Through the Bible with Les Feldick, Book 30

LESSON ONE * PART I

THE RESURRECTION COMPLETE

I CORINTHIANS 15:35-16:24

I know you are probably getting tired of I Corinthians Chapter 15, but it's such a loaded chapter. So we hope that you take your Bible, and follow along with us. It's still the greatest Book ever written, and once you learn how to separate the Scriptures it becomes so enjoyable. A lot of folks are finding out that when you separate what God said, and what He does with Israel, and what He does for us Gentiles, and completely separate the two; then this Book just becomes so understandable and not all that difficult.

Let's go back where we left off in the last lesson in verse 35. Remember this whole chapter is dealing with resurrection, and also that there is no other religion on the planet which has resurrection as the very basis of their beliefs. This is so unique to Christianity, that the very core of everything that we believe, and everything that The Bible teaches, is based on this doctrine of resurrection. This life does not end at the grave, but rather there is also a life for eternity. The way we can enjoy that eternal existence is that every believer is to experience a Biblical resurrection. And again I have to stress over and over, the word 'resurrection' does not refer to someone who has died and been brought back to life, such as the widow's son, and Lazarus in Christ's earthly ministry. They were not resurrected; they were just simply called back from the dead, and they died again. But resurrection began with The Lord Jesus Himself as He was the first ever to be resurrected. And that means He died, and rose from the dead never again to die, and it was for all eternity. We will see then in these succeeding verses that this is the same eternal life that we experience the moment we have believed the Gospel. Ref. I Corinthians 15:1-4.

I Corinthians 15:35

"But some man will say, 'How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?'"

I had a call recently where a gentlemen asked that same question, "When resurrection happens what are we going to be like? Are we just going to be invisible spirit beings, or are we going to be like angels?" But you see he's not alone, and I'm not faulting him at all. Remember even Paul was also constantly bombarded, "Well how, if we're
going to be resurrected, are we going to exist? What's it going to be like?" Well we are going to be eternally existing in a body, but it's not going to be the same flesh and blood body like we have now; it will be on the same order. I think the best illustration I can give of our resurrected body is The Lord Jesus in His 40 days after His resurrection. So basing that on Scripture let's turn to the Book of Philippians where this same Apostle Paul (and he's the only one that does) gives us a real detailed explanation of resurrection. Now the Old Testament saints believed in resurrection, we know that Job used that expression:

**Job 19:25,26**

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

When David lost the child from Bathsheba as a result of the adultery, he wept and fasted for seven days, but finally came to the realization:

**II Samuel 12:23**

"But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

So David also understood that there was resurrection. But now as Paul just enlarges on all of the questions that people have concerning resurrection, he lays it out so clearly. But here in the Book of Philippians, I just love these two verses in Chapter 3, they are so simple:

**Philippians 3:20,21**

"For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; (remember the Book of Colossians says, `we've already been translated into the kingdom of heaven.\') from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

Do you see how plain that is? So all we really have to take time to study is those 40 days after His resurrection, and before His ascension from the Mount of Olives, and we're going to do that in just a moment. But before we leave Paul's reference to all of this, let's go to the Book of Ephesians Chapter 1, to another couple of verses that I just love to teach because so many hearts have been opened by my simple reading of the verses. I haven't had to comment on these verses, but rather just as I read them it was
if all of a sudden I saw something that I had never seen before, so I do like to read these two verses.

*Ephesians 1:13,14*

"In whom (Christ of verse 12) ye also trusted, (placed your faith) after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: (see the core of eternal life is believing the Gospel) in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest (or down payment) of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

If you analyze that verse, the first thing you should ask is, "**Well I thought I was already redeemed.**" We are, but what part of us is not yet redeemed? The body. It's still prone to the same pain and accident, and sins as the unbeliever. So what is the down payment going to assure? That even this body, this physical body, of which the soul and spirit are a part of, will be redeemed. But at death of course we'll be separated from the body. Just don't forget about that old body, and say, "Well all God's concerned about is soul and spirit. Remember for eternity we have to be a complete entity. I explained this to someone the other day again, and told them to search the Scriptures, "Does any human being have any function as a complete entity, and that's the best word I can find for it, unless he is body, soul, and spirit?" No way, because all three of them are going to have to be brought back together before we can spend eternity in the presence of Christ.

So if we're a believer tonight then the soul and spirit has already been redeemed, absolutely, but the body is still unredeemed, it's still in the flesh, and under the curse. But the very presence of the Holy Spirit in our life as a believer is God's down payment that He's going to complete the whole transaction. He's not going to just redeem the soul and spirit, but rather body, soul, and spirit together. Now in light of that let's turn to Romans Chapter 8 for a moment. And these are another series of beautiful verses. I think that very few people really understand what these verses are talking about. Let's begin at verse 18.

*Romans 8:18-21*

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons (or children, or the born ones) of God. For the creature (creation) was made subject to vanity, (curse) not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope," In other words the moment that the curse fell back in Genesis 3:15, God promised a Redeemer didn't He? Now this is all in reference to that. Now verse 21:
Romans 8:21-23

"Because the creature (creation) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption (curse) into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (In other words all of creation is come under our rule and reign as we are joint-heirs with Christ.) For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, (the bird and animals, trees and so forth) but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, (in other words our soul and spirit are redeemed) even we ourselves groan within ourselves,(we have a lot, but we don't have it all, now we're) waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

When that happens it will complete it, and that's exactly what he was referring to in Ephesians Chapter 1. That as a believer, our soul and spirit has already been redeemed, yet that in itself is just a down payment and that God will complete the transaction, and redeem and give us a new body.

The best way to get a glimpse of that new body is to take a look at Christ in His resurrection experience (those 40 days between His coming out of the tomb, and when He ascended there in Acts Chapter 1). So come back to Luke 24, verse 36 and read about that account. Now we're going to take our time, we're not going to rush through this, because this whole concept of resurrection is the very bulwark of our faith. Not only did Christ die for us, but He arose victoriously over sin, death, Hell, Satan, and all the rest. He is able to impart unto us then, this blessed hope of resurrection. Now verse 36. One of the disciples was missing, so the ten are meeting.

Luke 24:36

"And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, `Peace be unto you.'" Now why did He have to say "Peace"? Well all of a sudden when He appeared right in front of them without benefit of a door or window, then naturally they, being human, were all shook up, probably half scared to death, and He had to settle them down with the word that He alone could use - "Peace be unto you." Now verse 37. But even with those words of comfort:

Luke 24:37,38

"But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. (or ghost) And he said unto them, `Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts?'"

Let's stop there for a moment. Could The Lord Jesus look right through their thinking? Sure He could, and He was seeing all those thoughts of fear. Now you want to
remember although they had been in His company for 3 years they still didn't know He was going to be raised from the dead. Remember what Luke 18:33 and 34 says?

**Luke 18:33-34a**

"And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things:" Why? Because the Scripture says, it was hidden from them Sovereignly. Now it's the same way here in Luke 24. They should have known, we think, but on the other hand let's not blame them because God has providentially hidden a lot of these things from these men until a time that He has ordained that they understand.

**Luke 24:39-41**

"Behold my hands and my feet, (and He showed them to them. Now a ghost doesn't have hands and feet. He's not standing there fluttering in some mist. He is standing there visibly, physically.) that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, 'Have ye here any meat?'" (or food)

Now this is going to be the proof positive. Up until now they still can't believe it's really the same Jesus that they had known a few days before. Now why was this so unbelievable to these people? I think that Isaiah tells us in Chapter 52 why.

**Isaiah 52:14**

"As many were astonied at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:"

So as He suffered that death on the Cross, He was more disfigured than any human being had ever been before. So take that into consideration when these people just can't believe what they're seeing. Because their last view of Christ on the Cross was something that didn't even appear human. But now He stands before them apparently whole with the exception of the wounds.

**Luke 24:42,43**

"And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of a honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them." That's what The Book says. And He ate in full view of these 10 disciples to prove to them now that he was a visible, resurrected Person. And that He had all of the physical attributes of even being able to eat.
Luke 24:44,45

"And he said unto them, 'These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.' (now verse 45. Here is the secret of Biblical understanding even today. What did He do?) Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures."

Then it all fell in place. That, yes, the Son of God must come in flesh, and must suffer, and die, shed His Blood as the supreme sacrifice for men's sin, and then be raised from the dead. Now they understood it all and the whole picture came together. But now I would like for you to come back up to verse 39 where He says:

Luke 24:39

"Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit (or ghost) hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

Now for a moment we need to follow up on that verse by coming all the way back to Genesis Chapter 9 where Noah has just come off the ark, and now God gives some new instructions. Now humans are going to be permitted to kill of living things and eat the meat. But along with that, He's going to put some stipulations. So let's begin with verse 3. God is conversing with Noah:

Genesis 9:3,4

"Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat (food) for you, even as the green herb (which was mandated back in Genesis 1) have I given you all things. But flesh (meat) with the life thereof, which is the blood (now don't forget that fact) thereof, shall ye not eat."

Now we just read the secret. Every thing living in this economy, "The life is in the blood!!" Whether it's in the animal kingdom, or the birds or humans the life is in the blood. So blood is the actual source of life that keeps that creature functioning. Now, with that in mind, let's come back to I Corinthians Chapter 15, and hopefully we can tie this all together. Let's begin with verse 50. Remember that Jesus said back in Luke 24, "Touch Me, handle Me, and see that I am flesh and bone."

I Corinthians 15:50

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."
Now put those two things in your mind. Over here in His resurrection appearance, Jesus said, "Handle me, look at me, see me physically in flesh and bone." What did The Lord leave out? Blood! Now here in this chapter you can see why it had to be only flesh and bone. You see, flesh and blood, as we are now, cannot go into eternity. And even The Lord Himself could not go into eternity with Blood. And so His resurrected body is devoid of Blood. It is flesh and bone. Also remember what the Book of Philippians says:

**Philippians 3:21a**

"Who (Christ) shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body...."

So our new body will be a body of flesh and bone, and that's going to make all the difference in the world. Now we may hit this a little bit in a later lesson, but jump up quickly if you will, in this same Chapter 15 to verse 45, and this will give us another thought. Now if we're going to go into eternity with flesh and bone, and no blood, yet the Book of Genesis tells us that life is in the blood, well, what is going to be the source of life in that eternal body?

**I Corinthians 15:45**

"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; (back there in Genesis when God breathed into him, and gave him the breath of life.) the last Adam (Christ) was made a (life-giving or) quickening spirit."

Now there's the secret. When we see that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom, but rather only flesh and bone then what has to be that life-giving substance that will keep the eternal body functioning? The Spirit. And it will be the Spirit of God Himself. Even now we are indwelt by the presence of the Holy Spirit, but not to the degree it will be in our eternal state. When we come into the eternal state of flesh and bone then the spirit will actually take over the role that the blood now has in our body. Life is in the blood in this physical existence. In the eternal existence life is going to be in the spirit. So this is the teaching that comes out of this great resurrection chapter. I'm amazed that Paul wrote in the beginning of this letter that these believers were carnal and that he couldn't give them meat, but rather milk. But yet at the end of this letter he comes out with the deep doctrine of our whole Christian experience, and that is resurrection. I haven't figured out how all this works yet, but I do know he suddenly shifts gears in this chapter and we get profound doctrines concerning our eternal state, and the resurrection of the dead. Always remember that the very core of our Christian belief is this power of resurrection. First in our salvation as Ephesians 2:1 puts it so plain.
**Ephesians 2:1**

"And you hath he quickened, (made us alive spiritually) who were dead in trespasses and sins:"

And Paul is talking about this life. In so many words we were raised from a dead spiritual existence to an existence that is filled with the Spirit of God, we have that new Divine Nature, we have all of these things that salvation brings working on our behalf, and all of this was unknown until we get to these writings of the Apostle Paul. So when you mull all these things over about our eternal state, the heart of it all is the resurrection.
LESSON ONE * PART II

THE RESURRECTION COMPLETE

I CORINTHIANS 15:35-16:24

We're going to jump right back in where we stopped in our last lesson, so we'll be turning to I Corinthians 15:35, and go on from there.

I Corinthians 15:35

"But some man will say, 'How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?''"

Now in verse 36 Paul is going to come into another concept of resurrection, and that is, before something can live it has to die. And this, again, is a Pauline concept. You just don't find it that much anywhere else in Scripture. We'll go back of course to The Lord's earthly ministry but for the most part as a doctrinal teaching, you do not find it like we do here in the writings of Paul. So he says:

I Corinthians 15:36,37

"Thou fool, (in other words you foolish individual) that which thou sowest is not quickened, (or made alive) except it die. And that which thou sowest, (in agriculture, a grain crop) thou sowest not that body that shall be, but (what shall ye sow?) bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:"

Paul had to make it simple here so that people without a shadow of doubt can get things straight. In other words Paul is saying that when you plant something you don't plant the whole stalk of wheat, but rather the seeds. Now it stands to reason if you're going to plant the seed then you don't expect the seed to suddenly come up above the ground. What's going to come up first? The stalk. Paul is using that as a total illustration of our own resurrection experience.

I Corinthians 15:38

"But God giveth it (this grain) a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body."

Now of course that goes all the way back to Genesis where everything is confined to its own species. There is no such thing as crossing over from one totally different specie into another. Now we know we can hybridize but so far as sowing the seed of
an apple and expecting to get an orange tree, that is just not going to happen. Now Paul say, "It's the same way in the flesh," as we see in verse 39.

I Corinthians 15:39-43

"All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: (in other words that which is out in space, and things that are here on the earth.) but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead, It is sown in corruption; (death) it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:"

Now we'll go back and see what The Lord Jesus said about in His own earthly ministry, and it's a portion that we've used often. So let's go back to John's Gospel Chapter 12 and let's begin with verse 20. And of course this is just shortly before His crucifixion. In fact just a matter of hours. The crowds are already coming into Jerusalem from all over the Roman empire for the feast of Passover. And among that crowd were some Gentiles, some Greeks, and I always like to use the analogy that when we go to the wailing wall we just sort of stand back, and watch the Jews go through all of their rituals and their prayers. We're just outsiders, we're looking at all this. Well I think the same thing was taking place here. As all these Jews were getting ready for their sacrifices, and the feast of Passover there were some inquisitive Gentiles. So they are the Greeks in verse 20.

John 12:20-24

"And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, `Sir, we would see Jesus.' Philip (remembering that Jesus sort rebuffed the Gentiles in earlier experiences) cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. (well what did they tell Him? That there's some Greeks that want to talk with Him. Now look at Jesus' answer.) And Jesus answered them, saying, `The hour is come, (it's a matter of hours before He's on that Cross) that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn (kernel) of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.'" (or grain)

Now He's just simply saying that we, as gardeners or farmers, until we put that seed in the ground, nothing is going to happen. But the moment that seed is put into the
ground and has moisture and sunlight - the first thing that seed has to do is die. It dies, it become corrupt, and out of that death comes the new stem out of which will come wheat, for example, hundreds of coronas. So this is the whole concept throughout all of God's creation. If you're aware of it, everything that you see in nature is constantly screaming the whole fact of resurrection. Every springtime when things began to shoot out of the ground and when you plant your crops and gardens, all of that is a reminder of the resurrection. Now when Jesus said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." What was Jesus referring to? His coming death, burial, and resurrection which was only a few days in the future.

And what Jesus is saying for these Gentiles was that He was not an object of their faith until He had experienced the work of the Cross. I try to stress to people that Christ in His earthly ministry was almost exclusive to the Nation of Israel.

Matthew 15:24

"But he (Jesus) answered and said, 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'"

Oh we know there were a couple of times, but His ministry was only to the Nation of Israel. But after experiencing the death, burial, and resurrection, now the Gospel of Grace can go to the whole human race as the finished work of the Cross is the object of our faith. Now coming back to I Corinthians 15 for just a moment we come down to the place in verse 42:

I Corinthians 15:42

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It (the body that has lived and died) is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:" (and power)

The reason that Paul has been led by the Holy Spirit to make so much of resurrection is that when Christ arose from the dead He exhibited more power than it took when He created the universe. And of course the reason being through His resurrection from the dead, He defeated, totally defeated, all the powers of Satan. He totally settled the sin debt for every human being that has ever lived. Remember the sins of every human being have already been atoned for. When people go to an eternal Hell it won't be God's fault. They just didn't capitalize on the Atonement. They didn't appropriate it. So that's what's going to make Hell so awful. They're suddenly going to realize that they are there because they chose to be. Not because an unfair God sent them there. A fair God has already declared those sins paid for at the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. And so it took all the power that God had at His disposal to raise Christ
from the dead. And that's why it is the very benchmark of our salvation experience. So looking at the text again Paul tells us in verse 42 "that it is sown in corruption." Let's go back for a moment to Romans Chapter 6 and look at that. In this verse it's almost enough to make you smile as it's the same kind of language that is used. It's a different word but it means the same thing.

**Romans 6:5**

"For if (here's the condition) we have been planted (or sown) together in the likeness of his (Christ) death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:"

Well what's it saying? Just as certainly as you plant two kernels of wheat side by side they're both going to come up the same. They're both going to be wheat. If we have been planted in the likeness of Christ's death, then we will be resurrected in Christ's likeness. So as we're planted together we come up in resurrection power together. Never that we become God. I always have to stress that. We will never become God, but we become the very manifestation of His resurrection power. Now come back again to I Corinthians. So we are sown in corruption. In other words, this old body, as soon as it dies, begins to go back to the earth, back to corruption. Now verse 43.

