Turn to Acts Chapter 15. We showed that the Old Testament program as it was laid out in Psalms Chapter 2 never gave the slightest hint of this 1900+ years we call the Church Age. The Old Testament program foretold the coming of the Nation of Israel on the scene by virtue of the Abrahamic Covenant. And how The Messiah came and they rejected Him, they crucified Him, and after that was to come the Tribulation; that awful period of seven years spoken of in Daniel. And then Christ would return and set up His Kingdom. Not a mention of the Church in there whatsoever! But, as we've been pointing out, just when it seemed like the rebellion was reaching its pinnacle under Saul of Tarsus, God saved the chief rebel by His Grace, on the road to Damascus.

In Acts 15, we saw how the Jewish believers at Jerusalem got all shook up over the fact that Paul and Barnabas were bringing Gentiles into the Church at Antioch and, consequently, they sent men from Jerusalem to check it out. It caused so much consternation that they requested Paul and Barnabas come down to Jerusalem to 'call them on the carpet' because they were bringing Gentiles in and offering them God's Salvation. That was just an anathema (a formal ecclesiastical ban) to the Jew of that time! Then, I showed how Peter had been silent during all the first part of this great controversy in Acts 15 until finally, Sovereignly, God reminded him of what he had experienced twelve years before when he had gone up to the house of Cornelius. And, I stress the fact that Peter, the good Law-keeping Jew, didn't really want to go to Cornelius. I put it as 'heel marks in the sand from Joppa to Caesarea.' But, God forced it for this situation right here. Had Peter not had that experience of having Gentiles saved in Acts Chapter 10, I doubt he would have come to Paul's defense in Acts 15. And had not Peter come to Paul's defense in Chapter 15, I'm afraid Christianity would have stopped in its tracks! But God, in His Sovereignty, wouldn't allow that to happen:

Acts 15:7

"And when there had been much disputing, 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.'"
Let's look at what Peter had to say. "And when there had been much disputing (I am sure this was later on after the meeting had begun), Peter rose up and said unto them, 'Men and brethren, you know how that a good while ago (12 years ago) God made choice among us, that the Gentiles (remember the house of Cornelius) by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel (the Good News) and believe.'"

 Acts 15:10

"Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, (the Gentile believers at Antioch) which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" Now, that was the Law, and Peter, of all people, stresses the fact that it was a burden, it was a yoke:

 Acts 15:12,13a

"Then all the multitude (that crowd of Jews meeting in Jerusalem to consider whether Gentiles could have access to Israel's God) kept silence, (after all, when Peter spoke they respected him) and gave audience (listened) to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. And after they had held their peace, James answered,..."

Most people automatically think it was the James of Peter, James and John; but it wasn't. That James, who was one of the Twelve, was beheaded some time before. This James was not even a believer during Christ's earthly ministry. He was one of the other children of Joseph and Mary. We call him a half-brother of Christ. The amazing thing is that, at this point in time, Peter is no longer the chief spokesman. When we study the Book of Acts, I always point out that beginning in Acts Chapters 1 and 2, Peter is the spokesman. He is the moderator - the head man. But, by the time we get to this situation, Peter has been sitting off in the corner, not really having a part in the discussion because he's not part of the wheels anymore. Sovereignly, God shakes him up, brings him to the forefront, and he makes this statement that God had shown him Gentiles could be saved even as Jews! So this James, who is the moderator, shows just how far the Kingdom program has already slipped -- that Peter is no longer the chief spokesman.

 Acts 15:13b,14 continued

"...Men and brethren, hearken unto me (listen): Simeon (Peter) hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name."

Now, who are 'a people?' The Body of Christ; The Gentile believers! There can be Jews, but for the most part, this Age of Grace has reached into the Gentile people to
bring out of them 'a people', or the Bride. The two words, 'a people,,' are the calling out of the Bride of Christ, that Gentile Bride. The Holy Spirit has been working amongst (predominately again) the Gentiles. We are not going to leave the Jews out completely; there are some, but it's predominantly a Gentile Bride. Then verse 15 (watch this carefully):

Acts 15:15,16

"And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,..." This calling out of a people - and to this, James says, agrees the words of the prophets; 'as it is written,...' Now, verse 16:"After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:...."

Underline those first two words, 'After this:' now what have you got? Well, you've got a time setting. Now, you haven't got a month and a day and a year, but you've got something denoting a time factor. So, 'After this:' well, after what? After 'the calling out of a people for His name!' See that?! It's so easy to just read and not see what you read. But, all this just falls into place if you look at it carefully. James says, 'yes,' prophesy indicated that God would call out a people for His name. And when that is finished, when that has been concluded, after this, then what's God going to do? Rebuild again, or He will return (verse 16), and rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen down. In other words, who is He going to go back and work with? His Covenant people, Israel! But in the meantime, He's calling out a Gentile Bride. Now, do you see that? To enlighten us a little more on that, let's turn to Romans Chapter 11.

Romans 11:25

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

This is the chapter where Paul draws the analogy of grafting a tree. I've got a horticulturist in one of my classes who loves to graft, and he showed me a perfect example of it just a few weeks ago. This fellow had taken an ordinary native pecan, cut it off, and grafted in two or three other new varieties; and now he could show me the results. It's unbelievable! He had clusters of pecans as big as my fist! That's what grafting can do. He also explained that if he wanted to cut off those grafts, he could take another native pecan branch and graft it right back in - no problem.
That's what Paul is describing here in Romans Chapter 11, concerning the Nation of Israel. **They were the native tree!** But, after dealing with the Nation of Israel for almost 2,000 years from the call of Abraham (1,500 years under the Law), they rejected, and rejected, until finally what did God do? He broke off those native branches and He grafted in the Gentiles. Then, Paul uses the analogy that if God could take a wild branch and graft it in, then how much easier will it be someday for Him to break off these grafted branches and bring back the natural - speaking of His coming back to deal once again with His Covenant people. As you come down through that Chapter, in verse 25, Paul writes, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be (...) ignorant...(!)" We have to be careful in our use of language. We can be ignorant and still have a pretty high intelligence level, can't we? Any one of us can be totally ignorant of a particular discipline, without having a low IQ, because **ignorance is brought about by a lack of teaching;** a lack of learning. That's the only reason I teach.

I'm not interested in making a Methodist something other than a Methodist, or making a Presbyterian something else, or a Baptist something else. **I just want to get everyone to where they can study The Word of God on their own.** As many of the people in my classes who are Sunday School teachers and deacons have found, they can go back into their local situation and teach The Book to others. So, Paul says here he would not have us be ignorant of this mystery or this secret, this very fact that has been hidden, **even in the Scriptures.** A lady here in Oklahoma said the first thing she got from my teaching was that, **indeed, the Church was hidden until it was revealed.** You know, I read something like that and I just about hit the ceiling, because this is what I want people to understand! What does The Book say about these things? Verse 25. "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery (secret), lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that (here's the mystery) blindness in part..." The words 'in part' mean not forever, but for a period of time. There's a good illustration of that in Acts 13. Paul and Barnabas have just begun their missionary journey and, as they have taken off from Antioch, they first stop at the island of Cyprus. This is a prophetic picture of the Nation of Israel.

**Acts 13:6,7**

"And when they had gone through the isle (of Cyprus) unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus (a Roman), a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God." This Gentile officer, or political leader, wants to learn more of the word of God, but his right-hand man is a Jew, a sorcerer, and a false teacher. In verse 8 this Jew is called Elymas, the sorcerer:
Acts 13:8-11

"But Elymas, the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith." He tried to keep Paul and Barnabas from this Roman deputy. "...seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith." Have you got the picture? He's doing everything he can to keep this Gentile from Salvation.

"Then Saul, (who is also called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, 'O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season.' And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand."

Look carefully at these verses. "Then Saul (Paul), filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes upon him, and said (to this Jew), 'O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease (or stop) to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now (Paul continues), behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind (now watch it carefully), not seeing the sun (or daylight; for how long?) for a season.'" Not for the rest of his days, but for a time. Now, what's this a picture of? The Nation of Israel! Everywhere Paul and Barnabas, and later Paul and Silas, went in their missionary journeys, who was their chief opposition? The Jews! And, when he came down to Thessalonica, Paul even says that the dishonorable women withstood him -- Jewish women. So, what did God do? Pick it up as we go back to Romans 11:10, to follow our line of thought on Israel being blinded even as Elymas was.

Romans 11:10

"Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway."

"Let their eyes be darkened...." -- now this is out of Isaiah. God knew all this was coming, yet it had never been revealed until now, as Paul lays it out so clearly: "Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway." Then he goes on to the description of grafting. Now, back to Romans 11:25: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part (or for a time) is happened to Israel (what's the next word? A time word! Not a month, day or year, but a specific time in God's program that blindness is going to cover the Nation of Israel, spiritually) ...until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Now, the fullness of the Gentiles is what? -- that 'calling out of a people for His name' back in Acts Chapter 15 -- the Body of Christ! Now, when the Body of Christ is full, then that period of time will come to an
end. God will remove the Body, and He'll pick up where He left off with His Covenant people, Israel. There's an interesting sidelight to all of this back in Luke 21. **Running concurrently, side by side, are two great fillings; that's what I like to call them.** Not only the filling up of the Body of Christ, but also a filling up of the cup of iniquity of the Gentiles, or the world in general.

**Luke 21:24**

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

At your leisure, read verses 20-23. For now we'll jump on down to verse 24 where Jesus is speaking. And He says to the Twelve, "And they (that is the Jews) shall fall by the edge of the sword and shall be led away captive into all nations:..." Now see, that is the clue in this verse that we're not talking about the return of Christ. We're not talking about Armageddon. **We're talking about Titus in 70 A.D.**

The attack by Titus, remember, was about 40 years beyond Christ's Crucifixion, and so he was foretelling what is going to happen. And, we know it did from history in 70 A.D. They fell by the edge of the sword. They were besieged by the Romans! It was one of the most awful sieges in all of human history! I won't take time to go into all of the details, but it was awful! In fact, one of the things that made the Romans so vicious (when they finally got over the walls, and knocked down the gates) was that, as those Roman soldiers would be climbing their ladders to get over the walls, the Jews would pour boiling oil on them. This just infuriated the Romans! And so, when they finally made it in, they were ruthless! They had no mercy, and that's what Jesus is referring to when He said, "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive to all nations: (and here's the crucial part) and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, (what's the next word?) until (there's that word again. There's coming a time when the Gentiles will no longer have Jerusalem under their feet. So Jerusalem, Jesus said, will be trodden down by the Gentiles) the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

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I'd like to illustrate this as two concurrent vessels, if I may call it that. Beginning back in 606 B.C. That's back before the Cross. Nebuchadnezzar, remember, came from Babylon and besieged the city of Jerusalem; he destroyed the Temple and took the Jews captive. From that point on, after the Babylonian empire, came the Medes and the Persians, and then came the Greeks, and then came the Romans, and up until the time Jesus is speaking, Jerusalem and Palestine had been overrun by these succeeding Gentile empires.

Even up to our present time of 1991: all this time, for the most part, Palestine and the Jew have been under the heel of the Gentile. Granted in 1948, they seemingly became a sovereign state; but for all practical purposes, are they all that sovereign? Not really. They wouldn't survive a day without Uncle Sam and the wealth that comes from this nation, although a lot of it comes from the Jewish people. But still, they are not what you would call a sovereign state, fully independent of the Gentiles. Now then, from 606 B.C. up until Christ returns, Jerusalem will not have peace (and we don't know exactly when His Second Coming will be). Now, I'm not talking about the Rapture of the Church, but at His Second Coming to the city of Jerusalem -- that is when Jerusalem will finally have her peace - not until! They can talk peace until they're blue in the face over there in Madrid, or Washington, or anyplace else, but there will be no peace for Jerusalem until the Prince of Peace returns.

All this period of time called the 'times of the Gentiles,' is like filling a container with the iniquity of the Gentiles. Running concurrently with that now, from sometime just beyond the Cross until The Lord takes the Church out, is the fullness of the Gentiles, and the coming in of a people for His name, which we refer to as the Body of Christ. Do you see how beautifully those two work together. While God is calling out the Body, during that same time, the Gentiles are filling their cup of iniquity, until the Second Coming. Let's go all the way back to Revelation and you'll get the full picture of how this iniquity is going to fill up.

Revelation 9:21

"Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."
LESSON ONE * PART II

CALLING OUT A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME

Turn to Romans Chapter 6. God's calling out a people for His name, the Body of Christ. The Body of Christ is also referred to as the Bride of Christ, and is predominately Gentile in its makeup because Israel has been blinded: sent into a dispersion that has lasted over 1900 years. I think that's just about to end. We don't know, but it would seem we're coming close to the end of this Age of Grace. God will pick up where He left off with the Nation of Israel. We'll spend this lesson on the doctrines for this Age of Grace. How do we become a member of this Bride of Christ? I think, even though we're in the so-called Bible Belt, I find there is so much confusion on the simple plan of Salvation; and indeed, it is simple. A six-year-old can comprehend it, and yet it is so complex that I can't comprehend it, and I don't think anyone else can. It is beyond human understanding. It is an act of God. Let's turn over to Chapter 6 of Romans and look at a verse that we made reference to several weeks ago. But in Chapter 6, Paul makes a tremendous statement. And again, it's simplicity in its entirety. Verse 14:

Romans 6:14

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

Whenever I teach the Book of Romans verse by verse, I always point out that the word 'sin' (singular) is not the act of sin, such as theft or adultery, for example. The word 'sin' in Romans, unless the text clearly says otherwise, speaks of the old Adamic nature. That old sin nature that we're born with. A question came up recently which asked, "How soon does a child show that sin nature?" You know what my answer always is? -- "Just as soon as they can!" Even in their innocence. But now, Paul says, sin doesn't always have to control us. In verse 14: "For sin (that old Adamic nature) shall not have dominion (control or reigning rule) over you: for ye are not under the law,..." (you're under what?... Grace!).

Few comprehend the Grace of God. Most people understand the definition to be unmerited favor. But Grace is that attribute of God that can take the person who realizes he's nothing more than a fallen creature; he's under sin; he's under condemnation; and there's nothing he can do... then **the Grace of God reaches down and saves him on the basis of his believing the Gospel** (plus nothing). Now, that's simple, isn't it? Recently, we were explaining the conversion of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. I describe him as a raging bull. He could hardly wait to get to Damascus and arrest more people (Jews of course) who had become followers of
Christ, and bring them back to Jerusalem, and either have them put to death or have them put in prison. That was his attitude. And yet, **despite Saul's destructive mindset, what did God do? He saved him! By Grace!** He didn't deserve it, work for it or do anything for it. He just said, "Lord, what would you have me to do." Now, that's Grace, and that's exactly where every one of us have to find ourselves. We're a totally undone creature. There is nothing we can do except call out for the mercy and the Grace of God, believing everything that needed to be done on our behalf was accomplished at the Cross. **That's faith, and you can't add anything to it.**

Alright, read it again: "...ye are not under the law, but under grace." Now, go back to Romans Chapter 3. Remember that, beginning with the call of Abram (or Abraham), back in 2000 B.C. -- with the calling aside of that favored nation, the Nation of Israel, God dealt only with the Jew (with exceptions, but they were few and far between). It was Jew only, His Covenant people. In other words, what did God do with the Jew? He called them out, set them aside, and made them different. He made them different to the point where they were never to have anything to do with the tribes and nations living around them. They were not to intermarry nor have any kind of social intercourse with them. **They were to be a separated, holy people.** But, in the final analysis, when we come to the Apostle Paul in Romans Chapter 3, verse 9; look at what it says:

**Romans 3:9**

"What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;..."

"What then...?" Now Paul is speaking of the Jew. Are we Jews better than they (Gentiles)? "...No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles...." **as what? As all under sin.** Now, when God set Israel apart and made them different; in the final analysis, what did it prove? **There is no difference.** He also says in Romans 3:

**Romans 3:1,2**

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision (practicing their Jewish religion)? Much every way: chiefly (or primarily), because that unto them (the Jewish people; the Nation of Israel) were committed the oracles (Word)of God."

**They had everything going for them. God gave them the priesthood, the worship, the civil law, the whole system of law.** What did it accomplish? Practically nothing. So, finally, in Romans 3, Paul, by inspiration, brings us to the conclusion that, though
they were different, it proved that that old Adamic nature is just as evident in the son of Abraham as it is in a Gentile. There's no difference. We're all under the control of the old Adam (there's that word 'sin' again).

Romans 3:11

"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."

Now, what did Jesus say back in John's Gospel, Chapter 3, verse 19? They "...loved darkness rather than light (why?), because their deeds were evil." It hasn't changed a bit! People still would rather stay in their spiritual darkness than step into the light of the Gospel, because the first thing the Gospel shows is what? Our sinfulness! And we don't want to see that. I remember a lady, several years ago, said to me, "Les, ever since I've been coming to your class, all I see every day is my own sin. I never used to." I replied, "Don't blame me for that." But nevertheless, when you get into The Book and start studying, what do we begin to see?... that we are fallen creatures. We're sinful. And yet, even though God has saved us, given us the Holy Spirit, and many other blessings, we still find ourselves constantly giving in to that old 'sin' nature. Let's go a little further in this chapter. Remember, all I'm trying to point out is how we become members of this Body of Christ that is being completed (and we're getting very close, I think, to the full mark). And, when it's full, God will take it out, and He can pick up where He left off with Israel. Now verses 19 and 20 - here are some choice verses:

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."

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law (in other words, to the Jew): that every mouth may be stopped,..." Jew and who?... Jew and Gentile; even though the Law was given to Israel, yet in its sovereignty and its perfectness, who did it also apply to?... the whole human race! It wasn't just the Jew who was condemned because he stole. It wasn't just the Jew who was condemned because he used God's name in vain, or gossiped or anything that the Law forbade. But who else?... all!Gentiles as well as Jews -- that "...all the world might become (saved?...righteous?...ready for Heaven?...what?) guilty...." How many people do you run into that say, "Well, I think I'll make it;" or "I'm doing the best I can;" or "I'm keeping the Commandments?" That isn't what the Commandments were for. If I could just get more people to understand! The Law can do nothing but condemn. That's all the Law can do. It can't save anybody!
Romans 3:20

"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."

"Therefore by the deeds (or the keeping) of the law (or the Ten Commandments, however you want to put it) there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is (not the knowledge of Salvation, but rather) the knowledge of sin." But the first step in Salvation is to recognize that we need something. And so, the very first part of our Salvation experience is to recognize what God says about us -- that we're sons of Adam, we're sinners, and we're a fallen race.

Romans 3:21

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

"But...." What does that word tell you? The flip side! The flip side is now the righteousness of God without the Law. We have to put the Law aside. And this righteousness of God without the Law is manifested; and again my definition for manifesting in Scripture is, 'put in the spotlight' - put under a microscope. This is what the word of God is going to do for us when we step into the truth of it. It is like being put in the spotlight, and it is being witnessed by the Law and the prophets. I want people to understand; yes, I am a great proponent of Paul as the Apostle to the Gentiles. And, that all our doctrine for Salvation and Christian living comes from Paul's letters. But, I don't isolate Paul's letters and teach only from them. I use the whole Scripture, from Genesis through Revelation!

Paul, himself, says that all Scripture is inspired of God and is profitable. So, I don't want anyone to ever think that I'm only a proponent of Paul. Unique to Paul's writings, however, are these doctrines of Grace. In fact, I often shock people to get them into The Book. I'll say something shocking, and they'll say, "Well, I've got to look that up." One way I'll do this is by saying, "You can't find the Gospel in John 3:16." That shocks people! They think, "But that's what I've heard since I was a kid!"

Just analyze the Scripture. Go back through John's Gospel, Chapter 3; beginning with Nicodemus and Jesus dealing with him. You can't find one word of what we would call the Gospel. We can use John 3:16, but what must we use to make John 3:16 come into full flower? Paul's Gospel!

You take Paul's Gospel - that Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again - and bring that into John 3:16. Then, bring out the fact that, when God gave His only begotten Son, He went to the Cross, died and rose from the dead. That's well and
good. But, just to simply use John 3:16 alone, the Gospel is not in it. This is where we must recognize that these basic truths come from Paul, and then we can go back in other scriptures and make application. Another one is Isaiah 53, the favorite chapter used to win Jews. **How much would anybody get of the Gospel out of Isaiah 53 if we didn't have the knowledge of Paul's Gospel? Nothing!** What can you put together of Isaiah 53:7, "...he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter (and) ...openeth not his mouth," if you didn't understand how Paul lays it out, that this was God's plan of Salvation. So, here you must be careful that you don't malign me for being too narrow when, actually, what I'm saying is that we use all of the Scripture.

