Now as we begin this new book let me pause for a moment and say thank you again for all the support that you have given us, and especially your prayers. We know that we cannot do this in the energy of the flesh. Now picking up where we left off in the last program, and that will be in Chapter 11:22. Remember, as we begin, Paul has to constantly remind not only the Corinthians, but you and I as well, that he was the God-ordained apostle of the Gentiles, the non-Jew and he has to constantly defend that. Even the Corinthians which were probably a mixture of some Jews but still mostly Gentiles, were evidently bombarding him with the accusation that, after all, he didn't have the authority that Peter, James and John had because they had been with Christ for three years.

II Corinthians 13:3a

"Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me,..."

But Paul will show us that he also had direct contact with Christ. Not in the way that the Twelve had in walking up and down the dusty roads of Palestine, but nevertheless the Lord has appeared to this apostle over and over and especially, as we're going to see today, to give him encouragement in spite of all the sufferings and disappointments that he had to go through. As we come into verse 22 of Chapter 11 he is again coming back to this same point. Those Twelve back there in Israel didn't have anything over him because look what he says.

II Corinthians 11:22

"Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I."

So with regard to genealogy they didn't have anything over the apostle Paul, because he, too, was all of these. Now verse 23:

II Corinthians 11:23a
"Are they ministers of Christ? [now here is where Paul's humility shows through, and this is the only reason he says this, because he is always saying `I'm nothing.'](I speak as a fool) I am more;..."

How could the man say that? **Because of the revelations that he had received, not from the pre-crucified Christ, but the Christ after His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.** And that makes all the difference in the world. I've made the point that if you made a will back in 1980 and covered everything, dotting every `i' and crossing every `t,' but then in 1990 you had some changes, you would write a new will then. Then, say, in 1992 you pass away and they go into your personal items and find two wills, one dated in 1980 (in which everything's in order), and another one dated 1990 (just as signed and dated), well which one do the courts look at? The last one, and that is much the same way with Paul's apostleship. He had not walked with Christ as the Twelve did, **but he had further revelations at a later time and as he says over and over, they now become the primary apostle.**

Now we're going to see it again even in Chapter 12, but for example let's just jump ahead in verse 11, and again he used the word `fool' merely to show the fact that he has no pride in himself. He did not have an ego problem.

**II Corinthians 12:11**

"I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: (because of their constant resistance to his authority he has to come back and prove it. He says. `you're the ones that are causing me to say all this, because you won't believe me.' ) for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, (Peter, James and John) though I be nothing."

They were what I call the inner sanctum of the Twelve. But Paul says that he is even ahead of them. Now go all the way back to Chapter 11 and you'll find the same thing in verse 5. Now here we have this three times in the space of a chapter, you might say where the Holy Spirit led him to say the same thing. And what have I told you ever since we started in Genesis? When the Scripture repeats something several times in a rather short span it's there for emphasis, and we'd better take note of it. All right now look what it says back in Chapter 11 verse 5:

**II Corinthians 11:5**

"For I suppose I was not a whit behind, the very chiefest apostles."

Do you see that? So three times now he is making the point that Peter, James, and John were not above him, in fact it's just the other way around. They have slipped off
the scene, and now this man is God's chosen vessel to take the Gospel of Grace not just to the Nation of Israel, but to the whole world. Now coming back where we left off in Chapter 11.

**II Corinthians 11:23**

"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prison more frequent, in deaths oft."

Now let's stop for a moment. How much physical suffering did the Twelve disciples go through until they were finally martyred? As far as we know, none. Certainly not during Christ's earthly ministry. Now we know they were all martyred, I take nothing away from that. But for this man throughout the whole 20 years of his ministry it was nothing but one beating after another. One imprisonment after another, and it was constant opposition from his own countrymen the Jews. And so for a whole 20-year period the man suffered only for the sake of the Gospel, and the Twelve didn't have to do that. Now we're going to see in Chapter 12 that he was dragged out of Lystra for dead, but evidently there were other times when, so far as the apostle was concerned, he was next to death whether it was through sickness or through the beatings or through imprisonment or whatever. Now verse 24:

**II Corinthians 11:24**

"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one."

In other words, they would stop at 39. The Law said 40, but in order to make sure they didn't miscount and to be on the safe side they would stop at 39. But you know what? Very few victims could take that many, and usually the chief priest would have to stop the whipper before they would get up to that point. Most men couldn't take that many stripes, they would die as they were being whipped. You and I, in our modern age, have no concept of what a human being looked like after they had been beaten 39 times.

Stoning was even worse. I was reading the other night in a biography on the apostle Paul how, when the Jews stoned someone to death, the corpse was obscene. It stands to reason that is correct as they would use rocks so big that it would take two hands to smash it down on the victim. And by the time they were through with them they were literally pummeled to where they were obscene. All right, the apostle went through that also, so we have to constantly remember (as we sit now in our western culture and most of us for sure have never had to suffer for our faith yet in order for us to have our New Testament as we know it), this is what the man had to go through. Now there was some reasoning for it and it goes back to the old saying. "What goes around,
comes around." Remember for several years this man did the same things to his victims. He was unmerciful to his fellow Jews because they had believed in Jesus of Nazareth. And that's why God told Ananias there in Damascus:

Acts 9:16

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

I'm bringing all this out to get you ready for Chapter 12, because we're going to have a tremendous experience in that chapter. So here he's been suffering at the hands of the Jews, at the hands of the Romans.

II Corinthians 11:25

"Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;"

The Book of Acts only records one shipwreck so there must have been two other times he was dumped in the water. And the same way with these beatings. I can only find once in the Book of Acts where the Jews gave him the 39 stripes, and yet he says that they did that to him five times. Three times he was beaten with rods and that's almost as bad. Then once he was stoned and that's the one we will look at in Chapter 12. Now verse 26:

II Corinthians 11:26,27

"In journeying often, (remember the man covered what is now Turkey and Greece on foot) in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen (the non-Jewish world) in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often in cold and nakedness."

We've had it pretty good haven't we? I don't think any of us have gone through any of this for the sake of the Gospel. If the Lord doesn't come back soon, the day may come, as we never know what the future holds. We do know that right now, today, thousands of Christians are being tortured and put to death. Some are sold into slavery in other parts of the world. In fact I was reading that since 1900 more Christians have been martyred than all then rest of time back to the time of Christ. Now we don't realize that.
But remember that communism held forth in Russia for 70 years, and it was ruthless. The Nazis in Germany were ruthless, and the Chinese have been ruthless and still are. In Africa we have no idea of the amount of Christian people who have suffered for their faith. So here we sit in America, and we're so blessed with all of our liberties, and freedoms, and our guarantees of freedom, and too often we do not stop to think that this is a rare commodity that we hold in our hands. This is something that too many areas of the world would just love to be able to do. To be able to sit down without fear and study the Word of God. So let's never fail to thank God that we are in such a place of liberty and opportunity. Now verse 28, and remember on top of all these hardships he had other concerns.

**II Corinthians 11:28**

"Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care (or the concerns) of all the churches." (assemblies)

I like the word `assemblies' better for Churches. That meant wherever he went he would establish a small assembly of believers. It was usually in a home, and it was called the local church. As reports would come back to him (that maybe some false teachings and vile sin had come into that congregation), we know that it just tore at the man. Now verse 29.

**II Corinthians 11:29**

"Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?"

In other words, Paul identified with all these converts that he had brought out of paganism, or Judaism.

**II Corinthians 11:30-32a**

"If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. (his weaknesses) 31. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. 32. In Damascus..."

In Damascus where it all started as we find back there in Acts Chapter 9, where Saul of Tarsus met the Lord on the road, was blinded, and then led into Damascus. After he got his sight back, and got food, remember how he went into the Synagogue and proclaimed that Jesus was the Christ.

**Acts 9:20**
"And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God."

Remember how I put it back there in the Book of Acts? Well you see that message was no longer sufficient. God was going to turn from the Jew only and let the Gentiles be the primary players. It was not the message that God wanted this man to preach. It was not enough to simply believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. God had further revelations to give this man. So there in Damascus God forced the issue. What happened? Oh, the word got out that there were people who were ready to put him to death. There were Jews who understood that he had turncoated on them. So he had to flee for his life, being let down over the wall in a basket, and then God took him to Arabia for three years for those revelations of the mysteries. But here in II Corinthians is what Paul is making reference to. He says right from the very beginning his whole life of fear and suffering began.

II Corinthians 11:32,33

"In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: 33. And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands."

Now that's the way to start a career isn't it? Right off the bat he has to start running for his life. Well it was all part and parcel, you see, of getting the man ready for the Gospel of Grace as we know it today. **That Christ died for our sins, and He was not left in the grave, He's alive evermore, He arose from the dead.** And that's our Gospel that we believe for salvation as we find in I Corinthians 15:1-4. Paul is going to take this Gospel to the ends of the then-known world.

And today, even with all of this in Paul's writings in the New Testament, that Gospel is so shunned. We just do not hear the uniqueness of Paul's apostleship. What a sad commentary because this is where we are going to find eternal life. It's the very heart of our New Testament from Romans through Hebrews, and this is why I'm always stressing the fact that this man was brought into all of this suffering and turmoil so that you and I as Gentiles can have this tremendous Gospel of the Grace of God. Now let's move into Chapter 12. Keep in mind two basic points that I've been trying to make throughout II Corinthians. How that he has to defend his apostleship. That he does have the authority even though he did not walk with Christ up and down the roads of Palestine. Paul had that apologetic authority. The second one was that we're not under Law, but rather Grace. So these things are going to be preeminent in his writings not only to the Corinthians but as we go on through the other letters.

II Corinthians 12:1
"It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord."

In the next verse he says something that I suppose a lot of people just gloss over (and they really don't know what he's talking about).

II Corinthians 12:2

"I knew (know) a man in Christ above (or about) fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven."

Now there is so much in this verse that I hardly know where to go back in our references first. But I think we'll go back to the time that he is referring to and that would be back in the Book of Acts Chapter 14. This was on Paul's first missionary journey. But he's gone up into central Turkey on that first missionary journey, and at the little city of Lystra he had performed a miracle. You would have thought that would have settled everything but rather it got everyone in an uproar because they thought he was a god. But it turned on him and when they suddenly realized that he wasn't a god, they came violently against him. And the Jews were leading the mob.

Acts 14:19

"And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, (these were cities close together) who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, (according the Jewish system of execution) drew (probably use a rope to drag) him out of the city, (of Lystra) supposing he had been dead."

Remember the ancients weren't that stupid. They had a good idea when life was still in the body, so I have to feel that for all practical purposes Paul died as a result of this stoning.

Acts 14:20

"Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, (don't forget what I told you about people who were stoned. Their corpse was so crushed and mutilated and yet this is miraculous. We don't know how many hours he laid there with his fellow believers in a dither of what to do.) he rose up, and came into the city: (I think if I'd been him I would have headed in the other direction,) and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe."
Now if you will come back to II Corinthians. The reason I tie this with the stoning in Lystra is because, chronologically, it fits. It was probably about 45 or 46 AD when Paul was on that first missionary journey, and we know that he wrote II Corinthians in about 60 AD So chronologically it fits. It was at this time that he experienced this tremendous opportunity to see the glories of Heaven, Paradise. Now let's read on. He says:

**II Corinthians 12:2b**

"...(whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth,) (well I think it's obvious to us that he was out of the body. I think the body was the one laying outside of Lystra having been stoned. So the soul and spirit took flight.) God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven."

Now we're going to look at these three heavens in Scripture for a moment so come with me to the Book of Genesis. There is the first heaven, the second, and the third. Now the first heaven is what we would call the air or atmosphere - the area where the birds fly, so we know what the Scripture is talking about. The second area is what we now call space or the area of the stars and so forth. The third one is Heaven as we know it. It the very abode of God.

**Genesis 7:23a**

"And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven;..."

So it was already referred to in Genesis that the atmosphere is part of what the Bible calls the first heaven.
LESSON ONE * PART II

PAUL'S GLIMPSE OF GLORY

II CORINTHIANS 11:22 - GALATIANS 1:7

We'll pick right up where we left off, and were going back for a moment to II Corinthians Chapter 12. Then we'll go back and look at our other reference with regard to verse 2.

II Corinthians 12:2

"I know a man in Christ (in other words a true born again believer) above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven."

I was in the process of showing how the Scriptures lay out all three of the heavens. We looked at the verse about the first heaven in Genesis at the close of the last lesson. Now if you will go back with me to the Book of Deuteronomy Chapter 4. Remember the first heaven refers to our atmosphere. But the second heaven is the area of the stars, and we get a view of that in verse 19.

Deuteronomy 4:19a

"And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars even all the host of heaven,..."

Now that's not the Heaven that we normally think of as the abode of God, but rather the second heaven. It's not the area where the birds fly, and it's certainly not the abode of God. Now if we can come back to II Corinthians we will find that Paul will delineate the third Heaven as being Paradise. Again we will chase down some Scriptures on Paradise. But for now II Corinthians Chapter 12, and going on into verse 3.

II Corinthians 12:3,4a

"And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) 4. How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful (or permitted) for a man to utter..."(or repeat)

Now we have to get an understanding of Paradise in the Old Testament and New Testament to realize that the apostle here is so in accord with all of Scripture. You
remember when we were teaching these things in the Old Testament we taught that in the Old Testament economy the atonement Blood of Christ had not yet been shed, and animals blood could not do anything but cover the sin. So the Old Testament believer could not go up into the presence of God when he died, but rather he went down into Paradise. We're going to show you now that this is the right direction to look at it. Here in Matthew 12 we find Christ is in His earthly ministry. Jesus is speaking.

Matthew 12:39,40

"But he answered and said unto them, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas; 40. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.'"

So the moment Jesus died He went down, not up. So everything concerning Paradise in the Old Testament economy until after Christ's resurrection was down to this area in the center of the earth. We get another little window of that in Luke Chapter 16:19. Now I'm sure you've all heard sermons on this so I'm not showing you anything new. All of this helps us understand what Paul now teaches with regard to Paradise compared to what it was in the Old Testament and during Christ's earthly ministry.

Luke 16:19-23a

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores. 21. And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23. And in hell..."

Hell in the Old Testament in the Hebrew word was 'Sheol,' in the Greek it was Hades, in English it's hell. They all mean the same thing. All three of these words ware simply the abode of those who had departed this life. A lot of people go to churches who use the apostles creed, and they ask the question, "What does it mean when we repeat our creed, and it says that we believe that Jesus died, was buried, and descended into hell. Do you mean that Jesus when He died went down into hell fire?" No He did not go into hell fire. But Jesus did go down into the Paradise side of hell. And here is what I'm talking about in this passage.

Luke 16:23-31
"And in hell he (the rich man) lift up his eyes, being in torment, (he was an unbeliever) and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. (two believers) 24. And he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, (the rich man must have been a Jew to say that) have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame.' 25. But Abraham (he, too, is in hell, but not in the torment side but rather the Paradise side.) said, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.' 27. Then he said, 'I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28. For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' 29. Abraham saith unto him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' 30. And he said, 'Nay father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.' 31. And he said unto him, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.'"

So remember in hell at that time one side was torment and the other side was Paradise. Now come back for a moment to the Book of Ephesians Chapter 4, and we'll see what happened. And while you're looking for Ephesians I'll remind you of another statement that Jesus made from the Cross. And one of the thieves was talking to Jesus.

Luke 23:42,43

"And he said unto Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.' 43. And Jesus said unto him, 'Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.'"

In Paradise that day they went down and joined the saints that were waiting for this great work of atonement. Now since the atoning Blood had been shed and Christ has spent these three days and nights in Paradise, now look what Paul says happened.

Ephesians 4:8-10

"Wherefore he saith, 'When he ascended up on high, [that is after His resurrection] he led captivity captive, [well who had been in captivity? Well those believing Old Testament saints. They were held in the Paradise side of hell waiting for the atoning Blood. which had now been shed.] and gave gifts unto men. 9. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)"
See how that fits with Jesus' account in Matthew Chapter 12? And here Paul puts the cap stone on it that before Jesus ascended to glory, He descended into Paradise and took those who were captive with Him.