**I Corinthians 15:43**

"It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:"

Oh, as much as we love our loved ones as they lay there in that casket, and we mourn for their passing, yet death is our enemy. I think we all hate death. I hate even to lose an animal, it just tears me up to see an animal die. We hate the death of our loved ones. The unbelievers will never see their loved ones again. But we will. We're going to see them, we're going to know them. I've had a lot of questions from our television audience in that regard. My proof that we are going to know our love ones when we get to eternity is that experience that happened on the Mount of Transfiguration. When Peter, James, and John, and The Lord Jesus were there and suddenly with them was Moses and Elijah. Did the three disciples ask The Lord Jesus, "Who are these fellows?" Did they? No, because they knew, and here these two had lived a couple of thousands years earlier. So that tells me when we get to heaven we're going to recognize our love ones. We're going to know everybody. But nevertheless if we don't live to see the Rapture and have to go the way of death, we have this blessed hope that this body is going to be raised to a new life if we're a believer. And the whole concept of resurrection is just exactly that. That body of flesh has to die, and then be raised in resurrection power.
I Corinthians 15:44

"It is sown a natural body; (that which is born of the flesh) it is raised a spiritual body. (we can't go into eternity with flesh and blood) There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

Even though these two are eons apart, yet they are a lot alike. We are still going to have all the outward features that we have now, and we're going to be spiritual in that we now have eternal life instead of the promise of three score and ten. Now verse 45:

I Corinthians 15:45

"And so it is written, 'The first man Adams was made a living soul; the last Adam (Christ) was made a quickening (or life giving) spirit.'"

Christ never stops being God. I know there are cults that deny the Deity of Christ, but that flies in the face of this Book. This Book says that He was Divine, He was Deity, He was God, and He never gave that up. In fact there's a verse in the Book of Hebrews that implies that even while He was in the womb, He was still God. And He never stopped being God. Now verse 46. It had to be that way because this is one of the rules of God in His manifestation with the human race. **And that is all through Scripture; you have first the natural, and then the spiritual.** Remember first Cain the natural and then Able the spiritual. Then there was Ishmael the natural, and then Isaac the spiritual. Esau the natural, and then Jacob the spiritual. First King Saul the natural, and then King David the spiritual. And it's this way all the way through Scripture to the very end of the Book where we find the appearance of the Anti-christ, the man of sin, the natural, and then the Second Coming of the true Christ, the spiritual. So this is one of the laws of Scriptures.

I Corinthians 15:46-48

"Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual but that which is natural: and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, (The first man was Adam, he was made of the earth he went back to the earth.) earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly."

We are earthy in our make-up although once we become a believer we are heavenly connected and our citizenship is in heaven, but we're still functioning, living, producing, and reproducing as physical earthly beings. Now verse 49:

I Corinthians 15:49
"And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

And this is where faith comes in. We believe it! Not because I can lay it out on a laboratory desk and pick it apart, but rather because this Book says so. We can believe it, we can trust it. It's the eternal Word of God. Now I know there's a lot in the news media about these Bible codes that these mathematicians in Israel are seemingly finding. But even that doesn't tell me anything more than I already knew. This Book is supernaturally put together. Every letter of this Book is in exactly the right place. We were discussing in our Tulsa class, "What is God's greatest controversy against mankind?" Well not man's immorality as much as God hates it, not his drunkenness as much as He hates it, nor stealing, but what does God hate most of all? "UNBELIEF" It just irks God to the core that man refuses to believe what He has said. And that's called FAITH!

In some of our Old Testament characters that was their problem. Esau for example - poor fellow, everybody feels sorry for him that he seemingly got conned out of the birthright and out of the blessing. No he didn't get conned. What was his problem? No faith. He couldn't believe a thing God said. Well for the most part the whole world is that way tonight. Now coming back to the test in I Corinthians 15:50:

**I Corinthians 15:50**

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

Well that's easy enough to understand isn't it? You do not put a spiritual Body such as Christ's resurrected Body back in the tomb. That which goes into the grave is this old physical body which is already corrupt. It's prone to disease, failures, and it's that body of corruption that we bury and place in the ground. But when it comes out of the ground in resurrection power it's going to be a new body fashioned after Christ's glorious Body. Now let's go to Ephesians Chapter 1, and if I don't experience it in this life then I know I will in the next one. And this Paul's prayer on behalf of the believers.

**Ephesians 1:17-20a**

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. And what is the
exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power. Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead,..."
There is probably more on resurrection in this 15th Chapter than the rest of The Bible put together. It's interesting that Paul uses the word "mystery" that is so intrinsic to his writings. For example in verse 51:

*I Corinthians 15:51*

"Behold, I shew you a mystery;..."

This word `mystery' comes from the Greek word `musterion' which simply means `secret.' Those two words can be interchanged throughout Paul's letters when he says, "Behold, I shew you a mystery or secret." And when we speak of secrets we have to look at the Book of Deuteronomy Chapter 29. I like to use this verse especially when there's a reference to Paul's use of the word `mystery.' God in His Sovereignty has every right and reason to keep things secret as long as He wants to keep it secret. But once He reveals it then He expects mankind to believe it. Take it by faith! Another expression for faith is God said it and I believe it! or Taking God at His Word!

*Deuteronomy 29:29*

"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."

Now this was written for the Nation of Israel, but it still shows in the attributes of God that He has the prerogative to keep things secret. For example, look at Ephesians 3:1-9 things only revealed to Paul, and then for the Gospel of Salvation, Romans 16:25, I Corinthians 15:1-4 and Romans 10:9-10 which He kept secret until He revealed it to the Apostle Paul for us, the Body of Christ. For the Rapture of the Church was given only to the Apostle Paul. Look at I Corinthians 15:51-58 and I Thessalonians 4:13-18. And there are many more examples given only to that great apostle for us. Remember God doesn't have to reveal secrets until He's ready. So this is one of the basic things it takes to understand the Word of God. He does not reveal everything all the way up, but rather at the right time. Now let's look for a moment at Luke Chapter 18. And here that is so evident that God actually, with the Twelve disciples, kept things secret from them that they did not understand until He was ready to reveal it. Remember this was at the end of His earthly ministry, just before they went up to Jerusalem.
**Luke 18:31-34**

"Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, `Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.' And they understood none of these things: (Well was The Lord speaking in some foreign language? No. Well why didn't they understand?) and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken." That was one of God's prerogatives to keep things hidden until it's time to reveal it.

As you come back to I Corinthians 15, Paul now says he is going to reveal a secret, or a mystery, which means it has never been revealed before. I can not emphasize this enough. All of these things that were wrapped up in that ball of knowledge, in that whole sphere of doctrines and revelations that have now come to us through this apostle, were for the most part, kept secret in the mind of God until He revealed them to the Apostle Paul. Paul makes reference to the fact that it was to him first that God revealed these things. God had the right to keep it secret. So keep that in mind now, that what He's now going to unveil to Paul had never been alluded to, or hinted at. It has certainly never been spoken, and that is that at a point toward the end of time there will be a group of believers who will not die physically.

**I Corinthians 15:51**

"Behold, I shew you a mystery: (secret) We shall not all sleep, (die physically) but we (remember Paul only writes to believers so he's not including the lost world here) shall all be changed."

That is why I took so much time previously to show that our resurrected body is going to be fashioned after Christ's resurrection body, it's going to be a lot like our physical body, but it's going to be different. It's going to be a spiritual body without blood. It's going to be flesh and bone and going to be activated by the spirit. So Paul says, "there's coming a group of people who will not die physically, but they shall all be changed." And of course Paul writes as though it would happen in his lifetime. And so those of us who adhere to this line of teaching, we speak of it as the imminent coming of Christ for the Church, which means it could be tonight; it may be tomorrow, it may be ten years from now, but we are to expectantly look for it at any time. There is no set prophetic program that must be fulfilled for this event to take place.

Now contrary to the Rapture of the Church you have a completely different event in the "Second Coming" when Christ actually comes to the Mount of Olives (we'll be
looking at this soon) in fulfillment of the second coming that will have prophetic events leading up to it, so by these events there will no doubt when He will be coming to the Mount of Olives. But for the Rapture of the Church there are no prophetic signs, there is nothing to indicate at what day or year that we can expect this to happen. Now let's read on:

_I Corinthians 15:52_

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump for trumpet (singular) shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." We shall be changed from this body of corruption to a body of incorruption in that split second at the trumpet call.

_I Corinthians 15:53_

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal (this body that is prone to death) must put on immortality."

This body we have now must lose the flesh and blood concept, and become flesh and bone, and be activated by the Spirit. Let's talk a little about the trumpet. Let's go back to Revelation Chapter 8, and look at the trumpet. This is the one that people are always throwing up to me. For some reason or other the best of people want to tie the trumpet of God in Paul's teaching concerning the Rapture, with these trumpets in Revelation which will occur about the mid-point of the Tribulation. But let me point out something.

_Revelation 8:2_

"And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given (not the trump of God singular, but rather were given) seven trumpets." (plural)

Now that's a big point I think. These are not the trump of God, these are angelic trumpets. The angels are going to blow these seven trumpets. Now comparing Scripture with Scripture look at Chapter 15 again of I Corinthians. The seven angelic trumpets can no way shape or form, as I understand language, be a part of the trump (singular) of God Himself. In other words God has a trumpet reserved for just this event and this alone "the calling out the Body of Christ." Now the Roman army, I think, used the trumpet to put out commands much like our American calvary used to (when the soldier blew the trumpet the ones in the very far distance would know what the command was). I think it was the same way in the Roman army. When the battle was over and the Romans were victorious, and the generals wanted to let the legionnaires know "we're going home to Italy" then that was the trumpet call that...
every legionnaire could be exulted by. And what a message from that trumpet. "The battle is over, we've won, and we're going home." Every soldier gets excited about going home.

Well you see that's where we are. We are in a battle, and even the press and Congress are finally waking up to the fact that Christianity world-wide is coming under ferocious attacks. Persecution is rampant against Christians, it's become warfare, and it's going to get worse. My what a joy it will be to hear that trumpet call, "The battle is over, come on home, and we're going to be out of here." I believe that with all my heart. We're getting closer and closer to the day when that trumpet call will take us out of this existence and we will suddenly, as Paul says, "be changed." Now in order to get the full picture of all this we have to go over to the corresponding portion in I Thessalonians Chapter 4. This is just an extension of this revelation of this part of the mystery which he now refers to "as being caught up." Now I've had a lot of people try to corner me by saying, "Well Les, the word 'Rapture' isn't in my Bible." Of course it isn't in there, not in the English anyway, but we're going to see in a little bit two words in the Greek that mean the same thing, so what's the big deal.

_I Thessalonians 4:13,14_

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, (died physically) that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, (that's the Gospel that saves you, and it was also given to Paul as a mystery. If we believe the Gospel to the place where God has now imparted salvation. If we believe the Gospel) even so them also which sleep (or have died) in Jesus will God bring with him."

Now verse 14 is another one of those scriptures where Jesus and God are synonymous. It's the same God, the same Jesus. Let's look at that a little more in the Book of Ephesians. We're not going to look at all of them but if I'm not mistaken there are 96 prepositional phases, "In Christ, In Whom, In Him" speaking of Christ Himself in the Book of Ephesians. But we will look at a few of them.

_Ephesians 1:1_

"Paul, and apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesians, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:" 

_Ephesians 1:4a_
"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,..." Do you see what I'm talking about? Over and over you have this prepositional phrase. Let's look at a couple more.

**Ephesians 1:12,13**

"That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted,..."

So all the way through these 6 chapters you have 96 times, if I'm not mistaken, this prepositional phrase which is our position in Christ or the Body of Christ. Now back to I Thessalonians, and let's pick up again with the Rapture of the Church. So those of us who are in Christ, they have been baptized into the Body by the Holy Spirit, not with water but rather by the power of the Spirit. So we are in Christ. And if those kind of people are already dead they will be raised in resurrection power, but that body that's raised in resurrection power is still void of the soul and spirit remember because they separated at physical death. So what does God have to do to get it back into one entity again? Well the soul and spirit of that believer is already in glory, and the body is in the grave. Although it just came to me to tie all this together in II Corinthians Chapter 5.

**II Corinthians 5:6-8**

"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, (while we're living in this tabernacle here on the earth) we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

Now I had someone ask me that not to long ago. "What happens to the believer's soul and spirit at death?" It immediately goes into paradise in heaven right into the presence of The Lord. Now back again to I Thessalonians Chapter 4 and let's look at verse 14 again.

**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." Believers only, and He will bring them from heaven down to the atmosphere. Now verse 15.

**I Thessalonians 4:15,16**
"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain (that's this one group of people He's talking about in I Corinthians 15:51 who have not died, but will be changed in a twinkling of an eye) unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (or go ahead of) them which are asleep. (or have died) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: (not the trumpet of the angels) and the dead in Christ shall rise first:"

Those that must be resurrected are going to be brought out of the tomb wherever they're buried, and reunited then with their soul and spirit which The Lord is bringing with Him. Now verse 17:

**I Thessalonians 4:17a**

"Then (after the resurrected saints have their new body) we which are alive and remain shall be caught up..."

Or another name for caught up is "Raptured." It all means the same thing. So if you don't like to use the word Rapture just say "caught up." Any way you put it we're going to be out of here. If The Lord comes in our lifetime then suddenly we're going to be out of here; whether we're driving down the highway or asleep in bed.

**I Thessalonians 4:17**

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them (the resurrected who have died in Christ) in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Now for a quick comparison of Scripture let's go to the Book of Acts Chapter 1. Here we have The Lord and the eleven disciples on the Mount of Olives. It's the same Mount of Olives that we visit every time we go to Jerusalem. The Lord's 40 days of resurrection experience has now come to an end. Now verse 9:

**Acts 1:9-11**

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel: Which also said, 'Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.'"
Now to put it in a lighter vain, I always say, "He went head first, but He's going to come back feet first." Now let's look at Zechariah Chapter 14 and compare the language. Paul says, "Christ is only going to come to the air, the atmosphere as we meet Him in the air." But here in this chapter in verse 4 it's just like Chapter 1 of Acts.

**Zechariah 14:4**

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

And that's the difference between the Rapture of the Church, and the Second coming of Christ. They are exactly 7 years apart.
LESSON ONE * PART IV

THE RESURRECTION COMPLETE

I CORINTHIANS 15:35-16:24

Well hopefully we'll finish I Corinthians in this lesson, I'm certainly going to try. So turn again to Chapter 15, and we're going to take a look at this revelation of a secret which was part of that whole revealed body of truth which Paul refers to as the mystery. Before we look at I Corinthians let's look for a moment at Romans Chapter 16. I want you to see that this is not just a flippant use of the word, for Paul uses it throughout his writings. And simply because the Holy Spirit has revealed to this man doctrines and truths that no one else ever dreamed would happen. They're not in the Old Testament, or in Christ's ministry, or in Peter's activity in the Book of Acts, but rather it's a whole new revelation which builds on everything that went before. And that's why I teach the Old Testament and the Four Gospels just as much as I do the Pauline letters. Nevertheless this is something that has come out of every thing that has gone before, but it was never prophesied. Now let's look at verse 25:

Romans 16:25

"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, (the one by which you are saved in I Corinthians 15:1-4) and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.

Remember in our last lesson we looked at Deuteronomy 29:29:

Deuteronomy 29:29

"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God:"

He is a God who can keep things secret as long as He cares to, and this whole volume of revealed truths was one of those. God just did not reveal it, not even a hint of the Church age, and what we call the Rapture in any of the prophecies, or His earthly ministry. And that's a good way that we can divide the Scriptures. The Old Testament was based on the prophetic word. Everything was based on what God said, "I Will, I Will, I Will," That was prophecy! And all sitting on that Abrahamic Covenant. So Christ came in fulfillment of that Covenant. He came only to the Nation of Israel (Matthew 15:24) as their Messiah, and their King, and we've been teaching that over and over. But Israel rejected it, (Acts 28:27-28) they didn't believe Who He said He was. Now God's going to turn to the rest of the world by putting the Nation of Israel
into a dispersion, and not using the Jew with the exception of this one man, the Apostle Paul who was a Jew, a Pharisee of the Pharisees of the tribe of Benjamin. So this Jew now has revealed to him and him only these mysteries, these secrets, and now He can take it to the Gentile world and reveal it.

Now in our time line, we always start back with Adam, and then 2000 years later we have the call of Abraham. That brought about the Nation of Israel which was pulled off the main river of humanity. But the Nation of Israel, instructed and taught, and nurtured through the Old Testament under the Law and prophecies, rejected Him, and they were dispersed then back into that main stream of humanity from which they were called in the first place. Remember God had intended for the Nation of Israel to evangelize the world, but when he sent them into dispersion, in the last chapter of Acts He put them into a place of spiritual blindness. Paul tells us now there is no difference between Jew and Gentiles. Now for salvation all must believe the Gospel that was given Paul by the crucified, risen Lord, the Gospel we find in I Corinthians 15:1-4. When this dispersion took place about 70 AD the Jews lost the Temple, and the city of Jerusalem, and their homeland. They were dispersed into every nation on earth.

But about 30 years before this dispersion took place, about 40 AD, the Apostle Paul was called by God, and he now is going to be progenitor of this Gospel of Grace and the calling out of the Gentile Body of Christ. Now when this Body of Christ, which is made up of Jews and Gentiles, is complete, and the last one has been saved, that's when we have this meeting in the air (Rapture) that we talked about in the last lesson. This is when the soul and spirit of believers that have been in the presence of Christ after they died, are brought to the atmosphere by God Himself in the Person of Christ, and their bodies will be resurrected to be reunited with their soul and spirit in the air. And then in the next instance we believers who are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet The Lord in the air.

Then after that has taken place, the final seven years are ushered in and are associated only with the prophecies concerning the Nation of Israel, which in 1948 became a nation again. We call that period the final seven years or the Tribulation. Of course the ending of the Tribulation will bring about the Second Coming of Christ to the earth as we saw in the closing moments of the last lesson. This is when Christ will stand with His feet on the Mount of Olives. Now just to show the graphic difference again between the Rapture and the Second Coming let's go back to Matthew Chapter 24. Now there are many other references to the Second Coming, but I'm going to use this passage as the prime example of how everything that the Old Testament, and Jesus and the Four Gospel accounts refer to in Christ's coming is never this Rapture of the Church, this meeting in the air. That is something that the rest of The
Bible knew nothing about. It was only a secret revealed by, and to the Apostle Paul.