**Romans 3:22**

"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:"

This 'righteousness' that he makes reference to in verse 21; this "...righteousness of God which is by faith (not faith plus ... not faith and.... But by the faith) of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all (that repent and are baptized, right? No! Upon all them who keep the commandments? No! Upon all them who join the church? No! See what I mean?... But upon all...them that believe...." I think of a sermonette I read as a teenager titled, "Believe on The Lord Jesus Christ and Thou Shalt be Saved - but, be sure you Believe!" In other words, I don't adhere to ease of believeism -- "Oh yes, I believe Christ died for me, and I've accepted Christ as my personal Savior" - I don't go for that. I want a person to know that they, with all their being, have understood that they are a lost child of Adam and that when they believe that Christ died for them - shed His Blood, was buried, and rose from the dead, and they really believe it! - then, The Bible says, God moves in and makes that person a child of His and puts them into the Body of Christ. That's how we get into the Body of Christ, by our Salvation. Continuing: "... upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:...." No difference between what? Jew and Gentile.

**Romans 3:23, 24**

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:" I call this the very first step of faith in our Salvation process. "...all have sinned, and come short:...." No one can say, "But I'm good enough." God says none of us can be, or will be. Then verse 24: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:"

"Being justified...." Justification is that judicial act of God. Now, when I use the word `judicial,' I mean like a judge on the bench hands down a decree. **Justification** is when God, The Judge, judicially declares the sinner (that person who recognizes that
they are undone and are under the control of old Adam) to be just as if he had never sinned. That's beyond our comprehension. Even after we've been justified, we still are prone to fall and sin, yet what does God tell us? He says we are justified! He sees us as if we had never sinned! We'll never have to come before the judgment seat of Christ, as believers, and have to answer for our sins. Never! Our sins are forgiven. They are under the Blood. Christ took care of it and we will never have to stand before Him with sin on our back. Our sins are buried in the deepest sea and God has put up a sign which says, "No Fishing!" He has completely removed them. They are not going to come back and plague us. That's being justified.

Let's continue in verse 24: "...freely (without a cause...and how did God do it?) by his grace (unmerited favor) through the redemption...." I think you all know what the word `redemption' refers to: losing something and buying it back. And it's a Scriptural term. When did God lose the human race? When Adam sinned. We're all in Adam, remember? It was there God lost us. So now, what does He have to do? Buy us back with a price. Satan is a hard task master; he won't let go of us easily. And this is the whole idea of redemption -- that God has to buy us back for Himself because He lost us in Adam. The word redemption here, especially in Romans, goes back to the Roman slave market in particular, for a beautiful illustration. The Greek word is Agorazo. We're not going to be concerned with that word so much, but we're talking about a slave market.

Just like in today's stock market, there were certain terms back then that applied only to the slave market. And these were the three that were usually exercised by wealthy Romans who would go down to the slave market and just spend the day. It was a good past-time for them to go down and buy a slave and leave it in the market. And, when they left that slave in the market (much like a stock trader today can buy stocks in the morning on the board of trade or stock exchange and, if at one o'clock in the afternoon, the market has jumped a couple of points, he can resell that same stock), if the price went up, they could sell the same slave that same day.

Well, the Romans could actually do that with slaves. But, the one we're most concerned with here in Scripture is the term Exagorazo. Now the term 'ex' always means out. So, in this case, they could buy a slave, take it out of the market and take it home, thereby becoming that slave's owner. Then, they could exercise the third part with regard to slaves -- they could 'Lutroo' him, or set him free. So, with that background, let's look at this verse. Here, the Roman legions have just come down from barbarian Gaul in Northern Europe. And they've got this teenage lad who has probably been beaten and dragged several hundred miles - and here he is in the slave market. But this rich, benevolent Roman sees this young man and sees something in him of worth. So, what does he do? He buys him; and instead of leaving him in the market to trade again, he takes him home, cleans him up and gives him light duty.
This young man has never lived so sumptuously, although he is a slave. And then, one day, this Roman master calls this young man into his office and says, "You've been an ideal slave and I'm going to now give you your freedom. I have paid for your citizenship. You are free to go wherever you want to go. You are a Roman citizen." What do you suppose that young man would say considering the fact that slaves who were not fortunate enough to be bought, were thrown to the lions in the coliseum? He would probably say, "Master, there's no way that I could do that after all that you have done for me. You bought me out of that awful slave market. You've put me in new clothes, you've cleaned me up and you've given me the best of duty. Master, I love you, and I will never leave you. I'm going to serve you all the rest of my life."

Now, doesn't that say it all? **That is what God rightfully expects from every child that He has saved.** He has taken us out of the slave market of Satan; He has broken the bonds of sin. He has cleaned us up and given us a whole new outlook on life. He has given us the Holy Spirit and all the promises of eternity to come. So, what should be our logical reaction? **"Lord, you've done so much for me. The least I can do is serve you and be your faithful bondslave."**
CALLING OUT A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME

I trust you are writing down some of these things and studying them. **The reason Christianity is in trouble today is because people will not study.** Don't take anyone at their word -- not me, nor anyone else -- because humans are humans, and we have to come back and see what The Book says. We were talking during our break about how denominations are all alike. They all build walls around their people, and if they happen to be unfortunate enough to be in a denomination where they don't hear these truths, then where are they? They're out of luck. So, this has been my ministry for over 20 years, and I get people from every denomination you can think of. I just call it 'knocking down some walls.' I try to get people to see, not necessarily what some denomination thinks, but to be able to discern from the Word by Itself as the Holy Spirit gives us wisdom.

Let's continue on in this Age of Grace, and then we're going to be looking at how the Age of Grace will end - what's going to happen and what's going to follow. We will take a little time to point out end time events before we go back to Genesis:

**Romans 3:25**

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;...."

"**Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation....**" -- that's a big word that throws a curve at a lot of people, and the best way I can define 'propitiation' is, that everything that is pictured in that Tabernacle experience (all the material that went in to the building of it, all the furniture, the Ark of the Covenant, the candlestick, the Altar of Incense, the Table of Shewbread, the Laver of Cleansing, the Brazen Altar, and all of those furnishings) is a picture of Christ in His work of redemption. So, that's really what propitiation is...**that complete overall work that Christ accomplished by His death, burial and Resurrection.** Reading on: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (how?) through faith (through our believing and trusting) in his blood, to declare his righteousness (not ours, but His) for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

**Romans 3:26**

"To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."
My, what a loaded verse this is: "To declare, I say, at this time his (Christ's) righteousness: that he (The Lord Jesus) might be (what?) just....." See, God can never be anything but fair. A lot of people think, "What about someone who has never heard, and they go to an eternal doom - Les, you mean to tell me God can do that in fairness? Absolutely; and you know why? Paul writes to Titus in Chapter 2: "For the grace of God that bringeth Salvation hath (past tense) appeared to (how many?) all men,...." Yes, everyone has had an opportunity, even though we like to think that maybe they haven't. But, somehow or other, God can reckon that He is absolutely just in everything that He does. This is the other side of the coin. He is going to be just by justifying what person? That sinner who believeth in Jesus. Now, I'm trying to point out in these verses how we come to this point of Salvation - by believing! What's the other word for believing? Faith! (plus how much?...Nothing!) Faith plus nothing. That is for Salvation. I'm not talking about the Christian life or works. I'm talking about Salvation. It is faith plus nothing; that He can be the justifier, verse 26 again, of him who believeth in Christ. Now, look at verse 27:

Romans 3:27

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith."

Why does it have to be that way? "Where is (what's the word?) boasting...." How many times have I said to you, "If we could get to Heaven on works, what would Heaven be? The most awful place on earth, wouldn't it? Because you would constantly be listening to somebody tell you all that he did to get there. It would be boring. You'd see somebody coming down that golden street and what would you do? You'd cross over so you wouldn't have to listen to him again, telling you all that he did to get there! And so, it can't be by works. It's going to have to be totally by the finished work of the Cross so that none of us can boast; as Paul said, "Where is boasting...?" What happened to it? It's excluded. What excludes it...the law of works? No, that law would bring it in. But "...the law of faith." That leaves no room for boasting about how you got to Heaven.

Romans 3:28

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

Since it's without works, it's without the Law, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified (how?) by faith." Plus anything? No! We're justified by faith without the deeds or works of the Law.
Romans 3:29

"Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:"

Let's go to Chapter 4, because I'm stressing the 'faith plus nothing' for a few moments. We will look at why we're not just saved, only to go and live carelessly. I know that shakes up a lot of people when they hear that we're saved by faith plus nothing. Yes, we're saved by faith plus nothing, but what does God expect of us. Well, just like the example of that slave that was taken home to that beautiful Roman villa. What did that slave automatically feel he should do? He should be the best servant he knows how to be because of what his master had done on his behalf. Here, in Romans Chapter 4, Paul comes back and uses the analogy of Abraham:

Romans 4:1,2

"What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God."

If Abraham were justified by works (by doing something), then he also could boast. That's what it means to glory. He could brag. He could stop everybody on the golden strand and tell them all he did to get there. But, what does the Scripture say? He could never do it before God. God will never let anyone be a debtor to Him. If you try to work for your Salvation, that's what you're doing; you're putting God in debt. You're telling God, "You owe it to me." And we'll never put God in our debt. Now, verse 3:

Romans 4:3

"For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

It tells us that Abraham did what? He believed! At this time, the Law hadn't been given, but Abraham didn't do anything except believe. And when God saw man's faith, what did He do? He counted it as righteousness. Not Abraham's, but the imputed righteousness of God. And then verses 4 & 5:

Romans 4:4,5

"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."
Now, do you see all the things that I could put in there that aren't there? "But to him... (that believeth) on Him that justifieth (what kind of a person?) the ungodly,..." How many times have we heard someone tell us (and I'm sure all of us have heard it), "When I can get rid of this awful habit;" "When I can get rid of the booze;" "When I can rid of this or that; then I'll be able to let God save me." Haven't you heard that? It's always, "When I can clean up my act;" "When I can live it; then I'll be ready to get saved." Listen, there's not a man on earth that can do that. It's impossible. So, where do we let God save us? Right where we are. Then, He takes care of the things that have to be taken care of. Remember, "...his faith is counted unto him for righteousness."

Even the Jews, when they came out of Egypt (and up through their Old Testament history), were under the Covenant promises of Abraham, weren't they? God had promised that they were His Covenant people. That was the umbrella. But under that umbrella of the Covenant, what did it take for a genuine Salvation of that Jew? A personal faith! It still had to be a personal Salvation, even though they were under those Covenant promises. This is what threw a curve at so many Jews. They thought, just because they were of the seed of Abraham, they didn't have anything to worry about. They couldn't comprehend they had to have a personal faith.

Now, even under the Law; even under all the ramifications of the system of Judaism, what was the basic premise of their Salvation? Faith! What prompted them to keep the sacrifice? God had told how to do it. And, when they did it on the basis of faith, they were accepted. Go all the way back to Cain and Abel. What does Hebrews 11:4 say about Abel? "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,..." Why was it more excellent? Because Abel did what God said to do. Cain didn't. And it's that simple premise all the way through the Scripture and so now for us - we have to have a personal faith.

Before we left Iowa, we were having a lot of home Bible classes. We happened to have our last meeting, before we left to come down to Oklahoma, in the home of a family who was attending one of these denominations who, more or less, taught 'umbrellaism,' as I call it. As long as they adhered to the prescribed ritual that their church advocated, they were under the umbrella. I was looking at one of their Sunday School text books as we were having coffee at break time and the gentleman of the home came over and said, "Les, you won't see anything in there that will interest you." I said, "I don't see anything amiss or that I would disagree with." And he pointed it out to me. He said, "We just sort of teach that everybody, as long as they've gone through the prescribed ritual of membership and so forth, is in. But it wasn't until we came to your class that my wife and I realized it had to be a personal Salvation."
And this couple is still walking with The Lord today. Now, that's exactly what I try to stress. You can be in the best of denominations and you can be under their umbrella, but that by itself is not going to put you into the Body of Christ. **It has to be a personal faith in the work of the Cross.** Now, let's go to the Book of Ephesians. The reason I'm stressing Salvation so much the last couple of programs is: I found over the years that there are very few people who hear and understand the plan of Salvation. I could stand here for the next 24 hours and give you examples of people who thought they were saved and what they had done to bring in that kind of thinking, and then they suddenly realize that they had never entered into a personal faith in the finished work of the Cross.

I told my classes several weeks ago **my fervent prayer daily is that no one will ever sit under my teaching over any length of time and, if they should pass away due to a heart attack or something like that, go out into eternity lost.** Oh, that would just strike me if I could think such a thing. All I can ask is God let no one sit under my teaching without coming to a true knowledge of this tremendous Salvation. Alright, Ephesians Chapter 1, starting at verse 13; and there are tremendous verses up ahead of this verse.

**Ephesians 1: 13**

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your Salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,..."

He writes "**In whom (that is Christ, up in verse 12) you also trusted...**" The word trusted is italicized; it's been added by the translators but its implied faith, trusting, faith and believing is synonymous. So, "**In whom you also trusted,**" or placed your faith, or whom you believed. When? "...after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your Salvation:..." - the good news and remember, that's death, burial, and **Resurrection.** So, he said we believed when we heard the Gospel. "**In whom also...**" That is in Christ also, after you what? - not after you joined the church, or went through catechism, or were baptized, but after what?... **After you believed!**

See how simple it is - how after you believed you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. Now, here comes a new Pauline doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit; you don't see this taught in the Old Testament; you don't see it taught in Christ's earthly ministry; that **a believer is suddenly not only sealed with the Holy Spirit, but he is indwelled by the Holy Spirit.** That's all Pauline doctrine. That's why we always have to come here for our basics - then we can go out and understand the rest of Scripture. Alright, after that, you believed you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of
promise. Now, let's go over to Ephesians Chapter 2 and verse 1. **I'm always stressing Paul always writes to what group of people? The believer!**

**Ephesians 2:1**

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;"

"And you hath (past tense) **he quickened** (made alive), who were (past tense) **dead**..." (spiritually dead). Do you remember what I told you? **We're born as sons of Adam. We are spiritually dead and we have to be regenerated.** In one of my classes, for the first time, I used an illustration of what it means to have our spirit dead. The following analogy, as simple as it may be (and it may be ridiculous to some), made sense to me, so I shared it. Take the battery in your car. Say you had left the lights on when you came in; when you go home after while, what's happened to your battery? It's dead. How much use is it? None! That battery is dead until you do what with it? Charge it from an outside source. You regenerate it.

That's where we are as sons of Adam. That spirit part of us is dead by virtue of sin, but it's not gone. So, what does it need? It needs regeneration. That's the work of the Spirit in Salvation, and The Bible uses that word, **regeneration. We are made alive who were dead.** Now, when you charge that battery up, what is it? It's useful. It can perform it's task. Now, verse 2:

**Ephesians 2:2**

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"

"Wherein in time past..." - before we were saved. And we're all in this category, even if you've been living in a sheltered home-life. Yet, we're all potentially in that kind of an environment, an attitude, a life style, according to the course of this world, "...according to the prince of the power of the air... Who is that? The old devil, Satan ...The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"

**Ephesians 2:3**

"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."

"Among whom also we all had..." all of us. Paul did. You did. I did. We had our manner of living in times past ...in the lusts (desires) of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind; and were by nature...." What do we mean? That old Adamic nature. Remember the old popular song, those of us who are older? "**Doing What Comes Naturally.**" Why does it come naturally? It's just part and parcel of that old nature. And that's exactly how Paul is using the word here. That we were fulfilling that nature that we were born with, as children of wrath, even as others.

**Ephesians 2:4,5**

"*But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*" What's the first word? "**But...**" the flip side. Oh, the flip side of that is that God, not you, not me. "**But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,**"

"**Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved,)**"

"**Even when we were (what?...) dead in sins, hath quickened us (or made us alive) together with Christ,**... (why? - ...**by grace ye are saved;**)" Now, let's go down to verses 8 and 9:

**Ephesians 2:8-10**

"**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.**" These are verses most of you learned as kids in Sunday School or Bible School.

"**For by grace are ye saved...** How? **Through faith...**" Not by works, but through faith. "...**And that not of yourselves...**" Salvation is what? "...**it is the gift of God:**..." For a true gift, how much do you work? Nothing. There's nothing you can do because as soon as you work to pay somebody for giving you a gift, it's no longer a gift. It becomes payment for something. And so, Salvation is a gift. We cannot work for it. Now, we can work after it and we're going to see that, but you can't work for it. Let's continue on with verse 9: "**...Not of works, lest any man should boast.**" Now verse 10: "**For we are his workmanship,**..." That word is connected to Poema in the Greek from which we get the word `poem.' What is a beautiful poem? It is words put beautifully together by someone, and communicated in rhyme. It's a beautiful work in itself and that's what we are. We are His workmanship. God has formed us.
I heard a Bible teacher years ago maintain that another word which comes out of the root of this is symphony. I tried to find it in my Greek Lexicon, but I couldn't so I'll take his word for it. Not many people like symphony music anymore, but I still do at times. And what is a symphony? It's that whole group of instruments that come together in beautiful harmony, in major and minor chords; and they blend together to make beautiful music. But what did it take? It takes some doing to get it all put together, and that's what God has done with us.

So, we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto what? Here it comes! Of course a believer is to live a different life than a lost person. We are to live and practice these good works because God has before ordained that we should walk in them. Let's continue on with verses 11-13 because I just made the statement that, beginning with Abraham and all the way up through the Old Testament, and well into the New Testament, who did God deal with? Jew only! With an exception here and there. Now, look how Paul puts the frosting on the cake:

**Ephesians 2:11-13**

"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh (non-Jews, not part of the Abrahamic Covenant or family) who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision..." Now, in plain English what is it saying? The circumcised Jew would call a Gentile a what? Uncircumcised. And usually they would add another word, Uncircised dogs. That was their favorite expression. Alright, verse 12. "That at that time..." (what time? While God was dealing with his Covenant people, Israel. "...That at that time..." before the Age of Grace came in, you Gentiles were without Messiah or Christ, aliens, (now watch the language) "...aliens from the commonwealth of Israel..."

Now, what's a commonwealth? We usually think of it as a nation - an entity. Someone who is not a citizen of that entity is an alien. And he is subject for deportation at almost any time. That's where we were while God was dealing with Israel. **We were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.** We were not Jews. We couldn't partake of those Covenant promises. And we were strangers (we Gentiles) from the covenants of promise. We were outside. And what was the lot of the Gentiles? **Having no hope!** And without God in the world. Not a very pretty picture is it? That's the lot of
the Gentiles because God was dealing with those people he had made different. But now, since he has come to the point that there is no difference, look at the next verse: "But now..." Oh, that's not the state now. "But now in Christ Jesus..."

See, once we are in the Body of Christ as a result of God's tremendous Salvation (His plan of redemption), we've been bought out of that slave market of sin, we have been cleaned, given a new set of clothes, have been brought into a villa, and now what? We want to serve Him. Alright, "but now in Christ Jesus, you who at one time who were far off," that is from God and from a spiritual relationship with Him. "you who were far off are made nigh," how? By the blood of Christ. You see how Paul is constantly bringing everything back to the work of the Cross. And now, we as Gentiles have been brought in to the Body. We are part of that Bride. Now, what's the whole idea of a bride? Who is she preparing herself for? The groom! One day, and we think soon, Christ is going to call the Bride to Himself. What did Isaac do when he saw the caravan coming - when he saw the dust rolling over that Middle Eastern landscape?...He went part way to meet the bride.

And, you remember that after he met the bride out there, he took her back home and there he consummated the marriage and he loved her. That is exactly the setting when Christ gets ready to call His Bride home. We're going to see how all of a sudden that vessel will be full. When the last person has been saved, when the Body is complete. What's going to happen? The trumpet will sound, Christ will leave Heaven, and we're going to have that great resurrection of all the saints and we'll go and meet him in the air.
LESSON ONE * PART IV

CALLING OUT A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME

Turn to 1 Corinthians Chapter 3. The last several weeks we have been talking about the Holy Spirit working among the masses of humanity to call out a people, or Bride, for Christ. Paul uses the term constantly; the Church which is his Body. The head of that Body is in Heaven in the Person of Christ, and since Christ is the very epitome of the kingdom, as we have seen the kingdom taught all the way through Scripture, the kingdom is where Christ is, and that is in Heaven. And so, consequently, as we become members of the Body of Christ, we also become members of the kingdom, as Paul points out in Colossians Chapter 1; that God the Father hath translated us from darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. Then, in Philippians, he speaks of it as our citizenship is now in Heaven. It sure is, for that's where the kingdom is. And as our citizenship is in Heaven, from there is where we look for the Savior, the Head of the Body, to one day take us to Himself, and then have the marriage supper of the Lamb, which will take place in Heaven.

But in the mean-time, as I've stressed Salvation by faith + nothing, we can't leave it there. I tell people we are not saved just for a fire escape - we're saved to serve and I've been stressing that in the last couple of lessons. Again, going back to the person bought out of the slave market, and how he wants to satisfy his master by being an obedient servant, he doesn't want his freedom; he wants to be a servant the rest of his life. Now, in 1 Corinthians Chapter 3, Paul gives such a beautiful illustration that fits every believer, and it may shock you a little bit. It will fit a lot of people you can probably think of. They do absolutely nothing to further the Word of God, but they are going to be in Heaven, The Bible tells us they are:

1 Corinthians 3:9

"For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."