Now come back with me to II Corinthians Chapter 12. Now when Paul says that when he went up to Paradise, you see this is confirmation of the fact that Paradise is no longer down in the center of the earth, but now it's in glory. In fact let's look for a moment at II Corinthians Chapter 5. Now here is the lot of the present day believer when they die. It has been ever since Christ ascended.

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."

Now if he's going to be present with the Lord, where is he hoping to go? Paradise! Because Paradise is now in Heaven as we understand Heaven. Have you got that? Now coming back to Chapter 12. Paul has now gotten a glimpse of Heaven as we normally think of Heaven. With all of it's beauty, and no doubt with all of the music. Now I love good music, and I think when we hear good music here on earth that it's just a sampling of what we're going to experience when we get to glory. Now, evidently, Paul had full exposure to all this. He saw the glories, he heard the magnificent things as we see in verse 4.

II Corinthians 12:4

"How that he was caught up into paradise, (into the third Heaven) and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

In other words God said, "All right Paul I'm letting you see and hear, but you can't repeat it, you have to keep it to yourself." Now verse 5.

II Corinthians 12:5,6

"Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. 6. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; (Paul is remembering what God had instructed) for I say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be or that he heareth of me."

What's Paul saying? If God had permitted him to repeat what he had seen and heard, what would the human race have done with the apostle Paul? They would have worshipped him. The apostle Paul is just as human as you and I. Never does Paul
expect worship from any of his converts. He's not God. So this is one of the failures of mankind, and this is why I'm sure that Noah's Ark has never been discovered. You know what would have happened. The world would flock to worship something like that, and the same way with many other things that God has seen fit to keep hidden because of the way the human heart is. Well if Paul could have rehearsed with any of his people, or even to the Roman world in general, of what he had seen and heard they would have fallen down and worshipped him, so God wouldn't permit that. So He put the stigma on Paul that he couldn't repeat what he had seen and heard.

Now again this happened fourteen years back from where we are studying. Now put all this together. When this man was going through intense suffering, from whippings and so forth what do you think constantly sustained him? What he saw and heard in glory. And on top of that how many times the Lord Jesus appeared unto him like he did at Corinth, when the Lord said unto him, "Don't give up Paul, I have a great number of people in this place." And the time they were about to be shipwrecked on that trip to Rome and a lot of the prisoners were about to be put to death for fear they would escape. That's when Paul just brought everything under control and said, "Look, God has appeared to me and not a life is going to be lost." So the Lord Jesus communicated with him often. Paul had these things of the supernatural to compensate for all his trials and all of his sufferings. Now you and I don't have that, but he did, and so when he would come through these beatings he could just remind himself, **But just look what I've got coming.** Let's go back to the Book of Romans for a moment and look at Chapter 8 and we'll begin with verse 18. Romans was probably written about 10 years after Paul got a glimpse of glory. So now look how he could write with full understanding, even though it's inspired by the Holy Spirit.

**Romans 8:18**

"*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time (see how plain that is now?)* are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Believers just can't seem to get that through their heads. Even though we may shun a lot of the world's pleasures, and we may not enjoy some of the things that the world thinks are enjoyable, is it worth it? Well you better believe it. Because no matter what we suffer even if we suffered to the extent that the apostle Paul suffered, we would still be able to say, *Oh but it's worth it because of the glory that is waiting for us.* And it's not just going to be seventy years to compensate for seventy years down here, but rather it's forever. Some pastor in our audience sent me a chart that he had made and an at the very end of the chart he had eternity, ages upon ages, a time without end. We may have to suffer yet some day, we don't know, but if we do that's what has to hold us up. No matter how much we suffer it's going to be worth it all, because of the glory that's going to be revealed to us someday. Now there is also
another scripture that we can use for this in I Corinthians Chapter 2. And again, remember this was written long after this tremendous experience. And I'm not taking away from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. I feel every word in this Book is Holy Spirit breathed, but remember, as men wrote their personality, their personal feelings were also evident.

_I Corinthians 2:9_

"But as it is written, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'"

What a promise, and God can't lie. So we can rest on it that the day is coming when we are going to experience things like what Paul had the privilege to see. I think Paul was just bursting to tell us what he had seen back here in II Corinthians Chapter 12. Oh how he would like to have shared at least some of it, but he couldn't, and that's the reason because they would have worshipped him. Now coming back to II Corinthians Chapter 12. To make sure that Paul never forgot what does God do? Gives him a thorn in the flesh.

_II Corinthians 12:7_

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations,..."

See how plain that is when you know now what he is talking about? What was the abundance of the revelations? Well, first the revelations of these doctrines of Grace, the Gospel, and the Church Age teachings that he got to share, but on top of that he got a glimpse of glory, a revelation, and the man is bursting to tell about that experience. And yet God says in so many words, that, "I don't want you to get the big head, I don't want you to get proud, and so I'm going to give you a thorn in the flesh to keep you humble."

_II Corinthians 12:7b_

"...there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure."

Now the Greek makes it so much stronger. I'm not a Greek scholar, but a few of these verses I go back and do a little study on. Do you know what Paul is actually calling here this thorn in the flesh? It was like being crucified. It was that kind of a constant pain. It was as if he was constantly suffering crucifixion. Now that is what the Greek actually implies. In order to keep Paul humble, the Lord had given him a thorn in the
flesh that was like an impalement that he had to live with: and he's already had it over fourteen years. And we have to assume that he carried it to his death. Now there's a lot of controversy from various points of view as to what his thorn in the flesh was. Some of them are absurd, and some make some sense, but the one that I still stand on is this: I think he had a vicious case of pink eye. It was very common in the ancient world and they didn't have the antibiotics and so forth, and it would lead to his repulsive appearance. Those matterly eyes effected his eye sight as we see in the Book of Galatians.

*Galatians 4:15*

"Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me."

Why would they want to give him their eyes if he didn't have a need for them? Then the next one is in Chapter 6.

*Galatians 6:11*

"Ye see how large a letter (large print) I have written unto you with mine own hand."

Who uses large print? Blind people.
LESSON ONE * PART III

PAUL'S GLIMPSE OF GLORY

II CORINTHIANS 11:22 - GALATIANS 1:7

Remember we were talking in our last lesson about Paul's thorn in the flesh (which we do not claim to have the only answer). But a logical one for me is that it was a common eye disease in that period of time and it was repulsive in his appearance. It was painful and it limited his eye sight and, consequently, I think that is the reason that he dictated all of his letters, seemingly, except the Book of Galatians. And that's what I closed with in the last lesson, how that he had to write the whole letter in huge block letters for his own sake so that he could read it himself.

So as we come on down in Chapter 12 again let's start at verse 8. Here God gives him the reason for keeping the man humbled and evidently putting him through all the trials and sufferings.

II Corinthians 12:8,9a

"For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, (three times) that it (this thorn in the flesh) might depart from me. 9. And he (the Lord Jesus Himself) said unto me, 'My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect (or complete) in weakness....'"

Again I have to take us back to I Corinthians because this is the whole concept of Christian service. I don't mind a bit when, once in a while, someone will say to me, "Les, the Lord is blessing your ministry so don't get the big head." Because that's always a danger in any ministry, and don't think we don't know that. The moment we think that we can do it ourselves we're all done. It has to be done as a weak vessel that God has seen fit to use.

I Corinthians 1:26

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:"

Now that says it all doesn't it? God doesn't go to the kings and queens of world, nor does he usually go to the ivy covered halls of universities for his servants. He never has. All you have to do is go back into the Old Testament economy and look. Don't think for a moment that there weren't more highly polished people to be used than Amos, Gideon, and Ezekiel and some of these people. They were just common
ordinary members of the Jewish nation, but that's what God saw fit to use. So Paul is really an exception to the rule. Paul was highly educated and no doubt had a lot of polish because he certainly moved in the upper echelons of Judaism. This is why he constantly puts himself down as nothing, because he realizes that God cannot use somebody unless they are nothing.

Do you know the prime example for that situation in Scripture is Moses. Do you remember back there in Exodus. Moses, at the end of his first 40 years, having lived in Pharaoh's palace (and was the second top man in Egypt), what did he think he could do? Well, he thought he could take the children of Israel out of slavery because of his own power and pomp and circumstance, wisdom, and leadership, so he went out to the children of Israel and as the Book of Acts says:

Acts 7:25

"For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not."

But you see God had to get Moses in the right position before He could use him. See he was leaving God out of the picture, and was using his own position, and what did God have to do to Moses? He took him out on the back side of the desert and of all the things that the man could have done to make a living, what does God put him in? A sheep herd. Which, in the eyes of an Egyptian, was an abomination. That's what Moses had to become before God could use him. For 40 years, living with those smelly sheep with almost no contact with any number of humans, and so he became a nothing. And when God finally approached him there at the burning bush, what was Moses' first excuse? "Hey I can't talk." Well for 40 years of practically being silent he'd almost forgotten how to talk. But you see how far God had to take him before He could use him. Now the same way with the apostle Paul. Remember he was highly educated, and had studied at the feet of Gamaliel, the chief rabbi of that day, and of a wealthy Jewish family. But what did God have to do? He had to take him down to a nobody. Now reading verse 27. Instead of God choosing the noble one or the highly educated:

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; 28. And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are."
I still remember a long time ago, when the lady called after seeing our program for the first time, and her first question was, "Well who in the world are you anyway?" Well, this humbles you and don't think it doesn't. I'm a nobody and I still claim that, and that's why I feel God has seen fit to use us. God does not use that which the world thinks is proper and has been rightly fitted for service. Now verse 29, and here is given the same concept to why Paul was given the thorn in the flesh.

**I Corinthians 1:29,30**

"That no flesh should glory (boast, or brag) in his presence. (God won't have it.) 30. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:"

Those are things that God accomplishes and no man can take credit for it. Now coming back to II Corinthians Chapter 12. So rather in Paul's weakness under the effect of this thorn in the flesh, whatever it was - under the effect of constantly being misused, beatings, shipwrecked, in prison, cold, miserable, hot, thirsty, you name it because the man went through it all, and only for the sake of taking the Gospel to a lost world. That's all he could think about. Now finishing verse 9:

**II Corinthians 12:9b**

"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, (his weaknesses) that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Do you see what he's saying? Paul wasn't wishing for power and circumstance, and political clout, he cared for none of that. But as long as he could be a nobody, who could use him? God could. You know, the more I've been studying with regard to these two letters to the Corinthians (and I hope I'm bringing it home to you), the more I see the insurmountable odds that this man was facing when he went into the absolutely strange territory of pagan Gentiles who knew nothing of the God of this Bible. Oh the little Jewish communities of these cities did, but the Jews never evangelize; the Jews never took their knowledge out to the pagan Gentiles.

So when Paul comes into the cities that we talked about earlier as he traveled on his missionary journeys, every one of these cities were abject pagan idolaters who knew nothing of the God of creation. And on top of that, they weren't even good people, they were rotten morally. You have no idea how morally corrupt most of the cities in the Roman Empire were, it's unbelievable. And yet it was into that kind of environment this man walked with no pleasant appearance, with nothing physically going for him. All he did was preach Christ crucified, and risen again, and those people turned from their idols and became believers.
They were so staunch in their faith that they were willing to be martyred by the hundreds, and they never wavered as Paul has shown over and over in his writings. In spite of everything that those early believers went through, they didn't give up, and how in the world did it happen? Well, it was the power of God when the Gospel was preached. I think it's the same way today. Oh, I know we're living in times when it seems like our moral fabric is just rotting away, but when I read how things were in the Roman Empire, hey we're not that bad yet, I believe that there is still hope. At least most of our American people have a concept of God. I read recently that 2/3 of the American people are sure that one day they're going to stand before God, now that's hard to believe isn't it?

Remember Paul didn't have that kind of an advantage. He didn't approach people who know that there was a God. He didn't approach people who had any concept of Biblical morality. They were abject immorally, I mean blatantly immoral pagans. And all he did was preach faith in the Gospel and they came out of that kind of lifestyle. I was told by a gentlemen several years ago who had come out of a pretty fast lane lifestyle (and he has been one of my students for at least 15 years now), "Les, do you realize that you never say a word against drinking, smoking, cursing, gambling or illicit sex? You have never said a word against any of that." I said, "Well, I didn't realize it." He said "Well, you don't but you brought me out of all of that." How? By teaching the Word of God. That's all it takes. You get people into the Word and you don't have to get on them about whatever sins they may have committed because the Word takes care of it. We're trying to somehow legislate all these problems, and trying to bring people in on a guilt trip, and yeah, they've got to be found guilty, but by realizing what the Word says. And this is exactly what Paul is after. Now looking at the verse again.

II Corinthians 12:9b

"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Paul wasn't looking for some gimmick to get people's attention. He wasn't looking for some Madison Avenue approach to get the masses to come and hear him. But when he preached, in all of it's simplicity, people were convicted. And as he said when he wrote to the Thessalonians (and this is what he experienced everywhere he went. Simply because he preached Christ crucified, buried, and risen from the dead. That's the power of the Gospel, and even though we can't understand it, God in His own way will bring people to a knowledge of the truth):

I Thessalonians 1:8,9
"For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. (do you know what was happening? As soon as Paul saw these people converted out of paganism what did they do? They shared it wherever they went. They couldn't shut those people's mouths.) 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;"

Isn't that amazing? Here Paul could come into a pagan city with all of its pagan statues and their gods and goddesses, and he would preach how God came in the flesh and went to that Cross, and was raised from the dead, and they believed it. Wonder of wonders. but they believed it. So, consequently, he had so many converts that they accused him of turning the Roman world upside down. Like one pastor I had years ago said, "Well it's just the other way around, he turned it right side up." Anyway, there was such an impact from this one man preaching the Gospel that the world in general said, "That man is turning the empire upside down." And we know he did. Now coming back to II Corinthians Chapter 12.

II Corinthians 12:12

"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. 13. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches,(assemblies) except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong."

Remember when Paul was asking for offerings? This is the one church that he did not really come out and put any pressure on them to give. But rather he tried to intimidate them by showing them that all the poor people up in the mountains had already made collections for the poor saints in Jerusalem. And from these Corinthians (many of whom were quite wealthy), he hadn't even asked for a dime, and this is what he's coming back to. Then he tells them to, "forgive me this wrong." That's a different way of approaching it isn't it? He says, "It's really my fault. I should have made you aware that you should give of your material wealth.

II Corinthians 12:14a

"Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you:...."

Paul wanted believers sold out to Christ. I dare say, myself included, that we would all like to be totally sold out to God. But you see it is almost totally impossible, it seems, for a man to be totally, completely sold out to God. But this is what God is looking
for. Now he won't demand it, He won't force us, but oh, how God is looking for men and women, boys and girls who can be literally be sold out to Him.

I think the apostle Paul probably did. You want to remember that he left all of his material wealth behind him. He counted it but dung in order to take the Gospel to the Gentile world. I've always said that I was sure that Paul had a wife and family because he was a member of the Sanhedrin, and in order to be a member of the Sanhedrin you had to have a family. You had to know how to deal with family problems. As a result of this tremendous apostle being sold out to Christ, he probably lost his wife. She probably turned against him (remember he had been a high man in Jewish religion). Anyway Paul turned his back on everything in order to take the Gospel to these pagan ungodly, immoral Gentiles. Now verse 15.

**II Corinthians 12:15**

"And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved."

Does that sound familiar? Oh does it ever. The more he loved those Corinthians the more they turned against him and said, "We're not going to listen to that man, now we're going to listen to Peter." After all Peter was with Christ, where Paul never was. I showed this verse several months ago and had some calls from people who said they never knew this verse was in their Bible. It might be appropriate to stop and look at the verse again in II Timothy Chapter 1. You know this must have been a heartache for the man. After all the sufferings, beatings, imprisonment, and the shipwrecks, to simply take the Gospel to people who had never heard it. He saw them established in it, saw Churches established, but look what he says in this verse.