Now all these other references to the end time events are directed to the Second Coming. When Christ will come and stand in that day on the Mount of Olives. All right now let's just look at Matthew Chapter 24 for an example. At this time the Twelve disciples are still intact.

Matthew 24:1-3

"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, ‘See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.’ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives the disciples came unto him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?’" (or age)

Jesus gives them the answer, and He comes down through these series of verses and none of this is associated with the Church one iota. This is all instructions for the Nation of Israel concerning the Second Coming of Christ. So when I teach Matthew Chapter 24 this is why I stress this over and over. Matthew 24 is Tribulation ground. This is not for you and I in the Church age. This is prophecy for those last 7 years. We're seeing the stage set now leading up to the Tribulation when there will be false teachers and there's going to wars and rumors of war, and granted we're seeing all this, but thank goodness we are certainly not in the Tribulation.

Now I was reading a book the other night by a dear old Bible teacher who had gone on to be with The Lord several years ago. And he was writing shortly after he had been at a prophecy conference, and he had been conversing with another well-known prophecy expert. As they saw the falling apart of western civilization and the apostasy of the Church, they thought that we were so close to the Rapture because they were seeing all the signs that were introducing the Tribulation. Well I read some of those things to Iris, and said, "Well what would those fellows say if they were alive today?"
Stop and think about it. Look how far we have come to Tribulation ground in the last 20 years. But we're not there yet, we're not in the Tribulation by any stretch of the imagination. But everything is bringing us closer.

I had a banker friend tell me recently that every new technology is just bringing the prophecies that much closer, because the whole Book of Revelation is based on our tremendous technology. So it stands to reason that the Anti-christ could never be able to put his thumb on every human being on earth without the computer. But with the computer he'll be able to, but I'm not saying that he will. But if the Anti-christ wants
to pull up some data on an individual anywhere then all he has to do is request it and there it will be. And he'll have every thing on that individual that he will want to know. Why? Technology.

Even in our ministry we're on the Internet, but the more I hear about it, it just scares the socks off me, because there's no place to hide. They can find anybody, and if they someday want to find us it will be no problem for them. There will be no place to hide. So what I want you to see in this lesson is that everything that was spoken in the Old Testament prophets; which was spoken by Jesus, and Peter, were all directed to the Nation of Israel, and His Second Coming. **Not to the Church or the Rapture of the Church!** So keep that in mind as we study even in these closing moments of this Book of I Corinthians. So let's come back to I Corinthians and we find Paul revealing one of the mysteries that was part of that whole volume of truth that he puts in one category. And that category is "**The revelation of the mysteries.**"

Now there were all kinds of mysteries revealed to Paul, and they were unknown to the rest of Scripture. For example, that Jews and Gentiles would be brought into the Body of Christ on equal ground. Now I pay all respect to Israel's Covenant position, as the favorite nation of God. I know they are where they are only because of that. But we must never lose sight that for a Jew today to experience salvation, he's on the same level playing field that we as Gentiles are on. The Jew today is not in a place of special privilege when it come to his personal salvation. He's a sinner who needs salvation. just a much as a Gentile. But in the great scheme of things they have to be in the land of Israel for the culmination of the Prophetic Scripture.

I had a young Jewish listener out in California tell me once, "**Now Les, stop and think. I know that you would just love for all of us Jews to get saved according to what you teach, but if all Jews would get saved then we would all leave with you at the Rapture, and there would be nobody here to fulfill prophecy.**" I told him that I hadn't thought of it that way. But you know what he said is so true. Israel has to be in the land at the end-time scenario for that final 7 years. She has no choice because all of prophecy is directed to that. Well you take them off the scene and God's Word would fall apart, and we know God's not going to let that happen. I was reading one of my little books the other day and had made the point that, yes, we love the Arabs, and Palestinians on God's behalf just as much as anyone else. But it's too bad that they can't understand that Scripturally they are not in the line of the Covenant promises given to Abraham. That was only for the Jew. If they think they're going to drive the Jew into the sea, then they'll have to deal with God first. Remember God has said that they are not going to disappear. They're going to be there for the end-time.

Now back to I Corinthians 15: 54. I think we've touched enough on the Rapture for now. All I want you to remember is that, "**The Rapture is not prophetically**
announced. **We don't know when it will happen, there is nothing to indicate that it's going to be today, tomorrow or next year.** But as the world scene is being fulfilled for that final 7 years, and the Second Coming, we have to be ready at least 7 years ahead of His Second Coming. So as you see all the signs of the world getting ready for the Second Coming just remind yourself, **"Hey, we're going to leave 7 years ahead of that so we'd better be ready."** Now verse 54. Here Paul continues on dealing with putting in the grave this corruptible, and resurrecting the incorruptible.

*I Corinthians 15:54-56*

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal (this old body we have now) shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, `Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting?' (I think I said it just a lesson or so back that we all hate death.) O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; (that's why we hate it. Death and sin are almost synonymous.) and the strength of sin is the law.'" It was the Law that showed sin to be what it really is. Then verse 57:

*I Corinthians 15:57*

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

There is no other way to gain victory over sin and death. Religion won't do it, good works won't do it, joining a church won't do it. It has to be by virtue of this resurrection power of the Gospel that does it. Now verse 58, and he begins this verse with the word **"Therefore,"** Now Paul is winding this letter down. So he can say "Therefore" in light of all that he has written in these previous 15 chapters, but especially with this hope of the believers. Before we read this verse I would like to show you a verse in Titus to tie it all together. This verse shows that the Rapture is a reality, and it will happen before the horrors of the Tribulation comes. Verse 13 says it all, but let's start at verse 11.

*Titus 2:11-13*

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath (already) appeared to all men. (no one is ever going to say, `But Lord I never heard.' For this Grace is) **Teaching us that,** denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world: **(and we are to be) Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."**
When someone asks that you to show them in The Bible that Jesus ever claimed to be God well here's one reference right here, and there are many others. But look at this verse. If this isn't giving Deity to Christ then I don't know what is. That we are to be looking for that blessed hope, and what's the blessed hope? The glorious appearing of the great God, the God of Creation, the God of this Book, and Who is He? Our Saviour Jesus Christ! Now back to I Corinthians 15:58:

I Corinthians 15:58

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

We may not reap the rewards of our labor in this life. We may go to the grave as poor as church mice, but don't let that discourage you. God hasn't promised that, "Just because we're believers we're going to drive cadillacs, and live in mansions." No way, but God has promised that He is keeping a record of our earthly activities. Then one day we're going to cash in on the rewards in glory, and remember that Paul is always teaching that. We are to run the race for rewards. Now go to Chapter 16 to wind up I Corinthians. Here Paul is going to deal with something totally different from resurrection. Here he is going to come down to the nitty gritty of, "How we're to give." Many people are hung up on the legal system of tithing. I've got nothing against giving. But you are not under the tithe. Now I know this is going to ruffle a few feathers, but remember the tithe was part of the Law. Tithing was given only to the tribe of Levi. I dare say if we could ask some of our Jewish friends whether they teach tithing today, I'd be very surprised if they would say yes. Because they, too, do not know who the Levites are so I just have to doubt that good Jewish people still tithe. Always remember that Paul never says tithe, because that was part of the Law, but that doesn't say that God doesn't expect you to give. Let's look how Paul puts it.

I Corinthians 16:1a

"Now concerning the collection (of money) for the saints,..."

Paul was always instructed to remember the poor saints at Jerusalem. Why? They had cashed in land and everything they had and brought the money to the feet of the Twelve disciples. It all went into a common kitty back there in Acts Chapters 2 and 3 in light of the Kingdom. But the Kingdom didn't come because the Jews had rejected it. So what happened to these poor Jewish saints? They had to live off the kitty and I imagine it was a pretty good existence for a while. But God took care of them through Paul's Gentile converts, and the money was taken back to Jerusalem for them. Now continuing on:
I Corinthians 16:1,2

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, (Jewish saints at Jerusalem) as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye (at Corinth). Upon the first day of the week (not on the seventh day Sabbath. Why first day of the week? Resurrection day!) let every one of you lay by him in store, (as a tithe? No, but rather) as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

Now that's one of the beauties of the Christian life, that's the beauty of God's Grace. He has left us with that free will. We can give as much as we want to, but God is not putting the thumb on our head, and saying, "You will give 10%! Now that's a guideline, and I'll always say that. God more or less lets it be known that 10% is a guideline for giving. But God's not going to zap you if you don't give 10%. Now you may lose some reward in glory, but you are under no mandate under Paul's teaching to give a set amount. That's up to you as a believer as God has prospered you. And God has enough respect for your free will as a believer that you're going to give as much as you can.

Paul told these believers at Corinth to take this offering before he came so that they wouldn't be under his influence. He wanted that all taken care of before he arrived. Paul doesn't want them to dig down in their other pocket and say, "Paul is here, and he'd better see how much I've given." But Paul wanted that all taken care of before he got there. The rest of this chapter is referring to the Corinthians how he still wants to come and see them. He wants to stop in there again physically, but until he gets there they're going to have to be satisfied with hearing from him, only by way of his letters. Now look at verses 10-14:

I Corinthians 16:10-14

"Now if Timotheus (Timothy the young preacher) come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him: (Timothy) but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren, As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time. Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity. (love)
Lesson Two * Part I

Paul, Our Apostle Defending His Apostleship II Corinthians 1:1-3:18

In our last lesson we finished I Corinthians 15 and 16. So as we come into II Corinthians I'll have to give a little bit of background. I think it will help you get a little better understanding of the Scriptures if you understand the circumstances under which it was written, as well as who wrote it, and one of the most important is to whom was it written. Of course most of you understand now that I stress that the Apostle Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles, and that's what he was called specifically to be. We will look at verses pertaining to that.

Acts 9:15a

"But the Lord said unto him, (Ananias) 'Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles,...'"

Romans 11:13

"For I (Paul) speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:"

And in that role as the apostle to the Gentiles when he writes he is writing primarily to Gentile believers. Remember most of the Old Testament and the Four Gospel accounts were directed to the Nation of Israel and the Jew. So this makes a vast difference in comprehending the Scriptures, and whenever you read The Bible ask yourself, "To whom is this being addressed? Here Paul is writing the second letter to the congregation at Corinth on the tip of Greece. And as we saw in the first letter to the Corinthians, they were a carnal church. They were one of the congregations that had just not begun to grow and develop the deeper things of Paul's teachings.

Also remember that there were four distinct divisions. Some said "that they followed Christ and His teachings." Another group of these believers said, "No, we followed Peter." And another group said, "Well we follow Apollos, he's the man that we look up to." And then there was the fourth part of the congregation that said, "We follow the Apostle Paul, because it was through him we heard the Gospel of Salvation for the first time, it was through him we became believers so it's Paul that we will follow." So these four groups caused a lot dissension and a lot of grief to Paul. They just did not grow spiritually. Also remember in the first letter, these believers had sent Paul a long letter of questions of how they were to handle all these various problems, and we dealt with that as we came up through I Corinthians.
One of the problems he dealt with in Chapter 5 was gross immorality. That was a grief to the apostle to think that a believer would stoop to such a low level, and the church wasn't addressing it. The reason I mention that is here in II Corinthians Paul is going to seemingly give us the idea that a lot of these things are now corrected. So evidently his first letter did not fall on deaf ears. Again you want to remember that the second letter was probably written in a matter of months, probably within a year from the first. So there's been time enough elapsed that they could clean up their act.

Now in the first six chapters of this letter Paul is more or less dealing with the defense of his apostleship. I'm always referring to that. Every time that you get into Paul's writing he has to defend his apostleship. Now if you can understand the background you can see why. You want to remember that all during Christ's earthly ministry, Jesus had dealt only with Peter and the eleven, and after His death, burial, and resurrection and you come into the Book of Acts, it's still Peter and the eleven. But here is that other Jew, Saul of Tarsus who in the meantime is doing everything that he can to destroy this element of Judaism that had believed that Jesus was the Messiah. So Saul the great persecutor, the one who reaped havoc among the early Jewish believers is now the one that God has commissioned, after saving him by Grace on the road to Damascus. This is the one that is being sent out into the pagan Gentile, Roman empire with the Gospel of Grace.

Now it stands to reason if you all understand religion. I'm running into it even from our television audience where people's eyes are opened after being steeped in one religion or another. And it's not easy; I'm the first one to empathize with that situation. When they've had something drilled into them ever since they've been old enough to listen, then all of a sudden have someone like myself perhaps come along and show from the Scriptures that they've been taught totally wrong for so long, then it's not an easy situation. We've had people call and say, "Les this is the toughest thing I've ever had to do, but I can see that you're right on from the Scriptures."

Well the Apostle Paul was in that same situation. Now as he goes out among the Gentile cities and he's calling out, by virtue of preaching the Gospel (I Corinthians 15:1-4), a people for the Name of Christ, these Jews, whether they were part of the believing element or whether they were totally still in Judaism, constantly came back to the fact that, "You never walked with Jesus like Peter did. You're just an upstart, you're just bringing all this on your own." Well under those kinds of attacks what does Paul have to do? He has to defend his apostleship, and over and over he has to refer to the fact that he has suffered and suffered some more so that the Gentiles could get this message of Grace that had been revealed to him by the risen Lord. So this is basically the whole theme of these first six chapters, that he is again defending his apostleship, showing to the Corinthians all that he has to go through for the sake of the Gospel.
But this doesn't shock us because we know - in fact I'm going to take you back to the Book of Acts for a moment to Chapter 9. I'm afraid that there are a lot of people today that are still treating Paul the same way that the early Churches did. They were prompted by the Judaisers, and I hope you all understand what I'm talking about when I say a Judaiser. A Judaiser was a believer that believed for salvation that Jesus was the Christ, he was saved under that Kingdom Gospel. But they still did not comprehend "The Grace Of God" and that the Law had now been satisfied and totally set aside. So the Judaisers were constantly following in Paul's footsteps telling his converts, "Now wait a minute, you can't be saved on just Paul's Gospel alone, you still have to practice Judaism" (Ref. Acts 15:1-5) You have to be circumcised, you must keep the Law, and so on. And that just about drove the Apostle Paul up the wall, and so he suffered because of that. But now back here in Acts Chapter 9 let's start with verse 13. Now here we're in Damascus, and Ananias, a believing Jew, is being approached supernaturally by The Lord from glory. And The Lord is warning Ananias that Saul of Tarsus is in town and that they would meet.

Acts 9:13-16

"Then Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.' (that is Jesus of Nazareth The Messiah) But the Lord said unto him, (Ananias) 'Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.'"

As I was again reviewing all this, getting ready for the program, I couldn't help but think about a book that hit the best seller list several years ago, and I think it was written by a Jewish individual. The title of the book is "Why Do Bad Things Happen To Good People?" You may remember the book. Well that's always the question. Even when some of our number is suddenly stricken, and the first thing that hits our mind is, "Why do these bad things happen to believers especially, and many times to unbelievers, but they're good people?" I'm also sure that the apostle must have had those thoughts many, many times. "Here I am sold out to Christ, I am beating the bushes of the Gentile community for the sake of the Gospel," and how he suffered. Not just physically at the hands of his enemies, but even in the area of sickness. Evidently as he left Ephesus and was in his second missionary journey under terrible persecution, and pressure because of the silversmiths, he gets deathly sick. We're going to see this in Acts Chapter 1 where he actually thought that he was not going to live. Yet he had that burden of the millions of unreached in the Roman Empire that he thought he was going to have to minister to. And on top of that, we'll see here in II Corinthians how he was beaten with rods, how many times he was shipwrecked, how many times he was cold, naked, hungry, and in prison. This was all for the sake of the
Gospel. I just have to remind folks of this because even today there are so many people that almost ridicule the writings of the Apostle Paul. So actually what it amounts to is, "People today are no different than they were in 60 AD. People don't change, their attitudes stay the same."

As another introduction to II Corinthians I can take you back to II Timothy, and just imagine how this must have grieved, and broken the heart of this apostle who had now spent twenty-some years through all of these hardships, through all of these sufferings. Probably, he had very little of the comforts of life, and then had to, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, make this kind of statement that we'll see. It has boggled my mind as long as I've been teaching this Book. How the apostle must have been brokenhearted to have to write something like this in II Timothy. Paul is writing to a young man who had labored with him in the ministry and who is now a pastor.

**II Timothy 1:13,14a**

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing..."

In the Greek the word `things' as we see here means the deposit. And the deposit was the volume of truth that we refer to in Paul's letters as the *mysteries*. So Paul is telling Timothy to hang onto this doctrine of the mysteries that was revealed to him by the ascended Lord which I have now left these mysteries with you. Now reading on.

**II Timothy 1:14**

"That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." Now look at verse 15. Imagine that poor man having to write a statement like this, and Paul was not lying.

**II Timothy 1:15**

"This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia (in Paul's terminology Asia was the western half of Turkey in the area where he established so many churches.) be turned away from me; of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. (the leaders)

What's he saying? All these congregations that he had founded in his Gospel of Grace, and in the knowledge of the mysteries had now turned aside. It's really heart wrenching to think that the poor fellow had gone all those years going though such privation and yet have to come to that conclusion. When I read things like this I'm always amazed but for the Grace of God Christianity would have never gotten off the ground. It was constantly under Satanic attack. You and I have to just thank The Lord
that it survived and that we today at least have the Word of God. Even today the truth of the fundamentals of Christianity are under constant attack, from within Christendom and from without. So we get a little taste of what Paul is talking about. Maybe that's enough introduction. II Corinthians was probably written about 60 AD and I Corinthians was probably written about a year earlier. Also remember II Corinthians was written two years after the letter to the Galatians. I'll be going back to that to show you that what Paul dealt with in the Galatian letter had already taken place quite some time before he wrote this letter of II Corinthians.