Where Paul writes to the believer "For we are labourers..." - someone who is laboring is not sitting in his easy chair, he's out there working. "So we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry" - we are under His control, we are His,... "you are God's building." I will use the analogy of the building more than anything else here because the language Paul uses fits that description.

1 Corinthians 3:10
"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon."

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder..." In other words, he's the contractor, Paul is speaking about himself, "...as the masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation,..." I don't know how many of you have ever done any building, but I know that whenever I've put up a building (of course I know the pole buildings are different), you just simply set the pole in the ground and build on that. Usually when you build a home you start with the foundation. You build that foundation, and that building will either be something or nothing, depending on that foundation; everything is going to rest on that foundation. If that foundation sags in five or ten years your building is 'kaput.' If that foundation crumbles, your building is 'kaput.' But, if the foundation is sound, you can build upon it. Then it depends on who does the carpentry there on up. So, Paul is laying the analogy, then, that he has put down the foundation there is nothing wrong with it..." "...But let every man take heed how he builds thereon..." on that foundation.

I Corinthians 3:11

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

"For other foundations can no man lay..." There's no way there can be another foundation for Salvation; it has to be that which is already put down, and that is "...Christ Jesus." There is the foundation: Paul is the masterbuilder, he has given us the instruction; he has given us the blue print of how to build on this foundation as a believer.

I Corinthians 3:12

"Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble,..."

"Now if any man (women or child, anyone) build upon this foundation... in other words they are believers, they trusted it for Salvation, and they are in the body. Now, if they build upon this they can have all these materials to work with ...gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or stubble,..." Anyone who has been in my classes can see you have two distinct kinds, and what are they? The first three can withstand fire and heat. The second three go up in a puff of smoke. Have you got that? Wood, hay, and stubble, and on the other hand gold, silver and precious stones.
1 Corinthians 3:13

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

"Every (person's) work..." Now, I'm going to use the word `person' to include the women and children as well, if they are believers. That's all we are talking about - believers now. Every person's work as a believer, his everyday practices, "...shall be made manifest..." Here comes that word again; remember I said it's like putting it in an intense spotlight. Now, this particular spotlight is going to be the penetrating fiery eyes of The Lord Jesus at the Judgement Seat of Christ wherein every believer will be examined, not for sin, but for what? His works. Alright, read on: "...for the day (the judgment day);..." not the White Throne Judgement, but the Judgement Seat of Christ - at that day it "shall be declared" or revealed or tested... how? ...by fire;... Now, hold your hand in Corinthians and come back with me to Revelation so that we see what The Bible is talking about when it speaks of being tested by fire.

Revelation 19:11,12

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself."

"His eyes were as..." what? "...a flame of fire,..." Now, it doesn't say they were a flame of fire, but they are just like flames of fire. In other words, they will be so penetrating, there will be nothing that can escape them. Nothing can be hidden from them; it will all be revealed. Now, let's come back to 1 Corinthians. This is the language that Paul is using. We will come before the Bema Seat (now here is where I have to make a qualification, the lost people from Cain until the very end of time as we know it, they of course will appear before the Great White Throne. And it's only for the lost, there will be no believers at the Great White Throne. Here Christ will be the judge and will judge the lost of all ages).

In John's Gospel, Chapter 5, Jesus taught so plainly, that there will be two resurrections. The resurrection of the just, and the resurrection of the unjust. In other words, the unbeliever is also going to be resurrected out of Hell before the Great White Throne, and he will appear there bodily in a newly resurrected body, but it will be a body fit not for glory and not for Heaven; but a body fit for the eternal lake of fire. It will be a body that will have many of the same appetites of this one, but without any hope of ever satisfying it. And so, that's why the Scriptures said to let the drunkard be drunken still, and let the whoremonger continue on with those appetites,
for they will never be satisfied. They will also have an eternity of regret. Remember, nobody goes before the Great White Throne except those who choose to go there. Salvation has been offered to all people (everyone; red, yellow, black, and white; rich, poor; it doesn't make any difference). But, if they reject it, they are going to end up at the Great White Throne.

All right, we are not going to concern ourselves with that, we're going to concern ourselves with what Paul calls the Judgement Seat of Christ, and again I think it's a mis-translation of The King James. It really should have been the Bema Seat or the Seat of Reward. The reason it's called the seat of reward is because the Bema Seat was the Seat of Rewards in the Olympic Games; and at the Olympic games, the Bema Seat was occupied by the judges who would determine who was first, second, and third, etc. Now, that's exactly what the Bema Seat is going to be in Heaven. It's not going to be a Great White Throne Judgement; it's not going to be a judgement for sin - that's all under the blood. But every believer will come before Christ in that moment of time, to be examined on what he has done with his life as a believer, for rewards. Many people don't want to hear about rewards and they say, "Well, I don't like this whole idea of working for rewards, but I can't help it." This is what The Bible teaches - not Les Feldick.

Paul says in another place that when you enter a race, what is to be your attitude? To win! Paul goes back to the Olympic games, and he said they entered that race, and what did they do? They controlled their body. In other words, they trained and practiced; only to win a corruptible crown. Back in Paul's day what was the crown? Just a wreath. By the time the poor guy got home it was all shriveled up and good for nothing, but maybe putting between the pages of a book. But, he says, they did all that for a corruptible crown. But we're not running for a corruptible crown. We're running for an incorruptible crown. And so, this is the whole concept of Paul's teachings. That, yes, we're saved by faith plus nothing.

But now what are we to do? Gear up for the race. Gear up to work for rewards. We're using the building concept here. Now, in this building, I'd like to draw a mental picture of a wall. And here, as a believer, you've been given this section of the wall and God gives you six materials to use. You use gold, silver and precious stones. Well, they're hard to come by. You can't just sit down and let that stuff come to you. But, on the other hand, I always like to come back to the three little pigs (I'm still just a kid at heart). What did they make their houses of? Two of them used sticks and straw. But one enterprising little fella went and got his bricks. Well, I always like to think of that here, because the little pig with the bricks is the believer. Are we going to be enterprising and energetic and go out and hustle for the gold, silver and precious stones? Or are we going to be like 95% of our fellow Christians and just say, "Oh well, I'll just put sticks in my section of the wall;" "I'll just use some straw; I
don't think it's worth going up into the mountains and dig for gold and silver." That's the attitude of too many Christians.

I Corinthians 3:13

"Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

"Every man's work..." What he puts in that wall, is going to be put under that spotlight of Christ's fiery eyes at this Bema Seat. We won't come before Him with our sins; we'll come before Him having won rewards. "...the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed (or tested) by fire" - by the eyes of Christ; and those eyes shall test every man, every believer. Now, we're not talking about the unbeliever. It will test every believer's work of what sort it is. Is it wood, hay and stubble? Or is it gold, silver and precious stones.

I Corinthians 3:14

"If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward."

"If any man's work..." In other words, will what we put in that wall remain after the torch of our Lord's eyes comes upon it? If it is gold, precious stones, or silver, then, Yes, it will! But, what if it's wood, hay and stubble? A puff of smoke, and then Nothing! And that, I'm afraid, will happen to too many Christians. Now, read on.

I Corinthians 3:15

"If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

"If any man's work shall be burned,...(if it's wood, hay and stubble) "...he shall suffer loss:...", - not of Salvation but of rewards! He won't get a reward. He hasn't earned it. Now, you see the difference between Salvation and works? Of course they go together, but you can't put works over here and Salvation over there. It has to stay over here in the area of Christian service. "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss:..." But, even that believer, misfit as he is in God's overall program, will still be saved! Now, you can't change that. A lot of us would probably like to. But listen, the Scripture says that even that careless believer is going to be saved.

I'll never forget years ago, one of my favorite pastors, when he was preaching on this, said, "Yes, he's going to be there. This being saved so as by fire, in the English slang,
could be called, "he'll be there by the skin of his teeth." Yes, they're going to be there. I'll never forget, when I lived in Iowa and was feeding a lot of very fat cattle; I had a very devout, religious person, who was one of my primary fat cattle buyers. We had a lot of discussions on these things and I will never forget, he made almost the same statement. He said, "I don't care what I've got when I get there, just so I can somehow slip under the door!" Isn't that sad? And he thought he could do it with his works.

For the person that is carrying out The Lord's bidding, we are doing what God expects us to do, we're using gold, silver and precious stones. If we're careless and we could care less, we're simply putting in wood, hay and stubble and it will amount to nothing. But yes, we'll be there. In fact, I've often said that a lot of the people we didn't think would be in Heaven will be there. It will shock a lot of us to see a lot of these people in Heaven that we didn't think would be there. And the people that aren't going to be there, we thought for sure would be. You know why? Because man looks at things from the human point of view, and God looks at it from His point of view. And that's all the difference in the world. So, we are to work for rewards.

Now, the crowns of course, are something else and the crowns we will definitely lay at Jesus' feet. What are the rewards going to be? I have to think that, since Paul makes such a beautiful picture of the fact that when Christ sets up His kingdom, we're going to rule and reign with him. We're going to be joint heirs with Christ and are going to rule and reign with him on the earth. So, I like to think that the reward aspect will be the amount of responsibility that God will give us in our role as ruling in His government. I don't know if I'm scripturally correct here, but I would like to go back to His description in the Gospels; in His own earthly ministry, when He gave out the talents. He gave the one individual ten talents; and gave another one five; and yet another one one talent. What did the guy with ten do? He came back with ten more. The fellow with five came back with five more. And the fellow with one came back with just the one. He had buried it and was tickled to death he still had it. Then, what did Jesus say? "Now, when I come into my kingdom, the one who had gained ten talents, he will rule ten cities. The one who had five will rule five."

Like I said, I don't know if I'm totally correct in bringing this in to Paul's teaching, but I like to. When we finally get into that kingdom economy, and we'll be ruling and reigning with Christ, our reward will be the amount of responsibility we will be given in that kingdom operation. Now, a lot of people will shrink from that. But I don't think God wants us to. I think God wants us to want to be able to accept responsibility; to take the energy that it takes to get out, and move, and do things. In fact, let me give this illustration. I'm a Dallas Cowboy fan and I make no apology for that. And I always like to give the analogy that, as far as I'm concerned, if I were given a choice of having a seat clear up in the upper seats, or being down there as a
quarterback, where would I rather be? I'd rather be that quarterback. Even if I did get my head knocked off. I'd be a lot happier down there on the field than sitting way up there in the seats. That's exactly the way I like to picture this.

If we work for rewards, we're going to be in the very center of activity when that kingdom comes about. But, if we're careless, we've got nothing but wood, hay and stubble. We'll be there but we'll be up on the sidelines and we just won't have the excitement. Now, a lot of people come back to me and say, "that's going to make people jealous." Now, wait a minute! Jealousy is part of sin, the old Adam, and that's not going to be there. So the person who goes into glory without rewards, is not going to be jealous or envious. He's going to be tickled to death that he's there. But there's not going to be envy. All these things are just going to work together so beautifully. If I don't make anything else clear, I want you to see that Salvation is by faith alone, but the Christian life is that of working for rewards.

Now, let's look at how the Church Age is going to end. Just turn on over in Corinthians to Chapter 15, and we'll quickly look at this. There's coming a day, and we think it's real soon, the way things are happening in the world, I don't see how it can be put off much longer. But, we are fast approaching the day when the last person will be brought into the body, and that vessel will be full, and God's going to have to take it out of the way.

I Corinthians 15:52

"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

Now, here again, these teachings you won't find anywhere but Paul. Nowhere has it ever hinted that there's ever going to be a day when living people are suddenly going to be translated. "Behold I show you another mystery,..." another secret. "We (that is believers) shall not all sleep (or die), but...", we have to be what?"Changed"
"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," in the split second of an eyelash, (at) "...the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead in Christ" Those who have been part and parcel now of the Body of Christ. Not the Old Testament saints. Daniel says he has to wait. We'll look at that in another lesson. But now, it's the Church Age saints. These who are in the body. "At the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we... Paul says (and he expected to be alive) ...shall be changed." In other words, when the trumpet sounds, and if we're living - and I think we will be, the dead in Christ will rise first and then we will suddenly take flight and we will go up with him. Now, in order to culminate all of this we have to go to 1 Thessalonians Chapter 4. Here, some people just simply
refuse the concept of the Rapture; and when they do that, they have to throw Paul away first. This is because Paul makes so much of it, and here is probably the clearest language in I Thessalonians:

**I Thessalonians 4:13**

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren (same language), concerning them which are asleep," (that is our loved ones who have died), "that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." In other words, if we, as believers, have lost loved ones, we don't have to weep and wail and carry on like the heathen do. Because we're going to see our loved ones again someday.

**I Thessalonians 4:14**

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

"For if we..." what's the word? Believe! It doesn't say if we are repenting and are baptizing. It doesn't say if we join the church. It says if we believe. But we've got to be careful what we believe. Don't just believe in God. We believe that Jesus died and rose again. There's the Gospel. So, if we believe the Gospel, even so them also who sleep, or who have died, in Jesus; God will bring them with him. Now, watch the language. We know that the believer, as soon as he dies; his spirit and soul take flight to where? The presence of Christ in Heaven. And there they wait for this day of resurrection to be reunited with the believers resurrected body.

**I Thessalonians 4:15,16**

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:..."

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent..." - or go ahead of, "...them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven," now you remember Isaac. He met Rebecca where? Part way, away from home. "...The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:..."
"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

And then we go back into Heaven with Him to go before the Judgement Seat of Christ, and have the marriage of the Lamb; and then we'll be ready to come back with Him seven years later, as time reckons it, at His Second Coming; as He comes then to stand on the Mount of Olives... as it says in Zechariah 14. Read it when you have a minute at home. Those first six or seven verses. It says in part, "...in that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives."

The other night I was teaching in Acts Chapter one, "...and there he stood with the eleven, and he went up, and the angels said, 'why stand ye gazing up into Heaven, this same Jesus in like manner as you have seen him go, shall come again.'" I don't say these things to be funny; I try to make it clear. He left how? Head first! He's coming, how? Feet first. And He's going to stand on the Mount of Olives just as sure as it's there tonight; and that will usher in the Kingdom. And when He comes, we're going to come with Him. In fact, I always like to use two prepositions - and that probably helps you remember as well as anything. When He comes at the Rapture, He's going to come for us. When He comes at the Second Coming, He comes with us.
LESSON TWO * PART I

FIRST FRUITS: GLEANINGS: OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS: RESURRECTION

We'll briefly review our timeline as we've looked at it over the last 14 or 15 months. How Adam and Eve came on the scene about 4,000 B.C. You remember regarding that generation of humanity; God dealt with them as one race of people. They all had an equal opportunity at God's Salvation. Relatively simple; always based on their faith, of course, but back in the pre-flood dispensations, it was as if they were convicted of sin on their conscience. They were to bring their blood sacrifice by faith and God would accept it. And the best example of that is Abel. The great faith chapter in The Bible tells us that by faith Abel brought a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. But, as all through human history, that generation of people totally rebelled against it until finally there were only eight left, and we had the bringing in of the Noah flood.

That takes us up to about 1600 from Adam to about 2400 B.C. and then, in between, the flood at about 2400 B.C. and I usually say, just in general terms, that half-way between the flood and the call of Abraham, we have the Tower of Babel. And here we have Abram, who later on was called Abraham. Now, always remember that the 8 souls that came out of Noah's Ark, as they began to re-populate the earth; instead of scattering, as God had instructed them to scatter, they all stayed together and were united under Nimrod at the Tower of Babel. The main thing I like to have people remember about the Tower of Babel is: all idolatry, and all of the paganism that has saturated the world ever since, has it's roots in Babel. All the occult religions, and even many of the cults that are coming on the scene today who are, in one way or another, associated with the occult, have their roots at the Tower of Babel. Then, God forced their scattering by the confusing of the languages.

Then, after another 175 or 200 years, the whole new generation of people...well, everybody is now steeped in idolatry. What does God do? He says He's going to do something different. And so, out of the midst of idolatry (and Ur of the Chaldees, and we know that from the Book of Joshua where God says plainly in his Word, that even Terah the father of Abraham served other gods. They were all in idolatry), God calls out one man Abram-Abraham, and he becomes then the great man of faith. It was at this point that God leaves off dealing with what we now refer to as the Gentiles, or non-Jew. God begins dealing with the Jew only, but with exceptions. I never want anyone to miss that. Now, one of the primary exceptions in the Old Testament account was what great city? Nineveh.
You remember God told that good Jew, Jonah, to go and minister to that Gentile city of Nineveh. Did Jonah want to go? Of course not! Why? He was a good Jew, and he understood that God was dealing with Jews only. He wasn't about to go and see his arch-enemy, a Gentile city like Nineveh be blessed of God and enjoy God's Salvation. You know the story of Jonah. He finally got there, and the Ninevites repented; but it wasn't long before they went right back into their same old way. Anyway, from 2000 B.C. then, all the way up into the New Testament, it is primarily God dealing with the Nation of Israel - Jew only. It's based on the Covenant and promises God made with Abraham. So then, we have the appearance here of John the Baptist and of Christ; to fulfill the Abrahamic promises made way back here. But, what did that generation of Israelites do? They rejected Him; they crucified Him.

Come back to Acts. Peter is still appealing to the Nation of Israel to repent of the fact that they had killed their Messiah, their King; and Peter is still pleading with the Nation of Israel to accept their king, so that they can have the kingdom. But they reject it. Someone asked me recently, when did Israel really come to the place of final rejection. Well, it isn't exactly final. But they reached the crescendo of their rejection when they stoned Stephen in Acts Chapter 7. And from that point on, Israel slides down into her dispersion; her Temple is taken away in 70 A.D., and God now turns to the Gentiles. So, this is what we've been looking at for the last several lessons. This calling out a people for His name. The Bride, or what Paul normally refers to so often, as the Body of Christ. The Church, which is His body, or the Body, which is the Church.

In our last lesson, we got to where the Church is Raptured out. Those of us who are alive and remain, (I Corinthians 15), will be changed and all those who have died during this Church Age, are resurrected bodily, visibly, physically, with a new body; and they meet The Lord in the air, with the souls of those departed saints. They've been in Heaven in His presence. They've been in a place of bliss and blessing, but without benefit of a body until the Great Resurrection Day, when they are caught up to receive their descending soul and spirit; reunited with their new body, and then, as Paul teaches, those who are alive and remain will be caught up; changed on the way; and so shall we all ever be with The Lord.

Now, I thought before I'd go back to Genesis and pick up where we left off several lessons ago, that we should delineate some of these basic doctrines of end times teachings. We've had several people ask that we spend a little time on our end-time view. Now, I think before we actually go on into the Tribulation and the Second Coming, it might behoove us to take a good look at this terminology, resurrection. There is probably no other word in Scripture that has been so maligned and so twisted completely out of its truth.
I remember reading a pastor who was certainly bound up in what I call the fundamental definition of resurrection (visible, bodily). And on Easter Sunday, he was visiting in a large midwestern city; and he was going to visit a church where he knew the pastor did not believe in a literal resurrection. And he wondered how that guy could preach a sermon on Easter Sunday morning and not believe in the Resurrection. I read as he reviewed that man's sermon that, yes, he talked about Resurrection, but he had no concept of a visible, bodily Resurrection. His definition of resurrection was just something into an invisible spirit realm and that he totally rejected the genuine Resurrection as most of us understand it to be. So, I think in order to clarify for some that might not be real sure about the bodily Resurrection of Christ, as well as our own resurrection some day, we're going to look at what The Bible calls the first resurrection. Let's turn to John's Gospel, Chapter 5 and let's look at verse 28. Most of you that have heard me teach, know that I am a stickler on what The Book really says and not what somebody thinks it says. Here, Jesus is speaking during His earthly ministry:

**John 5:28-29**

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth (now isn't that plain English? Everyone who has lived and died, at some point in the future, when God calls they're all going to come forth. Let's read on); they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

Now, how many resurrections have you got? Two! You've got the resurrection of the just, (the believers) but you're also going to have the resurrection of the lost. Many people don't realize that. They think that when a person dies and goes to Hell, that's the end of it. But oh no it isn't! They're one day going to be resurrected out of Hell and brought before the Great White Throne. From there, they go to the Lake of Fire. Earlier I told you about a question that came in one of my classes about, "What is the difference between Hell and the Lake of Fire?"

Well, there's all the difference in the world. I have been shrinking from teaching it in this lesson because it takes quite a long time to teach it correctly. So, for now we're just going to look at the first resurrection, the resurrection of the just.