**II Timothy 1:15a**

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

Now isn't that something? What had happened? Well I think that it wasn't that they had pitched Christianity overboard, but I think they turned their back on the apostle Paul's teaching of pure Grace and went back under so much of the legalistic teaching and influence of Peter, James, John and the Jewish community, as we're going to see when we get into the Book of Galatians. So, what a heartache: all these little Churches that he suffered for and had spent so much time with, and had been encouraged that they were growing in Grace and knowledge - and yet as he now writes from prison in Rome just before he's martyred that he has to make a statement like this. "...that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me;..." They had rejected him. to what
extent I don't know. But remember the Scripture is true. They had not remained true to the apostle who had brought them out of their paganism. Now back to II Corinthians Chapter 12.

**II Corinthians 12:16-18**

"But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile. (Paul did use some strategy and he caught them in places where they were failing) 17. Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you? (did they squeeze every dollar they could out of you? No.) 18. I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps?"

In other words Titus didn't beg for money any more than Paul did. Now let's wind up Chapter 12.

**II Corinthians 12:21**

"And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed."
LESSON ONE * PART IV

PAUL'S GLIMPSE OF GLORY

II CORINTHIANS 11:22 - GALATIANS 1:7

Let's pick up here in Chapter 13, and I'm not going to take this last chapter verse by verse, as you can read it at your leisure. However, I do want to close the Book with the final verse which is verse 14. This verse is probably the clearest statement concerning the Trinity that you can find anywhere in Scripture, next to Christ's baptism. I know when someone writes wanting to know where we get the idea of the Trinity (and if we can give them Scriptures for it), that the two we use the most are this one and where Christ was baptized:

Matthew 3:16,17

"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 17. And lo a voice from heaven, saying, `This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'"

At His baptism you have all three persons of the Trinity there at one time. Now here in this verse we have the apostle Paul making reference also to the three Persons of the Godhead in a pure unadulterated statement. Now verse 14:

II Corinthians 13:14

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, (The Father is implied) and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."

Now it's interesting that, normally when we speak of the Trinity, out of habit we put them in the order of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. But when you look at this verse, there is something different. Paul changes the order of the three. Paul puts Christ first rather than the Father. Not that there is any change in the way the Trinity operates. Never. You've all heard me teach that there is no such thing as God the Father having power over God the Son, and over the Spirit or vice versa. They are all three co-equal. They are all three members of the Godhead. Let me take you, for a moment, to the Book of Colossians where Paul makes that same statement.

Here is where the Jewish people in their Old Testament background refer to Christianity as a polytheism. They call us a religion of three Gods. But we're not three
Gods, it's three Persons in one God. And of course the Old Testament does not clarify that like it does in the New Testament.

**Colossians 2:8,9**

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 9. For in him (that is in Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Now backing up a little bit to Colossians Chapter 1. And I think all of this gives us a clear picture that the Godhead is that invisible Spirit out of which God the Son stepped and became visible.

**Colossians 1:15-19**

"Who (speaking of God the Son and the redeeming Blood in verses 13 and 14) is the image of the invisible God, (the Godhead) the first born of every creature: (in other words Christ was pre-eternal in His existence just like God the Father, and God the Spirit.) 16. For by him (God the Son) 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; all things were created by him, and for him; 17. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. (or held together. Remember now this is speaking of God the Son) 18. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; (referring to His resurrection) that in all things he might have the preminence. 19. For it pleased the Father that in him (Christ) should all fulness dwell;"

So the members of the Godhead are not One above the other, but rather they are all co-equal. Now returning to our text in II Corinthians. This is why, now, that Paul in complete liberty, and again, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, can sort of reverse the order that we normally use. Looking at verse 14 again:

**II Corinthians 13:14**

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."

Well, that will more or less wrap up our study of the Corinthian letters, and so we'll just turn the page and go right into the next one in the New Testament order which is the Book of Galatians. Now I've put a caricature map on the board and although it's not according to scale, I think most of you will recognize what part of the world we're speaking of here. Some of you might wonder. "Why don't you use a professional
map?" Well the reason I stick to my mundane simplistic way of doing things is that my whole thrust of teaching is to get you to teach people like I do. I don't know the number of times I've had people sit with us over the years at the kitchen table, and I get out a plain piece of typewriter paper, and simply draw. I would hope that you folks would be able also to just freehand some of these things - even if it's a caricature, it's not perfect, it's something that you can recognize, then use. Always be ready when people ask questions. Have your answers ready, and if you get a chance to witness to someone in your home, get a piece of paper and just simply as you know how, draw these things out.

Now that's what I've drawn up here on the board leading up to the Book of Galatians. As you see, we have the Mediterranean Sea coast, and down here, of course, would be the city of Jerusalem, the Jordan valley, the Sea of Galilee, and the Dead Sea. Now as you turn the corner of the Mediterranean Sea, and go under the underbelly of what is today Turkey, right down through the middle of Turkey was what we called Galatia. The city to whom this letter of Galatians was written. Now, at the western end of Turkey you had the ancient city of Ephesus, to whom the letter of the Ephesians was written, and the churches in that area. Then across the Aegean Sea up here was Philippi, and Thessalonica, and Berea, and all the way down to Athens. And then across to Corinth, and across the Adrian Sea was Italy and Rome.

Now as we study the Book of Galatians we're going to be dealing with Paul's letter to these people in this very area where we covered his first missionary journey. Antioch of Pisida, Lystra and Derbe. Remember Paul was stoned at Lystra, and after they had spent some time over here at the eastern end of Galatia, they retraced their steps and went back to Antioch. We will cover his second missionary journey at a later time.

Now to this letter of Galatians which is only six chapters. I pointed out a few programs ago that Paul was under such duress to get this letter written as quickly as possible that he didn't even wait for some kind of secretary to take dictation - but rather he laboriously printed it in large block letters because of his poor eye sight. There was such an intense need to get this letter up to those Galatian assemblies who were being bombarded by the Judaisers to come under the Law of Moses. And the thought of this just exercised the apostle to the point that he had to sit down and get this letter up to those congregations before it would be too late.

You see this little letter is so appropriate today because we're under the same kind of a bombardment. I had a letter today from someone who said, "Les I'm finding that most people hate Paul's doctrines of Grace." Well I've never put it quite that strongly, but I do know most people don't like them. Because you see most people want to do something. They want to feel that somehow they have merited favor with God. But you just remember that God will have none of that. He says, "Either you
believe that I've finished it or it will profit you nothing!" But this runs contrary to human thought. So what we're going to see now in these little six chapters of Galatians is this constant warning by the apostle that you're not under Law, but rather Grace. Don't let these people pervert the Gospel by adding something to it.

Now time-wise Galatians was written probably a couple of years before the Corinthian letters. Remember the Books that Paul wrote are not in the order in which he wrote them. But also remember they are in the exact order that the Holy Spirit wanted them. Paul's letters have always been in this exact order as we have them today. They are not in the chronological order that they were written as Thessalonians was written first and then Galatians, Romans, Corinthians, then the epistles of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, then First and Second Timothy and Titus. The whole theme of this letter is to convince the Galatians and us that we are not under Law, we're under Grace.

**Galatians 1:1**

"Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)"

Now, of what does Paul immediately remind his followers? The authority of his apostleship. He always comes at that first, that he had the absolute authority to proclaim the truth that he's proclaiming, and it had nothing to do with men appointing him. It's interesting, that back in Acts Chapter 13 (when Paul and Barnabas left to go on that 1st missionary journey), how careful the Scripture was to point out that it wasn't the Church that sent them, but rather the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 13:2-4**

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, `Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' 3. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. 4. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia, and from thence they sailed to Cyprus."

So the Holy Spirit sent them, not the Church at Antioch. And it's the same way here. Paul makes it plain that he did not come into this role of apostleship because maybe the Twelve ordained him, or some other group ordained him or taught him or set him down. No way did that happen. He comes on the scene by the miraculous laying of this apostleship on him by the Lord Jesus. Now verse 2:

**Galatians 1:2**
"And all the brethren which are with me, (that was his traveling companions) unto the churches of Galatia: 3. Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, in verse 4, right off the bat we find Paul bringing out the Gospel by which we are saved. I mean the guy can't help it, as in his writing, it's constantly going to come to the top.

**Galatians 1:4,5**

"Who (our Lord Jesus Christ of verse 3) gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: 5. To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Now that's the simplistic statement again of the Gospel (Ref. I Corinthians 15:1-4) How that Christ gave Himself. He wasn't forced, it was of His own volition. In fact, turn ahead a few pages to the Book of Philippians.

**Philippians 2:5-7**

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: (He was God!) 7. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, (or a slave. He was nothing in the eyes of a Roman world) and was made in the likeness of men:"

We've got to be careful here. In fact, the question came up recently regarding where II Corinthians Chapter 5 says, "He became sin for us."

**II Corinthians 5:21**

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew not sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Well, Christ didn't become a sinner per se, but what did He do? He took the sinners place. He became our substitute. After that conversation I had to start thinking of other examples in the Scripture. For example when Abraham was going to offer Isaac: just when he's ready to fulfill the command from God to offer his son Isaac, what does God provide in the thicket? The ram. What did the ram become? The substitute. The ram didn't become Isaac. Now the same way with Christ. When He went to the Cross, He did not, as I see Scripture, become a vile sinner, but rather He took on Himself all the sins of the human race without becoming a sinner, and says, "Yet without sin." Now that's beyond our human comprehension. But it was His substitutionary work,
that where you and I should have died, He took our place. He didn't become Les Feldick, He didn't become Kenneth, David, Rosalee or anybody else, but merely became our substitute. And this is what Paul is referring to here. Now verse 8:

**Philippians 2:8**

"And being found in fashion (form) as a man, (totally man, but also totally God) he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, (the most horrible death ever devised) even the death of the cross."

Now that is what becomes, then, the very bedrock of our salvation. We believe that. That's it, and yet it's so simple that people stumble over it. But on the other hand, as I've said so often, it is so complex. I could live to be a thousand years old and never comprehend it. It's impossible for us as humans to comprehend the power of the work of the Cross. It is beyond us, but on the other hand it's so simple that all God asks us to do is "Believe it!" And the world refuses to do so. Now back to Galatians Chapter 1 and let's look at verse 4 again.

**Galatians 1:4a**

"Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us (He's the one that is delivering us from) this present evil world,..."

Remember in our last program I was making reference to the wickedness that was in place in the Roman Empire. Just beyond our comprehension. I think you're all aware that historians have bemoaned the fact that America is going down the same road that Rome went. Just as sure as Rome rotted from within so we Americans are doing the same thing. The more I read of Roman history the more I know what they're talking about. Do you know that Rome was almost totally given over to the welfare system. The only people who worked were the captive of their military excursions, and they just used them as slaves. The Roman citizens did nothing; and in order to satisfy all their leisure hours they had to concoct something to keep them satisfied, and that gave rise to the coliseum, and the lions, feeding of the Christians, the gladiators, and all the rest. It also then gave rise to their implacable immorality, it was beyond description. Now reading on into verse 6, and here we find Paul getting to the heart of the matter of why he is writing this letter. Remember he's gotten word that these Galatian believers are being besieged by the Judaisers who want to bring them back under the Law of Moses. Practice circumcision, practice Temple worship or whatever was applicable. So Paul says:

**Galatians 1:6**
"I marvel (I can't comprehend) that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel."

Paul couldn't comprehend how these people, as we saw in Thessalonians in the last program, turned from idols to the living God, and now they're not satisfied with just Grace, now they're being hoodwinked to go under legalism. Paul tells them that they are moving from the Grace of Christ into another gospel. But what does the next verse say?

*Galatians 1:7*

"Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."

Oh it's not really another gospel, it's not something totally different, but it's a perversion. Now what is a perversion? Something that has been fooled with. It is no longer pure, so this is what has happened here. They hadn't just turned their back on Christianity as we call it, they hadn't turned their back on Christ, but they had turned their back on Paul's Gospel of pure Grace that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again and believing that plus nothing for salvation. They were now believing these Judaisers that, yes, maybe they did have to practice the Law. So they are now bending in that direction and this is the purpose of the letter. You're not under Law, you're under Grace, and even today this is the heart cry. "Why can't people see that we're not under anything legalistic, we're under Grace!" And Grace is simply the fact that there is nothing that you and I can do to merit favor with God. The only thing that we can do is **BELIEVE!**
LESSON TWO * PART I

PERVERTED GOSPEL

GALATIANS 1:1 - 1:14

Now always remember as we start our lesson today that we are just an informal Bible study. We don't try to twist people's arms or move them from one group to another. All we ask is that you get into the Book and learn to read and study it. If you really get a love for the Word, then reading the Bible is not enough, you are going to end up studying it. But if you really want to get what you need out of it you must study, and that's what the Scripture says:

II Timothy 2:15

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Know what is Law and what is Grace, and don't mix the two, and the only way you will ever be able to do that is study. So we like folks to know that all we're trying to do is emphasize the study of God's Word. We just have a heart for people to be taught from the Word and to be taught how the Word is divided, and we don't mean the Old from the New Testament. Once you learn how to divide the Word the whole Bible will just open up to you.

Now instead of going right on into Galatians, I would like to review our timeline for a moment. We just get so many requests and comments about our timeline. I've had so many people tell me that, "If you've ever done anything to open up the Bible, it's using the timeline." So in response to those requests I just thought that we would digress for this lesson and review once again the timeline and how everything unfolds and how it all fits and how everything rests on that which has gone before. So, consequently, it is hard to understand the Church Age and why God is dealing with us the way He is unless we see where it all begin.

I'll never forget years ago, and I've used this story over and over in our Oklahoma classes, but it's so appropriate. It's the story of the Gentlemen who came to our ranch one night. I had been bailing hay all day and I was tired, and it was about 10:30 at night, and he introduced himself, and said, "Tell me, Who in the world is Jesus Christ?" Now at the time it shook me up. I thought how in the world could anybody ask a question like that? But now some five or six years later all I ask is, "Why don't more people ask that very question?" Because most people don't know Who He is. Oh, they know He was born at Bethlehem, and they know He went through a
crucifixion, but to really know Who Christ is and how He came on the scene - many people haven't got a clue. Well, that night we went into our kitchen, to that old round oak table where we have led many people to the Lord. We put on a pot of coffee and that's what I did with him, I drew the timeline.

And if you want to get someone interested in the Word of God, learn to use the timeline. It's quite simple to use. Now I'm going to complicate it a little bit today by showing the difference between what the disciples and early Jewish believers understood compared to what you and I now understand as Church Age believers. Because God interrupted His original program for the Nation of Israel, and turned to the Gentiles instead.

So as far as the Scriptures are concerned, let's begin with the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis Chapter 12. From the timeline you will see that, if Adam was created at 4004 BC (and most chronologers pretty much agree on that), then from Adam to the call of Abraham or Abram as he was first known in Genesis 12, covers 2000 years. Now I don't put a lot of emphasis on that in this particular lesson because eleven chapters of Genesis covers that whole 2000 year span. So come over to Genesis 12, and here we will read for a moment. Here we have that Covenant that God made with Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees, so Abram was a Syrian, although God used him to begin the Jewish race. Anyway God made a special Covenant with him and here it is beginning with verse 1.

**Genesis 12:1**

"Now the LORD had said (back in Chapter 11) unto Abram, `Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will (future) shew thee: 2. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing 3. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.'"