**II Corinthians 1:1-4**

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, (Paul was set apart by God Himself) and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia: (southern Greece) Grace be to you and peace from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth (encourages) us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

In other words even for us believers today as we go through trying and testing times we have that promise that God is going to be a constant encouragement. And here again this is the answer to the question, "**Why do bad things happen to good people?**" Well I think it's so that God can show us that He's sufficient. You know when someone comes along and promises you a rose petal pathway if you become a Christian, then you just chalk it off as false teaching, because that has never been the theme of Scripture. In fact I've made the comment before, "**The Christian life is like paddling a canoe up stream.**" It's one of the toughest jobs on earth. A sissy cannot be a Christian, because it's a constant battle against all the forces of Satan and the world itself. But we have these promises that as we go through these times of testing and discouragement The Lord God Himself is going to encourage us. Now reading on.

**II Corinthians 1:5-7**

"For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, (Paul is speaking of his own experience) so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. (The same Lord that permits persecution and testing to come into the life is the same Lord that will provide the strength we need to go through it.) And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or where we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation."
Now another thing we have to remember is that all of the early believers under the Roman yoke were immediately under persecution. They couldn't walk up and down the street and glibly talk about their Christian faith. They were under constant surveillance, and the Roman Empire at one time actually tried to stamp out Christianity. So to become a believer under Paul's preaching and teaching actually was an invitation to persecution. How many would buy that today? So remember, although these early believer were under constant pressure they also had that promise that The Lord Who was permitting the affliction and pressure was also The Lord Who had the strength to bring them through it. Now verse 8:

**II Corinthians 1:8**

"For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: "Can you imagine that? What was Paul talking about? He didn't think that he would live to finish his ministry. Whether it was a physical sickness, or outside pressure from the various forces that I've already alluded to, whether it was the Romans, or the Judaisers, he would almost come to the place where he would despair even of life. Now verse 9:

**II Corinthians 1:9-10**

"But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us:"

The apostle Paul must have had much the same kind of mental attitude regarding his trials and tribulations as they pertained to the resurrection, as Peter and the other disciple must have had at the time of the crucifixion. Let's reflect back for a moment. After Jesus' arrest and as He was placed on the Cross, where were those eleven men? They had pretty much scattered like a flock of quail. They were practically running for their lives because they were seeing what was happening to their Master. But do you remember when their attitude totally changed? After His resurrection! Now they understood that there was nothing that could touch that eternal part of them because if The Lord had been resurrected they would be also. So Paul is going through that same kind of a mindset knowing that the crucified Christ had been raised from the dead. They could take his life, so what, but they can't end his spirit life. So I think this is what he is constantly referring to that even the resurrection power of Christ would keep him even through the trials and tribulations of his physical life.

**II Corinthians 1:11**
"Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf." In other words Paul then, and like we do today, realized what really sustained him in his ministry. The prayers of the saints! Never fail to pray for one another. Pray for us, and others in the ministry that God is using to reach hearts. Remember prayer changes things. Now verse 12:

**II Corinthians 1:12**

"For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation (or manner of living) in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward." (who are in Corinth).

What's Paul saying? What he has said over and over in his other letters. "He did not come to the city of Corinth with a bunch of flippant statements and silly ideas, or a lot of gimmicky, or fifth avenue advertising, but he came with all the sincerity and desires of his heart that he might see these pagan people come out of their pagan darkness and step into the light of the glorious Gospel." So Paul is going to refer to that over and over, that he didn't come selling his cheap wares, but rather he came with all the sincerity of heart that he might see them believe. Now for a moment let's turn to I Thessalonians Chapter 1. And this is typical of every place that Paul ministered.

**I Thessalonians 1:9**

"For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God:"
LESSON TWO * PART II

PAUL, OUR APOSTLE DEFENDING HIS APOSTLESHIP II CORINTHIANS 1:1-3:18

Now getting back into our study in II Corinthians, and remember that this letter is a follow up to the first letter where Paul had to deal with problems in the Corinthian Church. They had problems like no other congregation under Paul's Apostleship, and in I Corinthians he had to get rather hard with them. But now in II Corinthians Paul is coming back to encourage these people who had seemingly corrected their problems. Now we'll be seeing that more and more as we come through this second letter. That in itself must have been an encouragement to the apostle, that he did not have to come personally to them. Paul had intended to personally go down to Corinth, but evidently the message had come to him that his first letter had accomplished its work. The church had dealt with the person in gross immorality, and he was evidently back in the fellowship. So rather than come to them personally he writes this second letter.

I think we can all appreciate that. We have all found ourselves in a position where maybe we've had some hard feelings with perhaps a family member and it's so much easier to just write our thoughts rather than try approach them face to face. And I think this is exactly how Paul felt. He felt he could do more by writing than if he would go and meet them personally and become possibly too stern. Now verse 15.

*II Corinthians 1:15*

"And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benediction;" In other words he wanted to come to Corinth and deal with their problems personally. Verse 16:

*II Corinthians 1:16*

"And to pass by you into Macedonia, (in northern Greece) and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea."

In other words Paul's itinerary was to leave Philippi, and come to Corinth, and then go back up into Macedonia and visit the churches and then come back to Corinth and head to Jerusalem. But Paul didn't make it. And because he didn't make it a lot of his detractors and his accusers would say, "Well you didn't come because you were afraid to." And Paul had to deal with these accusations. Remember, always put yourself in
Paul's shoes. He was just as human as we are. Now verse 17. So he says, "Since I didn't get that accomplished...

**II Corinthians 1:17**

"When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? (did I say I was coming just to be saying something? No.) or the things that I purposed, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay?"

If you looked that up in the Greek what Paul is really saying is this: "Did I come to you and talk in fickle language? Did I just say something to tickle your ears? No way. Whatever the apostle said he said it with full meaning but other things of course intervened. Verse 18:

**II Corinthians 1:18-20**

"But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus,(Timothy) was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. (It was not fickle language, it was not something superfluous,) For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." In other words Paul is saying "Whatever I've said to you I can put it in concrete. I meant every word of it, it was from the depth of my heart and none of this was spoken with frivolity. Now verse 21.

**II Corinthians 1:21,22**

"Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest (or the down payment) of the Spirit in our hearts."

Now there is another verse that is a perfect parallel with that and for that we have to go to the Book of Ephesians Chapter 1. Some of these days we'll be teaching this tremendous letter verse by verse. It's dealing with our position in the Body of Christ as believers.

**Ephesians 1:13**

"In whom (in Christ) ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, (and the word of truth is) the gospel of your salvation: (I Corinthians 15:11-4) in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." Now that is part and parcel again of our salvation experience. We have been sealed, we have been marked by the Person of the Holy Spirit Himself. Now verse 14.
Ephesians 1:14

"Which is the earnest (and that means just exactly like we use the term today. He is the down payment. A sufficient down payment to make sure that the transaction is completed.) of our inheritance (which we will have by being joint-heirs with Christ, and that's going to hold it) until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

Now if I'm not mistaken we dealt with this verse when we were back in I Corinthians Chapter 15 on the great resurrection theme. I pointed out at that time that, yes, soul and spirit are redeemed in full. We are saved, we are redeemed completely for all of eternity. But at this moment only in the soul and spirit, so what's left? The body. The body is still in the flesh, it's still corrupt, it's still prone to sin and death. But the beauty and joy of resurrection is that we're going to have a new body. So it's this same concept that Paul is adhering to in II Corinthians 1:22 when he says again:

II Corinthians 1:22,23

"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth."

What's he saying? "I did not come to Corinth purposely so that I would not be more stringent in reproof, and a letter would be a kinder way in doing it." So Paul just knew that the time was not right for him to make a personal appearance among this congregation. And as we teach II Corinthians don't forget what we learned in I Corinthians about all the problems, and all the necessary reproofs that were brought upon that congregation. And remember Paul was broken hearted over what was taking place there. So all of this is in the back of his mind, and of course the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and we never want to take anything away from that. Now verse 24:

II Corinthians 1:24

"Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand."

Now look at that verse again. Paul is not overlording them like a totalitarian dictator. Oh he is their apostle, he's their teacher, he's the one who brought them out of pagan idolatry. But he is not standing over them with a heavy whip, or in a totalitarian way, but rather he is simply a helper of their joy and what makes it all possible? For it's by faith. Now you see if Paul had been the progenitor of a religion, and he was the grand guru of that religion, then yes, Paul could have stood over them, and held the whip over them and made them adhere to everything that he said. But that's not the case.
You see Christian liberty - **Oh listen, the average believer today still does not comprehend the liberty that we have in this age of Grace.** Liberty, now that brings up another verse in the Book of Galatians in Chapter 5. My these verses just ring in my mind as I'm teaching that Paul is telling these Corinthians, carnal as they were, with all their problems "You're not where you are because I have forced you there. You're not what you are because I'm standing over you." No, even the Corinthians in their carnality were still enjoying Christian liberty. And we have a lot of so called Christians today that have no concept of Christian liberty at all. They have no idea of what liberty in the Gospel of Grace amounts to. And here Paul has again been appealing to the Galatian believers much like he does to the Corinthians not to let the Judaisers destroy their faith.

**Galatians 5:1**

"*Stand fast therefore (with your feet in concrete if I may use the example) in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*

And that's exactly where most people constantly put themselves. They want to put themselves under a legalistic situation where someone lays down the Law that they must do this and do that. Well that's not Christianity! True Christianity is liberty! And remember I've always followed that with **liberty is not license.** Now let's come back to II Corinthians, and move on into Chapter 2. Don't lose sight of what I said in my introductory remarks that in these first 6 chapters we will find Paul constantly defending and reminding the Corinthians of his Apostleship as not tied to Jerusalem, not tied to Peter and the eleven, but tied only to the ascended Lord of glory.

**II Corinthians 2:1**

"*But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness.*" (or in much sorrow). Here again his reasoning for not coming personally to the city of Corinth, and meeting with the church, but rather writing them a letter.

**II Corinthians 2:2**

"*For if I make you sorry, (in other words if Paul would come down on them too hard) who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?*" In other words the human response is if Paul would come to Corinth and just come down on these people would he experience a joy in that kind of response? Of course not.

**II Corinthians 2:3**
"And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow (or
grief) from them of whom I ought to rejoice; (In other words he would hear about
things taking place in the church that would make him sorry instead of being able to
hear things that would make him joyful.) having confidence in you all, that my joy is
the joy of you all."

Paul's whole mental concept concerning this carnal church at Corinth was that they
could grow and become real trophies of God's Grace in spite of all the pressure. And
don't lose sight of the fact that these early Christians, the moment they professed faith
in Christ, were under pressure. They were under pressure from the Jewish element,
they were under pressure from the pagan element, and just a precious few of them
were won for The Lord. Just a precious few would come into this liberty of
Christianity. Now verse 4.

**II Corinthians 2:4**

"For out of much affliction and anguish of heart (now Paul's not over emphasizing) I
wrote unto you with many tears; (I was reading one commentary on this letter by an
old Bible teacher. He said "Paul must have written this letter with a quill dipped in
tears." I think that's just about true as his heart was broken, he was in tears because of
what he was hearing from the congregation at Corinth.) not that ye should be grieved,
but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you."

Are you seeing the heart of this man? In spite of all their failures contrary to his
teaching and doctrine, did he ever lose his love for them? No. And it was a constant
battle in that early church. These church members had come out of abject paganism
with no moral foundations whatsoever; with no concept of the one Creator God, they
were ignorant of all these things. They didn't have the Old Testament like the Nation
of Israel did. They had just recently heard the apostle preach them the Gospel of God's
saving Grace *(how that Jesus died for their sins, was buried, and rose again.)* And
how they were now set at liberty, and yet to see that they really hadn't consummated
all of the Grace of God that would give them victory over their past lifestyle. And
there was no doubt about it. They were still dipping back into their old lifestyle, and
this is what the apostle is so grieved about. And yet understanding the circumstances
he could equate with all of this, that you couldn't expect these people to all of a
sudden live like Peter, James, and John did, because it would take time for them to
grow. So catch this as you read these verses. Now verse 5:

**II Corinthians 2:5**

"But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part; *(in part here usually
means a percentage or fraction. In other words it wasn't the whole congregation that*
was grieving him, but a percentage or fraction of them.) that I may not overcharge you all."

Do you get that? So Paul wasn't condemning the whole congregation because they weren't all guilty, but there was that small percentage that was grief of mind. Now verse 6.

**II Corinthians 2:6**

"Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many." (or the majority)

Now when you have a majority then you also have a minority. So it was not a total consensus but it was enough of a majority that the Church could take the action. Well what do you think Paul is talking about when he says, "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment," Now verse 7:

**II Corinthians 2:7**

"So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow."

Do you know who Paul is talking about? We'll let's turn back to I Corinthians Chapter 5 and look at it again, and it was a gross situation. When we came through I Corinthians I touched on it lightly, because I realize that I have a lot of kids that watch this program, and I don't want to get overly explicit. But yet I guess more kids nowadays know more then we did when we were 20. But here we find one of the shortfalls of this congregation at Corinth. Now verse 1.

**I Corinthians 5:1-3**

"It is reported commonly (everybody in town knew about it) that there is fornication among you and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife." (Paul says, "even the Gentiles don't do anything that low." And the congregation wasn't doing anything except maybe grinning or joking about it.) And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already (or made up my mind already how to deal with it) as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed," Now here is what Paul is admonishing the congregation to do.

**I Corinthians 5:4,5**
"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, (as a congregation) and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one (as this guilty man) unto Satan (not for the destruction of his soul, but) for the destruction of the flesh, (inflict him with a sickness, or maybe take him out with death) that the spirit (of this guilty person, this saved individual who was a member of the congregation) may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

So does Paul consider this guy lost again? No. But this guy is in dire straights, because he is living in gross immorality, but the church is just as guilty as he is because they're not doing anything about it. Now after that I hope you can pick up again what he says in II Corinthians.

**II Corinthians 2:6**

"Sufficient to such a man (that we just read about) which was inflicted of many. (or the majority)"

So the Church had evidently taken corporate action and the majority had voted to deal with this man to get him to straighten up his act (even though there was a minority that is probably like many liberals we have even today that would say, "Oh, leave them alone, because people are people."). Now verse 7 again:

**II Corinthians 2:7,8**

So that contrariwise (or on the other hand) ye ought rather to forgive him, (even of a gross sin like that) and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him."

Isn't that something? That's not an attitude that most of us would take. But even today that's what we're supposed to do. When someone is overtaken in a gross failure, what does the average Christian do? Smile about it, joke about it. They never consider the fact that the person needs prayer and encouragement and forgiveness. Let's look at one more verse in the Book of Galatians that will just put the frosting on the cake for this. I'm sure that this event in Corinth had a direct bearing on this verse in Galatians. It happens all the time and it still does. But we can't just wink at it, but rather we must deal with these people and restore them.

**Galatians 6:1**
"Brethren, (believers) if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, (the leaders of the congregation) restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Do you see what he's saying? Anytime you come down on a situation in harsh judgment on a fellow believer, who are you setting up to be the next one to fall? Yourself. So instead, in that attitude that Paul had, we should forgive that man, and continue to love him. I think as we come to the end of the letter we'll find out that the Church at Corinth did deal with it, and they did bring the man back into fellowship.
Remember as we begin this lesson: to get the full meaning and understanding from Scripture, and to help you understand what you read, it is best to always determine to whom a portion of Scripture is written. What are the circumstances, and who is writing it. Remember things written to the Nation of Israel or their representatives were for the Jews only. Here in II Corinthians we are realizing that Paul is now following up his first letter which was a letter of reproof and correction. So in this letter we know that, first, Paul is defending his apostleship, because of all the snide remarks that are coming out of Corinth. Paul was like us, and was heartbroken about some of the things that were being spoken about him. Yet, on the other hand it was a recognition that the first letter had done it's work. So we'll continue on with that thought. Remember in our last lesson Paul is more or less commending the Church for having dealt with the man of gross immorality and having restored, and forgiven him, evidently, and that's as it should be. Now verse 9:

**II Corinthians 2:9**

"For to this end also did I write, (to take care of this immoral situation, and to get the man straightened out.) that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things."

Are you going to respond to this immoral situation or are you going to ignore it. But the majority responded to it, and had evidently voted to deal with this individual, and get him into a place of forgiveness and restoration. Now verse 10:

**II Corinthians 2:10**

"To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: (Paul had that much confidence in them that if they had the mind of forgiveness he could go along with it.) for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ:"

Now Paul had absolutely no power of forgiving sin and we know that. Only Christ Himself can do that. But in the Name of Christ he could agree with them that when they had restored this individual and forgiven him then he could concur. What was the real purpose of bringing this individual, who had failed so miserably, to a place of restoration. To keep Satan from getting the upper hand! Now verse 11:
"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices."

You all know the verse that says Satan can transform himself into an angel of light. And he can make it appear that he is promoting the Scriptures and as he does it he leads millions astray. Satan is a master at that, and so The Lord has given us the direction of the Holy Spirit. He's given us the mind and intelligence that by searching the Scriptures we can sort these things out. It just thrills my heart when people tell us that they have suddenly realized that some of the things that they thought were part and parcel of the Christian experience are not, according to The Book. I had a lady call the other night who wanted me to give her Scriptures to tell her that this particular practice was wrong. I told her that I couldn't do that, but I did tell her to see if she could find Scripture that instructs people to do it. I also told her that if it's not in The Book then it must be wrong. Anything that is part and parcel of our practice of the Christian walk is in The Book. If it's not in The Book then look out because you're on thin ice. How many times have I made the statement, "It's just as important to see what the Scriptures don't say, as what they do say." A lot of people go through life thinking something is in The Book because they heard it some place. But listen, you've got to search the Scriptures and if it's not taught in Scripture run from it like a plague. So Paul says in verse 11:

"...for we are not ignorant of his (Satan's) devices." Now Paul is going to bring in his own past experience when seemingly Satan had almost beaten him down in despair.