Here again in verse 29 is a good example of what Peter meant when he wrote in his epistle, "that no Scripture is of private interpretation." I'm sure you've all seen that verse and you've probably wondered what he meant there. All Peter meant was, that you cannot take one verse of Scripture and build doctrine on it. That's what the cults will do. They will take a verse here and another verse there and then they build their doctrine. You can't do that!
So, this verse, if you took it alone, and, even though The Lord Jesus is speaking of Himself, if you lifted this verse out of context and used it to build a doctrine, what could you teach? Well, you could teach that people will go to Heaven by doing good. Isn't that what it says? Look at it. "They who have done good, will go to the resurrection of life and they who have done evil unto the resurrection of condemnation." Now see, if you took that verse all alone, you could say that you could go to Heaven by doing good, and people are going to go to Hell because they are doing bad. But, if you study all of Scripture, there is only one way we can please God, and one way we can do good in God's eyes, and that is by faith. "...Without faith, Hebrews says, it is impossible to please God." So, what is Jesus really alluding to here when He says, those who have done good are those who have become people of faith? Whether it was back in the Old Testament or in the Age of Grace, there's only one way we can please God, and that is by believing His Word. So, we've got two resurrections. The resurrection of believers (the just), and a resurrection of the lost.

Next, we'll look at the resurrection of the believers. So go back to I Corinthians Chapter 15. This chapter deals with nothing but resurrection. The fact that men die; that we can revert back to the dust; that we can be cremated; that we can be burned at the stake; that still will not stop God from actually bringing the smallest particle of that original body back together. They are still someplace and He knows where they are. And He will take at least some of those original cells and reconstruct a new, resurrected body.

Now, I've often, over the years, had people ask me what I believe about cremation. And my only answer is that I don't see that the Scripture forbids it or encourages it. Personally, it's an anathema to me because I feel that when someone cremates a body, they're in so many words telling God, "Now try and bring that back to life." That may not always be their mindset, but that's the way it looks to me and so I am certainly not in favor of cremation. We also know that especially during the reformation, a lot of God's choicest servants were burned at the stake for their faith. Now, they were cremated and God is going to have no trouble resurrecting them. But all I want you to see is that I don't care where a person may go to their grave; whether it's in the deepest ocean, or cave, or whether they're cremated or blown apart in an explosion; never doubt for a minute that God is going to be able to resurrect that body. That's what resurrection is all about. He does not start with something new; He brings back that which was before and makes it new. Now, Paul teaches that throughout I Corinthians Chapter 15. Now, let's go to I Corinthians Chapter 15 and verse 20:

I Corinthians 15:20
"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept."

**We're going to look at this first resurrection.** Remember, this first resurrection is primarily attached to this Rapture of the Church. That's a coined word. It's not in the English. I read where the word `rapture' is in the German translation, but we don't have it in the English - but we know what we're talking about. **It's that up-calling of the living believers as well as the resurrection of the Church Age believers.** I'm taking the time to point this out.

Not everybody, from Adam all the way up to present day, will be resurrected at the same identical moment, as we'll see Paul teach here in I Corinthians 15. **When he speaks of them that slept,** he's speaking of those **who have died physically.** See the words, 'first fruits' ... the only way we can put a definition on it is to go back to our Old Testament to Leviticus Chapter 23, and in this chapter we have the seven feasts of Jehovah, as they were given to the Nation of Israel there at Sinai. When they were given the Tabernacle; the Priesthood: **God also gave them instructions for their seven feast days.** It was to begin, of course, with **Passover,** which was the feast day that Israel was celebrating at the time of the Crucifixion. And since Passover was about to begin at 6 o'clock on Friday evening, they had to hurry and get the body down off the Cross because it could not be out there once Passover started.

And so, that was the feast of Passover, and then, of course, Paul goes on to show us in Corinthians that **Christ then became our Passover Lamb.** And so, these seven feasts of Jehovah all have an indication of a New Testament trust. But, we want to look over to Leviticus 23:9 where we'll see what 'first fruits' is all about. Now, you have to remember that back here in Israel's ancient history, **they were primarily an agricultural people.** That's why so much of our Bible, including Christ in His earthly ministry, is constantly using what we would call, just ordinary farming language, because they understood what he was talking about.

**Leviticus 23:9,10**

"And the LORD spake unto Moses saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, 'When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf (bundle) of the first fruits of your harvest unto the priest.'"

In other words, when they went into the Promised Land and they have planted their crops, the first thing they would do as that crop would begin to ripen, and here again you have to have a little basic understanding of grain farming. Wheat farmers understand this. You know that, as that wheat field begins to ripen (I prefer to think it was barley, because barley was the early spring crop), all through that field of
green; **all of a sudden will come some golden stems that will ripen early.** Now, if you ever happen to be driving through the wheat country in the spring, and it's turning from green to the golden yellow of harvest, watch for it. As a field is just preparing to turn, and become ripe, scattered around you will see some golden heads of grain. Now, the Jew was to go into that field and pluck these early ripened stems and make a sheaf of them, and take that sampling of a crop and wave it there before the Temple, as a wave offering unto The Lord. And it was called **first fruits,** because it was the sampling of the crop that is soon to follow.

Now, Paul says here in I Corinthians 15 that Christ has become the 'first fruits' (plural). Now, you couldn't make a bundle or sheaf of grain with just one stem, so what did they have to do? They had to pluck many of them as they were ripened throughout the field and with it make a sheaf. **And so, Christ could not be the only one, although He was definitely the first.** Come back with me quickly to Matthew Chapter 27. A lot of these things I've come across because people have asked questions. And that's why I never discourage people from asking questions, because that's the way I've learned over the years. I'll never forget, 18 or 20 years ago, somebody asked me about these verses in Matthew. What were these people who came out of the grave while Christ was on the Cross. I said, "**Now wait a minute. No one came out of the grave while Christ was on the Cross.**" So, we went and found a Bible and looked it up and, as so often is the case, people don't read right. Now, let's look at it.

**Matthew 27:50,51**

"**Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.**" Do you see where we are? Christ is on the Cross and He has just yielded up the Ghost (He has died).

"**And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;...**" Now, you remember the veil that is spoken of here was that huge veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the sanctuary. And, as an act of God, that veil was rent from the top to the bottom.

**Matthew 27:52,53**

"**And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared to many.**"

"**And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints** (believers, believing Jews) **which slept arose. Came out of the graves after his resurrection.** Not while He's
on the Cross. But after His Resurrection. Now, you see it had to be that way, because Christ had to be the first to be resurrected from the dead. This has never happened before. Oh, there were people that were raised from the dead by the prophets, Elijah and Elisha; but they died again. Even when Jesus called Lazarus forth from the grave, that was not resurrection. That was just simply restoring life to him and Lazarus had to die again. But, beginning with Christ's Resurrection, now we have the term in it's fullest meaning. But you couldn't have a bundle of 'first fruits' with one stem of grain, there had to be many.

So these, I feel in Matthew 27:52,53, were the sampling of those believers who had died, and were resurrected, and walked into the city with Christ as the first fruits. Altogether, they become the first fruits of them that slept. Now, the first resurrection is really broken down into three areas. We've only covered the first one and that's what Paul refers to here in I Corinthians as the first fruits of resurrection. Christ, and this sampling that came out of the grave and went into the city of Jerusalem. Now, the Scripture is silent on them, but if they were resurrected, then naturally Christ had to taken them up on into glory. They were not left here in this old world of sin and pain. Now, if you'll turn back with me to I Corinthians 15 again. This is all part of the resurrection of the just.

I Corinthians 15:20,21

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become (past tense) the first fruits of them that slept...." (who have died physically). Why does there have to be a resurrection? Verse 21:"For since by man came death (back in the Garden of Eden) so also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."
LESSON TWO * PART II

FIRST FRUITS: GLEANINGS: OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS: RESURRECTION

Let's pick up where we left off; we had covered the first aspect of the first Resurrection, which was Christ who was the first fruits, and then, those that came out of the graves in Matthew 27, who would comprise the fulfilling of the type back in Leviticus when they had to make a sheaf. Now, let's go into the second part of the first resurrection. And again, come back to I Corinthians Chapter 15 and let's just start all the way back to verse 20 so we can pick up the flow here, because this is all dealing with this first resurrection.

I Corinthians 15:20-22

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept (or died). For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Now, you want to remember that Paul is always teaching that as Adam was the head of the human race, the first Adam, so Christ is the last Adam, and He is the one that makes it possible for mankind to come out of that death. And so here he ties the two together, once again, "For since by man (Adam) came death, so also by man (The Christ, the God-man), came also the resurrection of the dead." Look at verse 22 now. "For as in Adam all die,...." How can anybody reject that teaching, that our whole nature was precipitated by Adam's sin? And you know there are those who reject that. But, how can they when this makes it so plain. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Now, we have to be careful here. Going back again, to John's Gospel, Chapter 5, the believer will be resurrected to life by the work of Christ, the work of the Cross. But, the unbeliever is also going to be resurrected one day, according to the same power of God, but to a totally different end.

I Corinthians 15:23

"But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

Now, whenever you see that word, "but" you've got to look at something different here. All are going to be resurrected, "but" every man in his own order." Now, if you'll look it up in the Greek, that word "order" implies a military organization. Now, those of you who have been in the service know that the military
starts with a platoon, then a company, and then the battalion, regiment and division. Those are all orders of command. In other words, the resurrection is not going to be general. It won't be everybody at once, but Paul says every person in his own company. And that's the wording I prefer to use. Everyone will be resurrected according to their organizational company.

Now, we've already had the first fruits, remember; indicated by Christ. But now, in verse 23, it tells us that every man in his own order, Christ the 'first fruits' (that one is the company), they that are at Christ's side at his coming (now who are we talking about?). We are talking about the Church Age believer. Those who are in Christ, who are part of the Bride; who are part of the Body of Christ, they will be the next ones to experience resurrection. After Christ and the first fruits, comes this great group of believers of the Church Age. Let's go back and pick up the Old Testament description of harvesting that field of grain. Go back to Leviticus 19:9:

**Leviticus 19:9,10**

"And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard: thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God:...."

Now, remember, this is God's instructions to the Jew when they come into the land to occupy it. "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly (or completely) reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest." Now, let's put that in a square of 40 acres of barley. They were to harvest the whole field, the very center of it, but they were to leave the corners, as well as a certain amount of gleanings. Now, that was according to Law. Now why? Look in verse 10 again. "And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard,..." in other words, they weren't to pick every last grape in their vineyard. "...neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard: thou shalt leave them, (for whom?) the poor...." That was mandated by God. Now, as they would go into their field of barley, they went in first and took out those ripening heads of grain, the 'first fruits.' Then they came in and they harvested the main field, but they had to leave the corners and the gleanings. But the main harvest was taken all at one time.

So, that is what I would call the Rapture, or resurrection of the Church Age believer. He is that main harvest, because just think now for 1900 years or so, God has been calling out people by His Grace. He has offered Salvation to everyone. No matter what color or creed, although it is predominately for the Gentiles, yet always remember that this has been God's primary harvest. Now, let's go back to I Corinthians 15 and look at the verse again; we're going to pick up
those who are the gleanings; the ones indicated by the corners that are left, and the gleanings.

I Corinthians 15:23-25

"But every man in his own order (his own organizational company): Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's (who are members of the body, the main harvest) at his coming." Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he (Christ) must reign (as a king), till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

Now, if you'll turn with me back to Daniel 12 - and I think this is the third group that are indicated by the corners and the gleanings. Not near as great in number as the main harvest, and they also are going to be resurrected at a time slightly different from the Rapture of the Church. And in Daniel it lays it out so specifically as to when these Old Testament believers, and I'm also going to include the Tribulation saints, are going to be resurrected.

Now, when I say the Tribulation saints, that hour after the Church is gone, and we feel that we're getting awfully close to it; and the Tribulation comes in we know that there are going to be a multitude of people saved by virtue of the 144,000 Jews (12,000 from each of the 12 tribes who will go around the world and will be missionaries and evangelists). So, there will be people saved during this seven years, but they will be killed almost as fast as they are saved until we get to those that survive at the end. So, now, the resurrection of the Tribulation saints has to be included in the gleanings and the corners because they certainly are not in the Body of Christ. And yet, Daniel now is speaking of the resurrection of the Old Testament saints at a point shortly after the end of the Tribulation; or after the Second Coming of Christ, and into the Kingdom. Here it is in Daniel Chapter 12.

Daniel 12:1,2

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

The previous 11 chapters have been an outlaying of prophecy. In fact, Daniel and Revelation just fit together hand in glove. You can't study Revelation without
studying Daniel and vice versa. So, now, as you come into the last chapter of this great book of prophecy, Daniel writes this: "...and at that time shall Michael stand up, that great prince which standeth for the children (Israel), and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people (Israel, the Jews) shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Now, this is what Paul refers to in Romans as that remnant. "...And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth,..." In other words, they have died and they've reverted back to the dust. "...many of them shall awake,..." and here we have a parallel with John's Gospel, Chapter 5, "...some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt...." Again, you've got the believer and the unbeliever listed here. Now let's skip over to verse 8:

Daniel 12:8,9

"And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, 'O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?' And he said, 'Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.'"

Daniel is saying that he heard but he understood not. Now, I've always maintained, as I've taught the Old Testament, that all Scripture is inspired of God. Peter says so clearly that prophecy came not in the old time by will of man; and, you remember, I ridiculed the concept several months ago, of these things having originated around the camp fire and then just having been handed down as legend. That's not what our Bible is at all. Our Bible is the very inspiration of the Spirit of God and as Peter says, that these holy men of God wrote as they were moved along by the Spirit. Now under those circumstances, do you think they understood everything they wrote? Why, no way! And here it's so plainly.

Look what Daniel says, after writing this great book of end-time prophecy (and he's writing it 2500 years before it happens). And look what he says in verse 8. "And I heard,..." He realized what he had been writing, but look at what he says next. "...I understood not (!)," He didn't understand what he was writing. "And I said, 'O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?'" Now, that much he could comprehend. There were some terrible times coming upon this planet. But he couldn't understand it. And so he said, "'what shall be the end of these things.'" And The Lord said, "'...go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.'"

I always like to look back and read about men from years ago. You will find that it wasn't until near the turn of the century that men began to get a comprehension of prophecy. Before that, there was not a clear cut teaching of how these things were going to unfold. And that's exactly what God told Daniel. It wasn't for men to understand until we get close to the end times. And now, every week, it is so much
easier to understand. I know, 20 years ago, when I'd teach the Book of Revelation, it was hard to get people to understand what it was saying. Now, I can teach the Book of Revelation and people are almost running ahead of me with current events and news.

And the Book of Revelation is as simple as ABC anymore. A lot of people won't agree with me, but I think any of you who have heard me teach the Book of Revelation will admit that it's not that difficult, because we are now so close to the end. For example, I can remember when I was a kid and I heard a fellow preaching prophecy out of the Book of Revelation. He came to those two witnesses in Revelation Chapter 10 who would be killed; and their bodies would be left in the streets of Jerusalem; and the Scripture says so plain that all the world will see their dead bodies. They are actually going to celebrate by the exchanging of a gift. And what did we say? "How can that be." How can the whole world see two bodies laying in Jerusalem? That's not a question any more. It happens everyday with our communications and satellite television. We see everything that's taking place on the other side of the world at the very moment it's happening.

So, the Book of Revelation is now very believable. And when we read some of the other things in the Book of Revelation, all you have to do is attach it to a modern technology and it all makes sense. But Daniel said, "Lord I don't know." And God says, "don't worry about it. It's not for you to know until we come to the time of the end."

Daniel 12:10

"Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."

Look at what he says about "...the wicked shall do wickedly..." Now, you remember a few weeks ago, I said the times for the Gentiles is actually a filling up of their cup of iniquity? And it's going to reach the full mark when we come to the end of the Tribulation and the Battle of Armageddon. Men have become so wicked. We haven't see anything yet. It's getting bad, but the worst is yet to come. Daniel saw it. "...and none of the wicked shall understand." Just recently, a gentlemen that we lead to The Lord a few years ago, and who has just grown in the Word so fast, said to me, "You know, five years ago, I could watch all this that is happening in the world and it didn't mean a thing to me. It was just news. But now every news item I read or see on television, fits with the Word of God." It just makes it so exciting that we're living in the last moments of this Age of Grace. "...but the wise shall understand,..." because The Book is so plain. Verse 11:

Daniel 12:11
"And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days."

We'll look at this further in our next lesson. But, look at what it says. "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away,..." which will be in the middle of the seven-year period. The Anti-christ will cause the Temple to be shut down, and he will usurp it, and force the Jew to worship himself. Now that's the abomination that's spoken of here in verse 11. "...and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." Good Bible students know that three and a half years are 1,260 days. But, now, Daniel is going into 1,290, or an extra 30. But, it doesn't stop there.

**Daniel 12:12**

"Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."

God says to Daniel, "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." Or, seventy-five days after the kingdom has been set up, Daniel can expect what? To join all those others who have been resurrected before. Look at it again. "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." Now, let's look at verse 13:

**Daniel 12:13**

"But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

As a believer who is now in the presence of God, these saints are in bliss. I don't believe in soul sleep; they are there, but they are not there bodily. They are there in soul and spirit in the presence of The Lord, somehow or another, waiting for the resurrection day. Let's reconstruct. The Church Age believers who have been dying now for the past 1900 years or so, as soon as they died, Paul teaches that they went into the presence of The Lord in Heaven. But they're only there in soul and spirit. Their body is in the grave. And nowhere in Scripture is there any kind of entity of valid operation of the soul and spirit separated from the body.

You just study your Bible and there is nothing valid about a human being while he is separated soul and spirit from the body; and that's why Paul is always teaching, "what are we to be looking forward to?" **Oh, the resurrection of our body.** In Ephesians Chapter 3 he makes it clear, that, even though we have been redeemed, have been bought back by the blood of Christ, **yet our redemption will not be complete until**
we've got that new, resurrected body. So, the bodies of these departed saints will suddenly be reunited with their soul and spirit which have been in the presence of The Lord. Now we're complete! And we're ready to come back with Him at the end of the seven years. But you see, the Old Testament saints are going to have to wait until the Kingdom is set up, because remember, Israel is not going to enjoy the elevated roll that the Body of Christ will enjoy. And again, it boils down to terminology.

The Church is referred to as the virgin pure Bride of Christ. Israel is referred to as the adulterous, restored wife of Jehovah. Now, be careful, that does not mean that we're talking about bigamy, because we're not talking about sexuality. We're merely talking about a position. The Church is the Bride of Christ, united to Him. Israel is that adulterous; and if you don't quite understand what I'm talking about when I call Israel the adulterous wife of Jehovah, go back and study the Book of Hosea. In the Book of Hosea, what is Hosea instructed to do? Go out and marry a woman of the street, a prostitute. And he's going to live this thing out, literally. And he brings this prostitute home as his wife and she's not there very long and what does she do? She leaves him to go back to her lovers out on the street. But, as you get to the end of Hosea, she finally has a real conversion of heart and she comes back and becomes the obedient wife of Hosea and the mother of his children. What is that all a picture of? The Nation of Israel. Oh, listen, Israel chased after the pagan gods of the Canaanites. Let's turn to Jeremiah 44. Just to show you how adulterous spiritually Israel was always chasing after those pagan gods. But, the time is coming as God says in:

**Jeremiah 31:31**

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:"

"A new covenant..." I will make with my people; and they won't have to be instructed; they won't have to be taught. Why? God says he will put a new heart within them and they will be His people and He will be their God. But, that isn't the way it's always been.

**Jeremiah 44:17a,18a**

"But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven." And this is Israel. Oh they were burning incense to the queen of heaven. Let's read on a little bit further: "We'll pour out our drink offerings unto her, as we have done. We and our fathers, our kings, and our princes. Since we have left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven and have pour out our drink offering unto her we have wanted all things."
They had the idea that the worshiping this female goddess would bless them more than Jehovah would. So, Israel won't enjoy that elevated roll in the kingdom that the Body of Christ will. Listen, when it gets to pagan idolatrous worship, nothing is ever as grossly immoral as the worship of the female goddesses. I don't care whether it was in Egypt, Babylon, Greece or Rome. When they went to worship of a female goddess it was gross immorality.

Jeremiah 44:17b,18a

"...And to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes...."

"But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things...."

They had the incredulous idea that this worship of a female goddess was blessing them more than Jehovah would. Now that's spiritual adultery, and that's why Israel is not going to enjoy that elevated roll in the Kingdom, and in eternity in the Body of Christ. Now let's go back to Daniel 12. Let's look at verse 13 once again. "But go thy way until the end be. Thou shalt rest and stand in thy". What's the word? "Lot." Now, I liken that to a military term of a company or battalion. So the Old Testament saints will be resurrected in their own lot; they will be a smaller group thus representing the gleaning of the corners. They won't be resurrected until after the Kingdom has been set up. So they will be guests of the wedding feast.