This Abrahamic Covenant is given to the man who would be the father of a race of people who had never been on the earth before. They came out of Adam, and Noah and the three sons, but God institutes now by His Sovereignty a new race or nation of people that we have come to know as Israel. So the Jews came as a result of this Covenant made with this one man. This Covenant promises a nation of people, and implied is that you can't have a nation of people functioning and operating unless they are in their own geographical area, a homeland. And it's also implied that if you have a nation of people and they are in a geographical area, you can not have law and order and an economy unless you have a government.
So those are the three main tenants of the Abrahamic. That God will make of this one man a nation of people, put them in their own geographical area of land, and then at some future day, He and the person of God in the flesh would be their King. And that is the promise of the Messiah, and the redeemer. Now with the 2000 BC call of Abraham we have God dealing for the next 2000 years up to Christ's first advent with Jew only, and, of course, there are always a few exceptions. I have called this whole period of time from Abraham until we get out here to the Church Age, when the Jewish program is interrupted, the period of prophecy, the prophetic program, or the Old Testament program, and we'll see how it was interrupted. But when I say that it is a program of prophecy, I want you to turn the page here in Genesis to Chapter 15. I always like to make these things as plain as I possibly can. True prophecy is telling the future, as we understand in the Old Testament, and is almost always when God made a promise, He put it in a time frame. Now that's how explicit God is when He tells the future. God will name the day, and He will name the number of years that will be involved in that particular process. Now, here in Genesis 15, Abraham has now come along and he's going to have children. The first one, Ishmael, was not according to God's plan, but nevertheless in Genesis 15 here we have what I call a real example of true prophecy. Look at verse 13.

**Genesis 15:13**

"And he (God) said unto Abram, 'Know of a surety (it's going to happen) that thy seed (your offspring through Isaac) shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, (they are going to be some place other than the promised land, and we know it was Egypt) and shall serve them; (they are going to go into bondage, and now here comes the time element) and they shall afflict them four hundred years:'''

Do you see that? Now God is making a prophecy that this nation coming out of this one man, Abraham, will end up in a nation that is not theirs which we know is Egypt, and it's going to cover a period of 400 years. Now that's the way prophecy always works. Now according to my timeline, once we come past the first 11 chapters which is Adam, and the flood, and the tower of Babel - now comes the call of Abraham and the appearance of the Nation of Israel. Then we come 500 years to Moses and the Exodus experience, and the Law. Then we have all the rest of the Old Testament writers in the prophets, the Psalms and everything else. So everything now is prophetically looking forward to, and promising what we call, the first advent of Christ. In other words, His birth at Bethlehem when He came to the Nation of Israel to fulfill those promises.

Now what I always refer to as the outline of this prophetic or Old Testament program is Psalms Chapter 2. Now a lot of this is repetition even for a lot of our television
viewers, but on the other hand we have a lot of new people every week. So here in Psalms Chapter 2 I call this the outline of God's prophetic program.

Psalms 2:1-6

"Why do the heathen (in Old Testament language, and even in the New Testament anyone that was not a Jew born out of Isaac, and Jacob, and the Twelve sons was either called a Gentile, or heathen, or uncircumcised. So why does the heathen the non-Jews) rage, and the people (the promised Covenant people Israel) imagine a vain thing? 2. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers (of Israel) take counsel together, (even though the Book of Acts lays the blame on the Nation of Israel for crucifying Christ, yet never forget Rome carried it out) against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, 3. 'Let us break their bands asunder, (that is the Godhead. Let's not let God rule in our affairs) and cast away their cords (God's Sovereign rule) from us.' (Now here was the response of God the Father in Heaven) 4. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them (the nations of the world and Israel) in derision. 5. Then (now that's not a specific time of six months or years, but nevertheless there would be a definite time element between His crucifixion, and the next event in the timeline and that is not a pretty picture. And what is it? His wrath! The wrath of God, and) shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. (the nations of the world and Israel in particular. Now that's the Tribulation) 6. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Now in verse 6 that's the 1000-year Kingdom age that is coming.

Now then coming back to the timeline, we have Abraham at 2000 BC all the way up to Christ's first advent it was all Jew, with a few exceptions, and God dealing with only the Nation of Israel. Christ came and brought about His three years of earthly ministry, preaching and proclaiming Who He was only to the Nation of Israel, (Matthew 15:24) and they crucified Him. He ascended back to glory, and now, according to Psalms 2 that we just looked at, the next event would be the wrath and vexation which would be the seven years of Tribulation and then Christ would come and yet set up His Kingdom. Now that's Psalms Chapter 2, verses 5, 6, and 7. That's just as plain as you can get.

It's obvious then, there's something missing in those verses: what is it? The Church Age. There is not a word about the Church Age in the Old Testament. There's not a word about the Church Age in the Four Gospels that God would turn to the non-Jew, the Gentiles, and call out of them the Body of Christ of Jews and Gentiles. The only thing that the Old Testament was looking for was the fulfillment of this line of promises. That Christ would come, He would suffer, He would die. He'd be raised from the dead and then the wrath of God would fall, and then the Kingdom would be set up. Now let me show you how obvious it really is that Peter had no concept of
anything other than this Old Testament timeline - Acts Chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost. Remember these Jewish believers had been accused of starting their drinking a little too early in the morning. So by 9 a.m. they were drunk. Well I don't know how in the world they could accuse someone who was speaking in languages that everybody could understand of being drunk. My experience with drunken people is you can't understand one language let alone many. Now in verse 15, Peter's response was:

Acts 2:15-18

"For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. (only 9 o'clock in the morning. But Peter in verse 16 is saying in effect that what you're seeing is fulfillment of prophecy) 16. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; (now where's Joel? Back in the Old Testament, it was part of prophecy, and now he quotes him. This is what Joel wrote) 17. And it shall come to pass in the last days saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18. And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:"  

Peter was seeing this happen on the day of Pentecost. Now if Peter had understood that there was going to be a Church Age and that Israel was going to go into a dispersion, he should have stopped right here, and not read the rest. Because the rest is Tribulation ground. But Peter didn't stop, because he was still hanging on that Old Testament program that Israel had to come to a knowledge of their Messiah and then the Tribulation could unfold, and then they would have the King and the Kingdom. But since he didn't understand this, look what he continues to quote in verse 19.

Acts 2:19-21

"And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke; 20. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: (that's the Tribulation, and Peter knew that it had to come) 21. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Now that's not Paul, as he writes in Romans 10:9-13, but rather this is Peter. Peter is still in the prophetic program and all he's talking about here is that the One you crucified has been raised from the dead. He's gone back to glory according to Psalms 110:1, and He's sitting at the Fathers right hand; and yet would come the wrath and vexation, and then Christ would return at His second coming, and yet set up His
Kingdom. But Israel rejected it so the King couldn't pour out the Tribulation wrath, **He had to wait in heaven until something else glorious would come to pass.**

And now we must turn a little farther in Acts to Chapter 9. Now this is just a quick review. But here in Chapter 9 I want you to jump all the way to verse 15. And here we are at Saul's tremendous conversion on the road to Damascus. This one who detested (hated with a passion) the name of Jesus of Nazareth because he could see it as just totally rotting away Judaism. It was defaming the Temple and the Law, and so he did everything humanly possible to stamp out the name of Jesus of Nazareth. So Saul thinks he's got everything pretty much under control in his homeland of Jerusalem and Judea and so now he has gone to the high priest and has gotten permission to even go to Damascus.

Remember, the high priest and the leaders of Judaism had a fair amount of clout even with the Roman government; that they could actually demand extradition from certain cities from the Romans like we do today with certain countries. And so Saul rehearses in Acts Chapter 26 what they would do with these who had believed in Jesus of Nazareth. They would take them back to Jerusalem, throw them in prison, and put them to death. Now as Saul of Tarsus has met the Lord on the road to Damascus (and you all know the account here is where you have that tremendous change in the modus operandi of the Sovereign God), look at verse 15.

**Acts 9:15,16**

"But the Lord said unto him, (Ananias) 'Go thy way: for he (Saul, later to be named Paul) is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.'"

Now that opens the door to the apostle Paul's ministry among the Gentiles. Now, on the timeline, this is where we are concerned with. Prophecy had run its course with the exception of the seven years of Tribulation and the 1000 years reign of Christ in the Kingdom age. Christ had come according to prophecy. He was rejected, He was crucified; but now all of a sudden with Israel's continued rejection, the prophetic program of Jew-only has come to a screeching halt, and God's time clock stopped, and prophecy stopped. God then opened something completely new in Scripture. And what is it? The mysteries. Paul is always saying, **"Behold I show you a mystery"** Let's look at it in Romans Chapter 16:25:

**Romans 16:25**
"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, (as found in I Corinthians 15:1-4. Not the gospel of the Kingdom that Jesus and the Twelve preached, but Paul's Gospel that was revealed only to him) and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world begin,"

So now for almost 2000 years, we haven't been in the prophetic program. We are in the Age of Grace which is the revelation of the mysteries. Things that were kept secret back here in the Old Testament - there was no concept of Gentiles being brought into a relationship with the Almighty God. But when the Church is complete and it can be taken out of the way in what we call the Rapture then you see on our timeline the parentheses around the Church on the timeline is removed and the timeline is just like it was originally.

Then the prophetic program will go right on and yet be completed. Now all you have to do is look at the situation. Israel is back in the land like she was at the time of Christ's first coming. They'll soon have their Temple, and they will go back under Judaism, and the Law and Temple worship. The revived Roman empire is already on the scene. The European community is just about complete, and so everything is now falling into place. It will be just like it was at the time of Christ's first advent. Oh, granted, technology has exploded, but yet it is all for the sole purpose of bringing about the end-time scenario for that second coming of Christ to the Nation of Israel.
LESSON TWO * PART II

PERVERTED GOSPEL

GALATIANS 1:1 - 1:14

Now in our last lesson we went over the timeline. It is so self-explanatory how everything just unfolded and fell into place. The thing we have to understand is that the Church Age was never revealed until the apostle Paul came on the scene. So consequently, there is nothing of the Church in the Old Testament or the Four Gospels, and we have to realize that, doctrinally, the Church today has to go to the letters of Paul for its faith and practice. And when you do that it just solves a multitude of problems and confusion, because there are many people who think the Bible is contradictory. But when you show the difference between Law and Grace, between Israel and the Church Age, then that settles it all. It's not contradictory, but rather a different method of operation. Naturally, Law was a whole different program, and it was a works religion, but Grace is all of Grace. We will see this now as we get into Paul's letter to the Galatians. Remember the Holy Spirit was in total control of all this man accomplished.

Remember, Paul was under constant attack wherever he went about his apostleship. This was done primarily by the Judaisers, when they would say that he was an impostor. The Judaisers claimed he had turned his back and was a turncoat against the traditions of the fathers of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They even went so far as to claim that he didn't have the authority that Peter had because he didn't walk with Christ like Peter did. So Paul was under that constant attack for both reasons. Even when we come into the Book of Galatians, the first thing he's going to declare is his apostleship. He was an apostle, not declared by any group of men, but by God Himself. In fact let's look at how this bothered Paul, that he was under this constant attack. Let's look at it for a moment in II Corinthians Chapter 11. And remember this is Holy Spirit inspired. This is just Paul writing from his own spirit, this is the inspired Word of God.

II Corinthians 11:5

"For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles."

Well who was the chiefest apostle? Peter was. And he's not letting Peter have an advantage on him. Now skip down to verse 22.

II Corinthians 11:22a
"Are they Hebrews?..."

Well, who do you suppose he's talking about here? I think he's talking about the Twelve in Jerusalem whom his Gentile people are being told by Judaisers, "This guy Paul wasn't ever with Peter, this guy never spent three years with Jesus. So how can you listen to him?" Looking at verse 22 again.

II Corinthians 11:22,23

"Are they Hebrews? so am I, Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. 23. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) (he knows he may sound a little braggadocios, but remember he's inspired by the Holy Spirit to write. He says) I am more; (do you see that? This apostle says he was more than those back there at Jerusalem. More) in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft."

Then he goes on to show how he suffered for the sake of the Gospel, the likes of which Peter, James and John never did. Now coming on into Chapter 12 and, for emphasis, the Holy Spirit has Paul repeat this for the third time in just a few verses. So this is very important to the Spirit of God.

II Corinthians 12:11

"I am become a fool in glorying; (Paul didn't like to bring up his own credentials, but he had to defend himself because they were trying to put him down as no account.) ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing."

Paul knew he was nothing. He never took any of the credit, but he has to constantly affirm his apostleship, and even in this day and age we have to defend him even as much as when he was writing. I've stressed it on this program over and over, how many theologians, pastors, and preachers, and ministers totally ignore this man's writings? His writings are almost treated like a plague. And yet this is where we get our doctrines of salvation, this is where we have to be if we're going to know the truth of God during this age of Grace. Now for the Book of Galatians.

Remember Galatia was that central part of what is now the country of Turkey. It was probably in the southern half of Galatia where Paul had his first bad experience on his first missionary journey as he visited these cities of Antioch, Persidia, Listra and Derbe. Remember, Listra is also where he was stoned and left for dead. But here he writes to this group of little Churches that no doubt he had planted. And now they were being bombarded by these Judaisers. They were the Jewish element from
Jerusalem. Whether it was the Orthodox who still rejected Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah, or whether it was the Judaisers who had embraced Christ I don't know. Either way it doesn't make much difference.

They both were so hung up on the fact that you had to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses or you couldn't be saved. So these Judaisers were coming into these little congregations that Paul had been able to plant through his sweat, blood, and tears and they're telling them, "You can't be saved by Paul's message alone (which was "By believing in your heart that Jesus died for you, was buried and rose again."). These Judaisers were saying "You can't be saved like he says, but rather you must be circumcised, and keep the Law." They just couldn't get it out of their craw. Let me show you what I'm talking about. We're going to see it again in Galatians Chapter 2, but we won't be able to get there in this series of lessons. Come back with me to Acts Chapter 15.

I don't think there are too many Church people who know these verses are even in their Bible. These verses say it so clearly that I don't even have to explain the verses. Remember now this is about 52 AD and some 12 years after Peter went to Cornelius' house. It's about 22 years after the Cross. This is 15 years after Paul's saving experience on the road to Damascus, so time has been rolling on. Now look what the Scriptures says.

Acts 15:1

"And certain men which came down from Judaea (that's Jerusalem) taught the brethren, and said, (see they somehow wiggled their way into Paul's converts who had recently came out of paganism. But these Judaisers said) 'Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.'" Do you see how plain that is? Now jump over to verse 5 in this same chapter.

Acts 15:5

"But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, (now these were people who had believed like the Twelve that Jesus was the Messiah.) saying, 'That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.'"

Now these people were trying to pervert Paul's Gospel. And they didn't just suggest that they keep the Law of Moses, they commanded them to do it. And when they commanded it they were attaching the keeping of the Law to Paul's Gospel. Now that's what your Bible says. I don't care what translation that you have they can't foul
it up that much. I know some of the translators do a pretty good job of fouling up the Word of God. Now then back to the Book of Galatians.

Here the apostle Paul is probably back at Corinth if I'm not mistaken. Now at this writing it's about 60 AD, so it's been about 20 years since he began his ministry to the Gentiles. He is now getting word that his little congregations up there in Galatia are being bombarded to go under the Law of Moses. So this little Book is written to correct this false teaching and bring them back under the pure Grace of God. Now listen, it's just as appropriate for the world today as it was then. I'm even speaking of the world of Church people. Now verse 1, and I know we looked at a few of these verses in our last taping so we'll just skim over them.

**Galatians 1:1,2**

"Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, (in other words the Antioch Church didn't commission him an apostle) but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) 2. And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:"

Now the brethren that were with Paul would probably include Luke, and Silias, and maybe Timothy. Now verse 3:

**Galatians 1:3**

"Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,"

Now I've got to make a point about something up there in verse 2. Because they had given in to false teaching, we find Paul leaves an important part out of his address to the Galatian Church. Now you probably won't catch it unless I tell you. Look at the verse again.

**Galatians 1:2**

"And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:"

Let me show you. A good example is found in the Book of Romans Chapter 1:7. Let's compare Scripture with Scripture. That's the only way you learn some of these things. And it's a subtle way of telling us how far these Galatians had already degenerated because of the perverted Gospel.

**Romans 1:7a**
"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints:..."

Do you see that? Now that's quite a commendation isn't it? He is commending the Romans for that kind of a position. Now let's look at the Corinthians. I'm pretty sure that it's in there also.

I Corinthians 1:2

"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,..." Now I don't know whether II Corinthians does it or not. Let's look and see.

II Corinthians 1:1

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:"

Even the Corinthian Church. Remember when we studied Corinthians, what kind of a church were they? Carnal. Now let's look at the Book of Ephesians and that will be far enough because I think I've made my point.