If you can picture in your mind the Mediterranean Sea and Turkey as it winds out to the West. Also remember Paul's early ministry was there in that western half of present day Turkey which was called Asia Minor. Then you have the Aegean Sea between Turkey and the mainland of Europe which is Macedonia or northern Greece, and Athens in southern Greece. And on this map in your mind you go around the peninsula into the Adriatic Sea and across from that is Rome. Now here Troas is located on the western shore of what is present day Turkey. Evidently Paul had made arrangement with Titus, his fellow worker there in Asia Minor, to meet him at Troas. Then they were going to go on around to the northern reaches of Turkey or along the Black sea which at that time was called Bithynia, and then head back to Asia. But remember back there they couldn't just drop a note in the mail, they couldn't send a telegraph message, they certainly couldn't phone - how they communicated in the ancients I have a hard time understanding. But somehow or other Titus and Paul had made an agreement to meet here in the sea port town of Troas, which was actually the ancient city of Troy. Now look at what Paul says:
"Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, (and we're going to look in the Book of Acts as to what that was) I had no rest in my spirit, (in his own being) because I found not Titus my brother:"

When Paul couldn't find Titus, his brother in The Lord, can you imagine what that must have felt like? Here they had no means of communication so he had no way of knowing what had happened to Titus. Why isn't he at Troas at the appointed time? And then at the very same time when he's so distressed about what may have happened to Titus, The Lord comes on him with something totally different; contrary to what he thought he was going to do, and the two were almost a clash in the man's thinking. Now let's look at that in the Book of Acts Chapter 16 and here Paul has been ministering in western Turkey which was then Asia Minor so we find him at Troas. Now verse 6:

Acts 16:6-12a

"Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, (in other words back to the East) After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: (after that Paul had probably planned on taking a route back to Antioch in Syria) but the Spirit (that's the Holy Spirit) suffered (or permitted) them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. (where he was expecting to meet Titus.) And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, (northern Greece) and prayed (or begged) him, saying 'Come over into Macedonia, and help us.' And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; And from thence to Philippi,..." (which was up there in northern Greece.)

Now come back to II Corinthians Chapter 2, and get this whole scenario that is coming down on the apostle. On the one hand he is heartbroken and distressed because Titus for one reason or another, was unable to keep his appointment at Troas. But evidently it was at this same time that The Lord revealed, by way of a vision, that he was to go over into Macedonia or Greece and preach the Gospel (I Corinthians 15:1-4) which we know he did. Now verse 13 again:

II Corinthians 2:13
"I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia."

So what does Paul do? In spite of the fact that he had lost track of Titus, he is obedient to The Lord's call now to go across the Aegean Sea and begin his ministry in Macedonia. Now verse 14:

**II Corinthians 2:14a**

"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph..."

Do you do the opposite? On the one hand he is depressed, down and distressed, and yet he's always triumphant. These are tremendous lessons for each of us. Paul was just as human as we are, he had the same passions and appetites and feelings. He could get down, and he could rejoice. Now reading on:

**II Corinthians 2:14,15**

"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, (they are the recipients of God's Grace) and in them that perish: (a potential sweet savor to them that are perishing.)

So it isn't to those who are already lost, but rather to those who still had opportunity to hear him preach the Gospel. Paul was the good news for them, just as well as he was to those who had already embraced the Gospel. Now verse 16:

**II Corinthians 2:16**

"To the one we are savour of death unto death; (in other words if they didn't respond, then spiritual death was their end results) and to the other (the ones who did respond) the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?"

Now I hope I have enough time to do with verse 17 what I did with it the other evening. Every once in a while a word will just catch my mind, and I'll think, "I've got to chase this one down in the Greek." And here in verse 17 was one of those times.

**II Corinthians 2:17a**

"For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God:'"
here is `kapeleuo.' Now that Greek word is just Greek to us isn't it? But you can look it up in the Septuagint or the Old Testament Hebrew translated into the Greek by 70 Jewish scholars back quite a few years before Christ (and the reason I put a lot of emphasis on the Septuagint is because that was the Greek that Jesus always referred to). Whenever Jesus would quote from the Old Testament, if He didn't quote it from the Hebrew then He would quote it from the Septuagint Greek. That's where a lot of our Greek scholars put the Greek language together for our benefit.

Now when you compared that Greek word `kapeleuo' from the Septuagint it meant "**One who was a huckster or one who would hock his wares, or from Isaiah Chapter 1:22 it meant someone who was selling or was hocking an adulterous product.**" Now turn for a moment to the Book of Isaiah, and you will see when Bible study gets to be fun, or at least I think it is. How The Bible all so beautifully fits together. And the word "corrupt" in the English doesn't really show you this. We just think of corruption as something that has begun to spoil, but maybe this will help you see it. Now here in Isaiah we find Isaiah coming down on the Nation of Israel because of all their sins and wickedness.

**Isaiah 1:21**

"How is the faithful city become as harlot! it was full of judgment: righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.

What's Isaiah talking about? The city of Jerusalem. At one time it had been a righteous city and the Jewish people were obedient to the Mosaic Law, and the system. But what had happened? They had become so wicked, and that's why Isaiah was castigating the nation. So this city that at one time had been full of righteousness was now full of murderers. Now verse 22:

**Isaiah 1:22**

"Thy silver is become dross, (it was no longer pure silver, but rather impure. Now here is a word translated corrupt in II Corinthians 2:17) thy wine mixed with water:"

What were they doing? They were adulterating it, they were making it a cheap product. And this is the very same word that Paul uses. Paul says, "I didn't come unto you with wine watered down with water. I didn't come to you as a huckster hocking his wares which were not worth half of what he claimed." All of that is wrapped up in that one word "corrupt." Now coming back to II Corinthians Chapter 2. For Paul says:

**II Corinthians 2:17**
"For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: (a lot of people do hock an adulterated product of the spiritual.) but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."

Now I'm also thinking about another verse that corresponds. Let's go back to the Book of Jude for a moment. I imagine that these were the kind of people that Paul had in mind when he said, "For we are not as many which bring you an adulterated product, but rather we are bringing you the real thing." And remember Paul is defending his apostleship. He said, "I'm not like these false teachers. I'm bringing you the absolute truth." Now look what The Bible says concerning false teachers. I think this is the best description that you can find anywhere in Scripture. In fact I think II Timothy Chapter 3 is almost word for word like Jude. Now verse 8. Here Jude has given the example of the fallen angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah and so forth.

**Jude 1:8,10**

"Likewise also these filthy dreamers (he's talking about false teacher who are hocking an adulterated product. They) defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities," Now verse 10: "But these speak evil of those things which they know not; (does that sound familiar? They will ridicule the truth of Scripture, but have they ever really studied it? No. So what are they ridiculing? Something that they know nothing about. They ridicule it because it's the Word of God.) but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, (now that rings a bell doesn't it? When much of society lives at the level of animals. That's where these false teachers are coming from. They're no higher in their thinking than the animal world so they are as brute beasts) in those things they corrupt themselves."

They can live in the moral level of an animal and they think that they're living it up. Now verse 11:

**Jude 1:11a,12**

"Woe unto them!..." These (false teachers) are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, (false teachers can bring a cloud on the horizon of hope but all of a sudden the adherents suddenly realize that it's nothing) carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots."

Now these are all descriptions of what Paul says he was not. He said, "I did not come corrupting the Word of God, I did not come like we see in verse 13."

**Jude 1:13**

"For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: (a lot of people do hock an adulterated product of the spiritual.) but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."
"(like a) Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."

And that is what the world is falling for tonight. They're falling for this line of false teaching that is nothing but an adulterated product. It's so sad to be sure. Now coming back to II Corinthians. And let's look at verse 17 again in defense of his apostleship.

**II Corinthians 2:17**

"For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."

Paul didn't come to these Corinthians with fickle language, or half truths, but everything that Paul spoke was prompted by the Holy Spirit, and he was here because of his love for Christ as we will see in Chapter 5. The love of Christ is what constrained Paul. So Paul was able to suffer all the privations that he will list a little later in this letter. He went through privation after privation, and there is no doubt he was being accused of not bringing the truth, because you see he wasn't agreeing with the Judaisers in Jerusalem. He was not working hand in glove with Peter and the eleven. He was out here proclaiming something that they really knew nothing of. So, consequently, he was being bombarded with all of these false accusations that should have been reserved for false teachers. But isn't it amazing how so often it's the other way around. Instead of the false teacher being bombarded, it's those with the truth who come under attack.
LES S ON TWO * PART IV

PAUL, OUR APOSTLE DEFENDING HIS APOSTLESHIP II CORINTHIANS 1:1-3:18

We're going to begin with Chapter 3. We would encourage you to study right along with us. We had missionary friends from Bolivia stop by this summer, and they couldn't get over the fact that all of our people had a Bible and most had a notebook in front of them. They said they had never seen that before, even on the mission field. And I do think it's unique that our people always bring their Bible to class.

I want to remind you that the Apostle Paul was always having to defend his apostleship because of all the false teachers that were coming in. Probably the strongest element at Corinth that was in opposition to Paul and his teaching according to the mysteries, were those who claimed to follow Peter. And right next to that were those who claimed to follow the teachings of Jesus. And, of course, it's no different today. Many people tell me, "Les I know you like to teach Paul, but I'm not going according to what Paul said, but rather what Jesus said." Well I know these people mean well, but you want to remember what Jesus said, He said in His earthly ministry. Also remember that He was only sent to the Nation of Israel.

Matthew 15:24

"But he (Jesus) answered and said, 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'"

Romans 15:8

"Now I (Paul) say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision (Jews only) for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:" (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob)

So what Jesus said was to the Nation of Israel under the Law. Although we can make applications from it, it was not spoken to us. What the Apostle Paul writes is Holy Spirit inspired and it is directed directly to us as Gentiles in this age of Grace in the Body of Church. Verse 1:

II Corinthians 3:1

"Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?"
Do you see what Paul is saying? Do I have to come here with official letters from Peter, and the eleven in Jerusalem? Do I have to come with some kind of a commendation from those who were apostles before me? They had nothing to do with his apostleship. Peter and the eleven didn't send Paul out into the Gentile world, but rather the ascended Christ seated at the Father's right hand did. So Paul is reminding them of that. Now verse 2:

**II Corinthians 3:2**

"Ye (these people I pointed out in our first lesson today, like the Thessalonians. They had turned from idols to the living God. So Paul says you) are our epistle (you are changed people) written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

I like to feel the same way about so many who have come to know The Lord through our simple teaching. They've become living epistles!

**II Corinthians 3:3**

"Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, (now watch this) written not with ink, (on paper) but with the Spirit (Holy Spirit) of the living God; not in tables of stone, (reference to the Ten Commandments,) but in fleshly tables of the heart." So you as believers are living epistles with the work of the Holy Spirit written on the heart - and that's where it all has to be.

**II Corinthians 3:4,5**

"And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;"

Now again let me remind you, what kind of a man was Saul of Tarsus? Highly educated. He was the most educated Jew of his day, having sat at the feet of the greatest Rabbi of that time. So he had all that intellectual background, and he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He could have said, "Hey, I'm qualified by virtue of my training." But he never did that. In fact back in the Book of Philippians he called all of that just so much what? Dung.

**Philippians 3:7,8**

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."
He cast it all aside as worthless that he might become the very workmanship of Christ Himself. So all of his sufficiency was never because of his background. Not because he was a Hebrew of Hebrews but because he was a humble servant of the Creator God.

In these next series of verses, the casual reader probably never catches this, but there is one example after another of the difference between Law and Grace. I trust that, if The Lord tarries, and I go by way of the valley of the shadow of death and I'm off the scene, that people will still be able to remember that I was constantly trumpeting the difference between Law and Grace, and here it is again. Verse 6:

**II Corinthians 3:6**

"Who (God from verse 5) also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, (the Law of Moses) but of the spirit: for the letter (Law) killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

See the difference? Law could do nothing but condemn. The Law had no life-giving power whatsoever. And that's why people are so foolish when they say, "Well, I'm trying to do the best I can. I'm keeping the Commandments." The Commandments can't do anything but kill. The Commandments pronounce it as guilty! But Grace, which is epitomized here in verse 6 as the work of the Holy Spirit, giveth life. Now, remember from our resurrection study that when we get into the eternal state we will no longer be flesh and blood, but rather flesh and bone with that power of life coming from the Holy Spirit. Now here in this verse is that same Spirit - that power from on High, it's that Holy Spirit that gives life. But the Law can only condemn.

**II Corinthians 3:7**

"But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, (the Law, and so if that) was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which was to be done away:"

Now before we go back and look at those verses in the Book of Exodus I'm going to tell you something. I'll bet that you thought, like I did for so long, that in the account when Moses came down the mountain after talking with The Lord face-to-face that Moses' face shone, Right? So we know a veil was put upon his face. Now what do most of us think that the veil was for? Well, because Moses was so radiant in his glory, having been in the presence of Christ of the Old Testament that the children of Israel couldn't stand to look on his face. But that's not what that means at all. Now this is going to be hard to swallow isn't it? What was being veiled was the passing away of
the Law. Now put that in your mind, and as we come down the line you'll see what we're talking about. Now verse 8:

**II Corinthians 3:8**

"How shall not the ministration of the spirit (which is now indicative of Grace) be rather glorious?"

What's Paul talking about? As the gloriousness (if there is such a word) of the Law faded away, then what takes its place and is even more glorious? Grace! So you have the passing away of one and the bringing on the scene of the other. Law has to fade away and Grace becomes epitomized. Now moving on to verse 9:

**II Corinthians 3:9a**

"For if the ministration of condemnation..." Remember you only condemn something that has a flaw. We had better use some Scripture with this so let's go back to the Book of Romans in Chapter 3.

**Romans 3:19,20**

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, (who's under the Law? Israel. The Gentiles never were. But the power of the Law didn't stop with Israel but) that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world (not just Israel) may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds (or keeping) of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

And what's the other word that is connected with sin? Death! So the Law was an administration of death. All the Law could do was condemn the individual, and if he was condemned then death was the only alternative. Now coming back to II Corinthians again. If that was going to be done away with in verse 7, now we have the whole concept of Grace taking the place of Law.

**II Corinthians 3:9**

"For if the ministration of condemnation (Law) be glory, (then) much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory."

As great as the system of Law was in operating in the Nation of Israel, it's nothing to be compared with the operation of Grace.
II Corinthians 3:10

"For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth."

Now you know what I think Paul is saying? That, by comparison, the glory of legalism which was, of course, the way God mandated to the Nation of Israel living under the Law, was nothing. **The sad thing is that we have people today by the millions who turn their backs on Grace and say, "I'll do the best I can, I'll keep the Commandments."** It's just a sad commentary isn't it?. Now verse 11. In this verse Paul puts it in plain language. This isn't covered up or veiled one iota.

II Corinthians 3:11

"For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious."

Well what was done away with? The Law. What now remains? Grace. So we have two great contrasts, but the same God. These are two totally different economies. The one said,"**Thou shalt not and thou shalt.**" The other one stands over here in the verse we saw a couple of lessons ago. "**Therefore stand in the liberty wherewith Christ has saved us.**"What a difference.

Galatians 2:4

"And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:"

So you can see what a difference. Grace is far more glorious. Now verse 12:

II Corinthians 3:12

"Seeing then that we have such hope, (the coming out of legalism with all of its demands) we use great plainness of speech:"

I don't care in what form or shape legalism comes, it's legalism. And legalism always instructs you as to what you have to do in order to merit favor with God. There are millions of people who are shunning the Gospel of God's Grace, (believing in His finished work of the Cross. (I Corinthians 15:1-4) and saying, "**I have to work for it.**" What a sad commentary, but that's the Devil's lie. **When Christ died and rose from the dead, God was totally satisfied that was all we needed.** We can trust that completely, and we don't have to work and sweat, and worry, hoping that maybe
we've done enough, because Christ did enough. He did all that was necessary. But always remember that Grace is not license. That doesn't mean that I can go out and live like the Devil's crowd, and mostly because we don't want to. I dare say that the average true believer would be as miserable in a honky tonk on Saturday night as a regular honky tonk customer would be in Church on a Sunday morning. It's the same difference. Two totally different lifestyles, two totally different desires, and this, of course, is what makes it work. Now verse 13:

**II Corinthians 3:13**

"And not as Moses, *(in other words it's not the same set-up that Moses was operating under when he had to put the veil over his face.)* which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:"

Does that tell you what I've been trying to say? In other words when Moses put the veil over his head, it wasn't that Israel couldn't stand the brightness of his complexion, but rather that they could not see the end of this whole system of Law, and they can't even to this day. They are blinded to the fact that the whole system of Law has passed off the scene, it is abolished, and in it's place is this tremendous revelation of the mysteries, *"The Grace of God!"* Now verse 14:

**II Corinthians 3:14**

"But their *(the Nation of Israel)* minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken *(or not taken)* away in the reading of the old testament; which is done away in Christ."

In other words when Christ finished the work of redemption by virtue of His death, burial, and resurrection the whole system of Law was done away with. It was abolished because now we've got something far better. Now you want to remember that the Law was given to the Nation of Israel to prepare them for the coming of their Messiah. But in their unbelief they failed it from start to finish, but God didn't stop His plan of redemption because of it, He carried it out anyway. **So Christ died, He rose from the dead, He revealed to this apostle, the apostle Paul, this whole new concept of salvation by faith because of God's Grace, and nothing added.** But the average Jew in his blindness is still tying himself to the Law. To him the veil is still on Moses' head, and they cannot see that it has come to an end. Now I hope you can see that. It took me a long time and I don't expect you to really catch it in five minutes. But the veil was only to keep Israel from seeing that the Law was fading away, and that something better had now come in it's place. Now reading on:

**II Corinthians 3:15**
"But even unto this day, (now Paul was writing this about 60 AD but it's the same truth for 1997. To this day) when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart."