LESSON TWO * PART III

FIRST FRUITS: GLEANINGS: OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS: RESURRECTION

Let's turn to 2 Thessalonians Chapter 2. Now, just for a little recap from the last lesson. I hope I didn't leave any questions unanswered. The first resurrection of believers of all ages is really broken down into the three categories as indicated by Israel's harvest of grain. That is, first there were the 'first fruits,' which was of course epitomized by Christ, and those that came out of the graves in Matthew 27.

We have the Main harvest that came from the Church Age and the great resurrection day at the Rapture, or the trumpet sound when Christ shall leave Heaven and meet us in the air. The Old Testament believers as well as the Tribulation Believers who will have been martyred and died, seemingly are represented by the gleanings and the
corners that were left in the Jewish harvest, and they will be resurrected shortly after the kingdom has begun.

Then, I hardly had time to explain at the end of the lesson, but you see this is why we have that picture in the parables, and in the Old Testament, that the Jewish believers will be the guests at the wedding feast. We won't take time to look at that, but if you want to, you can pick that up in Psalms Chapter 45, I think. It's also alluded to in the Song of Solomon. Lots of people don't understand the Song of Solomon as being so typical of Christ and His Bride, the Church. Now on our Time Line we're coming to that next event. The Church Age will have ended with the Rapture, and then we know that the Tribulation will be ushered in next. It will be that seven years not associated with the Church - because the Church Age has ended - it's gone. Instead, we'll be coming back to God's dealing with the Jew once again. I'll never forget a little lady in one of my classes, all of a sudden she just happened to see it. Then she exclaimed, 'In other words God's going to pick up with the Jews where he left off.' She hit the nail on the head perfectly.

Now, he has taken this Old Testament program, as we saw back in Psalms Chapter 2. God's time table stopped when He turned to the Gentiles with the Gospel of Grace. When that period has ended you will find Grace and Law cannot mix. Israel is going to have the Temple, she's going to go back under the Law. If ever I have any argument that we will not go into the Tribulation, it's that one purpose right there. You can not mix Law and Grace. Therefore, Grace cannot go into the Jewish economy, as it will pick up again in that seven-year Tribulation period. It has to be removed, so they cannot be mixed.

Paul, here in 2 Thessalonians, is coming as close to prophecy, if you want to call it that, as he does in any portion of his writings. He is introducing us to this seven-year period of time which Jesus in Matthew 24 calls the time of Tribulation. Now in 2 Thessalonians Chapter 2 verse 1 Paul writes to the Thessalonians believers who, believe it or not, had gotten to the place with all the persecution that they were under, and all the pressure, they were afraid that the Rapture had taken place, and they had missed it. So, Paul had to quickly come back with 2 Thessalonians and reassure them that they hadn't missed the Rapture, that, yes, things were going to get tough, but it wasn't their situation.

II Thessalonians 2:1,2

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand."
Do you see how that little bunch of words sets that completely apart from the second Coming. See, at the second Coming Christ won't be gathering people unto Himself. He's coming! But here Paul is referring to an act of Christ where He's going to gather His own unto himself, and that's the Rapture. Verse 2: *"That you be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled."* In other words, Paul is setting their mind at ease that they hadn't missed the Rapture. And he's going to give them points to look for so that they'll know that they haven't missed it. *"Neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that day of Christ is at hand."* Here is a time to stop and define. The Day of Christ is referring to that outcalling of the Church, the Rapture. The Day of The Lord, the Day of Jehovah, the Day of God; that is this period of time, including the Tribulation and into the Second Coming and the setting up of the Kingdom. That's all referred to as the Day of The Lord, etc. But, the day of Christ is that time when Christ will call the Body of Christ unto himself.

**II Thessalonians 2:3**

*"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;..."*

Let's look at what he says. *"that day",* the day of Christ, the calling out of the body, *"shall not come except there come a falling away first."* Now, that word in the Greek is *'apostasia,'* from which we get the word, apostasy. Now, I'm afraid too many Christians, churchgoers and members, do not know what apostasy is. I can remember when I was young, I thought it had something to do with the Apostles, but I wouldn't doubt that a lot of other people think the same thing, because it is so close in pronunciation. But apostasy is that turning away from the revealed truth of the Word of God.

Isn't that exactly where we are today? The churches, for the most part, have apostatized. They have turned their backs on the basic truths of Scripture. And this is why all the false teachings are having such a free run in so many of our main-line denominations. And this is why so many theologians and pastors and preachers are denying the Virgin birth. They are denying the literal, physical, visible Resurrection of Christ as just so much methodology. They have turned their backs on the revealed truth of the Word of God. We're in it, so now then, what does that tell you and me? We could be expecting the Day of Christ at any time because the apostasy has now come about.

Let's look further. *"...there shall come a falling away first..."* (apostasy). There's also a second definition of apostasy. We see it here and other places in our New Testament. It is actually translated, *"departure,"* as a person departing from one place to another. So, you might say that within verse three, you not only have the
apostasia of Christendom turning it's back upon the truth of the Word of God, but also the departure of the Christian himself; we're going to be taken out. And then, as soon as the apostasy has come on the scene, there shall be the revealing of whom? That 'man of sin,' who will be revealed, the son of perdition. Who is that? The Anti-christ.

**The Anti-christ will be revealed, I think, immediately.** Not maybe within an hour or two, but a relatively short period of time after the Rapture, and this great world political leader, who is going to come on the scene. A very charismatic individual. The Book of Daniel says he is going to come in with flatteries, promising peace, prosperity, telling the world's population that he's got the answer to all their problems. Don't you know the world is looking for that kind of a person. Oh, the world has got so many problems that they don't know which way to turn. But, when this fellow comes on the scene, he's going to seemingly have all the answers and the world will fall at his feet.

I remember right after World War II, when Europe was in a shambles, and before the Marshall Plan had really started taking hold. One of the European leaders, who was a Belgian general, said this in 1945, "**What the world needs is a strong leader. And if such a man would come on the scene today, by tomorrow night the world will be falling at his feet!"** Now, he said that in 1945. How much truer that is today. I maintain with all the turmoil that is going on in Eastern Europe and Russia and Europe itself and America, and even prosperous Japan, the world is suddenly realizing that we've got problems we don't have any idea of how to cope with. Our leaders don't really know which way to turn. And this man is going to come on the scene with such a charisma. He's going to seemingly have all the answers and the world indeed will fall at his feet. He will have the world to rule and reign, as The Bible says he would.

*II Thessalonians 2:4*

"**Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.**"

This man is going to be **godless.** Now remember, he is the Anti-christ, so he is the counterfeit Christ. He's going to receive this power from Satan. And remember, Satan can perform a lot of good. I'm afraid too many people have the idea that all Satan promotes is skid row, the gross immorality. That's the least of Satan's concern. Satan's main area of activity is in the upper of ecclesia. In the upper levels of our so-called religious leadership. The seminaries, our large denominations. Now, that's where Satan works overtime. He doesn't have to work on the poor guy who is down and out. He's already got him. But if he can get the ecclesiastic leaders in his camp,
then that power just funnels on down to the average person in the pew, and then he's got them all.

We have to remember that Satan will promote good things, beautiful things, that the world is just in awe of, in order to accomplish his own end. Paul describes him here in verse 4 as one "...who opposeth and exalteth himself...." Now, that's what it takes to be a good political leader, doesn't it? An egotist. And this guy is going to be the greatest that ever was, so far as personal egotism is concerned. "...who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God...." You see, he's going to set himself up as the god of this world. And he's going to sit in the Temple of God. There's only one place on this earth where God has ever had a Temple and will have it again, and that's in Jerusalem. The Jew is getting hungry for their Temple to come back, and one of these days they are going to have it. I think it's going to almost come up overnight. I personally think it's prefabricated, and I think that the Israelites, when they get the go ahead, will raise that Temple so fast the world will hardly believe it's happened. And we're going to see in a little while, when we go back to the Book of Daniel, where the Old Testament introduces us to all of this. But, Paul is merely putting the capstone on it. Read on:

**II Thessalonians 2:5**

"Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?"

Paul writes to the Thessalonian believer. You know how long he was with the Thessalonians? - about two weeks. He saw them converted out of paganism. He taught them the doctrines of Grace and even took the time to teach them end-time things. I remember many years ago, I only had one person who ever brought it up. But, as soon as he said, it I thought of that previous verse. He said, "I'm not concerned about end-times because God will probably take care of it in His own way, and it doesn't make any difference if I know what's going to happen, or how it's going to happen." I said, "Now, wait a minute." If Paul took the time, way back there in about 55 A.D. with new converts out of paganism to teach them things concerning the end of our Church Age, then don't you think it's good that you and I know it when we are actually in it?" Absolutely; we have to know these things. And we have to know what the Scripture teaches so that we know what to look for.

You remember what we read in Daniel in our last lesson? "...Oh the wicked shall do wickedly, but the wise shall understand...." And like I told you a lesson or two ago, a gentleman that we led to The Lord a couple of years ago, how all of a sudden (and I've had people tell me that down through the years, as soon as they got a true insight into the Word of God and the end time things), every headline, every news item is
telling them that this Book is true and it's all coming as God said it would. Now, let's look at verse 6:

**II Thessalonians 2:6**

"And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time."

Let's pick that verse apart. We've got two personalities involved here. We've got one personality that has to put the brakes on things so that the other personality won't come in and do his work before the appointed time. Do you see that? Read it again: "Now he who withholdeth" (or is holding back), "that he (the other person), "might be revealed in his time....", (and not ahead of it). Because God is a stickler for His own time-table.

For the last 1900 years or so, I've always taught that God's time clock has stopped. But as soon as the Church is taken out of the way, God's time clock kicks back in gear and it's going to be right on schedule. So, Paul is saying here, that as we come to the end and the Church is taken out of the way, or just before the Church is taken out of the way, there has to be a person that will hold back this man, Anti-christ, from usurping the power that he's going to have for the seven years. He has to hold it until the right time.

**II Thessalonians 2:7**

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way."

Paul says, "For the mystery", (or the secret), "of iniquity doth already work." Do you know when the mystery of iniquity began? Basically, at the Tower of Babel. Oh, I know it goes back to the Garden of Eden. But at the Tower of Babel, is when all things began that are now reaching a crescendo, right before our very eyes. The explosion in the Oriental religions, the New Age movement. And what's the heart and soul of the New Age movement? That we can become our own god! Oh, this whole idea of positive thinking sounded so good a few years ago didn't it? But, we can expose it now for what it really is. It's New Ageism. The whole concept is that you can become your own god, and if you can become your own god, then who do you not need? The real One. And this is what is exploding all around us. That's the only word I can use for it. It's coming into the churches. And people are blind to it. It's the mystery of iniquity already at work. "...only he who now hindereth..." (now I'm using the new language rather than the old). "...only he who now hindereth will hinder, until he,..." that hinderer, "...is taken out of the way."
Just think for a moment. What person has the power today to hold back, like a dam on a river, the forces of Satan, so that things won't break loose and start bringing in the Tribulation until the right time. **It's the Holy Spirit.** So, the Holy Spirit here is the hinderer. Now, where is the Holy Spirit dwelling today? In you and I! In the heart and life of every believer. So, the only break that God has on the earth against the influx of all this evil work is the believer and the indwelling Holy Spirit. That's God's brake on the system. And that's why we have to know our Book; to know what we believe and we have to stand on it. I was thinking the other night, how many of us (and I asked myself this same question) would endure the torture and martyrdom of the believers back in the Reformation? I doubt if I could. Their torture was unbelievable. They were laid out on the rack and cranked up until every bone in their body was broken, and yet they survived to walk like a cripple. How many of us could be peacefully tied to a stake and the brush piled around us, waiting for them to light the torch? It happened all the time.

But, you see this is where we're to stand. **We're to be so rooted in the Word of God that none of those things would scare us.** They do me. It's like an old pastor of mine told me years ago: when I was just a young believer. he said, "Les, don't worry about it. When the time comes, and if it does come, God will give Grace." Well, I'm resting on that because evidently He does, because those people back there would have never been able to survive and go through what they did. So, the Holy Spirit dwelling in the lives of the believers, are like a dam in the river to hold back this flood of iniquity. And then when He's taken out of the way, it will be just like lifting that dam out of the river, let's look at verse 8:

**II Thessalonians 2:8**

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming...."

The newer translations have the word "**One**" after the word "**Wicked**" in the first part of this verse. That is the Anti-christ. He will be revealed. Now, that comma skips you seven years to the end, "...**whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.**" In other words, that's when the Anti-christ will meet his doom. But he's going to have seven years. Let's go back to Daniel Chapter 9. We'll see if we can finish down to verse 27 in this lesson, in order to validate this seven-year period of time as definitely in our future (not our future, because we're going to be gone, but in the future of the planet).

**Daniel 9:24**
"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."

That "seventy weeks are determined upon thy people,..." and that word 'weeks' here is used as we would use, 'dozen.' If I would say so many dozen, what would you automatically do? You would multiply it by 12. A week is always seven, and so seventy weeks of years is (a lot of the new translations have already calculated it for you and what have they got?) 490 years. "Four hundred and ninety years are determined upon thy people..." Daniel's people. And who are Daniel's people? The Jew - Israel. "...and upon thy holy city, (Jerusalem) to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity,..." That all took place when? When Christ died on the Cross. And you remember several lessons ago this was one of the verses that we split with a parenthesis and a dash, because the next part of this verse is still future. It didn't happen at Christ's first coming. "...that is to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy." That hasn't happened yet. It will when He returns and sets up His kingdom, but it didn't happen at His first coming.

Come down through these next verses, but what you really figure out here that even though 490 years were in God's time table back here for the Nation of Israel, leading up to the rejection of The Messiah, would only total 483 years. Which means that there are seven years left that were not fulfilled at Christ's first coming.

Chronologists and archaeologists have teamed up and they have actually found the decree that Daniel mentions here, that gave the Jew permission to go back after their Temple had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar; it was dated, and from that date, it was March 14, 445 B.C. Up until Palm Sunday, was exactly 483 years. That was fulfilled. But, the prophecy said 490 years. And so that's why Bible scholars have sometime referred to the Tribulation as Daniel's 70th week. Sixty-nine of them were fulfilled at the Cross, but the 70th week, or that final seven years is still unfulfilled. It's been pushed out into the future. Let's drop down to verse 27, it says, "...And he (the Anti-christ) shall confirm the covenant with many for seven years." Now, there is the triggering mechanism for the Tribulation!
LESSON TWO * PART IV

FIRST FRUITS: GLEANINGS: OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS: RESURRECTION

Let's get right into The Book where we left off. Remember, when we were back here in our study of Genesis, we had gotten as far as Abraham sending his servant into a far country to get the bride for his son. That's what catapulted us into the New Testament for the last several lessons. We wanted to show you how clearly that was a parallel for God sending the Holy Spirit into the world to call out a Bride for His Son, which of course is the Body of Christ. And then, I didn't feel right about just showing that, and going right back to Genesis without carrying on, at least a brief overview of the rest of the end time events as we see them coming up. The seven years of Tribulation, the return of Christ and the setting up of His kingdom. We're going to cover that, not so much in detail like we would if we were in a verse-by-verse study in the Book of Revelation, but just to give a little bit of a glimpse of what is immediately, we think, ahead for this old planet.

Let's go back to Daniel Chapter 9 where in our last lesson we saw 490 years in this complete prophecy concerning Israel. But, 483 years were fulfilled at the Crucifixion, which means there were seven years unfulfilled. And these seven years will have the time clock triggered by the signing of a peace treaty between the Anti-christ and Israel. And so this big push for peace in the Middle East, that we see now is not going to last, even if they sign some sort of a peace treaty. It's just going to be a make-shift thing. But, the real peace treaty will be with this man, the Anti-christ, who I feel will come up out of the United States of Europe.

You want to remember in 1992, by the end of the year, they hope to have the whole thing put together so that all of Europe will be a federated United States of Europe, even as we are here in America. And then, out of those federated European nations, I feel the Anti-christ will come out of the revived Roman Empire (I know there are others who feel he'll come out of maybe the Arab nations, the Muslim world). Now, let's look at Daniel 9:27:

Daniel 9:27

"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."
"He (this man Anti-christ) shall confirm (or sign) the covenant with many (speaking of many Jews who will be back in the land as they are even now) for (how long?) one week:" (or seven years). Now, the minute they sign that seven-year peace treaty, Israel is going to just lay down her defenses and feel so secure that this man with all of his charisma, and, seemingly, all of his economic and military power behind him from Western Europe, is going to be able to guarantee her safety and her borders. And so, Israel will almost think he is The Messiah. And he's going to be benevolent. When he signs this seven-year treaty, he's willing to give Israel permission to have Temple worship. And so if the Temple isn't built by this time, it soon will be. And Israel will come back under the Law. I think they'll go back into the sacrifices and the whole nine yards and if you'll just read a little bit about the mentality in Israel today, you'll read how more and more, the orthodox are gaining momentum over the secular.

So, this man will sign a seven-year treaty with the Jews, but let's read on: "In the midst of the week,..." In other words, at the mid-point, after 3 1/2 years, or 1,260 days, he suddenly is going to turn on the Jew and look what it says, "...he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." Now, if you don't read that verse casually, but read it carefully, in order for something to cease, it has to start. So, what this verse is telling us is that, by the mid-point of the seven years, Israel will have been enjoying sacrificial Temple worship. And with the blessings of the man Anti-christ.

This is why Paul says in 2 Thessalonians that as soon as the Church and the indwelling Holy Spirit is taken out, then shall that wicked one be revealed. Now, he won't be revealed to the world in general as the awful Satanic individual that he will be 3 1/2 years later. But, he is going to be revealed enough that he will be the one to sign this seven-year treaty with Israel. And it's a seven-year treaty made in Hell. But, Satan is still lurking in the back ground. He's prompting all this, but as yet he has not indwelt him (the Anti-christ).

You get to the mid-point, as we see here, at the middle of the week. He causes the sacrifices and oblation to stop and, "...for the overspreading of abominations." Now, you know what abominations in Scripture are. Those are various human acts that God hates with no ifs, ands, or buts, about it. And this man is going to come in and he is going to defy God at every turn and, "...he shall make it desolate." Now, again, you've got to be a good student of language. What's the 'it?' The Temple! This Temple that Israel will have built and will have been using for worship, he is going to make that Temple desolate. How? "Even unto the consummation (or until the end of that seven years), and all that's been determined (by prophecy)shall be poured upon the desolate." or the desolator.

Now, we get from a previous portion of Daniel an historical act by a literal, historical, little king by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes. Now, Antiochus was not a great man
as far as world history was concerned, but he was a great man in Scripture because he, like the man Anti-christ (when he over-ran the little Nation of Israel back there in about 200 or 300 B.C.) also decimated and defiled the Temple by sacrificing a sow (a hog) on the altar. And you know what that did to the Jew. It was just a horror to them. I think that's what this man is going to do, as well. When he comes in to the Temple he will defile and desecrate it. He will perform acts of abomination and it will be epitomized by the offering of a hog on the altar there at the Temple in Jerusalem. Then, in order to pick up what's going to take place at that mid-point, let's turn over to Matthew 24. Now, remember, for the first three and one half years, after signing the seven-year treaty, Israel is going to have a relative amount of freedom to worship.

The man Anti-christ will, I think, still be up in his headquarters in Europe. The only thing that Israel is going to have happen, that is really going to put them in a bind for awhile, will be, what I think is the great Russian invasion of Israel. That's found in Ezekiel 38 and 39. We won't have time in this lesson to touch on it, except to say that I think the Red Horse of Revelation 6, will be that great Russian invasion. Now, I know a lot of you are probably looking at me and thinking, "But, Russia is all done." Oh, no they are not! Don't you believe it!

If you believe in writing to your representatives in Congress, you'd better write and tell them not to lay down our arms because of Russia. We'd better be more on guard than ever before. Now, just for an aside to make you think, and give you something to chew on, I'm always careful to say that this is my own speculation. I can't prove it from Scripture, and don't even pretend to. But, I've always asked my classes, when I've taught the Red Horse of Revelation 6 (I think it is the northern invasion of Ezekiel 38 and 39), I like to ask my class people, "If you were a Russian general or the chief of staff, and you saw that you were getting ready to invade the Middle East, and Israel in particular (as Ezekiel says he will), what's the first move that you would make before you would do anything?" Well, I know what I would do. I would unload everything I had on North America, because they are the only ones who would have any means of counteracting me. So, this is what I think is going to happen.