Ephesians 1:1

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

Do you see that? All right now come back and look at the Galatian letter again.

Galatians 1:2

"And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:"

Isn't that something? There is nothing about them being saints of any kind. They now have become just "the churches of Galatia." You know when I first started seeing this some time ago it reminded me of God's attitude toward the Nation of Israel back when He was writing to Daniel. Often He would refer to the Nation of Israel as "Thy people." God didn't call them "My People." Why? Because they had degenerated so far from their love of Jehovah that God wasn't really even claiming them. They were Daniel's people, they were Moses' people, but He didn't say "My People" like He did at the beginning. At the beginning He called them "My People" and He will again when Israel finally responds at His second coming. Let's look at it in Jeremiah
Chapter 31 and verse 33. Some day I'm going to get into trouble trying to do this from memory. This is the point that I want you to see with regard to the new Covenant.

*Jeremiah 31:33*

"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, `I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be (what?) my people.'"

Now they're not tonight. God doesn't call Israel "my people" tonight because they're far from Him. Oh, they may be religious, but they're not God's people per se, but the day is coming when they will be. Oh, listen God is not through with that nation. Don't you believe all of this garbage that He has completely forgotten His Covenant promises, and that's all it is. God is going to yet complete His prophetic program because prophecy cannot stop in mid-place. Now coming back quickly to the Book of Galatians. Now here in verse 4 comes Paul's major message throughout all his letters.

*Galatians 1:4,5*

"Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: 5. To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Now here we come to the crux of this letter. You know what it means to correct someone? For example, we might have a rocket headed out into outer space, and for some reason or another it gets off track a little bit, what do they have to do? Well, they've got to get busy with their computers and bring it back on track or else it's a disaster. Well, it's the same way here. The Galatians were off course, and the whole purpose of this little sixth chapter of the Book of Galatians is to correct and bring them back on course to the knowledge of truth, and get them away form the false teachings that were besieging them.

*Galatians 1:6*

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:"

And yet he goes on to say in the next verse it's not really another, it's not really a totally different one, but it's the same Gospel that he had used in establishing them, but now it was being perverted, and polluted. Let's go for a moment to the Book of II Corinthians Chapter 2, and this will be a good place to compare Scripture with Scripture again.
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."

Now you remember when we were studying this I took you back to the Book of Isaiah Chapter 1:22 because it explains it so graphically, and it's in such simple language. Kids can understand this. And you see the Jews understood all this. This was part of their everyday experience, and this is exactly what Paul was referring to when he said, "He didn't do this with spiritual commission."

Isaiah 1:22

"Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water:"

Now I'm not a buff on wine, but I can imagine that if you have an expensive French wine, and you water it down with water, what do you have? Well you've got something that isn't worth trying to swallow. What was the illusion? That somebody was corrupting them. And that's exactly what Paul is talking about back here in Galatians. Now come back with me to that Book. So in verse 7, Paul says, "You're not falling for a totally different Gospel," but there are some that would corrupt, or pollute (or like mixing water with wine, that's what these Judaisers are doing with Paul's Gospel). Why? Because Paul's Gospel says, "You are saved by Faith + NOTHING!" And yet these Judaisers are coming in and saying, "You can't be saved that way. Yes you can believe what Paul tells you, but you have to also practice circumcision, and you have to keep the Law of Moses. If you fail to do this then you can't be saved." Now folks that's a pollution. That's a corruption of the truth, and that is why Paul had to write this letter to the Galatians to correct them from this error of believing something that wasn't correct because it was perverted.
LESSON TWO * PART III

PERVERTED GOSPEL

GALATIANS 1:1 - 1:14

Now in our last lesson we stopped at verse 7, so that's where we will pick up our text. When you study your Bible get a good concordance and start chasing these themes down from cover to cover. Because the amazing thing of this Book is that it all fits so beautifully. Now there are a lot of people who think the Bible contradicts in places, but it doesn't contradict at all. It's just the vast difference between Law and Grace. A good example of the difference between Law and Grace is found in why we should forgive others. Jesus, during His earthly ministry, speaking to the Nation of Israel, the Jews under the Law said:

Matthew 6:14,15

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Now the Holy Spirit revealed to the apostle Paul under Grace why we should forgive:

Ephesians 4:32

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath (already) forgiven you."

So #1: the key to understanding the Scriptures is to whom the particular text is written to. It's high time that we get a fresh view of this again, because you want to remember that when God called Moses up into Mount Sinai there in Exodus, God gave the Law to Moses and Moses took it down the mountain and gave it to the Nation of Israel. So Israel came under the Law. Not the rest of the world, just Israel.

But, as Romans 3 says, all the world came under the condemnation power of the Law and proved that no one is righteous, no not one. But so far as the mode of operation of the Law was only given to the Nation of Israel, then as we're going to see as we get into Galatians and Paul's account of his apostleship, we find that Paul is the central character and to that man was revealed these doctrines not of Law, but of Grace. And Grace is for primarily the Gentiles, but it also includes the Jew. A Jew today can be saved under Grace as well as a Gentile. But it is primarily God's time of calling out Gentiles from among the unbelieving world. Now then, Paul's message, as we saw in our study of the first two letters to the Corinthians, was to the pagan world.
Paul could come into these abject pagan people with nothing but the Gospel of the Grace of God and they would come out of their paganism and become believers (or as we normally like to use the term "Christians," although that word has certainly lost its real meaning). Today almost anybody, and anything can be called a Christian. So now let's begin in verse 7.

**Galatians 1:7**

"Which is not another; (Gospel) but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ."

Now when we talk about the Gospel of Christ we have to go back to where it is the most explicitly laid out. Remember the Gospel for the Body of Christ was only revealed to Paul so we need to turn to I Corinthians Chapter 15, and look at those first four verses. This is the clearest explanation of Paul's Gospel that you can find anywhere. Now he will refer to it as the Gospel of the Grace of God, the Gospel of God, my Gospel, the Gospel according to the revelation of the mysteries, but regardless how he refers to it, it's this Gospel.

**I Corinthians 15:1-4**

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel (not a Gospel, not a perverted Gospel, not a corrupt Gospel, but the Gospel) which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, (remember Paul even addressed the carnal believer at Corinth as saints.) and wherein ye stand; 2. By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, (not what Peter and the Twelve in Jerusalem have, but what I've preached) unless ye have believed in vain. 3. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, (and we're going to see how he received it in Galatians in just a moment. Now here comes the Gospel we must believe in our heart for salvation.) how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Long before the world or the universe was ever created, God already had the whole scheme of things laid out. He wasn't caught by surprise. The whole human experience was pre-planned, and the plan of redemption was already in place long before Adam was ever created. And here it is, how that Christ died, was buried, and rose again, according to the Scriptures. It was prophesied and now all mankind has to do for salvation is to believe it, and we're going to see that so clearly as we move on through this little letter to the Galatians. Now come back to Galatians Chapter 1, verse 8. Oh the horrors that are going to befall people who are guilty of what Paul is talking about in verse 8. I shudder to think of what one day they are going to have to experience, because look what he says here.
Galatians 1:8

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, (and I just showed you that Gospel which was, that Christ died for you, was buried, and rose again, and if they preach any other than that unto you for salvation) let him be accursed."

Now that's a horribly strong word. Paul, speaking through the Holy Spirit, is not just talking about maybe ending up 15 or 20 years in prison, he's not talking about capital punishment. Paul is talking about an eternal separation from God, an eternal doom to these people who are corrupting and are perverting the pure Gospel of Grace. Hey that's enough to scare anybody. Now verse 9. And again whenever you see the Scripture, whether it's Paul or Moses or the prophets or wherever, if it repeats something you take special note. It's there for the purpose of getting our attention. So here this warning is again in verses 8 and 9.

Galatians 1:9

"As we said before, so say I now again, 'If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, (from the lips of this apostle) let him be accursed.'"

Now Paul wasn't talking there out of meanness, or out of envy of some other minister. He was writing by inspiration of the Spirit, and the Spirit is making the emphasis that if we adulterate and if we pervert the true Gospel, then we are in danger of being accursed. Now you know apostasy is a terrible thing. Most people don't even know what apostasy means. What is apostasy? Is that something that the apostles taught? No, it has nothing to do with the apostles. Apostasy is turning the back on the revealed truth of Scripture.

Someone sent me a little booklet by the old radio pastor, J. Vernon McGee who has now gone on to be with the Lord. And the little booklet was copyrighted I think in 1971. In this booklet he was rehearsing a conversation that he and the president of Moody Bible Institute at that time had had. They were in a Bible conference out in Los Angeles, and during that week of Bible conference he and the president of Moody, and a couple of more well-known theologians were visiting with each other, and the president of Moody made this statement. Now remember the time element (1971) That man made the statement that he could never envision the apostasy of the Church at that time. He had no idea that the Church would be into such apostasy short of being in the Tribulation. Now that's only been 27 years ago. What would the man think today? I don't think they could handle it. But you see we've been programmed to see all this creeping in and we just sort of roll with it. We accommodate, but listen we are in such a state of apostasy that it's alarming. And why
can't people see what these verses say. They're under the condemnation of being accursed for perverting the Gospel. Now move on to verse 10.

**Galatians 1:10**

*'For do I now persuade men, or God?* (who is Paul serving? Well it's certainly not men, because like me, he didn't draw a salary. Paul didn't have to be beholden to anybody. If he needed some money, he went out and sewed some tents didn't he. So Paul didn't have to worry about losing his pay, so he didn't have to serve men.) *or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.'*

Now that's quite a statement isn't it? Hey, you can't serve both, you cannot please God and man. But listen, this apostle says that there is no way that I am out here suffering imprisonment, suffering beatings, suffering shipwrecks, suffering cold, and heat, and nakedness - all the things we studied back there in II Corinthians Chapter 11. He says I didn't do that just to be serving men. But Paul did that because he was the bond slave of Jesus Christ. Now that reminds me of a verse in the Book of Ephesians Chapter 3. Let's turn there for a moment, and this, of course, is the whole motivation of this apostle.

**Ephesians 3:1,2**

*'For this cause* (what he had just written in Chapter 2 especially) *I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,* (now back in the Old Testament everything was for Israel's benefit. But this mans apostleship is for our benefit as Gentiles.) *2. If ye have heard of the dispensation* (this period of time when God is calling out primarily the Gentile Body of Christ, the Church in this administration) *of the grace of God which is given me* (and then from me ) *to youward:’*

Now that's exactly how I've got it on the board. God revealed to the apostle Paul these doctrines of Grace, and what did Paul do with them? He didn't do like Moses did when he received the Law. Moses took it to Israel and Israel alone. But the apostle Paul takes these revelations of the doctrines of Grace to everyone. He went to the Jew first in the synagogue and they would reject it and he would then go down the street to the Gentiles. His primary mission was to the Gentile world. So this is what he's making reference to. He was given the Grace of God and he gave it to us Gentiles. Now coming back to Galatians Chapter 1, let's read verse 10:  

**Galatians 1:10**
"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

It would be utterly impossible to be a servant or bond slave of Christ if Paul sought to please men. Now verse 11. Boy it gets interesting. I wish people would study Chapters 1 and 2 until they almost know it from memory. Know the content of these two chapters like you do your name and address, and it will just blow away all the dust and cobwebs of confusion, because this just opens it all up. Now verse 11:

Galatians 1:11

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

All right I'll repeat myself once more. What is the apostle Paul claiming? His apostleship, and his authority, and not because of any relationship with the Twelve. Also, remember, he has totally broken with his Jewish past, and now he is the bond slave of the resurrected and ascended Lord. Now verse 12:

Galatians 1:12

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

Now you want to remember what it says about this in I Corinthians Chapter 15 - where we just left off with the clearest explanation of the Gospel and let's start with verse 5.

I Corinthians 15:5

"And that he was seen of Cephas (Peter) then of the twelve:"

Remember the word `twelve' was used as a generalized term for a group of people. Just like the Sanhedrin, or the seventy that was sent forth, and it was the same way with the disciples; they were known as the Twelve, although here Paul was speaking of the eleven others, yet he could rightfully call them the Twelve. That happens a couple of other places in scripture and we know that all 12 of them were not there. Now verse 6:

I Corinthians 15:6-8
"After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, (which is now about 60 AD or 30 years after the crucifixion) but some are fallen asleep. 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 8. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due (or head of the ) time.

Let's go all the way back to the Book of Acts Chapter 22 and begin with verse 17. Here I want you to see why the apostle Paul is making such a big deal over his having seen and heard all these things from the resurrected Christ. I'm always trying to get people to see that, if you stay in the Four Gospels (and there's nothing wrong with reading the Four Gospels. Don't misunderstand me), that was Christ's before the work of the Cross. That was before the atoning Blood had been shed, and it was under the Law (Gal. 4:4).

Everything that Christ said was in accordance with the Jewish legal system. You can find nothing of the Gospel of Grace back there. And Peter carries that on in the early chapter of Acts. But all this apostle talks about is the crucified, buried, and risen Lord who has now ascended to glory. Oh what a difference. You take the little Jewish epistles at the end of our New Testament, James, I and II Peter, I, II, III John, Jude and Revelation, do you know what? The word 'Cross' is not even mentioned. You won't see the word 'Cross' in those little Jewish epistles. For them it was not the pinnacle of information like it is for Paul. Paul says, "We preach Christ crucified." All he knows is the work of the Cross. And it's all because Paul saw our Lord in resurrection power - he saw him in His ascension.

Acts 22:17-21

"And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, (Paul had already been out into the Gentile world) even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; 18. And saw him (the Lord Jesus) saying unto me, 'Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.' 19. And I said, 'Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: 20. And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, (back there in Acts Chapter 7) I also was standing by and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.' 21. And he (the resurrected ascended Lord) said unto me, 'Depart: (from Jerusalem) for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.'" Do you see how clear that is? Now if you will come back to Galatians again and verse 12.

Paul is, by Holy Spirit inspiration, distancing himself from the Twelve apostles of Israel to keep his apostleship pure from any of the legalism of Judaism (of which Peter, James and John were the epitome). Now verse 12:
"For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Who is now in glory so it had to be through some kind of a communication process between the Lord and this apostle. Now verse 13:

"For ye have heard of my conversation (now that word `conversation' is always translated throughout the New Testament, if I'm not mistaken, as manner of lifestyle.) in time past in the Jews' religion,..."

Why did the Holy Spirit inspire the apostle Paul to use that term for Judaism? Because that was what it had become. It had become watered down over the last 1500 years from the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai, and the establishing of the priesthood of Israel, and all of the sacrificial worship. In the beginning, that was pure, that was Law, but oh, as Israel progressed up through those 1500 years, what happened to it? It just got watered down, and degenerated, and finally, after that, it had become 613 rules and regulations (one of which was that they could only walk so far on the Sabbath day). That's what the Law had become and it was now a religion.

There was no saving power in the Judaism of Christ's day. Oh, there were a few bonified believers, we know there were. Zacharias, and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist. Joseph and Mary no doubt were, but oh, it was precious few Jews that were true believers when Christ came to Israel. The majority were not true believers but they were religious. Oh, you bet they were religious. They kept the feast days, they practiced the sacrifices. You know, Josephus claimed that, at the time of Christ, one million animals were sacrificed every year. Now that means that a bunch of animals had to be sacrificed every day. But whether it was that many or something less than that, don't ever lose sight of the fact that the Jews religion of Christ's day was, to the hilt, a practicing of those 613 rules and regulations.
LESSON TWO * PART IV

PERVERTED GOSPEL

GALATIANS 1:1 - 1:14

Now we're going to pick up where we left off in verse 13. Remember, as we introduced the Book of Galatians, Paul is frantically responding to false teachings that have come into the congregations that he had established up in Asia Minor, which is what we call today, Turkey. Galatia was pretty much in the middle of Turkey and especially the Galatian churches were probably in the Southern half of that part of Turkey. They were being bombarded by false teachers who were claiming that they couldn't be saved by faith and faith alone, but they also had to be circumcised, and they had to keep the Law of Moses or they couldn't be saved. Does that ring a bell? Well, we don't have circumcision as such, but we've got a lot of other things that are required that are in the same category. It's that which you can do and that which is of works and it does nothing but bring down the anathema of God Himself. Now verse 13.