Remember in synagogue worship what is primarily read? The Torah, from Moses. Bless the Jews' hearts because they're sincere, and Paul felt the same feeling toward them. They were sincere in their activity, but as they read from Moses that veil that keeps them from seeing that it has all passed off the scene, is still on their hearts. Now let's look for a moment at a verse back in Romans Chapter 11. This says it in a little plainer language than what it is here in II Corinthians.

Romans 11:6,7

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. (in other words, Grace cannot operate mixed with Law. It has to stand totally by itself.) But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more works. What then? Israel (nationally. not individually) hath not obtained that which he seeketh for: but the election (that small percentage of Jews who believe the Gospel) hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." And that's the vail that's on their heart according to II Corinthians, and they just can't see through it. Now coming back to our text for the few moments we have left, and lets read verse 15 again.

II Corinthians 3:15-17

"But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it (their hearts) shall turn to the Lord, (by believing Paul's Gospel) the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

We have liberty, and not the heavy hand of legalism. Every believer has that liberty, that wherewithal to search the Scriptures to come to their own conclusion. I don't mind if folks write or call saying, "Hey I don't agree with you." That's fine. We have that liberty. But when they disagree they have to do it on the basis of The Book. Now verse 18:

II Corinthians 3:18

"But we all, (now who is Paul speaking on behalf of? Every believer of the Grace Gospel) with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Remember when they're on the Mount of Transfiguration and Peter, James, John, and The Lord was transfigured before them, and He shone forth with all of his glory. Do
you know that's the same identical word as changed is here in the Greek. So every believer has experienced that already. Oh we don't show it outwardly, but God sees it inwardly, and so we have already been transfigured into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of The Lord. All right come back up to the first part of that verse for a moment.

II Corinthians 15:18a

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,..."

Now Israel was depicted as being veiled from the truth of the Law. They couldn't see that it was fading away. But we look at Christ as in a mirror, and as we look at Christ in a mirror, what does the world see on us? His reflection! It's just that simple, and the Law could never do any of that, because Moses had to be veiled, and Israel could never understand. But you're not under Law, but rather GRACE!
LESSON THREE * PART I

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE?

II CORINTHIANS 4:1-5:9

Now if you will turn with me to II Corinthians Chapter 4 we will begin our study for this lesson. I think though before we begin with verse 1 that we should have just a little review. We review because we have so many people that thank us for reviewing. For so many of our people this is the first time that they have really heard The Bible taught on a verse by verse basis, and especially the letters like I and II Corinthians. Even in my own Bible study I suppose these were two of the most neglected letters of Paul's writing, and even as I study for the television programs, I am seeing things that I have never seen before. Never lose sight of the fact that as soon as he began his ministry to the Gentiles, Paul came under satanic opposition from every possible direction. I think as we're going to see in Chapter 4, Paul grew weary and almost despaired of life itself. Because it just seemed as though he was just getting the Gospel off the ground, when everything fell in on him. Remember Paul was just as human as we are.

Also never lose sight of the fact that all the way through these Corinthian letters he is, especially more than in the others, defending his apostleship. Everywhere Paul went the Judaisers would say, :"Well you're not Peter. After all Peter spent 3 years with The Lord and Peter is our spokesman and Peter is the one we're going to listen to." Then there were other factions that said, "Well we go by what Jesus said in His earthly ministry." Does that sound familiar? It does to me. And then there were others that said, "Well Apollos is the man that we follow." And then on top of that controversy Paul had that tremendous opposition from Satan throughout the pagan background where they to were trying to stamp out this new idea.

I've often wondered why the Roman government came down so hard on Christianity when they didn't bother Judaism? In fact I've read and I'm sure that some of you have, that the Roman authorities guaranteed that the offerings to the Temple would arrive safely. So the Romans had no problem with the Jews religion, in fact they protected it. But Christianity - the Romans tried to stamp it out and I think I finally found the answer to all of that and it was that the Romans had due respect for any ancient religion. It didn't matter whether it was pagan or whatever and, consequently, since the Jews religions went back into antiquity, the Romans had a high regard for it, but Christianity was something new. This was something that coming from the up-start of this one man Paul, and so they, too, had no compunction about putting it to death, and martyring those who were adhering to it.
So as we come through even the first couple of chapters of the second letter to the Corinthians I want you to understand that the first letter was written from Ephesus over there in what is today the land of Turkey on the western coast. So he wrote I Corinthians from Ephesus, and it was a letter that came down real hard on many of their problems, division, immorality, and some of the other problems that they had. And then this second letter was written sometime after he had been forced out of Ephesus because of the tremendous hatred for the Gospel from the pagan followers of the goddess Diana. So after he had left Ephesus he went up north into the northwest corner of what is now Turkey to the ancient city of Troas, which was the city of Troy. Remember it was at Troy where you had the Trojan horse so that will give you a little historical background. So, evidently he began a little congregation there at Troas, but he was supposed to have met Titus there in Chapter 2 verse 13. We might look at that again for a moment, because I'm giving this background to show you why this man was under such constant satanic attack. Now, that's nothing new. I've always taught that just as soon as God made that classic statement in Genesis 3:15, and God was speaking to Satan, that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent.

**Genesis 3:15**

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Now Satan knew what God was talking about. It was the coming of the Redeemer. And so Satan kicks into gear everything to prohibit the coming of a Redeemer for the human race. And then when the Abrahamic Covenant was given to Abraham, again Satan understood that this was the vehicle that God would use to bring about the seed of the woman. So what does Satan do? He turns on the Nation of Israel. So all the way up through Israel's history there is that satanic attack and the apparent desire to destroy the nation Israel, because if Satan could destroy that nation then God's whole program would fall apart. Well it's the same way now as you come into the advent of Christianity. Satan is going to do everything in his power to disrupt it, to destroy it in order to thwart the very program of God. Paul has been under such pressure from the persecutors of Ephesus and now he's up at Troas, hoping to meet Titus. Now let's look at verse 13:

**II Corinthians 2:13**

"I had no rest in my spirit, (that is, in his innermost being) because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia."

Now imagine - there was no communication. He couldn't just go to the telegraph office, as those of you who are older would probably think of as being antiquities. But
there was no way of communicating. There was no way that Titus could tell Paul that he would eventually make it. And so after, no doubt, waiting a few days and ministering to the people at Troas, he finally had to go on his way, not knowing what had happened to Titus. Well from there he went to Phillipi, which is way up in Northern Greece and it was probably at Phillipi that he became so deathly sick that he despaired of life itself and thought his ministry had come to an end. And all of that was heaped on the man, I think, by Satanic forces. But God, on the other hand, said, "It's in weakness that you become strong." And so Paul had to rely on that. Now as we come into Chapter 4, once again he's going to defend his apostleship because of all the innuendos that were leveled against him, because of all the attacks of the Judaisers and the other forces that were in the man's life and so let's look at verse 1 of Chapter 4:

**II Corinthians 4:1**

"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;" Paul didn't, but he was oh so close. Now verse 2.

**II Corinthians 4:2a**

"But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully;..."

Now does that ring a bell? Come back with me again to Chapter 2. Remember there was a word we used in verse 17. It's not the same Greek word but it's awfully close. So here again the Apostle is showing us that he is not in this for personal gain, nor wealth, or fame, but rather for only one purpose and that is to see lost humanity given the Gospel of Salvation as we find in I Corinthians 15:1-4. Now for a quick review let's look at verse 17.

**II Corinthians 2:17a**

"For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God:..."

The word `corrupt' is translated in the Septuagint back in Isaiah 1:21-22 as water mixed with wine. Well when you throw water in with good wine, what do you do to it? You adulterate it, you corrupt it. So that's exactly what the word means here in verse 17. Paul wasn't corrupting the Word of God. He was not watering down his message with something that would tickle people's ears. He was not giving them a message that would just make people feel good. That kind of message would have been an adulteration, that would have been a corruption. Then the other part of the Greek word for corruption in verse 17 was like a street salesman, like a huckster, who
is out simply hocking his goods, but those kind of fellows are usually a little bit suspect, because they do not have the best quality products because they too are adulterated. So all of this fits together when Paul says, "I'm not like those kind of people, and I'm not coming with something that is corrupted, adulterated, or cheap, but rather I'm coming with the real thing." Now back to Chapter 4 then if you will, and continuing on in verse 2 we find Paul saying:

**II Corinthians 4:2b**

"...nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

Now you know the meaning of truth is an elusive thing isn't it? A lot of our universities use to put across their main gates, "Seeking After Truth." in one way or another. But truth can be so elusive many times, and yet if we just get in and search the Scriptures then the truth will come out. We had three phone calls just yesterday from people of the same denomination, and they were from different parts of the country who said, "Les you've opened my eyes. I never realized that I was under such false teaching. Well it was not that I opened their eyes, but rather the fact was they're doing something that I tell people to do and that is asking, "What does The Book say?" And that's when they found out that they were under a lot of false doctrine, because they couldn't find it in The Book. It was coming from their pulpit, but it wasn't in The Bible. And seeing it wasn't in The Bible made them come away from it. And that's all I'm saying because I'm not here to knock any group, and if you can line up with what they're preaching in The Book then fine, I have no opposition with that. But so much of what we're hearing is not in The Book, it's men's ideas, and people are swallowing it hook, line, and sinker and then suddenly realizing that they have been led down some back alley. Now verse 3:

**II Corinthians 4:3**

"But (Now here's the flip side. Paul's not coming with an adulterated product, but he says) if our gospel be hid, (or veiled) it is hid to them that are lost:" Now just mull that statement over. A better word for hid is veiled like we saw in Chapter 3. Let's turn back there a moment and look at it.

**II Corinthians 3:15,16**

"But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away." What has been happening? Something has been hidden from them. Now you bring that same concept up into verse 3.
II Corinthians 4:3a

"If our gospel be hid..." (or veiled)

Something is over it so that hearts cannot comprehend it. What has to happen? Well someone has to remove the veil, and in this case who is holding the veil in place? Satan is, as we'll see in the next verse.

II Corinthians 4:4a

"In whom the god of this world..." (Satan)

A lot of people don't like to talk about Satan. They think of him as a cartoon character in a red underwear suit, and a pitchfork with some horns on his head, but listen, that's not the Satan in The Bible. The Satan of The Bible is a powerful being. Paul says in another place that he can transform himself into an angel of light. So this is what Satan is doing so expeditiously today. Satan is constantly confusing the issue with his seeming light, but remember it's Satan who -

II Corinthians 4:4b

"...hath blinded the minds of them which will not repent and be baptized? Notice it doesn't say that. So what is God's controversy? They won't believe. They) believe not,..."

It's not that we have to repent, it's not that we have run down some aisle in repentance. But rather what does God demand for salvation in this day of Grace? That we believe the Gospel. Now is a mighty good time to look at the Gospel of salvation that saves us and places us into the Body of Christ. Jerry Pool isn't here with us today, but if he was here he'd be winking at me, and I know what he'd be saying. So turn back with me to I Corinthians Chapter 15. And bless his heart, Jerry started coming to my classes about 16 years ago and I guess one of the first Thursday nights he attended I must have struck a cord with these first 4 verses in I Corinthians, "The Gospel!" There is no clearer place in the whole Bible where the Gospel is laid out in full. This beats John 3:16 a hundred miles. Now I have nothing against John 3:16, but John 3:16 can't even come close to what Paul writes here. Remember any time that Paul makes a reference to the Gospel in any of his epistles it's always this one. All right verse 1:

I Corinthians 15:1,2

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel (absolutely. Today there is only one Gospel of Grace.) which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and
wherein ye stand; (that was all it took. When they believed the Gospel then God literally moved heaven and earth to bring that person to place of enlightenment. And as soon as we believe the Gospel this Book begins to open up to understanding. And it begins to make sense) By which also ye are saved, (it's by this Gospel and this Gospel only that we're saved. I don't care if it was in Corinth or any other area of the world, whether it was back in 50 AD or in the present year it makes no difference because this is the Gospel that saves lost people.) if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain."

Paul is saying, "Don't believe the wrong thing for salvation." Listen God is meticulous. Again this same Jerry had been to a funeral of a dear friend, a good person, and I'll never forget the look on Jerry's face when he said, "Les is there any chance that God might compromise this a little bit and let this person in?" No way! Because God is not a compromiser. God has made the plan of salvation so simple, and plain that He is not going to let someone slip in a side door, and say, "Well I thought..." You see that's what Cain did. I always have to go back to Cain and Abel because they were so typical. Abel did just exactly what God said to do. Abel believed what God said and he acted on it. But old Cain rationalized, and said, "Yeah but I think that if I do this and if I come on with all of this effort then God will accept me." But did He? No! I've often said that Cain was probably a better person than Abel. It wouldn't surprise me a bit. Because Cain tried, but what was his problem? Cain didn't believe what God said.

And it's the same way today. If people are going to somehow or other connive around this simple Gospel, then I don't believe that God is going to accept them. Now I don't know hearts, and I never pretend to, but I have to go by what The Book says, and The Book says that this is the Gospel by which people are saved. Here it is in verse 3 and 4.

_I Corinthians 15:3,4_

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, (now here we come back to the revelation that Paul received from the ascended Lord, and not from Christ's earthly ministry. Christ had the finished work of the Cross now behind Him. So this is what was revealed by the ascended Lord for us to believe for salvation) how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; (This was in that whole preordained plan of the ages that Christ would go to the Cross) And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures;"

Now folks that's the Gospel that you must believe in your heart for salvation. And isn't it so simple. Oh there is no string attached, there is no prescribed ritual, there is no particular way that you have to do this. You can believe it at the kitchen sink, you
can believe it driving down the road, you can believe it when you wake up in the middle of the night. You can say, "Yes I see it. For me there is only one remedy, and that is that Christ died for my sins, and He arose from the dead!" Then God does all the rest. God saves us. God sets our feet on a Rock, and He begins to open up the Scriptures, and then we begin to comprehend the truth of The Bible from cover to cover. Now this isn't going to happen all at once, but salvation happens all at once. I told a class many years ago that salvation is not a process, but rather salvation is an event. Salvation is an instantaneous event. Christian growth is a process. Bible understanding is a process, but salvation is a one time event. And what an event to be translated from darkness to light! To know your sins have been forgiven, and to know that you're justified! And all this happens instantaneously.

I noticed in my studies of this past week that in all of Paul's letters that we never have to beg God to forgive us of our sins. Think about that. And yet for most people who are putting out the plan of salvation they say, "You have to ask God to forgive you of your sins, you have to repent." Well I can't find any of this in Paul's letter to the Church Age believers. It's not in here, but rather my Bible tells me that when Christ died the death of the Cross, He took on Himself not just the sins of those who are saved, but rather He took on the sins of every human being that has ever lived or will ever live. And when He took every human being's sin then He could cry to the Father, "Those sins are forgiven," All of those sins are buried in the deepest sea, never, never to be brought before us again. So even when lost people slip out of this life into eternity, their sins are already forgiven. But they had not believed unto Salvation. Now when we get into Chapter 5 of II Corinthians we're going to find the word "Reconciliation" and the same thing applies. Every human being that has ever lived has now been reconciled to God by virtue of the work of the Cross.

But now I have to clarify that don't I? I think this will be a good illustration. Those guys in Congress who hold the money bags, and can hand it out by the billions. For a particular program they can appropriate millions of dollars, but that money stays in that account until somebody out there starts drawing on that account. Am I right? Is that government process? You know it is. All right the money is already appropriated, but it won't do a nickels worth of good until somebody draws on it and puts it to use. Now that is God! At the Cross God paid the payment for every person's sins. He paid their eternal doom, He did everything that needed to be done. So now all that lost people have to do is draw on that account. And how do they do that? By simply believing the Gospel for their salvation. But the reason they will never enjoy all the ramifications of that finished work is that they are never going to draw on it by believing. They will never exercise the faith that God demands. Now isn't that sad? You know I think when people go to the Lake of Fire for all eternity, they won't be going there for all their sins. They're not going there because of the drunkenness, and
adultery and whatever you want to call sin. They're going there because of their unbelief! And if I'm not remembered for anything else I want to be remembered for that. That lost humanity is going to their eternal doom for only one reason, and that is they refuse to believe that everything is already done. And isn't that sad. And who is keeping them from seeing all of this? The powers of Satan as we see in II Corinthians 4:4:

II Corinthians 4:4a

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not,..."

And how does Satan do it? I think his favorite choice today is to keep people so busy. Everybody is so busy. Our kids are all involved in sports from the time they get old enough to walk. And so it is a constant bombarding of our time with everything except the things that count. And so I believe this is Satan's biggest instrument. And there is nothing wrong with a lot of those things. There's nothing wrong with kids playing T-Ball, or basketball; but what's it doing? It's keeping their minds so occupied that they never have time to think in terms of the spiritual. Oh, the old Devil loves it when we're preoccupied. The more he can keep people in programs, and the more he can keep people with their eyes on material things the more old Satan can say, "I've got them veiled, I'm keeping them blinded, and I'm the winner."
Now to begin this lesson let's pick up where we left off in the last lesson and that will be in verse 4.

**II Corinthians 4:4a**

"In whom..."

That is, the lost people of the world who are lost, not because of what they've done, but rather because of their unbelief. Now while we were in Minnesota last week several people showed me my little quote in the fly leaf of their Bible, and it kind of tickles me that people take note of these things. But I've had it on the board several times in the past, and the quote goes something like this. "We are not sinners because of sins we commit but rather we sin because we are sinners." Now all that means is that we are born with that old Adamic nature, and that Adamic nature knows only one thing, and that's to rebel against the things laid down by God Himself. So the human's natural tendency is to listen to the old Adam. So, consequently, we become sinners, and it isn't because of what we've done. It's because of what we are.