I think that just prior to that great invasion of Israel, early, probably within the first year of the Tribulation, the Russians will unload everything they've got on America and we'll be off the scene, because I can't find America anywhere in prophecy. No where! Prophecy deals only with Western Europe, Russia, the Orient and Africa. So, I personally think, and it's only conjecture (don't say that I've taught it from The Bible because this is my own idea), that the Russians will still unload, and will wipe us off the face of the map. But, Ezekiel 39 says that, even though God destroyed those invading Russian armies on the hills of Israel, God will destroy them just like He destroyed the Syrians back under Elijah's time.
God will destroy the Russian armies, but Chapter 39 says a fire shall fall on their homeland, and will annihilate the Russian homeland. Now, again just go back to common sense. If Russia unloads and destroys our North American continent, what have we got out there that can still retaliate? We've got a bunch of submarines and they'll unload everything they've got on the Russian homeland, and that will be a mutual annihilation, leaving the Scripture prophecy open, and, I think, in perfect accord, that will transpire. So, don't worry, if you're a believer we won't be here. But, if you're an unbeliever, there's a possibility you'll be left into this seven-year period (I wouldn't be able to sleep at night because it would scare me to death). Now, you talk about nuclear winter - I think it's coming. I'm not a prophet of doom. I think I'm as optimistic as most people. But I can see what the prophetic word says. And I can see that certain things have to happen. And then you see, we're not teaching Revelation, but the next course in Revelation Chapter 6 is the Pale Horse. And that Pale Horse depicts famine and pestilence.

If you knock out the great agriculture areas of Russia and the great food production areas of our middle west, how much has the world got left? Not much. And, with those great areas of agricultural production off the scene, the remaining billions of people in the Orient, those in Europe and Africa, are going to be getting awful hungry. And so, the world, indeed, will come under terrible famine, terrible inflation, as the Russians are seeing now. It can happen when there is a shortage of something. You've got runaway prices and nobody can afford what little there is. Now, this is the picture of the opening days of the Tribulation, and like we said, Israel is going to enjoy the blessings of her Temple worship, but she is going to have to put up with this tremendous invasion and at tremendous loss of life.

I've had several who argue (friendly), "That just doesn't fit because Ezekiel says that the Jews are going to be seven years burying the dead and cleaning up the residue of all the equipment that has been destroyed." Now, to that I think I've got the answer. And that is that, all through Scripture, any part of a year (I don't care if it's only three days), in Scripture is considered a full year. So, when The Bible says that Israel will be seven years cleaning up the equipment and burying the dead. That tells me that this invasion could take place 10 or 11 months after the Anti-christ signs the treaty, and Israel, according to the Scriptural reckoning of time, would still have the full seven years to fulfill the cleaning up of the mess, and have it all done before Christ returns and sets up the Kingdom.

And so, that time frame doesn't scare me. But, a lot of people say that it can't happen in the Tribulation, that it has to be before; otherwise, there's not enough time to fulfill the seven years. But, always remember that any part of a day, any part of a year, is considered a whole. Do you remember when Jesus gave the parable of hiring those workers for the vineyard? He hired some in the morning and they said they would
work for so much. He hired some at noon and they worked for the same amount. And then he hired somebody about an hour before sunset, and how much did they get? The whole days wage. Why? Any part of the day is considered a whole. Any part of a year is considered a whole.

You see, the chronologists were having fits trying to reconstruct time back in the Old Testament because of this very thing. The Old Testament record may say that "so and so" reigned 10 years, and they knew that he only reigned a little over nine. But see, The Bible considered that little part of the tenth year as a whole year, and that's all the way through Scripture. In fact, that's my answer for Christ's being crucified on Friday, and yet can be stated as having been in the grave three days and three nights. **Because if He was crucified on Friday, He went into the grave before 6 o'clock that evening, and that was considered a day. Then He was in the grave all day Saturday, and then He came out of the grave after midnight on Saturday, and that fulfilled the three days and three nights.** Now, you may not swallow that, but that's okay. Go back to Matthew 24 and we'll see what happens when the Anti-christ moves into the Temple in Jerusalem at the mid-point of the seven years:

**Matthew 24:15,16**

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:..."

Jesus is speaking to the Twelve all through Matthew 24 and 25. And so, as He speaks to the Twelve, He is also speaking to the whole Nation of Israel then as well as when this happens. I maintain that all of Chapter 24 is Tribulation ground. Even the introductory verses, 1-14 are all Tribulation, that is, seven years. Now, it's not the Great Tribulation (the last half), but it's the first half and then, when you get to verse 15, He says, "**When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation...**" You remember what Daniel called it? The abomination of desolation! "...spoken of by Daniel the prophet..." Now, there is proof that Daniel is legitimate because Jesus refers to him as a prophet: "...when you see him stand in the holy place," that is in the Temple, "...whoso readeth, let him understand. Then let them who be in Judaea flee into the mountains." Why? Let's look in verse 17:

**Matthew 24:17-20**

"Let him which is on the house top not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes, And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day...."
Do you see how appropriate this is for a cross-section of Jews? Let's go back and examine these verses. Verse 17: When the Jews of Jerusalem suddenly realize that the Anti-christ is come into their Temple and has defiled it, and has forced them to begin to worship him instead of Jehovah, Jesus said when you see that happen, flee to the mountains. Now, who is going to flee? This is not the 144,000. This is a cross-section of Jews in the area of Jerusalem and Judea. Who are they? "Let him who is on the house top not come down to take anything out of his house."

Now, I like to ask the question, if you know anything about the Middle East at all, "What kind of people will have their patio on the top of their house?" Well, the wealthy, the retired, those no longer engaged in everyday work. And so here we have the older retired people with probably a little more wealth, and a little more time for ease. They'd better get down off his house top patio and not worry about any clothes in the closet. They'd better get out of town. Now, let's look at the next one. "...Neither let him who is in the field return back to get his clothes..." What age group and kind of people do you have doing the every day labor of field work, construction and "what have you?" Well, your younger people. I'm going guess their ages from 25 to 45 years old; men and women both. And they too, had better get out of town and not take time to go back and get their clothes. Let's move on. Verse 19: "Woe unto them that are with child..." Now, what have you got? You've got your young women - your young mothers-to-be.

And then in the next statement, you've got nursing mothers, carrying their little ones. Do you see what a cross-section of society we've got here. You've got retired people, working people, the young mothers, the mothers to be - it's a complete cross-section of society. And then verse 20: You remember I told you Israel will be back under the Law? What had they better pray for? Oh, that this isn't on a sabbath day, because Israel's Law limited how far they could walk on the sabbath day. So he says, "...pray that it won't be on the sabbath day." so that you'll be free to go that hundred miles or so into the mountains southeast of Israel. I think they will go into Moab. The red rock city of Petra is a distinct possibility.

Matthew 24:21

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

Now, Jesus is speaking, and He knows what he is talking about. For He says then, (when the Anti-christ moves into the Temple and defiles it at the mid-point of the Tribulation),"...then shall be great tribulation (watch the language) such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Listen, there have been some tremendous calamities in this earth's history. Those of you who have
heard me teach the flood, what was it? It was instantaneous cataclysmic destruction. It wiped out everybody. What have the Jews gone through in their history? The most recent, of course, was the holocaust in Hitler's Germany. When you read some of the accounts of what those people were subjected to, you wonder how a human being could even maintain their sanity. But that was a Sunday School picnic compared to what's coming. If I were a Jew, the last place I would go would be Israel. But, you see, they go there blindly, with no comprehension of knowing what is coming.

But Jesus said when this last Three and one-half years break, except for these, and I call them the escaping remnant; the group of people in Matthew 24 will flee to the mountains. And once they get there, God is going to protect them just like He did Israel in the wilderness under Moses. He's going to feed them and protect them from all the ravages of the Tribulation, and they're going to be there completely safe for three and one half years. But, I always point out that they go out in unbelief. Oh, they recognize the God of Heaven and that there's a power beyond them, but they still will not recognize The Christ.

And so, they go down into that refuge in the mountains for three and one half years of God's Sovereign protection, in unbelief. But, all the Old Testament, the Book of Revelation and other areas make it so plain that when they see Christ returning at His Second Coming, this group of Jews, and I have no idea how many it could be, will be saved. Perhaps several hundred thousand or more. But, when they see the returning Christ in all of His power and glory, the Old Testament says, "...shall a nation be saved in a day?" Yes! And that little Nation of Israel, the remnant of course, will suddenly realize that He was the one that they had crucified. Go back to Zachariah Chapter 12:

**Zachariah 12:10**

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."

**Zachariah 13:6**

"And one (of these Jews in the protective area in the mountains) shall say unto him, 'What are these wounds in thine hands?' Then He shall answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'"
Now, isn't that plain? They're going to see Him, and they're suddenly going to have their spiritual eyes opened, and they're going to believe Him, and the nation will be saved in a minute.
LESSON THREE * PART I

RAPTURE: TRIBULATION: SECOND COMING: MILLENNIUM

Turn to Matthew 24, for a quick review of our last lesson, where we left off with Jesus telling the Twelve the events of the Tribulation:

*Matthew 24:15*

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)."

He makes a tremendous statement that gives veracity to the Book of Daniel -- a book that has probably been under more attack by the scoffers and the liberals than any other book in The Bible, except maybe Genesis. But, here in Matthew 24, Jesus puts his stamp of approval upon the prophet Daniel. "When ye therefore,..." and remember He's talking to the Twelve; and so He is naturally talking primarily to the Jew. Never forget that this great Tribulation period, the seven years that is spoken of throughout all the Old Testament, is referred to here by Christ. And then, of course, the road map of it is in the Book of Revelation; that seven-year period is primarily, according to Jeremiah Chapter 30, Jacob's trouble. Which means it is primarily God dealing with the Nation of Israel after all these years of seemingly ignoring them, and yet not really. **Because always remember, one of the greatest miracles of the whole human race is the Nation of Israel. They should have been long gone, but here they are after over 4,000 years of history; and more than one government, more than one empire, more than one king has tried to obliterate them. And yet, here they are.**

I'm reminded of an anecdote I read years ago that during the time of Bismarck, I think it was, and the Prussian empire, he was an unbeliever and almost an agnostic, had one of his top generals who was a very devout believer. And so, one day as he was conducting his inspection, he came to this general and sneeringly said, "**General, tell me why do you still believe The Bible? Tell me in one or two words.**" And the general, without a pause, said, "**Sir, the Jew.**" And you see that is. The proof of this Book is the Nation of Israel. God is not through with them. He is still bringing them back to the land and that's why we're seeing this mass emigration into that little postage stamp piece of real estate, because God's getting ready to again pick up where He left off with His favored nation.

Now, here in Matthew 24, verse 15, He says to the Twelve, "**when ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (that would be in the Temple) whoso readeth, let him understand.**" Let's go
back to Daniel and pick up again those verses that Jesus was referring to, so we can tie it all together. Now, as I was driving up here for our lesson today, I was trying to sort things out in my own mind, because this is not just a short lesson, and we can go on to another subject some other time. We're trying to teach the whole scope of Scripture from Genesis through Revelation, and not in just bits and pieces; not as a shotgun approach, but we're trying to tie everything together. And I've known in my classes when people have gone through Genesis to Revelation four, five, six times with me; every time they will pick up things that they've never caught before. I used to apologize for reviewing, but I don't anymore, because every time I review, I know that somebody picks up a little bit that they've either forgotten, or they've never actually tied together. So, let's look at Daniel 9:24:

Daniel 9:24

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."

We're again dealing with the Nation of Israel; it's Old Testament, and some may say, "Wait a minute, you mean that the Old Testament isn't for us?" Of course it is! All Scripture is by inspiration and is profitable. So, we don't put lines through any of it. But, I maintain that you have to be aware to whom the particular passage was directed. And so, here again, Daniel makes it so plain that "seventy weeks," or seventy weeks of years, or 490 years, "are determined upon thy people." God is speaking, of course, through the prophets. So, who are Daniel's people? Well, the Jew - Israel - the nation. "and upon thy holy city," (Jerusalem), "to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." Of course, that all took place at the Cross.

That's where sin was paid for, and all these things came to their culmination. But, on the other hand, there's still some time to go on after the Cross and the verse continues on, "...to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." This is not an in depth study on prophecy; we're still going to go back to Genesis soon. But as I mentioned the last lesson, we've had so many requests to go back and spend a little time on end-time things, because we are getting so close to it all. And I agreed heartily, because, when I look at how long it's taken to go through the first 24 verses of Genesis, I'm honestly convinced that we won't be here long enough to finish the whole book. We'll be gone before it's all gone. So, we are just taking a brief overview.

Daniel 9:25,26
"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times: And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, 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."

So then, here in verse 25 & 26, we see that these 490 years are broken down into a period that would be 483 years. Remember, that Abraham, the beginning of the Jewish nation, began about 2,000 B.C. The Cross would be in the middle. Now, in this passage of Daniel, he is speaking of 483 years that would transpire from the decree from the king, which we find in Nehemiah 2. That decree was found to be dated in 445 B.C. If I remember right, the date was March 14. All you have do is remember a scriptural year is 360 days, not 365. It's twelve months of 30 days, or 360 days. But you still have to compensate for those 5 days and leap years, so you just punch it out in your calculator, even with our present day calendar, from 445 B.C., archaeologists have found this. It's not just pulled out of a hat. From 445 B.C. until the year of the Crucifixion, as I calculate it, comes to within about one year. And there can easily be that much difference in calendarization and so forth. So always remember that the Scripture is so accurate. Nothing is guesswork. And if there is a discrepancy, it is ours, not God's.

So, anyway, Daniel has determined that there would be 483 years from that decree of Nehemiah 2 until the Crucifixion. But, the total years that God was going to deal with Israel was 490. So, if 483 took place up to the Cross, that means there is seven years left. And consequently, most Bible scholars, and those who do a lot of writing, will refer to the seven-year period as Daniel's seventieth week. **Sixty-nine were fulfilled at the Cross. God's clock stopped,** and the last seven years are still ahead of us. They still have to be fulfilled. Now, then, as you go into verse 26, it speaks of a coming prince. "**After the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off** (at the Crucifixion), **but not for himself,**" He didn't die because of anything He had done. He died for us, "and the people," (now here's where you have watch carefully as you read), "**...the people of the prince that shall come,**..." Now, the prince that shall come is a small letter "p," and is the reference to what we call the Anti-christ. Christ is the Prince and He would be capitalized.

But, this prince is a small letter, and it's a reference to the counterfeit christ, the Anti-christ, and it's the people out of which he will one day come that will destroy the Temple. And we know that was done by the Roman general, Titus, in 70 A.D. So, that verse tells us at the time of the Anti-christ's appearance, he will have to come out of the geographical area that comprises the ancient Roman empire. And it's coming to
pass right before our eyes. It's basically the European Community, which by the end of this year, they hope to be able to call a Federation of Europe, or a United States of Europe. And so, the geographical part of it is already in place; that somewhere out of that revived Roman empire this prince will make his appearance. Then, in verse 27, we find what he is going to do:

Daniel 9:27

"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

He is going to make a covenant or a treaty with Israel for how long? One week - seven years! Now, there comes that seventieth week of sevens, or that 483 to the 490. He's going to sign the seven-year treaty. So on that basis, I've taught that when that treaty is signed by the Anti-christ and Israel, that puts God's time clock back in gear, which stopped back there at the Cross. And there have been an indeterminate number of years since then. But as soon as that man signs a treaty with Israel, God's seven-year time clock starts running. But, look on in the rest of that verse, at what's going to happen? And this is what Jesus was making reference to when He said in Matthew 24, "when you see this desolation take place in the Temple, then flee to the mountains." And here it is. "In the middle of the week", in other words at the end of 3 1/2 years, "he will cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease", or to stop. Now, the first thing you've got to ask yourself when you read something like that, in order for Israel to have the Temple worship and have it disrupted, what is Israel going to have to have first? The Temple.

And so, we know that one day soon, some how or another everything is going to fall into place, that Israel will have her Temple rebuilt. And we know from all our news coming out of Israel that they've already got young men trained for the priesthood. They've already got all the garments of the priesthood hanging on mannequins. They've got everything ready, and all they need is the Temple, and that can go up rather quickly with all the technology that we have today. In fact, I saw in the Jerusalem Post, just recently, all of the damage that was done by the scuds and next to it was the picture of the same street today. And do you know what? Everything was rebuilt and you couldn't tell there had been any damage at all. The streets were new. And they did that in one year!

So, don't ever shrink and ask how can they build a Temple and get everything going so quickly. It won't take that long. But in the middle of this seven years, the Anti-christ is going to turn on that nation with whom he made this treaty, and go into the
Temple, Daniel says. There he's going to cause an abomination. And he shall make the Temple desolate. **In other words, he's going to shut it down, and, the reason for that, is he's going to force Israel to worship him as their Messiah.** Now, I think for the first three and one half years, Israel will enjoy the protection of this individual, and they will be so awed by what he is able to do, that they will begin to wonder if he, indeed, is the real Messiah. But then, at the mid-point of that Tribulation, **they will suddenly realize that, indeed, he is not The Messiah, but in fact, quite the opposite.** I was reading a book the other evening concerning the New Age movement. It's amazing how gullible people can be. I just can't understand it. **And these New Age people are actually elevating Lucifer and Satan and his man Anti-christ, as the one who will bring in the utopia that the world is looking for.** And we know from Scripture, that this man is not going to bring in a utopia; he's going to bring in the most devastating years that this world has ever known.

Come back to Matthew 24 so we can continue for just a moment to see how Jesus describes these seven years, but in particular, the last 3 1/2. He's talking about the time from when the Anti-christ goes into the Temple here in verse 15. We covered this in our last lesson so we're going to take a real brief look at how he now instructs the Jews, living in the area of Jerusalem and Judea, at the time that all of this takes place, to flee to the mountains. In other words, they must get out of the area of Jerusalem and Judea. Then, I gave you a good indication of all the various types of people that will be in that fleeing remnant of Israel. Let's look at it in Matthew:

**Matthew 24:17,18**

"let him which is on the house top not come down to take anything out of his house:..." This is probably somebody who is retired and may be fairly well-to-do, with no day-to-day responsibilities.

"Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes."

Here we've got the opposite, a younger person who is a laboring person, working every day. And Jesus said to let him not go back to get his clothes, but let him flee.

**Matthew 24:19,20**

"And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!" You have the young women of a society. Some mothers and some mothers-to-be, but you've got a whole cross-section here. Men, women, young children, infants, babies and those that are about to be born.

"But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day;..."
Here's the reference that Israel will be back under the Law. That's another thing many people can't comprehend - that Israel is getting ready to go back under the old Mosaic Law. Oh, not in it's purity, as Moses gave it to them, but as it was, perhaps, at the time of Christ. If you know anything at all of Judaism, you know that it was pretty well adulterated, and that's why Jesus made such a fuss over the way they were conducting themselves in the Temple. But, they're going to go back under the Law; they're going to have the Temple worship; and at the mid-point of that last seven years, when you see the Temple desecrated and the abomination, they will flee to the mountains. We don't know when it will be, because this is a question mark period of time, but we do know that this is going to be seven years. Daniel divided it and Jesus divided it.

**Matthew 24:21**

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

"For then (in other words from the mid-point on) shall be great tribulation,..." Now, watch the language - "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time,..." or that time, because He's speaking of it in the future tense, "no, nor ever shall be." I do a lot of reading and I think you all know that by now. Recently, I read something that came in the mail and I don't know what group put it out, they didn't have their name on it. I've got a pretty good idea though. They were maintaining that we're just simply going right straight on through to the Second Coming. Christ comes and that ends it, and they completely ignore verses like this. But Jesus here is speaking of a time of trouble that this world has never seen, as over against what this particular little booklet was saying, that if the Book of Revelation ever was acted out, it was back in the time of Nero, and some of those in the Roman empire.

What these folks don't understand is that there has never been a time in human history, not under these Caesar's, or Hitler, or Stalin, like that which is coming after the Anti-christ turns upon the Nation of Israel. And look what He says, "there shall be great Tribulation like as was not since the beginning of the world, nor ever shall be." Now, let's go back and take a look at this in Revelation Chapter 11. I always like to point out that throughout Scripture this seven-year period is always broken down into the two halves. In fact, you might even want to look at Chapter 11, verse 2:

**Revelation 11:2,3**

"But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two
months." We're not going to make comment on the verse per se, except to say that the last part of the verse says, "...for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot Forty and two months." How long is that? Three and one-half years.

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." How long is that? Forty-two months or three and one-half years. Now then, come on a little further:

Revelation 11:13

"And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven,"

This is the exact mid-point of the seven years. Then there's going to be a tremendous earthquake in the area of Jerusalem. Now, I think we're all aware that we're already seeing a progressive increase in the number of earthquakes, all around the planet. They started about 1972 or 1973 and they've been increasing ever since. Well, all during this seven years, along with all the other plagues and the wars and famines and pestilence, there's going to be tremendous, physical upheaval. Much, as it was, during the Flood. Tremendous earthquakes, volcanoes, tidal waves, you name it. The old earth is going to come under all of this.

This remnant will be these Jews fleeing (as Jesus said they'd better), out of Jerusalem, at the mid-point, and a lot of things happen. When I teach the Book of Revelation, I try to, first and foremost, delineate between all the events at the opening. And then all the major events at the middle, and all the major events at the end. And then fill in. Because that's the only way you can really comprehend the Book of Revelation. Now, here at the mid-point, there is going to be a lot of things taking place. The two witnesses that have been preaching there for 3 1/2 years, are suddenly going to be killed, laid in the street for three days, and then they are going to be resurrected and taken up so the whole world can see them go.