Galatians 1:13a

"For ye have heard of my conversation (manner of living) in time past in the Jews' religion,..." 

He was a Pharisee of the Pharisees, he says in the Book of Philippians. I'm positive that he was a member of the Sanhedrin, and, as such, he must have been a husband and father or he wouldn't have been a member. I feel that way because he says, in Acts Chapter 26, that when they were persecuting these Jewish believers, and they were brought before the religious counsels, he, along with others, voted to have them put to death or have them thrown in prison. So that tells us quite a bit right there. So Paul was high up in the echelons of Judaism as it was known at the time of Christ with the Temple worship. Now reading on:

Galatians 1:13b

"...how that beyond measure (it was despicable) I persecuted the church (assembly) of God, and wasted it;" 

Now I use the word `assembly' here on purpose because too many people get confused by thinking that the word "church" always means what we call the Body of Christ, and it doesn't. Always remember the word translated `church' in our New Testament is the Greek word `ecclesia' (it can be spelled with two c's or two k's). All
that word meant in its true translated form was "a called out assembly." It doesn't mean something with pastors, and bishops and deacons necessarily, although when Paul speaks of the Body of Christ and the local Church, then, yes, it does. Now the word `ecclesia' then was what Stephen referred to in Acts Chapter 7 when he said "The church in the wilderness." Remember that? Well, that wasn't a church, but it was a called-out assembly because God called Israel out of Egypt unto Himself. And it was called an ecclesia.

The group of Jewish believers in Jerusalem was a called-out assembly, or ecclesia, in Jerusalem because they had separated themselves from the run-of-the-mill Judaisers. I maintain they were not yet the Body of Christ. Back in the Book of Acts there was another instance, when it's anything but a spiritual group of people, when they rioted in Ephesus. They ran into the theater, they were a mob, they were rioting because of what the apostle Paul had been accomplishing among those pagan people and what's it called? An ecclesia. Now, fortunately the King James translators didn't use the word `church' for that, so what did they use? Assembly. So the assembly was being addressed and warned that the Roman authorities were going to call them into question. So we have to be careful how we let these terminologies either confuse us or set us straight. So when Paul says:

Galatians 13b

"...I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:"

I prefer the word `assembly' because that's what it was. It was a called-out, separated group of Jews who I do not feel were, as yet, under the terminology of the Body of Christ which is something so different. Take that for what it's worth; you may not agree with me, but that's fine. So Paul persecuted the assembly and wasted it. Let's go back to the Book of Acts and get the Scriptural account, and you can see for yourself what he is talking about. Let's turn to Chapter 7 verse 57. Here we have Stephen now, who has addressed the leaders of the Nation of Israel. He has gone through that whole historical record of the nation, and he brings them all the way up to Christ's crucifixion and rejection. He proclaims as Christ Himself had been doing, and as Peter had done at Pentecost, that He was the Christ, the Messiah of Israel. But remember Peter said back there in Chapter 2 that they had murdered Him.

Acts 2:23b

"...ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:"

Acts 3:15a
"And killed the Prince of life,..."

Peter goes on to say that God raised Him from the dead, and He is still in a position to be your King. And like I said earlier: when Saul of Tarsus, that religious practitioner of Judaism, saw the inroads that Jesus of Nazareth and the Twelve were making into Judaism, he just about went into orbit as we would say. And he fought it tooth and nail and was trying to stamp it out. Saul was sincere - sincerely wrong; but he was sincere in hating these Jews who had embraced Jesus of Nazareth. Look at Stephen's account in Acts 7.

**Acts 7:57-60**

"Then they (these Jewish leaders) cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him (Stephen) with one accord. 58. And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. (now he's thirty something. He was about the same age as Christ.) 59. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' 60. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

Recently we had one of our television watchers send us a tape of their preacher's Sunday morning sermon. The sermon that he preached was a gem, and I just listened to it from start to finish, it was a good one. He made several points and one of those points was, "It is not appropriate for us in this age of Grace in the post-resurrection era to refer to the Lord as simply"Jesus." That was His name in the flesh of humiliation. This preacher made the point and that's why I'm repeating it. **Never in all of the scriptural accounts did the Twelve address Him as "Jesus" They called Him either "Lord" or "Master," but they never called him Jesus.** Now the ridiculers did, but His followers never did, and it's the same way here, do you see it? Look at verse 59 again.

**Acts 7:59**

"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'"

I've said before that the only appropriate address for Him today is either Christ, or the Lord Jesus, or the Lord Jesus Christ, or the Lord, but don't ever approach Him as just Jesus because it is not a scriptural application. Looking again at verse 60:

**Acts 7:60a**
"And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, 'Lord,...'"

Now it's the same way with the apostle Paul with a couple of exceptions. I know in I Thessalonians Chapter 4 he will say, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again..." But most every place else he uses the term Lord Jesus Christ, or Jesus Christ but never Jesus alone. It's just not appropriate now after His resurrection. Now come over to Chapter 9 and we'll pick up a description of Saul of Tarsus in his hatred for anything connected to the followers of Jesus Christ.

Acts 9:1a

"And Saul, (the one we just read about in Chapter 7) yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter..."

Now remember, I've mentioned in a lesson or two that the Judaistic religious people had clout with Rome. They had quite a bit of clout. In fact, it was just their own obstinacy that brought down the city of Jerusalem by Titus. But the Romans had a lot of respect for Judaism. The reason they persecuted the Christians so was because it was something totally new and so the Romans treated it like a sect or something. But Judaism had the respect of the Roman authorities, because it was considered one of the ancient religions.

Also remember that the Jews from one end of the Roman empire to the other would send vast amounts of money to the Temple as offerings, and never was a dollar lost. Never did they lose an ounce of those gifts because Rome recognized and protected it. Now, as I said before, they also had enough clout with the Roman Government that they could demand extradition of Jews that they wanted to deal with in their own religion, and bring them back to Jerusalem. And that's why Saul had the authority to go Damascus which was outside of Israel, and yet Rome permitted them to do just that. Now read on:

Acts 9:1,2

"And Saul, yet breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest. 2. And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, (see he wasn't going to bother the Syrian population, all he wanted was these Jews who had embraced faith in the Messiah.) that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."

Saul was vicious, he had no mercy. He didn't care whether they were young or old, or men or women; if they had embraced Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah, then Saul's attitude was, "They're not worth living, get rid of them, they are nothing but a threat to
my religion." Have you got the picture? Now come back to the Book of Galatians. And the poor man never got over that for hurting so many. I imagine as he suffered all of the ramifications of his apostleship he must have constantly remembered it's coming around. What goes around comes around, and his was coming around. Now verse 13.

**Galatians 1:13**

"For ye have heard of my conversation (manner of living) in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted (how I chased them to the ends of my authority) the church (assembly) of God and wasted it:"

What does wasted it mean? Utterly destroyed wherever he went. Now he had evidently made so much headway in the area of Jerusalem and Judea that he thought he had pretty much cleaned house, and there wasn't anything left to do so he said, "Okay, High Priest, let me go to Damascus, because there are still some of these people up there and we know there are." A lot of these Jewish believers who had to flee Jerusalem, for fear of Saul of Tarsus and the other religious persecutioners, did migrate up into the area of Galilee and some as far north as Damascus. Now verse 14. Not only was Saul a religious zealot who had no mercy, who had no compunction in putting these Jewish believers to death, on top of that he was motivated for money. Does that ring a bell?

**Galatians 1:14a**

"And profited in the Jews' religion..."

Now I've told my classes that you can go into any religion of the world, and you go into their headquarters, their upper echelons, what do you find? Wealth. Tremendous wealth, and where have they gotten it? From the peons down there on the lower level. Judaism was no different. Why did Jesus drive out the money changers in the Temple? What was going on? Hey, it was corruption. These poor people living out in the small alleys and huts of Jerusalem couldn't afford to go out into the Judean hills and buy a nice beautiful lamb, and bring it to the Temple. Nor did they have whatever it took to do that. So what did they have to do?

They had to buy some kind of a sacrifice for some kind of a peon's wage in order to fulfill the demands of their religion, and so what were these religious leaders setting up? A market place right in the Temple. And they would try to charge high prices for whatever these poor people had to have, whether it was a turtledove, or maybe a little lamb that had something wrong with it. And remember God required a lamb without blemish so this was also a controversy between God and Israel. But these rascals of
Israel were taking advantage of the poor people and selling them the off scouring of stuff that they could use for a sacrifice, and charging them bloated prices, and why? The same motivation that people have today. To get rich! Old Saul was right in the middle of that. He was making big bucks - if you don't believe me then you need to go with us to Jerusalem.

Usually we get a chance to go down and see the home of Caiaphas the High Priest. His home has been dug out of the archeological diggings, and it's quite a few feet below street level. But even after all of these 2000 years of laying under the dirt and sand of the Middle East, you can see by the materials that were on their walls, and with all the bathrooms that they had, they lived sumptuously.

In fact, in one area of that house you can see three or four layers where our guide pointed out that Caiaphas' wife must have gone to Athens and she came back and said, "Honey we've got to have this on our walls because after all that's what all the rich people in Athens have. And you can imagine old Caiaphas saying, "Okay, Okay." So maybe a year or so later she went to Rome and saw something there that was even prettier and came back and said, "Honey, you've got what it takes, I've got to have this new material on our walls." And he says, "Well, well Okay." So there was about four layers and you could see that each one was beautiful.

They must have cost tremendous amounts of money. They lived sumptuously. Why? Because they were feeding off the income of that religion. Hey, religion has always been that way. I tell people to look at any religion on the face of the earth tonight, go up into the higher echelons and you'll find the same thing. It hasn't changed. The human race hasn't changed one iota in 6000 years. As they get more they get more corrupt, remember total corruption breeds total corruption. The more corrupt people get, the more corruption there is, and corruption just keeps feeding. Listen, this was Saul of Tarsus. This is the point I wanted to make. This guy was a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He was corrupt in the religion, he didn't have any mercy for those who opposed it and so he could drag them into the dungeons or commit them to stoning, it never bothered him then. Now read on about his account.

_Galatians 1:14a_

"And profited in the Jews' religion..."

You know I detest the word `religion.' The Bible always uses it in a bad light. I think in the Book of James there is probably an exception, but for the most part the word `religion' in scripture is a bad word, just like it is here. Paul says, `I was profiting in the Jews' religion,' because it was a bad, corrupt system. Now I don't have to tell you
that. All you have to do is go back and read Jesus' account with the Pharisees, and what were they? They were corrupt.

Remember when one of them smote the apostle Paul on the face? What did Paul call him? You whited sepulcher. That's pretty strong language, and he had to take it back, because he didn't know that he was talking to the high priest. I think there's more there than reads between the lines, but anyway that's what he called him. Now finishing the verse:

*Galatians 1:14*

"And profited in the Jews religion above many my equals in mine own nation, (he was probably making more bucks than most of them) being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."

Always remember this, "Religion always banks on traditions rather than doctrine. And when we get a little further in Galatians, I'm going to show you that things haven't changed one bit in the past 2000 years. Oh we're not dealing with circumcision, or Pharisees, and Judaism, but we're dealing with the same kind of mentality. It's the same thing, it's religion, and all of its demands on poor unsuspecting people. But look what he says:

*Galatians 1:14b*

"...being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."

In other words, Saul was proud of his genealogy, and he probably was even able to chase it clear back into the Old Testament economy. Remember, his father must have been some kind of a man of influence as a Roman citizen, because Paul, remember, was also a Roman citizen, so that tells you something about his father and probably his grandfather. All of these things come into play when you look at the man's religious fanaticism. If he could stamp out all of these Jews who had followed Christ then he thought he was the winner.
LESSON THREE * PART I

THE GOSPEL OF THE CIRCUMCISION AND THE GOSPEL OF THE UNCIRCUMCISION

GALATIANS 1:15 - 2:9

Now this is Bible study so let's begin. You know I would like to get every person from whatever station in society or whatever age group interested in the Word of God. The Bible is still the greatest Book on earth, and it's not as difficult as most people have been led to believe. The secret to understanding the Bible is to separate some of these things that you cannot mix. And so this where we come in, especially with the apostle Paul and his writings. All of his writings are of Grace and Grace alone. So if there seems to be a contradiction in Scripture, see if it's under Grace or Law as the two won't mix.

Now let's jump right into today's lesson in Galatians Chapter 1 and verse 15. Also remember that this little Book of Galatians is primarily dealing with Churches that were being bombarded with a perversion of the Gospel which Paul says:

Galatians 1:7a

"Which is not another; (Gospel) but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."

It's not a completely different Gospel. But what they were doing to Paul's Gospel of Grace was adding law and legalism, and works. Now nothing thrills us more than to get letter after letter that exclaims, "My what a joy. It's like someone took a load off my shoulders when I came out of all that legalism, and realized that it's in Grace and Grace alone that we have to find our salvation (I Corinthians 15:1-4)" So this is the whole theme now that the apostle Paul is still defending his apostleship as he did all through the Corinthian letters.

I can see now why the Holy Spirit put the Corinthian letters where they are, and why Romans is where it is, even though they were written later. Paul declares in Romans the basic doctrine of his Gospel, and then in the Corinthian letters he had to correct and reprove them for having so many other problems. Not so much like the Galatians with legalism, but they had divisions and other problems so he had to correct those problems and in correcting them he had to defend his apostleship.

Now I know you're probably sick and tired of hearing me say this, but I have to get this across.
As Paul's writings and his letters are so often totally ignored, we have to remember what an Ivy League president in the late 1800's once said. He said, "We must realize that it's either back, back, back, to the doctrines of Paul or it's on, on, on to an apostasy." I believe that more than ever. If we can't get folks back to an understanding of Paul's doctrines, then Christianity is in dire straits. Now verse 15. So, in this verse, Paul is pretty much still declaring his apostleship and declaring his authority and so he says:

**Galatians 1:15**

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

Now that's a Pauline expression. *Called me by his Grace*. All you have to do is stop and reflect for a moment. What else but Grace could have done what God did with that man on the road to Damascus. Here he was trying to stamp out anyone in Israel that had proclaimed Christ as the Messiah, and had become separated from the mainstream of Judaism, although they were still keeping Temple worship and the Law. Evidently Saul had pretty much cleansed the homeland and now he had gone to the chief rulers to get permission to go to Syria and bring back the Jewish believers to Jerusalem for trial, punishment and death. So on the road to Damascus with that heart of absolute hatred with anything contrary to Judaism, the Lord called Him by His Grace. If there was ever a man that didn't deserve what God did for him it was Saul. But, contrary to what most people think, we have to do to get right with God. Saul, like Israel of old when they stood on the shores of the Red Sea, did absolutely nothing. Nothing but helplessly call out, *What would you have me do?*

Remember in Genesis when Noah and his family were in the ark? Do you remember what the picture of the sealant of those wood boards were? It was the word "pitch" but in the Hebrew it meant "atonement" So it was the atonement that sealed out the flood waters of Noah's ark. Now with the atonement in place and the ark secure, Noah and his family were totally safe. Well, it's the same when you come to Israel standing at their kitchen table in their little huts in Egypt. And the death angel is flying over, and wailing and weeping is carrying on in Egypt, and yet, there, those Jewish families could stand safe and secure because the blood was on the door. Then sometime later they stood on the shores of the Red Sea with no hope. And when God spoke, He didn't tell them to do anything except to stand still and see the power of God. And, of course, that was the opening of the Red Sea. Now this is exactly where Paul had to find himself. Just exactly like Israel, there was only going to be one place of safety for the man, and that is the Blood of Christ, and how is he going to appropriate it? Not by doing something, but rather, once the Lord spoke to him, all he could say was, "Lord
what would you have me do?" And it hasn't changed a bit. So this is what he is referring to when he says in verse 15:

*Galatians 1:15,16a*

"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, (Now verse 16.) To reveal his Son (Christ) in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; (anybody that is not a Jew)

Now let's go back to the Book of Acts and look at that account, for after all, with Bible study we have to use references as much as possible to see that all of scripture agrees. We never pick up a verse here and there in order to build some ideas, but all of scripture will substantiate hopefully what we are teaching. In Acts Chapter 9, after that experience on the road to Damascus, we find God working both ends to the middle. He's working on Saul outside the city, He's also working on Ananias inside the city of Damascus. So now we're going to pick it up where God is speaking to Ananias, this believing Jew, somewhere in the city of Damascus.