Now the same way here. The people who are lost are not lost because they went out and got drunk one night. They're not lost because they cheated or stole, or committed immorality, but rather they are lost because they are born in sin as children of Adam and they have refused the remedy; which, of course, is faith in the finished work of the Cross. And Paul is constantly throwing out that the Cross has completed everything. We were just talking at break time about how the Devil blinds people and I think that this is just another ploy of the god of this world who transforms himself into an angel of light, because he won't do this clothed in the black robes of magic. But rather the Devil does this clothed in bright lights, as the angel of light, and that is he is keeping the world that has any interest in Scripture in the Four Gospel accounts.

I think it is so frightening that people are not getting away from Christ's earthly ministry, and getting into the fact that it was His death, His burial, and the fact that He arose victorious over sin and death, and now we are on this side of the Cross. We are not back there in Christ's earthly ministry, and we're going to see that specifically in the next chapter. So we have to constantly force ourselves almost because the tendency is to just study mostly in Christ's earthly ministry. But what did Jesus say in Matthew 24:14?
Matthew 15:24

"But he (Christ) answered and said, `I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'"

Romans 15:8

"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision (Jews only) for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers;' (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.)

So remember the Four Gospels were only to Israel and that was under the Law of Moses. Now looking at verse 4 again.

II Corinthians 4:4

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

Now there is another point. You have no idea how many people are asking the question, "Well, Who is Christ?" A lot of people are confused. Some have the idea that Christ never really amounted to anything until He was born at Bethlehem. They do not have the understanding that Jesus of Nazareth was the manifestation in the flesh of the Creator God of Genesis 1:1. I show that when we teach the Book of Genesis that Christ, as we know Him in the New Testament, was the Creator of the Old Testament.

John 1:1-3

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

John 1:14a

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,..."

As I explained to a person yesterday morning on the phone, and this very concept that we talked about in our last lesson. that when Christ died He paid the sin debt of every human being from Adam until the end of time. He could have never done that if He had not been the God of glory. So Jesus is the fleshly manifestation and is the image
of that invisible eternal God. Turn with me for a moment to the Book of Colossians in Chapter 1. And let's see how this fits so beautifully with what the Holy Spirit inspires the apostle to write back in the letter to the Corinthians.

**Colossians 1:15**

"Who (speaking of the Son in verse 13, and who has redeemed us in verse 14 through His Blood.) is the image (or visible manifestation) of the invisible God, the first born of every creature:"

So you see this is what we have to take by faith. I know I can't prove this in a laboratory experiment, but the Scriptures says it. And by faith we believe it, that God the Triune, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit were invisible. But God the Son stepped out of that invisible Godhead and became the visible manifestation of the whole. And that's Christ, that's The Lord Jesus of Nazareth. Do you see that? Now verse 16, and here we find that Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, attributes The Lord Jesus with the Creation.

**Colossians 1:16**

"For by him (Son in verse 13) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; (that even goes into realm of Satan and his powers) all things were created by him, and for him."

So that's why I say He is the same God in Colossians as He is in Genesis. The only difference is He has now taken on human flesh, human appearance. He is the image of the invisible God. I had a whole living room full of people about 25 years ago the first time I taught this. And when I just laid this out so clearly that Jesus of the Cross was the same God Who created everything in Genesis 1:1 it just blew their minds. And these people had been in church all their life, but they had never seen that before. And that's what we have to understand that Jesus of Nazareth was same God of Genesis 1:1, the only difference being He had now been manifested in the flesh. And that's why when we put our faith and trust in what He has accomplished, then we're not just talking about some Jew who grew up in a carpenter shop. But rather we're talking about the Creator Himself Who has taken it upon Himself the very work of redemption. Now coming back to our text in II Corinthians.

**II Corinthians 4:5**

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."
Here Paul is again defending his apostleship. He's saying, "I'm not coming in here with something just to gain personal support. I'm not coming in here for some kind of personal fame. What I'm doing is only because I am the servant." Now the word in the Greek here is really bond slave. So Paul says, "I'm a bond slave for Jesus' sake." Let's go for a moment to Ephesians Chapter 3. And here the apostle is constantly showing us that he's not in it because he wants to be some religious big wig. He's not in here to build some personal empire. He is only out here to bring these pagan Gentiles out of their sin, out of their spiritual darkness, and into the knowledge of his Gospel.

Ephesians 3:1

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles."

And not only was Paul a bond slave of Christ, but also a literal prisoner of Christ for this distinct purpose. Now we've got to go back to the Book of Acts Chapter 9, because there are so many people in our listening audience that do not understand how all this began. I know for a lot of you folks this will be just a review, but for a lot of folks they do not understand. Why does Paul make these kind of statements? Well you want to remember that Paul early on was a religious zealot, and he earnestly thought that by stamping out anything that referred to Jesus of Nazareth in Israel, he was doing the God of Abraham a service. But you see God all of a sudden stopped the man in his tracks, and you find the story of his salvation on the road to Damascus. But look what took place in Damascus while Saul, now blind, is making his way into town.

Acts 9:11-15a

"And the Lord said unto him, (Ananias) `Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.' Then Ananias answered, `Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.' But the Lord said unto him, (Ananias) `Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles,...'"

Now that was something unheard of in the Jewish culture. They had no idea that they were to go to the Gentiles. Oh they knew the prophets spoke of it, they knew that Isaiah spoke of Israel being a light unto the Gentiles, but certainly not their generation. I mean they had the same mentality that Jonah had, and you all know what Jonah did. Jonah would rather walk the plank than go to a Gentile city. So the Jews attitude hadn't changed, and now God tells Ananias that this man is going to go to the Gentiles? Boy I bet Ananias swallowed hard on that one. And he probably thought
well that's better than having to back to Jerusalem a captive of the guy. But nevertheless right here is where God takes a drastic change of direction. \textbf{Up until this time He had been dealing only with the Nation of Israel. God had been dealing only with the Jew.} In fact look for a moment in Acts Chapter 11.

\textit{Acts 11:19}

"\textit{Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen (and remember who headed up that persecution? Saul of Tarsus. He held the cloaks of those who stoned Stephen) travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.}"

I know people rebel at that, in fact it's almost like they say, "Les that's not in my Bible." But oh yes it is. Here we are about 7 or 8 years after Pentecost, and these Jews have gone to no one but Jews only. But now all of a sudden God is going to do something totally different because Israel is rejecting it in unbelief again just like they did at Kadesh-barnea. And just like they do so many other times, they rejected God's offer, and so God says, \textit{"all right then we'll do something different."} So then this is why He raises the Apostle Paul to go to the Gentiles. Have you still got your hand in the Book of Ephesians? Let's read that verse again.

\textit{Ephesians 3:1}

"\textit{For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,}"

Well let's back up a page and see which cause Paul is speaking of. Chapter 2 verse 8 and 9. Now this isn't the only thing he's referring to, but primarily. And who had ever heard something like this before?

\textit{Ephesians 2:8a}

"\textit{For by grace are ye saved through faith;...}"

Now stop a minute. What do a lot of people think should also be in this verse? Oh sacrifices from the Jewish economy. From our own present day a lot of people think that repentance and baptism, church membership, good works should be in here, but none of that is in here. That doesn't save us. It's all a part of the \textbf{result of salvation}. But look what it says, \textit{For by grace are ye saved through faith.}

\textit{Ephesians 2:8a}

"\textit{For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves;...}"

Now that flies in the face of works doesn't it? Oh, look at the millions of people across the world tonight who are still hoping that they are going to make it by their works. And this Book says it's not of works. The moment anyone puts works to salvation then it becomes worthless. Then Christ shall profit you nothing.

_Ephesians 2:8,9_

"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." Now back to Ephesians Chapter 3 again, and let's look at verse 1 again.

_Ephesians 3:1-2_

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner (the bond slave) of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation (or administration) of the grace of God (not Law, not works, not legalism, but the grace of God) which is given me to you-ward."

And who is Paul writing to? Gentiles. You know I'm always making the analogy that when God gave the Law to Moses up there on Mount Sinai, and Moses came down the mountain with the Law who was he to dispense it to? Israel. So God gave the Law to Moses, and Moses gave it to the Nation of Israel. But now about 1500 years later God does much the same thing, and yet totally different. I think He has Paul down there at that same Mount Sinai in Arabia (Gal 1:17) and now to this man He gives not the tables of stone but the revelations of the mysteries of the Grace of God.

And God doesn't tell Paul to go back to Jerusalem and give it to Israel, but he tells him that He's going to send him far hence to the Gentiles _with this whole new concept of a salvation by faith, and faith alone_. Without temple worship, without a priesthood, without works. Is that mind boggling? Absolutely it is. And most of humankind can't understand that, unless the Holy Spirit opens our thinking. And this is what it takes. All I can tell people when they call with questions is I can't help you unless the Holy Spirit helps you to understand it. He has to give you the wisdom. And that reminds me of another verse in Ephesians still in Chapter 3. Look how Paul prays for these Gentile believers, and it's still valid for us. Remember this is a prayer that Paul is uttering.

_Ephesians 3:14_

"For this cause I bow my knees..." (See he's praying. And look what he prays in verse 16.)

_Ephesians 3:16_
"That he would grant you, (remember he is writing to you and I) according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;" Not just intellectually, not just in the head, but it has to be in the heart. It has to be in that very core of our being. Now verse 17, and Paul is still praying.

Ephesians 3:17,18

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love," (Now this is fantastic. This is for everyone of us, that we) May be able to comprehend (and if we comprehend it we will appropriate it.) with all saints (this isn't just for the clergy, this isn't just for the few, this is for every single believer.) what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;"

The fourth dimension. I suppose that Einstein had a little bit of this in the physics. But nevertheless we're not used to four dimensions, but rather only three. But here is a fourth dimension that God wants the believer to enter into. You know there's a book out now that is one of the best sellers that has to do with the codes of The Bible. It's called "Bible Codes" and you have all been hearing about it. How this Jewish mathematician in Israel has seemingly found the code in the subliminal area (or however you want to put it) back in the Old Testament. Someone gave me a copy and in the introduction of the book this mathematician in Israel really got the idea from all this from finding something like 2000 pages of notes, if I remember correctly, from the old inventor Isaac Newton.

Now I never knew that Isaac Newton was that kind of a Bible scholar, but he was. He had already determined that the Word of God was so supernaturally put together that there could very well be hidden truths in here that man had never been able to recover. Then if we can put some credibility to this finding then it's the computer that makes it possible. I had a little quote that I was going to bring and read today but I went off and left it on the kitchen table. Anyway in Isaac Newton's life, which was from 16 something to around the early 1700's, he wrote that he could see that in the latter times shortly before The Lord would return, a body of men would be raised up who would be able to discern the prophecies written within this Book. Now Isaac Newton saw that over 200 years ago, and of course we're seeing it now. We're understanding prophecy like never before. But getting back to the text we have the potential now in response to the prayer of this apostle to enter into a fourth dimension. Now verse 19.

Ephesians 3:19

"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth (or goes beyond) knowledge, (every body is hung up on education, and I have nothing against education. I mean it's amazing the explosion of knowledge and technology today. But you know something
far better than that, and that is to know Christ. To know Him is beyond knowledge,) *that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.*"

Now a thought just comes to me. I think that it was Dwight L. Moody who, at the beginning of his tremendous ministry, had read a quote by a previous great man of God. But that man of God on his death bed had said, "I had always hoped that I could be the man that God had used to the full, but I've failed." Well when Moody read that and began his ministry, he said, "Gentlemen I hope to be that man." But years later after all of his tremendous response to evangelism, and on his deathbed, he said, "That man still hasn't lived." And isn't that true? There has never been a man that has lived out the full potential of what God has in store. Every one of them and every one of us will somehow fail and come short of it, but the potential is there, and God is able. Now come back in the short time we have left to II Corinthians again. Now verse 6.

*II Corinthians 4:6a*

"*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,...*"

Now that may be a reference to the Creation, but I think rather it's a reference to Christ on the planet earth in the flesh. Let's look at that in John's Gospel Chapter 1.

*John 1:6-9*

"*There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. (John the Baptist) The same (John) came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, (Christ) that all men (not just a few)through him might believe. He (John) was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, (Jesus of Nazareth) which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*"

Now that's a frightening statement isn't it? In other words, no one is ever going to be able to say, "But I never had a chance." Remember the true Light lighteth every man that comes into the world.
LESSON THREE * PART III

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE?

II CORINTHIANS 4:1-5:9

Now we'll go right back to II Corinthians Chapter 4 where we left off. In my opening remarks a couple of lessons ago we said that the apostle Paul had left Ephesus where he had written the first letter to the Corinthians and I put a make-shift map on the board. We had the land of Israel and the Mediterranean Sea coast coming along what is present day Turkey or which in New Testament days was called Asia Minor. There on the west coast of present day Turkey is still the ruins of the ancient city of Ephesus for which Paul, I think, almost had to flee for his life. You remember at one point he referred to the beast at Ephesus? Well he wasn't talking about the beast in the coliseum, he was just talking about the population in general that had been so pagan in their fervor for Diana the goddess of the Ephesians.

Well up here at Troas the ancient city of Troy, he had hoped to meet Titus who had been down ministering at Corinth. And remember all these churches were founded on his first missionary journey, and here Paul is on his second. He missed meeting Titus at Troas so he goes on up to Philippi in northern Greece where he was evidently on his sick bed, nigh unto death. Then after he got well he made his way on down and finally visited Corinth a second time. Now that's the back drop for these next few verses when he was almost despairing of his life because of his tremendous sickness. Now remember in verse 6 we have this treasure, this Light that lighted the whole world. It's already there for us to draw upon. And we who know The Lord can have the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. But even though this is such a magnificent knowledge and understanding, yet God didn't see fit to put it in the hands of angels, but rather He left it in the hands of mortal men. Paul was just as human as the rest of us. **But it didn't stop with Paul. Other men came along and as we've come down through human history, and even today, every one us has the opportunity to share the Word with whoever might listen.** And so verse 7 says it all in that regard.

**II Corinthians 4:7**

"But we have this treasure (the light of God) in earthen vessels, (Now Paul wasn't talking about a clay pot, but rather this body of flesh.) **that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.**"

Man can never take the credit for anything. It all has to be of God or it will fall flat on it's face. Let's turn back to I Corinthians for a moment and look at verse 27, 28, and
29. I have to remind myself of these verses constantly because I'm the first one to say, "Who in the world am I. Why did God see fit to even use me what little ways He does?" **Well, it's not because I'm somebody, but rather because I'm a nobody.** And according to Scripture that's the way it has to be.

**I Corinthians 1:27,28**

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought (nothing) things that are;"

In other words what's all this saying? God uses that which mankind would never dream of using. And He uses it for His honor and glory. Now what's the purpose in verse 29? And it's the same concept of II Corinthians 4:7. All of this is for the one purpose.

**I Corinthians 1:29**

"That no flesh should glory in his presence."

No one! Not a Dwight L. Moody, or Charles Wesley, because no one can ever glory that they accomplished something. **It is all of God or is none of God.** Now back to II Corinthians Chapter 4, and here I think you can get the mindset of the apostle as he is now writing. He had just gotten up from the sick bed in Philippi. He was actually thinking that his ministry had come to an end. He thought God for some reason was taken off the scene. But we know God wasn't. Paul goes on now and look what he writes.

**II Corinthians 4:8**

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;"

Why was Paul perplexed? My he had been doing so much. He had been set apart way back there in Damascus to go to the Gentiles. Paul knew that he hadn't finished the work, he knew that Christianity was still in its infancy. He knew it was being attacked from every direction imaginable. So Paul was perplexed, and I think it's the same thing that we are today. Sometimes we're prone to ask, "Well God, why?" Why? But remember God has His own purposes. Even though Paul was perplexed he never gave up. He didn't say, "I'm throwing in the towel because it's not worth it." Now verse 9.
II Corinthians 4:9

"Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, (laid in a bed of sickness) but not destroyed;"

Absolutely Paul was persecuted. He was driven from city to city, but The Lord didn't forsake him. The Lord promised him what? When he was in Corinth The Lord said, "Paul don't you run from the enemies because I've much people in Corinth." So Paul was cast down and disappointed especially not being able to meet with Titus who was part of his whole ministry. What a disappointment, but yet he says, "not destroyed." Now verse 10.

II Corinthians 4:10

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, (Now upon first reading this I think most people think that Paul is making a reference that when Christ died we died also. Well up to a point that's correct, but I also think that if you know the setting here he had just gotten up from a sick bed that he thought was unto death, and so this is what he's making reference to.) that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."

In other words, as Paul was lying on that sick bed which we can assume was up there at Philippi. Even though he thought his ministry had ended, what was he confident of? That he had done as much as The Lord had intended him to do. I always have to think of how he wrote to Timothy at the end of his ministry. Let's look at that for a moment in II Timothy Chapter 1. This was probably the very last of his epistles that was written before he was finally martyred.

II Timothy 1:9-12a

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things..."

What is he talking about? Well, number one, who was his chief opposition? The believing Jews as well as those still steeped in Judaism. But it wasn't the Jew alone, but rather a satanic power from every direction. So Paul suffered because Satan didn't want the Gospel going to the Gentile world. Satan hated that it was going to Israel
throughout the Old Testament. But now to go to the masses of Gentiles? That was the last thing that Satan wanted. Now continuing on with verse 12.

**II Timothy 1:12**

"For these which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed (isn't that something? In spite of all his difficulties and all of his sickness, and sorrows, and sufferings, he never doubted the God in Whom he served. Paul says,) I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Now we'll be studying Timothy some day if The Lord tarries. I don't think it will be that long before He returns for us, but He may tarry. Now verse 13 and 14.

**II Timothy 1:13,14**

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us."