The Anti-christ is going to move his headquarters down into the Temple in Jerusalem. He'll defile the Temple, and set up his throne room there and his seat of government. Along with that, Satan is going to be cast out of Heaven for the last time, and so he comes down with all his wicked cohorts - now this all takes place in a matter of hours at the mid-point of this seven years. Along with it, is this tremendous earthquake and the fleeing of the remnant of Israel. That remnant we just saw in Matthew 24. Older people, middle age people, working people, young people - men and women, boys
and girls. They'll be fleeing out of Jerusalem to their place of safety. But they go out in unbelief concerning The Messiah.

Now, pick that up here in verse 13. They gave glory to God. I enjoy reading that Jerusalem Post just to see the attitude, and every week there's an article in there by one of the chief Rabbi's of Israel. And listen, they're getting more religious by the week, over there. And so, the Rabbi's are speaking of God and of all of His glory, but who are the still rejecting? The Christ! And so, they will not recognize that Jesus was The Christ. And, you've got the same thing here in Revelation. They're going to be fleeing out of Jerusalem. They're going to give glory to the God of Abraham, but they still don't know The Christ. Then, let's pick them up across in Chapter 12:

**Revelation 12:5,6**

"And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne." It says that she brought forth a man child, that is the Nation of Israel, "...who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron (and, of course, He is! It's coming closer now) and her child was caught up unto God and to his throne," - that was the ascension.

"And the woman fled in the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

We come back again to this remnant of Israel, fleeing Jerusalem, "...where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." Three and one-half years. And it just keeps coming up over and over. So, there's just no way that we can explain away the fact that. This remnant of Israel will finally flee to the mountains (and I think it will be in the mountains in Moab, probably the ancient of city of Petra). But for 3 1/2 years, God will protect them out here even in their unbelief - don't forget that. Now, He's going to protect those remnant Jews who have fled from the area of Jerusalem, much the same way as He did for the Jews under Moses, when they were in the wilderness for 40 years. You all know what happened there. Their shoes and clothes didn't wear out; they never went hungry; they never went thirsty. God provided everything, and so He will again. Now, if you want to pick that up, carry it across to verse 14:

**Revelations 12:14**

"And to the woman (that is this fleeing remnant) were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for
Now, let's go back and cover that statement in verse 14, that she's given the wings of a great eagle. Let's go back to Exodus 19, and I think you're all acquainted, especially if you've seen the movie, "The Ten Commandments," with the fact that Israel did not sprout wings and fly. No Air Force came and picked them up, like some folks like to think they're going to this time. But, how did they leave? Well, they walked. But, look what Exodus says about it. God is speaking to Moses there at Sinai now, and He says:

Exodus 19:4

"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself."

You can really learn something from this. Whenever you see something in Scripture that you can't make sense out of, always go back to the place of first mention. And here it is: "I took you out on eagles wings, but they walked." Again, He's going to take them out as if they were going on eagle's wings.

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LESSON THREE * PART II

RAPTURE: TRIBULATION: SECOND COMING: MILLENIUM

We'll be turning to Matthew 24 again as the kickoff chapter. The only reason we teach, is to help people understand what this Book really says. I have always warned my people, and anyone I teach, to be aware of what's said, as well as what is not said. You can completely adulterate good biblical teaching by simply ignoring portions of Scripture. This is what I've found to be the most flagrant of the things that I read, where they just simply ignore certain portions of Scripture that don't fit their particular teaching. I trust I'm never guilty of doing that. So, let's start back at Matthew 24 where we were last week. But this time we will come into the first half of the chapter. Here, the Twelve disciples have cornered Jesus, more or less, up there on the Mount of Olives. They start out by saying:

Matthew 24:3-5

"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, 'Tell us when shall these thing be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world (I think a better phrase is the "end of the age.")?' And
Jesus answered and said unto them, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ; and shall deceive many."

I'm convinced that Matthew 24 is totally Tribulation ground. I've used this analogy so often in my classes. Most of you have participated in a high school drama or something similar. And you know the weeks of preparation that went in before the curtain ever rose. There was practicing to be done; there were props to be gathered; there was advertising that had to be done. Everything was building up for the night the curtain rose. We are witnessing many things today; an increase in earthquakes; an increase in perplexity; in governmental correction, ungodliness, and wickedness in all places. This is not the Tribulation by any stretch of the imagination. But, it is the preparation. Everything is getting set. The stage is being set for the Anti-christ to sign that treaty with Israel, as we pointed out last week. The curtain goes up and out comes the seven years of Tribulation. So Jesus is referring to those seven years:

Matthew 24:6,7

"And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places."

In other words, not just fault lines we know about, but all over the world. Now, I want to kick off from verse 8. These introductions of the Tribulation are the beginnings of sorrows. Now, if you have a newer translation, I would think someone's Bible uses the word "travail." All these things the opening stages of the Tribulation are simply the beginning of travail. Now, scripturally, the word travail is always associated with child birth. "A woman in travail." The reason Jesus uses this analogy is because the earth, you see, has been under the curse since Genesis 3. For the last 6000 years we've been living under the awful stigma of the curse. But, we know from Scripture that, one day, the curse will be lifted. Jesus uses the analogy of the earth being delivered from the curse. And so the whole purpose of that seven years of Tribulation is to bring the earth to the place of delivery. That's why he uses the travail.

Now, that helps you understand when you study the Book of Revelation, detail by detail, that as these seven years progress, it is just like a young mother approaching child birth. Her labor pains will start gently and rather far apart. But, the closer she comes to the hour of delivery the more intense the pain and the faster they come. And that's exactly the way the Tribulation will unfold. As we get to the end of that last three and one-half years the plagues are going to get so awful; cosmic disturbance will be so awful; death is going to be just running rampant. It's going to be one thing
right after another, until Christ appears and that, of course, is the delivery. So, all of these things are the beginning of sorrows. Let's go back to Revelation. Like I said, this is just a brief overview. I'm in a hurry to get back to Genesis as I'm sure most of you are. But, on the other hand, I don't want to cut this short and leave anyone hanging by a thread. Now, Revelation Chapter 14.

We know as we approach the final days of this seven-year period, the Anti-christ, now ruling from the Temple in Jerusalem, will put out a call to all the nations of the world. He will tell them to send their armies to the Middle East. And I look at that, as primarily the final effort to get rid of the Jewish problem. And he is going to simply ask the world to come and obliterate the Nation of Israel. And, of course, it's going to end up in a battle against Israel's Christ. But I think they are going to primarily gather to get rid of the Jews. And then, just when it seems like the Nation of Israel is doomed, Christ returns from Heaven. Let's pick it up now from Scripture in Revelation 14, and it's the battle of Armageddon.

We even see the word Armageddon used quite often by the news media. Although they don't really know what they are talking about. But, it is a Scriptural term. Armageddon simply comes from a village by the name of Megiddo. If you take a trip to Israel, more than likely the tour bus will take you right around the base of Mount Megiddo. It's a place where city after city has been destroyed. And you know how they have done over there throughout history. When a city is destroyed, they just level the rubble, and build another one. Another enemy comes in and destroys it, burns it; they level off again and build another. So, all over the Middle East are these mounds, which are called 'tels.' They are cities that have been rebuilt many times in the same location without hauling away the debris. In fact, the city of Jerusalem is one. When you walk on the streets of Jerusalem today, if you've got a good guide, he will probably tell you that the streets of Jerusalem, on which Jesus walked, are several feet below where you are walking today.

Because Jerusalem has been destroyed, rebuilt, destroyed and rebuilt. Megiddo was one of those. It was just an ideal place to build a city in ancient times - it was a good defensible place. It had good food production, and water. So, naturally, it made a good place to build a city. So, Megiddo sits right on the edge of the plain of Esdraelon, which is just as flat as the floor of this building. It's several square miles of open area. And the armies of the ancients fought battle after battle on that plain. And so, all these nations of the world will be sending their armies to that area and, I think, by a Sovereign act of God, they're going to get packed in to that valley; into that very huge, flat plain.

Revelation 14:14-19
"And I looked and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle." Whenever you think of farming nomenclature, what does a sickle refer to? A harvest; it's the clipping of the fruit or whatever.

"And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, 'Trust in thy sickle and reap, for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the Earth is ripe.'" Now, the Greek actually is a little stronger word, it's more than ripe, it's almost past harvest time.

"So he that sat on the cloud, thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." In other words, the Sovereign God is now coming into the picture:

"And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also having a sharp sickle. And he came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, 'Thrust in thy sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.' And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God."

Remember we're talking in an analogy here. The people of the Earth that are still remaining (the armies, etc.), are being gathered just like a husbandman would gather his grapes. We have to keep this back in the setting in which Jesus is talking, or the setting in which the Scriptures were written, when they still gathered the grapes and put them into a huge wine vat. How did they press the juice? They walked on them. And, they would just simply walk and walk and walk, until the juice would just finally find it's way out and be drained on the bottom. Then they would just catch it in a wine vat. Alright, now this is the analogy. God is harvesting the men, the people of the World, into His wine vat. Most of them are going to be congregating in the valley of Esdraelon or Megiddo.

Revelation 14:19

"And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God."

Oh, not a big rock winepress, hewn out. Not a cement one; not an oaken one; but which one? The wrath of God! Do you see?! We are so programmed, and rightly so, that God is a God of love, mercy, and Grace; and, indeed, He has been. But, the Scripture literally screams at us that this will not always be the case. There's coming a day when God is going to say, "Enough!" - even as He did with Sodom and
Gomorrah and the Noahic flood. And so, He says, "**Enough!**" and He gathers them into this great wine vat, and it's the wrath of God. And then verse 20:

**Revelation 14:20**

"And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

"**And the wine press was trodden without the city,**" In other words, northeast of Jerusalem. "**And blood came out of the wine press, even unto the horses' bridles by the space of a thousand six hundred furlongs,**" that's about 180 miles. Now, a lot of people scoff at this. They say, "Well, how in the world can such a thing be?" Well, fortunately, since we're not taking this detail by detail, we can jump in on another little aspect of all this and that would be in Chapter 16 of Revelation, verse 21. The final plague that falls upon mankind, as we see it here. I think this plague will be associated with this battle of Armageddon.

Let us picture the city of Jerusalem, the Mediterranean Sea, the valley of Esdraelon, and all the way up to Mt. Carmel that comes in over by the port city of Hiffa. In this great flat valley, the armies of the world are seemingly going to be brought in from every direction, like I said a little while ago, by a **Sovereign act of God.** They're going to pack them in. Almost senselessly. No great general would ever do that... **but they will!** As they are packed into that valley, the last of the plagues (the final bowl judgment), will begin. Now, read Chapter 16:21: "...**and there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone, that is every hailstone, the weight of a talent** (or if you've got a margin - that's 100 pounds)." Now, we talk about golf ball sized hail, and maybe softball sized, and you know what that can do. It can knock out car windows, or go through house roofs. And they are still only about two or three pounds. Can you imagine hailstones weighing 100 pounds? They will just crush everything they hit. But the Middle East is hot. How long will those hailstones remain as ice...? Not very long.

And so, I look at this river of blood as deep as horses' bridles as very literal because, you see, with those millions of men packed into that valley, crushed under these hundred pound hailstones, which will immediately begin to melt, what have you got? **You've got a veritable river of blood!** Now, lest you tell me I'm stretching the point, I remember reading that after the battle of Wake Island, our marines had to go in on the beaches and I think we lost something like 7,000 men. The Pacific Ocean was **red,** as much as two or three miles out from shore. Just from 7,000 casualties. I know that's a lot of precious people, but here we're going to have millions. **And then with the hundred pound hailstones, indeed, it will be a river of blood running for**
180 lengths. Now, I always like to go back and tie in the Old Testament as well as the New. Let's get this same picture from Isaiah. Let's go to Isaiah Chapter 63. There's a lot of people who don't like to read the Book of Revelation - they say it's of no account, and there's no use bothering with it because you can't understand it anyway. Well, we'll just go back and see what the Old Testament says, cause it says basically the same thing:

*Isaiah 63:1,2*

"Who is this that cometh from Edom (Edom is southeast of Jerusalem), with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speaketh in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore (the prophet asked), are thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?" Use your imagination? You get somebody in there barefoot, and they trample that winefat. After a few hours, they're going to be covered with grape juice from head to foot.

*Isaiah 63:3,4*

"I have trodden the winepress alone (this is the coming Christ) and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger,..." Now, remember he's not talking about the blood of Calvary here. He's talking about the blood of the wrath that is poured out on his victims. And he said, "I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled (or splattered is what the Hebrew word says) upon my garments and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come."

That's the Second Coming of Christ. If you'll go back to Revelation once again, we'll get a different view of it. It is not so much in wrath and judgment upon the gathered armies of the Anti-christ. In Revelation Chapter 19, we see Him coming in His glory - His power. **And never lose sight of the fact that after we have been taken out at the end of the Church Age, it will be before the Tribulation begins.** And again, someone asked me during the last lesson, "Are you sure we don't go into the Tribulation?" I'm sure!

I maintain there is no way that the Church can go into the Tribulation for, primarily , one reason. When God began to deal with the Gentiles, the first thing the Apostle Paul made clear was, you are not under Law, you are under Grace. And I've always maintained you cannot mix them. I have already pointed out that when the Tribulation begins, Israel will be back under the Law, and God's premise still stands, you cannot mix Law and Grace. And so, in order for God to deal with Israel under the Law, the Church has to get out of the way. And I maintain that is probably my best argument,
as to why will not go into the Tribulation. We have to be out! Several lessons ago, you remember we used the verse in Romans 11:25, that when the fullness of the Gentiles was brought in, then God turns again to the Nation of Israel. That says the same thing - that when the Body of Christ is complete, the last Gentile is saved - God takes it out and He picks up where He left off with Israel.

Revelation 19:11a,12

"And I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse;..." "...And his eyes were as a flame of fire and on his head were many crowns and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself" "And his eyes were as a flame of fire and on his head were many crowns and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself"

There was a White Horse back in Chapter 6, but that White Horse was the fake christ, the counterfeit christ, the Anti-christ. But, here we've got the real thing. "And I saw a white horse and he that sat upon him was called,..." and here are the names of deity, capitalized, "Faithful and True, and in righteousness He does judge and make war." "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood", This, I think, is the reference to His own blood, the shed blood of Calvary. "And His name is called the Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven, followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword." You always have to be careful when you study Revelation, because it is always in symbolic language, but every symbolism has a literal truth. Go back with me to Hebrews Chapter 4 because I don't want you to picture Christ coming with an old iron Roman sword between his teeth.

The sword is something else in Scripture. Hebrews Chapter 4, verse 12 and most of you know, at least partly, from memory, Verse 12: "For the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword." So what's the sword? His Word! Oh, when He spoke at creation, what happened? The universe came into being. When He had everything all prepared, He brought that dust from the ground and He spoke to it, then what happened? Adam appeared. And so, it's been all through Scripture; everything that God does, is done with the spoken Word.

We had an interesting discussion in our class last night. **Faith cometh by, how? By hearing!** But we cannot hear until God speaks the Word. And it's kind of a hard concept for a lot of people to understand, but I try to make it as simple as I can. For example: When did Abram leave Ur of the Chaldees? When God spoke the Word and said to leave Ur. And Abraham left, and what did God call that? Faith! He told Noah to do what? Build an ark. What did Noah do? He built it. That was faith! Then along came Moses, and God gave to Moses the Law. Moses brought it down off the mountain and he said to Israel, "...thus saith the Lord." And what did they do? They
believed it. And so all the way up through Scripture, when God speaks, that's when He expects us to believe it. In other words, did Noah jump the gun and start building his ark 6 months before God told him to? No, he waited until God said it.

And so it is, in the Age of Grace. God has now told us today, to believe that Christ died for our sins; that He was buried; and that He rose again from the dead. As soon as God spoke it, what did He expect man to do? Believe it! And that's where faith comes in. But you can't believe something until God speaks it. Always remember it's the Word of God that makes things happen. Verse 12 again:

**Hebrews 4:12**

"The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner."

**Revelation 19:15**

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword," At the Word that He speaks, and as he speaks, millions of troops gathered there in the Battle of Armageddon, will be zapped; they'll be all done. Satan won't have a particle of power left. It's going to be all over. And then read on: "...that with it he should smite the nations:..." as they are represented there in Armageddon.

Are all the areas of the world going to come under these judgments? Absolutely. It is mainly the time of God dealing with Israel, but the whole planet will come under this. Everything. There again, you have to understand that Noah's flood was universal, and Jesus says in His earthly ministry, that as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be at the coming of the Son of Man. So we have that same application that it's world-wide, and when He comes, even though it's to the Middle East, yet the whole planet will come under this judgment. Alright, reading on: "and He shall rule them with a rod of iron:" That sounds like a cruel term, but it isn't meant to be cruel, it means **absolute. When He sets up His kingdom, He is going to rule with absolute power.** There'll be no monkey business, no corruption, no bribery, no disobedience. It's going to be absolute righteous rule. So don't let that term "rod of iron" scare you. "And he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Now, verse 16. I love it. This is the God we serve. We don't have to shrink from anybody, because look what He is:

**Revelations 19:16**
"And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

You can't add anything to that, can you? That is the epitome of His power, and it's coming. And we're going to be part of it if we have trusted the Gospel. And we're going to rule, Paul says, and reign with Him. The Book of Revelation says the same thing. We're going to reign with Him 1,000 years on this earth. Many people rebel at that. Again, going back to the little booklet I read last night: this author maintained that we were going to come to the Second Coming, then Christ comes, and He takes us to Heaven, and then it's all over. Well, they have to throw away half The Bible to teach something like that. We know that when He comes, He's going to be KING OF KINGS and Lord of Lords, and we're going to rule and reign with Him!
LESSON THREE * PART III

RAPTURE: TRIBULATION: SECOND COMING: MILLENNIUM

We'll turn to Zechariah Chapter 14 and we're going to continue on now with our timeline. The last lesson we saw the return of Christ in glory - the "...KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." Not to just go into Heaven and eternity, but to set up the earthly kingdom that's been promised to Israel since day one. So, I'd like to have you turn with me to Zechariah Chapter 14, where we have yet another picture of the return of Christ, and we might as well start at verse 1. I don't like to jump in on a verse if I don't have to:

Zechariah 14:1-4a

"Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle;..."

Now, there you have that picture we described in the last lesson, how that the Antichrist will bring all of the armies of the world there to the Middle East. Mainly to obliterate the Nation of Israel.

"And the city shall be taken (Jerusalem) and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." In other words, when it looks like there's no hope, let's read the next verse...

"Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle."

And that's as we saw in our last lesson - how that He reaps the nations of the world. And He destroys them with the word of His mouth. Verse 4 - and this doesn't sound like His coming to take the believer and end everything, then take us to Heaven, does it?

"And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east,..."

That is such a graphic description that there's no mistaking that it is the literal Mount of Olives in literal Jerusalem. Let's go back to Acts Chapter 1, because I just want everyone to see that everything that I say, I try to tie to the Scripture. Now, this is after His 40 days; after His Resurrection, and He has been with the 11. Judas, of
course, is off the scene, and they have not yet put in his replacement. And so the 11 are assembled with Him. Verse 4:

**Acts 1:4-6**

"And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

I know we touched on these verses several lessons ago, but sometimes it bears repeating. Is Jesus going to restore the kingdom once again to Israel? You remember, I always ask the question, "Why did they ask this question?" Well you've got to go back to Matthew and maybe we can take the time to do that.

**Matthew 19:27,28**

"Then answered Peter" and said unto him, (this is during His earthly ministry and all 12 are with Him) 'Behold we have forsaken all (their fishing nets and their families), and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" Now, he's not talking about Salvation. We know from Chapter 12 that they had that. He's wondering what more is in it for him and that's so human. And Jesus doesn't upbraid them for that kind of a question. He answers it very specifically.

"And Jesus said unto them, verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me (referring to the 11), in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory,..." What does the word `regeneration' mean? Well, it means made over to what it was in the beginning. In other words, if you have a storage battery and it runs down, what do you have to do? You have to generate it to return it to its original condition. Well, this old planet is going to undergo the same thing as we pointed out last week, as a result of all the cataclysmic action of the Tribulation. The planet earth is actually going to be delivered from the curse and be like it was in the Garden of Eden. It will be beautiful, and it will not have much water area. It will be mostly land mass. Probably not many arid or mountainous areas; it's just going to be totally habitable and productive. That's the regeneration he's speaking of. And then, he'll be sitting in the throne of his glory, there at Jerusalem, on the throne of David.

Observe what the Twelve have got to look forward to. Read on in that verse: "ye also (the Twelve, and not Judas that's why Matthias has to take his place in Acts Chapter 1) shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Now isn't that plain English? You can't enlarge on that. You can't spiritualize it. It's just plain
English. These twelve men, when the Kingdom is set up, will rule the 12 tribes of
Israel. Now then, if you'll come back to Acts Chapter 1 for just a second, you'll see
why the Twelve are all hung up on the kingdom. Because for 40 days, it says, Jesus
had been talking to them about aspects of the Kingdom, and you remember the
promise that they would be ruling the 12 tribes. So now verse 7:

Acts 1:7

"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."