*Acts 9:11-15a*

"And the Lord said unto him, `Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth. 12. And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.' 13. Then Ananias answered, `Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: (Saul's persecutions) 14. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. (and here it is in verse 15. Oh we want people from one end of this country to the other to understand this. 15. 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 a lot of people don't realize this, but when Christ came in His earthly ministry to the Nation of Israel and He chose the Twelve, He had instructions for them.

*Matthew 10:5*

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, `Go not into the way of the Gentiles, (the non Jew) and into any city of the Samaritans (Samaritans were half breeds)enter ye not: 6. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'"

Now that was a commandment. They were to go to no one but Jews. And the Twelve understood that better than most preachers and teachers today. The Twelve never lost
sight of that as we see in Acts Chapter 11. And this is many years after the Cross and Pentecost. I just want you to see how those early Jewish believers adhered to that commandment that Jesus gave to the Twelve. **Now there are a lot of people that think that as soon as Jesus began His ministry, the Church began, and God's Grace and the Gospel went out to the whole world. That's not according to the Bible. According to this Book He ministered only to the Nation of Israel for the whole three years. That's why most preachers and teachers think the Church today is Israel. That way they can try to make it all fit, but listen, Law and Grace won't mix.**

And even after His ascension, and Peter begins at Pentecost, then for several years it was that same format. They could not go to the non-Jew.

**Acts 11:19**

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

Do you see how plain that is? Now this is about seven years after Pentecost. They are still adhering to the commandments that Jesus gave to the Twelve in Matthew 10:5,6. The Lord Jesus didn't want the Gentiles to have anything to do with the Jews' religion, and we can look at that now and see that the Lord wanted the apostle Paul to go to the Gentiles and give them pure Grace. Now coming back to Acts Chapter 9. Maybe this will be more enlightening as to why the Lord Jesus had to make such an emphasis to this man Ananias, as to what was the purpose of saving this Jewish zealot who had been putting Jews to death for having embraced Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah. And yet he has to understand that now there's going to be a change of direction in God's plan.

People must understand that, from Genesis Chapter 12 to Acts Chapter 9, it's God dealing with the Nation of Israel. Don't try to draw the Body of Christ into those areas. But here in Acts Chapter 9 there is going to be a change, there's going to be a fork in the road, and we're going to see it explicitly as we go on in Galatians. Now looking at verse 15 again:

**Acts 9:15**

"But the Lord said unto him, 'Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16. For I will shew him (Saul) how great things he must suffer for my name sake.'"
Did he suffer? Oh, did he ever. In the Corinthian letters we saw how he was beaten, stoned, and scourged, and cold and naked, and many times sick, and living in fear for his life, and all because of what the Lord Jesus had promised him here. Well, now if you will come back with me to Galatians Chapter 1. God is going to reveal Himself to this apostle, Saul of Tarsus, who is now Paul and reading on in verse 16:

_Galatians 1:16b_

"...immediately _I conferred not with flesh and blood:""

Now we know a lot of people think this verse should read that immediately he went up to Jerusalem to check it out with the Twelve. That would have been the logical thing wouldn't it? To go back to Jerusalem, and say, "Hey, Peter, you guys were with Him for three years. I want to know everything that He taught you. **But you see the Holy Spirit here is making it so positive that He's not going to let this man be tainted whatsoever by what the Twelve had learned at the feet of Jesus.** The Lord Jesus now has something totally different to show this man, and he doesn't want it mixed up. But you see, men are adept at mixing things up. Men have been mixing it ever since the apostle Paul left the scene. And I'm trying my very best to unmix it, and to bring it back again to this clear division between what God did with Israel, and what He's doing with the Gentile, and the Body of Christ.

_Galatians 1:16b_

"..._I conferred not with flesh and blood:""

In other words, with other human beings, why? Because he's dealing with the flesh and bone, the Lord Jesus up in glory. Now verse 17. And for emphasis, to make sure that we get it straight. he repeats that.

_Galatians 1:17_

"_*Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me;*_ (Paul never takes away the authority of Peter and the other eleven apostles, so far as their position as apostles of Israel. But on the other hand he's also not going to let them usurp his authority as the apostle of the Gentiles.) **but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus,**

Now the first thing I like to do when you see that word `Arabia' in verse 17 is take you to Chapter 4 here in Galatians.

_Galatians 4:25a_
"For this Agar (Paul is making an allegory here but we won't cover it now) is mount Sinai in Arabia,..."

Now, from that little statement of Paul, I have to feel that, since this man is going to be delegated to receive a whole new Body of Truth from the ascended Lord, and he is going to be given the responsibly to take it out to the whole Gentile world, God did much the same thing with Moses at that same Mount Sinai. You have seen me put that on the board before, and we'll do it again now. **When the Lord spoke to Moses there at Mount Sinai and gave him the Law, Moses took the Law down to Israel.** And only Israel received the ramifications of the Law, although the Law certainly affected the whole human race.

But here we are at the time of Paul some 1500 years later, and God hasn't changed. God is still the same, as He never changes. But now He's dealing with a different individual. **He now gives to Paul these doctrines of Grace, which is imbedded in what Paul is always referring to as the mysteries. And then this apostle is instructed to take these doctrines of Grace to the Gentiles, and for the ones who will listen to him in the Nation of Israel.** That, I think, just answers all of our questions as to what part of the Scriptures are we to depend on. Now it's all God's Word, don't ever take that away from me. Every word in this Book is the inspired Word of God, but He has made it so plain that this man is the apostle of the Gentiles. In fact, seeing Jerry Poole here today, I've got to use this verse. There are several verses that Jerry, when he first was bombarded by them 16 years ago would come up and would say, "Now Les I never saw that before, so repeat it, repeat it and repeat it." So that's why I do it. Go back to the Book of Romans Chapter 11:13. And this says it so plainly. There's no arguing over it.

**Romans 11:13**

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

In other words Paul is not going to back down for anything as that role of the apostle of the Gentiles. Why can't people adhere to that? That's Paul's authority. That's why, as we saw in the Corinthian letters, he was always defending that authority. Now come back to Galatians. So evidently he went down to Arabia, Mount Sinai, and, of course, there's a difference of opinion among Bible scholars and theologians whether he spent the whole three years at Sinai as I believe he did. Or, did he spend a portion of time at Sinai and then go back to Damascus, and then at the end of the three years begin his ministry. I have to feel that the Lord took that whole three years of dealing with this man all by himself down there in the desert at Mount Sinai.
Now the reason I take that approach is that, when you understand all the trials and tribulations that this man went through, most men would have given up long, long ago. But the apostle Paul always kept pressing on. Why? Because I think this three-year experience was so imbedded in the man's makeup that he could do nothing less. Then, on top of that, there were several times that the Lord Jesus referred to him face to face. Paul says that He appeared unto me. So all of these things contributed to his constant pushing forward against all opposition. So, after a three-year stint, which I think was down at Arabia, he finally gets up to Jerusalem to meet Peter face-to-face for the first time. Now I imagine that was quite a meeting, because, after all, they're coming from two totally different backgrounds.

Galatians 1:18

"Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days."
LESSON THREE * PART II

THE GOSPEL OF THE CIRCUMCISION AND THE GOSPEL OF THE UNCIRCUMCISION

GALATIANS 1:15 - 2:9

Now back to Galatians Chapter 1, and we hope you take your Bible and study with us. We don't want people to say, "Well, that's what Les says." I want people to say, "My Bible says such and such." Be able to confirm whatever you may be sharing with someone from the Word. This Book is the authority; this is the only thing that we have to go on. I always emphasize that I am a firm proponent that this is the inspired Word of God from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21. Remember when Paul speaks in the first person it is still inspired of God, and it is God's Word and we can rest upon it.

So let's begin our study, and in our last lesson we left off at verse 18, where Paul had now finished his three-year hiatus, evidently with the Lord alone down in Mount Sinai in Arabia. I had someone ask me, "Why would it take three years to get the revelations?" I answered, "It probably took 2 1/2 years to get Judaism out of his system." And this lady said, "That makes sense, because it took me forever to get my old religion out of my system." And this is a possibility because Saul of Tarsus had been a Jews' Jew, a Hebrew of the Hebrew, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, and educated at the feet of the greatest rabbi of that time. So you know he was saturated with Judaism. He was more religious than many of his peers, and he was human. We're all human, and when we've had something drummed into us for years and years, it takes the power of God to cleanse us of all that.

There is such a stark difference between Judaism (and all of it's rules and regulations and Law-keeping, and Phariseeism on the part of Paul) and the Grace of God (receiving all of this free for nothing without lifting a finger). Hey, that flies in the face of human thinking, but this is where we have to begin. Now we don't stay there, but that's where we begin. That's where salvation comes in, when we just say, "Lord there is nothing that I can do, but I believe You've done it all, and I believe that on top of dying for me, You also rose from the dead. I believe it with all my heart." Then, yes, God expects us to move out and live a life of service, and that's the thrilling part of it.

There is a man in our television audience in a distant state who has just come out of one of these binding religions, and he is so thrilled. He's called just about every time that he sees another truth. He can't get over the fact that he'd been blinded to all this for so long. Now he's begun a Bible study on his own, and I think last night was his third Bible study, and he was so thrilled. He said "Les, I just can't wait until tonight."
Well that's the way it goes when you come out from underneath all that pressure of a religion of having to do something. Then, to step into the freedom of Grace, it's just like setting a bird free out of its cage.

Now this is where the apostle Paul is coming from. He has been weighed down with Judaism and all of its demands of a religious leader, and now he's been set free. So Paul has had three years to shed himself of all that, and to absorb some of the mysteries. I maintain that the things that he shares with us in the prison Epistles of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon, he probably had revealed to him while in prison in Caesarea before he got to Rome. Because, by the time he gets to Rome, all these new revelations are fresh on his mind as he begins to write those letters. But back here in his earlier Epistles I think of all of these tremendous doctrines that are so separated from legalism, and Judaism, and yet they all fit. It isn't something that's just like a thorn in all the rest of scripture. No it all fits so beautifully. In fact, I know I've shared it with some of my classes about the lady who called and told me that the scripture that her preacher used for Sunday was out of Matthew 19:16,17.

**Matthew 19:16,17**

"And, behold, one came and said unto him, 'Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?' 17. And he said unto him, 'Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

She said, "This morning I was watching you and you said we weren't under the commandments, but rather Grace." She said, "I'm confused." Well, I gave her a one-on-one Bible study. I brought her up all through the Abrahamic Covenant, and Christ's earthly ministry, and the Nation of Israel's rejection and the raising of Saul of Tarsus who became the apostle Paul, the apostle to us Gentiles. And the revelation of the mysteries that was given only to him, and how that now, since the work of the Cross was complete, He has been resurrected from the dead, He's gone back to glory and revealed these truths. How that now there was no need to work for salvation because it's all done. After I explained all this she was silent for a moment and said, "It's so logical isn't it?" Yes, it's so logical that if it's all done then why try to work, work, work to still do more. Now this is what the man is trying to get across so he says in verse 18:

**Galatians 1:18-20**

"Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days, (that's only two weeks and a day) 19. But other of the apostles (the other eleven) saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. 20. Now the things which I write
unto you, (the Gentiles up in Galatia. He's writing to us even today) behold, before God, I lie not."

Does that sound familiar? What did he tell the Corinthians in their letters? "I didn't bring you a corrupt message. I didn't bring you something that has been adulterated." Now here we have it in a little different language, but it's the same thought. Now verse 21.

**Galatians 1:21**

"Afterwards (after he had been to Jerusalem, and the three years with the Lord at Sinai, and after he is ready to fulfill that commission to go to the Gentiles that we saw in the last lesson in Acts Chapter 9 then) I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;"

Now I think most of you know your Bible geography well enough to know that Cilicia was just around the corner of the Mediterranean Sea, up in the area of Saul's home town of Tarsus. So he's not that far removed from Palestine, but yet he is in total Gentile territory when he begins his ministry after the two weeks with Peter. He goes from Jerusalem directly up to his home area of Cilicia. Verse 22:

**Galatians 1:22**

"And was unknown by face unto the (assemblies or) churches of Judaea which were in Christ: "

Now why did the Holy Spirit inspire the man to make a statement like that? Why is he letting us know that he had nothing to do with those Jewish congregations in Palestine? Because this man is going to be separated from all of that. He has no ministry to the Jews there in Judaea. No more than the Twelve had a ministry to the Gentiles when Jesus sent them out. Do you see the difference? It's just a complete fork in the road. This man is going to be sent to the very opposite direction that Peter and the other apostles were sent. So he goes up into a totally new Gentile area, and no doubt there were some Jews in these areas as they were in areas of the whole Roman empire. Now verse 23:

**Galatians 1:23**

"But (these Jewish believers down in the area of Jerusalem and Judea) they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. 24. And they glorified God in me."
Of course they did, for after all it's the same God, it's the same Christ - but whereas the Jewish believers had come in by virtue of the kingdom economy and the kingdom Gospel, yet this man is going in a different direction but still serving the same God. Never lose sight of that because someone sent me an article the other day about theologians who are trying to promote the theory that the apostle Paul, even though he was the founder of Christianity, was in complete contradiction and in opposition of what Jesus taught. I know that promotes book sales, but how can you come to such a conclusion. It's not in opposition, but it is a difference in His program. It's no longer under Law, but it's the same God, it's the same Christ. So how can they say that Paul was in direct opposition to the teaching of Christ when in Ephesians Chapter 3:1 Paul says:

**Ephesians 3:1**

"*For this cause* (because of what he has written in Chapter 2) *I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ* (but for what purpose?) *for you Gentiles, '*

Paul is not in opposition to the teachings of Jesus; it's an extension of them. Now that the life of Christ was culminated there at the Cross, and then picked up in resurrection power, of course that makes it different, but it's still the same God. Now back to the Book of Galatians, and we're ready for Chapter 2. Now remember we've seen him saved on the road to Damascus and we've seen him spend three years either divided between Arabia and Damascus or, as I feel, all down at Arabia. And so he says:

**Galatians 2:1a**

"*Then fourteen years after...*"

After what? His conversion. Once in a while the Lord has seen fit to give us the time element, and the chronologers can jump on this and they can pretty much reconstruct the whole time-table even though there is nothing definitive; and, consequently, I have not found two chronologers that agree. They are always at least a few years apart on their estimation of some of these things. But in this verse here is a benchmark as Paul says:

**Galatians 2:1**

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

Well where did Paul hook up with Barnabas? Up at Antioch. And when did he get to Antioch? After he had been up to Cilicia. So we know there's a time frame in there
between his conversion and this counsel in Jerusalem. Now I think, again, that most chronologers feel that this counsel in Jerusalem was somewhere around 51 or 52 AD. Now, you want to remember that Christ was crucified, and Pentecost took place, in 29 AD. Then I feel (and again some chronologers also feel) that there was a seven-year interval between Pentecost and the stoning of Stephen which would be in 36 AD. This was when Saul was at the height of persecuting those Jewish believers, and had brought about the stoning of Stephen. Then in the next year (37 AD) we have Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus. Then adding three years for Arabia it would take us up to 40 AD when he returned to Cilicia. But if he went back up to Jerusalem here in Galatians Chapter 2, then 14 years after 37 AD would take you up to 51 AD.