Now those of you who are real Bible students and want to chase down an interesting word "*that good thing*" in the Greek is the deposit. In other words Paul tells Timothy, "What I have deposited with you keep it. Now when you deposit something you look for security as the number one thing. You don't want to put something someplace and get back next week and it's gone. Secondly, especially in our age of investments and so forth, if you're going to make a good deposit what do you expect? Dividends, interest, a return on it. Well you see the word means all of those things. Timothy keep the deposit and let it earn dividends and interest. Don't just sit on it. Now that goes back to when Jesus gave the talents back there in the Four Gospels. Did He want them to just go home and bury it? No. But rather go out and gain some increases with each talent. So I think the same admonition is good for all of us.

I made comment on the next verse in a previous program and I'm still getting calls about that verse. One person said, "I never knew that verse was in my Bible. What did the apostle Paul mean?" I said, it means exactly what it says.

**II Timothy 1:15**

"This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me;..."

Now you want to remember that Greece was Europe, and Asia Minor was the Asia of the New Testament. Here of course is where Paul had started so many churches. You
remember Thyatira, and Pergamos, and Smyrna? All these little town here in Asia Minor had evidently already turned away from his Gospel (Ref. I Cor. 15:11-4) by the time he was martyred. What a heartache to think that he spent so much and poured out his life and yet those were the people that turned their back on him. And of course I think the results are very evident. None of those little cities are left anymore, not one of them. But on the other hand many of the cities in Greece are still valid. Philippi is still a valid sea port. Athens is still valid. Corinth is no longer the ancient city, but there's another city right next to it, and much of Greece refers to the journeys and so forth of Paul, but back there in western Turkey not one of these cities are left. They have all faded off the scene, and I think that is the basic reason for their disappearance. Now returning to our text in II Corinthians, and we'll just skim through these next few verses because they're all just decrying the fact, "that Paul had suffered so much to get the message to these Gentiles." Now verse 11 and 12 for example.

**II Corinthians 4:11,12**

"For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you."

What's he saying? Well as a result of him spending his physical life, his physical energy, to get his Gospel to these pagans, they were coming out of their physical darkness, they were coming out of their spiritual darkness into the joy and the life of the Gospel, but his body was suffering the consequences. I'm sure that the old fellow must have been wracked with much pain as he sat in prison in Rome waiting for the executioners sword. Now verse 13.

**II Corinthians 4:13**

"We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believe, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;."  

Speaking of believing, come back for a moment to Acts Chapter 9. I know a lot of our folks were with me when we studied this many months ago, but a lot of you weren't. And also remember this where you had this tremendous change of direction in the Book of Acts. Up until this chapter it's Peter and the eleven and the Nation of Israel. And now all of a sudden with just an exception in Chapter 10, and Peter comes back on the scene momentarily, all the rest of the Book of Acts covers this one man. Peter is completely forgotten so far as the Acts accounts are concerned. But here in Acts Chapter 9 we find Saul of Tarsus, that great persecutor of Jewish believer. Now remember Paul didn't go after Gentiles because there were none of them believing
yet. But Paul was after the believing Jews who had followed the supposed heresy that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah for their salvation. Remember at that time the Gospel of the Kingdom was the only Gospel that had been revealed. To this good Jew, Saul of Tarsus believed that this was the worst thing that could have happened to the Nation of Israel. Remember he thought Jesus was an impostor. So he's trying to stamp it out by persecution, by imprisonment, by putting them to death.

**Acts 9:1-5a**

"And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, (Saul was not satisfied any longer with just working the small towns of Israel) that if he found any of this way, (that is that Jesus was the Christ) whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, `Saul, Saul, why persecuted thou me?' (Now this is what I want you to see in verse 5. We always make this point.) And he said, `Who art thou, Lord?'"

Now you want to remember that all the way up through the Old Testament the word **Lord** was used by the writers of Scripture, by the Jews in general, in place of the name that they didn't even dare to repeat, and what was it? Jehovah! It was of such awe and such high esteem that the average Jew didn't even want to breath the name. So what did they substitute? Lord. Now all the way through the Old Testament when you see the word LORD all in capital letters, it's Jehovah. When Saul of Tarsus addresses God, which he knows this Light and voice is, then in so many words he says, "Who art thou Jehovah?" Even though he didn't come right out and say, yet he was thinking it. And how does Jehovah answer?

**Acts 9:5a**

"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest:..."

And this answer blew his mind. He thought he was doing the work of Jehovah by stamping out the name of Jesus, and then to suddenly realize that what he thought was his enemy was in reality the God of Abraham. Oh what a transcending experience. And then Saul says:

**Acts 9:6a**

"... Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?..."
It didn't take Saul of Tarsus an hour to figure out Who The Lord was. It didn't take him very long to understand Who Jesus was. I've shared on this program before about a gentlemen who came to my home several years ago and that was his first question. "Who in the world is Jesus Christ?" Oh I wish more people would ask that question. There are too many people who don't know. People do not understand that Jesus Christ of the New Testament is the Jehovah God of the Old Testament. Jesus of the New Testament is the God of Genesis 1:1. They are One in the same. The only difference was that in the New Testament He manifested Himself in the flesh.

*John 1:1*

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,"

*John 1:14*

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,..."

That's who Jesus Christ is. He's the God of glory. He's the God of Creation. Well enough for that, now back to II Corinthians. So this is where the apostle is now after his years of taking the Gospel that was revealed to him to the Gentiles, and still having a heart for the Nation of Israel. Now verse 14.

*II Corinthians 4:14,15*

"Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by (that same) Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things (everything that has happened to this man) are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound (or resound) to the glory of God."

It's always God's glory. We don't elevate Paul to glory. He was just a common human being like the rest of us that God saw fit to use. But everything was to bring glory to the God of heaven. Now verse 16.

*II Corinthians 4:16-18*

"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; (they are earthly not heavenly) but the things which are not seen are eternal."
Oh listen, get the impact of that. The world today is only set on the temporal. What's in it for me. How can I enjoy life to the fullest? How can I make the most? How can I do this, and how can I do that? But listen that's not where it's at. Remember what The Lord said back in His earthly ministry?

*Matthew 6:33*

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Now there's nothing wrong with things. The Bible doesn't condemn things provided we have our priorities straight. But if the believer gets hung up on things, and more concerned about the temporal then he loses the sight of the eternal. Oh please don't get caught in that trap. I feel we are in the closing seconds of this age, and I'm not a date setter, but I'll tell you what; the way I see the world rushing into the scenario that is going to be on the earth for the appearance of the Anti-christ; I see it coming so fast. You see the Nation of Israel pushed tighter and tighter by the Arab world till finally she will get to the place where she may do something rash (which I do not think is going to happen because God's going to do it in His time, and not according to the Arab world's time). But if Israel would be pushed to the corner to do something rash, it would be to use nuclear energy, and don't think they don't have it, for they do, - but the world is literally rushing to the time when the man of sin will make his appearance, and will finally bring a semblance of peace to the Middle East.

Peace is what everybody is waiting for. And while they're waiting for peace to come to the Middle East they're forgetting all about the admonition, "That when you see all these things come to pass, then lift up your eyes for our moment of redemption is coming near." And the more you see technology explode, the more you see world politics move into a global format, the more you see global economics, the more you see the religions and the major denominations of the world coming in under one headship (and they're doing it), then that tells us that time is short. Now coming back to the last verse again. Don't be concerned about the things that are seen, but rather look at the things that are not seen because they are eternal.
LESSON THREE * PART IV

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE?

II CORINTHIANS 4:1-5:9

Now in this lesson we're going to move into Chapter 5. I would like to make it known that even though our material is copyrighted that's only to protect us from somebody who would use it for profit. But anytime someone wants to copy our material we give full permission as long as you don't try to sell them for a profit. I do not believe in making merchandise of this Book (Bible). Now II Corinthians Chapter 5. Paul is still dealing with this whole concept that he thought he was going to die, and lose the rest of his ministry. So all of this is on his mind, but the Holy Spirit is inspiring it. In this chapter I will be able to answer the question, "What Happens When We Die.?" Here it is.

II Corinthians 5:1a

"For we know that if our earthly house..."

Our earthly house is a tent, a temporary dwelling place of our earthly body... a temporary place for the real you and the real me. See the real us, the part that's going on into eternity, is that invisible - the mind, the will and the emotion, the personality. It is simply dwelling in this old earthly tabernacle. And one of these days this old earthly tabernacle is going to dissolve and go back into the earth from which it came, unless the Rapture of the Church takes place first. And if that happens then this old body will just be changed. This earthly house, this earthly tabernacle is the body of flesh. Now reading on:

II Corinthians 5:1

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, (in other words it goes back into the ground from which it came. However that won't stop us because we're eternal. So) we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in heaven."

We should get excited about eternity. Even though Israel is more or less going to enjoy the ramification of the new earth, as God's earthly people, you and I as members of the Body of Christ are going to be heavenly. And I think that whatever new universe God is going to create, He will create one that will be literally garden plots for believers. I think that we will have responsibilities throughout all of God's new creation. And we won't be limited by time and space, but rather we'll be able to go to
the end of the universe and back in a second or two. We are literally going to be ruling with Christ in the heavenlies. My, what a prospect. And not for a thousand years, but for eternity. Now that's mind boggling. Eternal, forever in the heavens. Now verse 2:

**II Corinthians 5:2**

"For in this we groan, (we just can't fully comprehend) earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house (or our dwelling place) which is from heaven: In other words the new body. Now again I've got to turn to the Book of Philippians because there's a verse there that answers all the questions, "Well what kind of a body are we going to have when we get to the eternal?"

**Philippians 3:20,21**

"For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence (from that same heaven that our citizenship is now located) also we look for the Saviour, (not the King. Remember at His Second Coming when we come with Him, He will be coming as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. But when He comes for the Rapture or catching away of the Church He'll be coming as our Saviour.) the Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall change (it will be a metamorphous only on a grander scale than a butterfly. He shall change) our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

I always tell folks to study the 40 days after His resurrection if you want to get a glimpse of your new resurrected body. How did He operate? Well, He looked very normal, He had all the outward appearances of another human being. He walked in step with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, and they didn't see Him as something strange. They invited Him into the house for probably the evening meal then suddenly He's gone. The Lord didn't go out the door, He didn't slip out a window; He was gone, and in a split second He was in the upper room in Jerusalem with the disciples. And again He just suddenly appeared to the disciples. Then we find Him up at Galilee, and He stands there on the seashore and waits for the fellows to come to shore in their little boat. And when they don't have any fish what does He tell them? "Breakfast is ready." The Lord had fish frying, and had the bread ready, and the Scripture says He ate with them. Now is that weird or bizarre? No. He had a Human appearing Body, and It could do all the things that the disciples did, but now It was an eternal body, it was the resurrected Body. It was not of flesh and Blood, but rather flesh and bone. And the Spirit is the life-given aspect of that new Body and that's our prospect. So when this old body dies, and if we are buried and it goes back into corruption then we know without a shadow of doubt that this is going to be resurrected to a new body fashioned like His body. Now returning II Corinthians Chapter 5.
II Corinthians 5:2a

"For in this we groan, earnestly desiring..."

How many Christians today can earnestly say that? Very few I'm afraid, but I hope I'm wrong. But you see for every believer, the minute they wake up in the morning the first thing they should think is 'Oh Lord I hope you come today.' We should be so fed up with this old world. And I love life just as much as anybody. When I drive across those pastures and look at those cattle, I love it, just ask my wife. I think she sometime thinks she's in second place. So don't think I don't enjoy life.

But you know what I love more? The thought that maybe today or tonight I'm going to be suddenly in the realms of glory. What a prospect. And I know that takes a lot of faith. Iris and I were talking about it the other night. It just takes a lot of faith to believe that all of a sudden there's going to be a sudden disappearance of millions of people. I want you to realize that if you can believe God's Word it's going to happen. And I can understand when the scoffers say, 'How can you believe such stuff.' Because it does take faith. But for us who believe it is an exciting prospect that maybe before this day is over, maybe before this year is over, or before this century is over it's going to happen. And I believe we're getting so close, and it's going to happen because The Word declares it. Now verse 3:

II Corinthians 5:3-4

"If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. 4. For we that are in this tabernacle (we're still here in the flesh) do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

What's Paul driving at? We are not so much looking forward to losing this old body, and having the soul and spirit separated from it. But the whole prospect is that as soon as this body has quit functioning and is no longer necessary then we have a new one. One that's far better, one that will never again have an ounce of pain, one that will never again have sickness. Oh what a glorious prospect. But it's coming and we're getting so close. I try to tell even young people about how close we are. You can tell those young people the same thing that you can tell the older folks. "Hey listen we're getting close. One day this body, whether it's young, old or in-between, is suddenly going to be gone, and we're going to be clothed with that which is immortal."

We have seen lives full of vigor and vitality, suddenly gone in a split second. That also happens on our highways everyday, and we never know who's going to be next.
But all of a sudden this body that is prone to die is never going to die, only change, and that's the hope of the believer. Now verse 5:

**II Corinthians 5:5**

"Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, (it all began with God and it will all end with Him.) who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." Now why did the Holy Spirit inspire the apostle Paul to talk about something like a down payment? Because a down payment is something that is only a holding pattern until something later consummates. Let's go to Ephesians Chapter 1 for the answer.

**Ephesians 1:13,14**

"In whom (speaking of Christ) ye also trusted, (placed your faith) after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: (as you find in I Corinthians 15:1-4. How that Christ died for you, was buried, and rose again) in whom also after that ye believed, (in your heart) ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise. Which is the earnest (the down payment. I thought our salvation was complete. Yes and No. That's a terrible answer isn't it? Spiritually of the soul and spirit - Yes it's complete. We are redeemed, we are justified, we're sanctified, we're in the Body of Christ. But there's one part of the great plan of redemption that is only partial and here it is. At our salvation the Holy Spirit comes in as God's earnest or down payment) of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

Now what's the purchased possession if it's not the soul and spirit. Well there's that third part of us that has to be ready for eternity, and what is it? The body. Several years ago I had a pastor claim from our pulpit that, "God's not concerned about the physical body, but rather all He's concerned about is your soul.' Oh No? We are a three-part person. We are body, soul, and spirit! Before we go to the Book of Romans let's look at that in the Book of I Thessalonians Chapter 5.

**I Thessalonians 5:23**

"And the very God of peace sanctify (set you apart) you wholly; (completely) and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body (all three parts) be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The spirit, soul, and body is preserved for all eternity. We're talking about eternal things. So we're not going to be a viable entity in eternity until we get the body. The soul and spirit when it is totally redeemed, has experienced absolute salvation, so
what is waiting to be consummated? The body. Now let's go to Romans Chapter 8. In this chapter we find such a thrilling concept of that. In our next lesson we're going to get into detail about what happens to the believer the very moment that we die. The moment the medical authorities say, "Well, he or she is gone." Where are they? Well, they're in the presence of The Lord immediately. But for now read verses 22 and 23:

**Romans 8:22,23**

"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together (that's the whole creation) until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, (believers) even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

See how beautiful that all fits? So even though the moment we're saved, the soul and spirit are totally redeemed, it's saved, it's made ready for eternity. But what about this old body? Oh it's not ready yet. But God has put His down payment on it by virtue of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Remember that's His brand on us, and that tells us regardless of whether we go through the valley of the shadow of death and we're put out in the cemetery or whatever, we know one thing for sure, one day we're going to have a new body, and it's going to be reunited with the soul, and the spirit so that we're a complete entity for the eternal. Now back to II Corinthians Chapter 5:

**II Corinthians 5:6**

"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, (while we're alive here on the earth) we are absent (bodily) from the Lord." We can't be in both places at once. Now we know that spiritually in the realm of the invisible, yes we are already citizens of heaven. The Book of Colossians makes that so plain.

**Colossians 1:13**

"Who (God) hath (already) delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." So we're already citizens of that kingdom, but for now the soul and spirit are The Lord's. The Holy Spirit is indwelling us to be that comforter. But the old body is still prone to death and sickness, and failure.

**II Corinthians 5:7**
"(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)" How do we know all of this? Faith! And faith is taking God at His Word. If the Word declares it then we believe it and God reckons it for righteousness especially for salvation. Now in verse 8 Paul repeats.

II Corinthians 5:8

"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

I hope you haven't lost what we've been talking about, what the apostle has just recently gone through. There he was lying on a sick bed in Philippi having barely escaped with his life I suppose out of Ephesus. He was under constant attack from all of his adversaries within the Church as well as without, and death then almost becomes, I think, a welcome escape. But on the other hand Paul realizes that there is unfinished business to be done. There are still people to be reached with the Gospel as only he could do it. Now verse 9:

II Corinthians 5:9a

"Wherefore we labour,..."

Paul's life is not his own. He had long pitched that. You remember he said in the Book of Philippians that he counted everything in his past, which was no doubt rather lucrative in the area of Judaism, and probably had a rather expensive lifestyle. I think he had a family, he probably had a beautiful home in Jerusalem, and he called it all but dung. And it was all for the sake of the Gospel.

II Corinthians 5:9

"Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him."

Now that's not for salvation, but rather for rewards. A lot of people don't like to look at it in that light, but that's the whole idea of salvation in the first place. God leaves us here to further the work of the Gospel. And as we do it in whatever capacity that God gives us, it's to be for His glory to further the work of the Gospel. Because you never know. You may just drop a word someplace, you may just have a short conversation with someone that will all of a sudden make them start thinking. And they're going to start considering some of the claims of God on their life.

Oh I hear it almost every day of just one little comment someone may make. And it just blows people's minds. There was a guy that called from the audience, and he said, "I just love to go in and bounce some of these things off people, and they look at me
quizzically, and all I say is, `Well think about it.'" One of these people happened to be a pastor, and the next day was at his door, and the pastor said, "I never thought of these things before but now you've got me searching the Scriptures." Well you can do that also. My, you come across someone and all you have to say is, "Have you ever thought about it? Have you ever considered it? Well think about it because eternity is long, eternity is forever." We can do this while we are yet in the body.