Salvation by Grace.

Now, come back to Acts 15. The Jerusalem believers are all shook up that Gentiles are supposedly being saved up in Antioch. So they send men up there to check it out, and sure enough, they are! And so they decide they’d better bring them back to
Jerusalem. Now, this is what Paul is referring to in Galatians 2, when he says fourteen years later he went up to Jerusalem.

*Acts 15:2*

"When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question."

Paul and Barnabas had this big argument with these Jews from Jerusalem, saying the Gentiles could not be saved unless they were circumcised after the manner of Moses, as stated in verse 1. And then you come over to verse 5 of the same chapter. Look what these Jews in Jerusalem (including the Twelve), are saying:

*Acts 15:5*

"But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them,(those Gentile believers up in Antioch) and to command them to keep the law of Moses."

**Most people don't know this chapter in The Bible! But see, this was still the setting of the Jerusalem church. It was still based on the Law and circumcision, and everything else.** The Gentile was based on the Grace of God, and so the Jerusalem church had to reconcile it. So they called Paul down on the carpet. And I can just imagine how they thought they almost had him until, finally, Peter wakes up and realizes that by a previous experience, God had shown him that He would save Gentiles. Had it not been that God providentially took Peter up there (in Chapter 10), to the house of Cornelius, he would have never come to Paul’s defense here. It’s the only thing that kept it going.