Always remember, NEVER in the Old Testament, NEVER in the
Gospels, NEVER even here in the Book of Acts, is there a specific indication of the
Church Age. Now Jesus knew it, from His Deity side. He knew Israel was going to go
back into a dispersion. He knew that He was going to turn to the Gentiles, but He
never indicated it. Always watch for that as you study the Gospels or the Old
Testament, that there's not a hint of this 1900 years or so, of what we call the Church
Age. And even here, He could have told them they were going to die, and there would
be 1900 years or so, and He, would turn to the Gentiles. Then he would return and
set up his Kingdom, but He doesn't tell them that. And Peter never catches on, as I've
pointed out before. As Peter begins to preach here in the early chapters of Acts, all he
can see is that God is going to fulfill the promises made to Israel, and it would be
coming in short order. But, that was not to be. We should go on further in the Book of
Acts, but we won't for now. If you will come back to Zechariah, because you all know
the verses in Acts, where He ascended; and what did the angel say? "This same Jesus
that you have seen go into heaven, in like manner shall come again." Well, where
were they standing? On the Mount of Olives.

Zechariah 14:4

"His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem
on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east
and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; And half of the mountain
shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."

There is going to be a split in the Mount of Olives, so that there will be a river flowing
from the Mediterranean, through Jerusalem, and out to the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea
will no longer be dead, but it's going to come alive. Now, all of this is on the physical
earth. Before we turn away from Zechariah, read verse 8:

Zechariah 14:8,9
"And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea (the Mediterranean), and half of them toward the hinder sea (the Dead Sea); in summer and in winter shall it be."

"And the Lord (Jehovah, The Christ, The Messiah) shall be king over all the earth." Not Heaven! And that's what people can't seem to see. That when he returns to the Mount of Olives, he sets up his rule from Jerusalem. The Nation of Israel will finally enjoy everything that was promised to Abraham back there in Genesis 15. Those of you who have been with me, now, for the last several months will remember, that territory goes all the way from the Mediterranean clear out to the River Euphrates. Then clear down to the Red Sea, out west to the River of Egypt, and back. That's the whole Middle East. That will be the homeland of Israel in the kingdom economy. Verse 9 continuing "...in that day, there shall be one LORD, and his name one." He's going to be "...KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS," over this physical, literal, earthly kingdom. Now, if you'll come back to Isaiah 66 Verse 7:

Isaiah 66:7,8

"Before she travailed (speaking of delivery) she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child (the man child always refers to Christ, The Lord Jesus). who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day?"

Absolutely. After the holocaust, and Tribulation, oh, the beauty of that kingdom is just going to come in short order. "Or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." Now what's that speaking of? Number one; remember we spoke of this remnant fleeing from Jerusalem to the mountains, and God is going to take care of her there for three and one half years? Well now, when the Nation of Israel, which is all that's really left here in this remnant who fled in the middle of the Tribulation, when they see the returning Christ coming as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, that's when this Nation of Israel will experience her Salvation. She will suddenly realize who Jesus really is. Now, before we go all the way back to Zechariah again to pick up the language that makes that so plain, you may want to look at Isaiah 51:3, where He will make the earth, again, like the Garden of Eden. Now, back to Zechariah, because we try to put all these things together and hopefully they are making sense to you.

Zechariah 13:6
"And one shall say unto him, 'what are these Wounds in thine hands?' Then he shall answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'" Now, isn't that obvious, it's just as plain as day. Turn back to:

**Zechariah 12:10**

*And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.'*

So, the Nation of Israel out there for that 3 1/2 years of protection in the wilderness, when they see Him coming, immediately, the whole nation (and remember it's a remnant), seeing who He is, **will believe. The nation will be born in a day.** And now then, the Nation of Israel is ready to come from their mountain hideout, and come back to the land that was promised. Then they will go in as the predominate head nation of the kingdom. Now, I say the head nation. I pick that up from:

**Deuteronomy 28:13**

"And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them..."

That will finally come to fruition, when saved Israel comes into the Kingdom, and they enjoy their King of Kings and Lord of Lords. All right, what about Gentiles? Are they left out of the picture? Well, not at all. Come back with me then to Isaiah once again to Chapter 24 (I hope you are keeping all of this straight). The Lord returns, smites the nations that have gathered around Jerusalem; the earth will suddenly be renovated like the Garden of Eden. The Nation of Israel is saved in a day. They come back up and begin to occupy the land deeded to Abraham way back in Genesis Chapter 15. And now, we are going to pick up the Gentile nations. Because, after all, The Bible is a Book of nations. And it never stops being a Book of nations. The last chapter in the Book of Isaiah, which takes us into eternity, is still dealing with nations:

**Isaiah 24:1-6**

"Behold the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master;" as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him. The land
shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD has spoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish." It won't help to be a billionaire. They won't have enough billions to buy their way out of this one."

"The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoureth the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left."

There is going to be tremendous holocaust, probably a nuclear effect, but the last words of that verse are what I want you to see and remember - "And few men are left." In other words, I've reminded my classes over the years, whenever there has been a tremendous calamity, even Hiroshima, where we dropped the Atom Bomb, they found right under the center of the bomb, survivors. I know that's almost unbelievable. We can have tremendous earthquakes, like the one out in Oakland a few years back, and what did they find? Survivors. And so it will be at the end of this seven years, even though it seems utterly impossible, there will be a few people left all around the planet. From every tongue, tribe, and nation there will be a small percentage of survivors.

Come back now with me to Matthew 25. In the few moments we have left, hopefully I can cover this. The number of survivors will be many. The earth is now populated with nearly 6 billion people. We've done this in some of our other classes by putting it on the black board. If you take 10% of 6 billion people, how many are still left? 600 million according to my arithmetic. And if you want to go 5%, there would still be 300 million. If you want to go 2 1/2 %, you've still got 150 million. There are a lot of people that will survive. You want to remember that during the seven years of Tribulation those 144,000 Jews were preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. Many believed and were martyred but some of them survived. Many of them heard it and rejected it. So now, The Lord's got to deal with it. And here we have it in Matthew 25:

Matthew 25:31-40

"When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:...."

We have already established where that is going to be at Jerusalem.

"And before him shall be gathered all nations: (Plural) and he shall separate them one from the another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:.. And he shall set his sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left."
Remember, we are dealing with an eternal God, in an eternal situation, and nothing is impossible. Nothing. All right, he immediately sorts them. With the sheep representing the believers on the right, and goats representing the unbelievers on the left. Let's go on:

"Then shall the King (see it's capitalized) say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom (do you see that?) prepared for you from the foundation of the world:..."

**Matthew 25:35-38,40**

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, 'Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?'"

"When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And the King (CHRIST) shall say unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'"

Now, who are these," **my brethren**"? The 144,000 Jews who were preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, during the seven years of Tribulation. They went through privation, They went through suffering. Remember they couldn't be killed. And so it was just like it was in Nazi Germany with the Jews. Who were the people who gave refuge to the Jews in Nazi Germany? **Well, the believers, the Christians.** It's the same way here. These people who respond to the message of the 144,000 young Jews become believers. They minister to their physical needs. Now look what happened to the survivors who didn't care, the goats:

**Matthew 25:41-46**

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not."

"Then shall they also answer him, saying, 'Lord (See they called him Lord, but they're unbelievers, they're lost), when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?''"
"Then shall he answer them, saying, 'Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into the life eternal.'"

But their life eternal is going to begin in the Kingdom. I don't have to take you back to John's Gospel Chapter 3; you all know that verse, when he replied to Nicodemus. What did he say? Except a man be born above, or born again, he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Now, that's why he had to have this separation. **There were survivors of the Tribulation, who were still unbelievers, and they could not go into the Kingdom. Therefore you have the setting of Matthew 25. The believer goes in.**

To make a short picture of it, since you've got this large group of Jews, going up to be the Nation of Israel in the kingdom, you've also got a small smattering of Gentiles. Just a few probably, from every nation around the earth, who were part and parcel of these sheep. They then become the seedstock, if I may use that word, of the Gentile nations in the kingdom. So you have all the nations represented; you have nothing but believers going into it. **Christ is The King of Kings and Lord of Lords. You have the Twelve disciples ruling over the 12 Tribes of Israel. And ruling with Christ over the whole Kingdom will be the members of the Body of Christ.**
LESSON THREE * PART IV

RAPTURE: TRIBULATION: SECOND COMING: MILLENNIUM

Once more, as usual, let's go right back to the Scriptures. I think we've had enough for the last several weeks on prophecy and so forth. It gives everyone a little whetting of their appetite. Let's go back and pick up where we left off in Genesis. Let's turn now to Chapter 25 You remember several weeks ago, we left off with Isaac receiving a bride from a far country in Rebekah. And he took her back to his mother's tent, and he loved her; consummated the marriage, and now, of course, the Nation of Israel is on its way. Abraham finally has that son of promise. Ishmael, you remember was not a son of promise. He was a son of the flesh. **But Isaac was the son of promise,** and now he has his wife Rebekah and we're ready to move on. In Chapter 25, there is a strange interlude in the life of Abraham. I can't understand it. But, there are a lot of things I don't understand. But anyway, after Sarah's death, Abraham marries again and her name is Keturah. And it's interesting to note, that ,out of this other wife, Abraham has several more sons. Two or three at least are well known enemies of the off spring of Isaac.

*Genesis 25:1,2*

"Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bear him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian;..."

Remember how many times the Jews had to fight the Midianites. Well, here's where they come from. Some time ago I showed how all the families of the Middle East, the Arabs and the Egyptians, are all inter-related? They all come from Abraham. Let's move on now to verse 5. In spite of these other sons that Abraham had he only had one that he had any reckoning for and that was Isaac:

*Genesis 25:5-7*

"And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country." Here Isaac is being separated from the all the rest.

"And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years." That's 175 years. Remember when we were back here in Genesis, I told you that 5 is the number of Grace in Scripture? Every important figure in Abraham's birthdays that end in 5, are a unique, high point in his life. More than likely, he received the call out of Ur when he was 50; he got the promise of a son
when he was 75; and the son finally came on the scene when he was 100. Now he dies at 175, and everyone of those figures are divisible by the number 5 (a little added interest):

**Genesis 25:8,9a,10,11**

"Then Abraham gave up the ghost and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah (the cave he bought for his wife Sarah): in the field of Ephron... The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife. And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahairoi."

Remember, that even though all these other Arab families have come out of Abraham, or at least his next of kin, yet the only people that are in the line of the Covenant, are Isaac, and later on Jacob and his twelve sons. Now, in verse 12, true to the scriptural format I've pointed out since Genesis 1, there's always the appearance of the natural, or their genealogy, and then the spiritual. First Cain and then Abel. And now, it's first Ishmael and then Isaac. Then there's Esau and Jacob. And so, Saul and David, and when we get up to the finality of Paul, it will be the false christ - the Anti-christ, and the true Christ. Watch for it all through Scripture. Now we come to the genealogy of the spiritual line, Isaac.

**Genesis 25:19**

"And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac: And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram, the sister to Laban the Syrian." Remember that I pointed out that he got a bride from a far country. I didn't like to call them Gentiles just yet, although I guess in reality, they were. They were no longer of the line of Abraham, who now becomes the father of the Nation of Israel.

**Genesis 25:21-23**

"And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children (twins) struggled together within her; and she said, 'If it be so, why am I thus?' And she went to enquire of the LORD. And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb...."
God has all foreknowledge. He knows everything before it happens. Also, I have to feel that He has Sovereign control when He wants to. Even over the children as they are conceived, as it seems to be here. Now the rest of Verse 23:

"...and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger."

Underline that because, I'll admit, for years I had problems with the conniving that Jacob and Rebekah did to beat old Esau out of his birthright. But, you see, it was in God's plan all along, that Jacob should have the birthright and the blessing. Because He foretold it way back here, that the younger would be over the elder.

**Genesis 25:24-26**

"And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them." (Sixty years old, or twenty years after he married her).

**Genesis 25:27,28**

"The boys grew;..." They are two totally different individuals. They are as different as daylight from dark. One is a hairy individual and the other one is smooth skinned. The one is going to be an outdoors man, probably a rough and ruddy type individual. Jacob, I think is going to be more on the effeminate side. Two totally different people, but, God had said from the beginning, that Jacob would be the one that would be used in the Covenant. Now, let's read on. "and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents." As was so often the case with the old patriarchs, I guess it's probably a thorn of trouble in a lot of families, even today, when parents make favorites.

"And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison (in other words to satisfy his carnal appetite): but Rebecca loved Jacob."

Now, can you see the controversy that's going to be in that home. Every time old Esau did something that would irritate Rebekah, Isaac would stick up for him, and vice versa. These are young men now, they are full grown. Esau is already a hunter.

**Genesis 25:29-31**
"And Jacob sod (or was cooking) pottage (soup, or just plain old pinto beans): and Esau came from the field and he was faint...." Why? He was hungry. He was about to drop. He'd probably been hunting all day without a bite to eat. He smelled that bean soup and got so hungry that he was about to pass out.

"And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage, for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom (which means red). And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright."

Now, do you see how the overall plan of God is coming into fruition? God said before they were ever born that Jacob would be the one in the line of the Covenant. He would be the one who would rule over the elder. And so, here it comes to fruition. After Jacob says, sell me thy birthright, Esau comes right back and says:

**Genesis 25:32,33**

"And Esau said, 'Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?' And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright to Jacob."

The first thing you have to qualify back in ancient Israel, is, what was the birthright? Many think it was the estate. That was not the case. That is the blessing. The blessing was the material part of the estate. And to be in the place of the eldest son in Israel, meant that he would receive a double portion of the estate and then the others would get what would be left. So remember, that the **blessing was the material** estate, but the **birthright was a spiritual** thing. Go back all the way to Genesis 3:15. What did that say? That the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head, or crush his head. That was the promise of the Redeemer. And then when you come to Genesis Chapter 12, this seed of the woman is going to come through what line? Through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That was a whole spiritual concept that had to be taken by faith.

Here's where I hope you can get it. **Esau was totally destitute of faith, like Cain.** Esau saw absolutely nothing to be gained in enjoying this spiritual promise. He couldn't have cared less that someone would be born out of his lineage who would bring redemption to Israel and to the world. **But Jacob had a glimpse, maybe not much; but he had a glimpse that there was something to be gained by being in the line of that spiritual birthright.** And the physical, the blessings, which would come later, that, of course, was secondary. But, what I want you to understand is that Esau was destitute of faith and he could have cared less about what these spiritual blessings might entail. Now, go to Hebrews Chapter 12, because you always have to
realize that what the Old Testament doesn't answer completely, most of the time the New Testament does.

_Hebrews 12:16,17_

"Lest there be any fornicator (or immoral person), or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." So, even though he was a favorite son of Isaac, even though he was a great outdoors man, and a hunter, what kind of a person was he morally? He was an immoral person. He was destitute of faith.

"For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing (which of course entailed the physical and the fleshly things): he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

I think there's two ways to look at this and either one, I think, could be correct. Remember when he was crying out to Isaac to go back on his word, and take that blessing away from Jacob and give it to him? And, you remember what the rule was in the ancients? Once something was spoken, it could never be taken back. I think part of the repentance that Esau is pleading for, is Isaac's. "Dad, can't you change your mind? Can't you change the decree?" But Isaac couldn't. Number one, not only was it the Law of the orient, but God had already foreordained that this is the way it was going to be. And secondly, I think Esau, even as much as he thought he now wanted the blessing, didn't care about the birthright. But oh, how he wanted that material blessing. And yet he was so destitute of faith that even though he wept bitter tears, he could never bring himself to come to the place where it would have been a step of faith, rather than just simply just being the hunter of the field.

I don't know if that makes sense to you or not, but anyway, if you'll come back to Genesis for a moment, always remember that God had foreordained; had foretold that Jacob would be the one through whom the spiritual line would continue and not through Esau. **And Esau's whole problem, from start to finish, was that he was destitute of faith.** He could not put any trust in what God said. You know, that's the problem with a lot of people today. They just cannot believe the Word of God. Well, that's not God's fault, and yet they will not, just like Esau, turn around and say, "Yes, I believe it." They will continue on in their unbelief. Alright, let's go on:

_Genesis 25:34_

"Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils (beans); and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau (now watch the language) despised his birthright."
He didn't have any need or desire for it, because it was a spiritual thing that had to be comprehended by faith and he had none. It's the same with people today. They say, "Well I can't understand that Bible. It's just a bunch of Greek to me." You know what their problem is? They're destitute of faith. You would have to take this Book by faith. And I've maintained over the years, and I've seen it over and over again, that as soon as someone comes into a saving knowledge of Christ and believes the Gospel, then God opens their eyes of faith and they take this Book and believe it from cover to cover, no questions asked. Why? Because faith opens our spiritual eyes.

*Genesis 26:1*

"And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar."

Now, this is interesting. You remember what Abraham did back there when he had that beautiful wife, Sarah? Where did he end up? Down in Egypt. Well, he learned a tough lesson down there, and here we've got Isaac coming close to doing the same thing. But Gerar in the Hebrew is a town; like today, one that we would call Lineville, or Bordertown. Because that's where it was. It was on the border between Canaan and Egypt. And so Isaac doesn't go into Egypt, but he gets as close as he can. Now, the lesson of course here, even for us as believers, is there is no way we can straddle the fence. You can't put one foot in the world and one foot in The Lord's business. But here is this good man, Isaac, and he goes down to the Philistine's bordertown of Gerar:

*Genesis 26:2,3a*

"And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of:..." This next verse is why we call this segment of Scripture "promise." God is constantly promising Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob of things to come, if they'll be obedient. So to Isaac He makes the promise.

"Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries,..."

Do you see that? The Arab world thinks they are going to drive Israel into the sea, bless their hearts. I have a heart for the Arab as well as for anybody else. But I'll tell you what, if they only knew their Scripture, they'd quit fighting about it and resign themselves to the will of God, because God has promised that whole area of the Middle East to the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and no one else. So he repeats it to Isaac here in this verse.

*Genesis 26:3b,4*
"...and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father. And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries (and here comes the repeat of the Abrahamic Covenant of Chapter 12) and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed...." That's looking forward to The Messiah, Who would come through the line of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the Nation of Israel.

*Genesis 26:5,6a*

"Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." Abraham was obedient and faithful. That's why Paul lifts him up in Romans as the epitome of a man of faith. He wasn't perfect; he had his downfalls and failures like we all do. But he was a man of faith. When God spoke, Abraham believed: "And Isaac dwelt in Gerar..."

He didn't go into Egypt, but he got as close as he dared. And he does the same identical thing that Abraham did. Now, these guys had beautiful wives, evidently:

*Genesis 26:7,8*

"And the men of the place asked him of his wife and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife, lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon. And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife." They were behaving as only husband and wife would behave there in the Orient, and so old king Abimelech put two and two together, and he thought, "She's not a sister. She's his wife."

*Genesis 26:9-11*

"And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife: and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, 'Because I said, Lest I die for her.' And Abimelech said, 'What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us.' And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, 'He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.'"

*Genesis 26:13-15*

"And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants; and the Philistines envied him." See, people were no different then than they are now.
"For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth."

You know, there in the Middle East, a well was everything, wasn't it? If you didn't have water, you had nothing. And this was one of the favorite ploys of an enemy, to plug their wells, and that's what they were doing now to Isaac.

**Genesis 26:16**

"And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us, for thou art much mightier than we."

And so we find in the coming verses, that Isaac departs and he goes all the way back over to where Abraham had spent a lot of his time. Isaac will spend his time also in that major city, which in the land of Israel today, Beersheba. Those of you who have been to Israel in the last several years, knowing Beersheba is a thriving university town, even though it's out there in the middle of the desert. It's the same Beersheba that we have back here in the Book of Genesis. Well, let's go on in the chapter and pick up at verse 24:

**Genesis 26:24,25**

"And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake. And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants dug a well."

"In other words he settles down:

**Genesis 26:27-30,32**

"And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me (speaking to Abimelech's servants), seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you? And they said, 'We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee;' and we said, 'Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee; That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good...' And he made them a feast, and did eat and drink. And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water." You know what that meant to a Middle Easterner? That was the very staff of life to have water.

**Genesis 26:33-35**
"And he called it Shebah, therefore the name of the city is Beersheba unto this day. And Esau (and remember we're dealing with Isaac and now his two sons, Jacob and Esau) was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite:..." Now remember this is Esau:

"Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah."

Do you see what that says? And why did Esau do it? He was destitute of faith. They had been instructed from day one not to consort with the Canaanites. But old Esau, destitute of faith, a rebel from the beginning, goes out and marries two Canaanite women.