Now the only reason I do this is to show that all during the Book of Acts time is moving on. This isn't all happening just in a year or so. Time has been going by, and now here we are 14 years after his conversion. He has been out in the Gentile world preaching his Gospel of Grace, and in the meantime, as we saw in the Corinthian letters in our previous program, the Judaisers from Jerusalem are opposing him at every turn. Whether they were believing Jews, whether they were under the influences of Peter and the eleven, or whether they were from the Orthodox, it made no difference. They would come into these Gentile congregations and say, "You can't be saved by Paul's Gospel alone. You also have to keep the Law, and practice circumcision or you can't be saved." All right let me show you where the Scripture makes that so plain. We have to go back to the Book of Acts again for that. I know when we taught Acts, we used Galatians, and, when we teach Galatians, we'll use Acts. That's sensible, isn't it? Back to Acts Chapter 15 and verse 1. I maintain (and not everybody is going to agree with me), that this counsel in Jerusalem is Luke's account, whereas in Galatians Chapter 2 it's the same counsel, but it's Paul's account. And they all go together. Now then, let's go back to Acts 15 first. I've got to take my time here. I have to force myself to slow down because otherwise you're going to lose the thread.

Acts 15:1

"And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren,...

Now look at that. Analyze it. What kind of Jew would come into a Gentile congregation and begin to teach them? Well, not the orthodox, nor the Pharisee. They wouldn't have anything to do with something like this. After all, what were Gentiles in the mind of a Pharisee? They were dirty dogs! So they certainly wouldn't. So who must have been coming into these Gentile congregations? Jewish believers that believed that Jesus was the Christ. Now they weren't believers in Paul's Gospel. They were still believers that Jesus was Who He said He was. He was the Messiah of Israel. And so they are still under the Law. Now a lot of people don't realize that. Those early Jewish believers, under Peter's preaching, were still Law-keeping Jews.
It's so evident that I don't have to show you the scripture. You remember when Peter had the vision of the sheet and all these creatures were in there and they came down. And what did the Lord command Peter to do? "Rise Peter. Kill and eat." And what did Peter answer? "No way, Lord. Why, I've never eaten anything unclean." Why hadn't he? Because he's a Law-keeping Jew. It had to be kosher or Peter wouldn't eat it. And then a little later he gets up to the house of Cornelius and he is full of trepidation, and I've always put it this way. From Joppa, where the Lord revealed all this to Peter until he gets up to the house of Cornelius, some 80-90 miles up the coast, I've always said there must have been heel prints in the sand where the Lord just pushed him and pushed him because Peter didn't want to go. No more than Jonah did.

And so he gets to the door of Cornelius' house and still full of trepidation, what's the last thing he said before he steps in? He said, "Now Cornelius, you know it's an unlawful thing for me, a Jew, to keep company with a man of another nation." Well why does he say something like that if he's set free? He wasn't set free. He was still a Law-keeping Jew. Now those same kind of believing Jews who were under Peter's control there at Jerusalem, they had maintained a separation but they were still Temple worshippers. You can't ever prove to me that they weren't. And they were still legalistic Jews, but they had recognized Christ as the Messiah. Now back to Acts 15.

Acts 15:1

"And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, (these Gentile brethren) and said, (now look at it carefully because you're Bible says it as sure as mine) `Except (unless) ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.'"

That's what your Bible says. But it's quoting these Jewish people from Jerusalem who are now up there in the Gentile area of Antioch. They were saying you couldn't be saved by Paul's Gospel. Does that sound familiar? You bet it does! We don't use circumcision as a prerequisite today, but, instead, use a host of other things. People will tell you that you can't be saved by what Les is teaching. You've got to do this and that. Hey, there's no difference. Read on:

Acts 15:2

"When therefore (because of this kind of false teaching coming into their midst, which Paul had to constantly refute) Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension (arguing with them) and disputation with them, they (all of them together) determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go
up to Jerusalem (to Peter and the eleven) unto the apostles and elders about this question."

Now jump all the way down to verse 5. They get to Jerusalem and they ride into this big meeting of the Jerusalem believers, that believe, for salvation, that Jesus was the Christ - the ones that Saul had been trying to stamp out.

**Acts 15:5a**

"But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees (what kind of Pharisees?) which believed..."

They had embraced Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah. They're not the whitied sepulchers who were religious, but had nothing. No, these were Pharisees who had seen the light that Christ was Who He said He was. That's what it says, "they were Pharisees who believed." Now continuing on.

**Acts 15:5b**

"...saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."

Not only were they to be circumcised, they were to be commanded, like I pointed out in Matthew 10:5 that Jesus did to the Twelve. He commanded them to go not into the way of the Gentile. These Pharisees are commanding these Gentile believers of Paul's Gospel, based on faith alone, **that not only were they to practice circumcision, but they have to keep the Law.** They have to keep the Law or they couldn't be saved. Now reading on. And here is the bone of contention between the Jerusalem Jewish believers and these Gentile converts that Paul has now won up there in Antioch.

**Acts 15:6**

"And the apostles and the elders came together for to consider of this matter."

Can you see the argument? Listen, we've got to understand this because this is where Christianity is at today. We are being deluged with these same demands. "Oh yeah, we believe the gospel, but it's not enough alone. You've got to do this and that. You have to come this way or that way." **Listen, Paul's gospel will have none of it. God, through Christ in this Age of Grace, will have none of it.** And we'll see that later when we get to Galatians Chapter 5. But here was the need for this counsel to consider this. And now let's come back to Galatians Chapter 2. So, here we are at 51
AD It's a long time after Pentecost. That makes about 22 years after Pentecost, and they are still debating, "Can you be saved by faith alone? Or do you have to keep the Law of Moses and practice circumcision." Now verse 2:

*Galatians 2:2a*

 `'And I went up by revelation,` (the Lord spoke it. Evidently the Lord told Paul, `Now Paul it's time to get up to Jerusalem and confront the Twelve. We have to settle this matter, otherwise we'll never be able to move out into the Gentile world.`) *and communicated unto them that gospel* (if you don't mind, underline the word `that.` You might say that's not an important word, but in this verse it's all important. Because it was *that Gospel*) *which I preached among the Gentiles,..."*

Not just that Jesus was the Christ as Peter preached, but now that he also **died for your sins, He was buried, and He rose from the grave for you.**
LESSON THREE * PART III

THE GOSPEL OF THE CIRCUMCISION AND THE GOSPEL OF THE UNCIRCUMCISION

GALATIANS 1:15 - 2:9

Now we're here for Bible study we always say, so we're going to buy up the time and use every minute for searching the Scriptures and we trust that you will learn how to study. Now we're in Galatians Chapter 2, and here we find this Church that Paul had started in Galatia was having a problem. Remember this little letter was written primarily to straighten out the false teaching by Judaisers of attaching Law-keeping and circumcision to Paul's Gospel of Grace. Now here as we saw in our last lesson, some 22 years after Pentecost in about 51 AD., Paul has already established Churches throughout Asia Minor. We know that the Church at Antioch has been more or less the home base. It's where Gentiles were first called Christians, and where they were first interested in the things of God.

So consequently it's at Antioch that this matter really boiled over to the place that the Lord instructed Paul to go up to Jerusalem and meet with the apostles and elders of the Jewish congregation. I refuse to call those Jewish believers Christians simply because the Bible doesn't. Now I know that I stand alone out there and that's all right because like I've always told people that come to my classes, "I have never taught anywhere, classes or even on television with the idea of having any monetary return. So I don't have to worry if people like it or don't like it. I told one gentleman one night, "It fine with me if you don't want to come back to the class, it's no skin off my nose." But you know what? He came back to the class a couple of weeks later and he became one of my best students.

So I feel the same way here. I can take my stand on some of these things without compromise because I only have ONE that I'm responsible to, and that's the Author of this Book. I handle this Book realizing what a tremendous responsibility it is. It doesn't matter whether you're a Sunday school teacher, or whether you're going to just hold a devotion in your women's group or whatever. Never forget that when you handle the Word of God that it's an awesome responsibility, and I never forget that. We appreciate the letters and phone calls of encouragement that we receive. I do feel that Paul and Barnabas as they now come from Antioch and they're going to try to prove to the leadership at Jerusalem that you cannot add anything to the relationship between Christ and the believer except faith and faith alone in Paul's Gospel.
Now when we left off in our last lesson we were in verse 2, and I hope that I made the point that when he says-

**Galatians 2:2a**

"And I went up by revelation, and communicated..."

In other words they didn't just flippantly say, "Well this is what we believe." But rather they sat down and they looked at it point by point. Line upon line, because these revelations that came through the apostle Paul are so far above and beyond Judaism that it took some time for these people to understand where Paul was coming from. Those of you who remember my teachings back in Romans 1:16 where Paul says:

**Romans 1:16a**

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it (the Gospel) is the power of God unto salvation..."

And what does salvation imply according to Paul's teachings? **It's that whole body of truth that involves justification, sanctification, forgiveness, redeemed, baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and you can just go on and on and on. These are all new revelations that you won't find until you get to Paul's writings.** You don't find that taught in the Old Testament. You don't find the Old Testament believer told, "The Spirit dwelleth within you." Do you? No. Abraham was told that he was justified by faith and faith alone, but he's the only one of the Jews back there told that. The reason is, all of this has to be after the Cross and the resurrection had been completed. So Paul communicated carefully, line upon line, precept upon precept that Gospel.

**Galatians 2:2a**

"And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles.

Now why does the Holy Spirit prompt the man to use the word "**that gospel?**" Well to signify the difference between Paul's Gospel, and what Peter and Jesus and the eleven had been teaching to Israel. Now you've heard me many times make the statement that Jesus and the Twelve operated under the Gospel of the Kingdom. And the Gospel of the Kingdom was just simply that the King is here, He is ready to set up the Kingdom offered to Israel since Abraham was given the Covenant. And that whole
scope of that Kingdom message was "That Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Messiah of Israel."

But now you see the Gospel of Grace is "That this same Messiah of Israel Who was crucified, shed His Blood, was buried, and rose from the dead is the Savior, not just for Israel, but of the whole human race." Not to those who keep the Law, not to those who do something for salvation, but to those who simply believe. Oh, that was a whole new concept and these believing Jews couldn't comprehend it, so they have to bring Paul to Jerusalem. Now reading on in verse 2.

**Galatians 2:2a**

"And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately (probably a small room where just the leaders were present) to them which were of reputation,..."

The leadership, and that would include Peter and the eleven, and maybe a few of the Jewish elders of that assembly. And so they were more or less in a separate room by themselves first, as Paul was delineating that Gospel which he was preaching to those Gentiles, and it leaves out circumcision, and Law-keeping. But the opposition couldn't see that that was the way to do it. Now verse 3.

**Galatians 2:3**

"But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled (or forced) to be circumcised:"

At least Paul and Barnabas held them at bay on that point. They weren't going to circumcise Titus in order for him to be part of this great counsel meeting. Now verse 4.

**Galatians 2:4a**

"And that because of false brethren unawares brought in,..."

Now these false brethren didn't sneak in, but rather the leaders no doubt had something to do with it because they were brought in. Now that's why I'm a stickler for every word. Now if that word brought wasn't in there then I could say, Peter wasn't aware of these people, but I think he was. Somebody was influential in bringing these people into this great counsel meeting of the Jewish believers at Jerusalem to confront Paul and Barnabas and Titus, but primarily Paul and Barnabas.
Galatians 2:4a

"And that because of false brethren unawares..."

Now there is another scripture that uses that same word unawares, and let's look at it for a moment. It's in the little Book of Jude. So when false teaching slips into a congregation or a denomination, it's nothing new. The writers of Scriptures were already aware of it.

Jude 1:3,4

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. 4. For there are certain men (not a lot of them, but enough of them) crept in unawares, (a false teacher will never come into your Church, and say, "OK folks I'm going to give you a little poison to go along with the good stuff." So what does he do? He comes in perfectly sanctioned, he's got all the credentials, but he's a false teacher. And this has been a warning from day one.) who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Does that sound familiar? Sure it does. And yet the gullible just can't see the difference. And that's what they are, they're gullible. Oh, these men may sound like they have all the answers, they may be polished, they may be like an Apollos. They may have all the knowledge that makes me look like what I really am - just an uneducated cow man, but they are false teachers, and they are leading people astray. Now coming back to the Book of Galatians and you'll see that same word and they're using the same mode of operation. They will bring false teachers in without the whole congregation knowing who they are. And look what they do.

Galatians 2:4

"And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily (or secretly) to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that thy might bring us into bondage."

Now what do you suppose Paul is talking about when he says "Liberty?" Well, that he was no longer under the demands of the Mosaic Law. They were set at liberty from that. Now I don't want to get risqué, but we've got to face facts as to how life was back in those days. Not every home had a private shower and bath, so most people had to go to public baths. Well, when these false brethren would go to these baths and there
was an uncircumcised Gentile such as Titus, do you think they're blind? Why they
could pick that out in a moment. So the whole idea here that these Jews were going to
slip in and spy on Paul and Barnabas, especially with their relationship with Titus who
was a Gentile, to check them out and make sure that they were practicing
circumcision. They probably watched how they ate. Are they eating kosher food, and
it was all done to just submarine the apostle and sink him? That's all they have on
their mind, they want to sink the apostle Paul. They want him to be absolutely put out
of business rather than go out to the Gentiles with the message that he's been
preaching. Now reading on:

*Galatians 2:4b*

"...that they
(these Judaisers, although most are Kingdom believers in Christ as the
Messiah) *might bring us into bondage:*"

They actually wanted Paul to say, "OK fellows you win, you win, I'll go back to my
congregations and I'll just tell them, OK folks I've had it all wrong. I'm sorry I've been
teaching you wrong, I guess we're going to have to give in. Go ahead and practice
your circumcision if that's what you want to do. Go ahead and keep the dietary laws,
keep the Law of Moses for after all I was wrong." **But you see that's not Paul!** Now
let's read on in verse 5. Now the real Paul stands up:

*Galatians 2:5*

"To whom
(that is the leaders of the Jerusalem congrega-
tion) *we gave place by
subjection*, (do you know what that means? Pressure. Paul was under pressure from
these Jerusalem leaders to get rid of this idea that your converts don't have to keep the
Law of Moses.) *no, not for an hour;* (Paul didn't weaken one bit, why?) **that the truth
of the gospel might continue with you.***

Now he's writing to Gentiles remember so he's writing to you and I. He's rehearsing
what he went through. And what was the purpose he fought so hard for us? So that
Gentiles could continue to literally revel in the Grace of God without being weighed
down with all of the burdens of Law-keeping. Now you want to remember that any
kind of religion is a burden. That's why that most of your Oriental religions, in
particular their whole format for keeping people under their thumb, is superstition.
They keep people scared to death that if they don't do exactly what their religion
commands then they're in trouble. Bring it into any kind of a legalistic system and it's
the same way they keep people under their thumb, and that's not freedom. Let's look at
that in Galatians Chapter 5:1 **And this is what he's talking about and fighting so
hard for us that we would never have to give up a verse like this.**
"Stand fast therefore in the liberty (the freedom) wherewith Christ (in His finished work and power of resurrection) hath made us free, (we have liberty) and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

That yoke of bondage was what the Law was. Judaism was the religion of Christ's day, and pretty much the extent of Orthodox Judaism today. But what were the roots of Judaism? Well the pure Mosaic and Levitical Law that you had back there in the time of Moses. But the religion degenerated, and as they came up through the centuries, and the Rabbi's begin to make comments on the various portions of the Old Testament, it just gradually became watered down from its original purity. I'm not saying this with any criticism of the present day Jewish religion, but truth is truth. So it had degenerated down to a religion, and that's why Paul called it that in Chapter 1:13 at the time of Christ. It was no longer resting on the Ten Commandments and the Torah, but it had become 613 rules and regulations.

Now can you imagine living 24 hours a day under the constant pressure of 613 rules? Why you couldn't take a breath without breaking one of them. And yet they had to be scared to death of what the religion would demand of them if they broke one of these 613 commandments. Now Paul is saying that we've been set free from all of that. Now let's turn on into the Book of Colossians, and this is one of my favorite verses. Oh what beautiful language we have here. I hope the new versions don't take this out, but leave it just like it is. Paul, writing to Gentiles up there in Asia Minor writes:

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances (what do you suppose that was? 613 of them.) that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;"

See that finished it. The Cross was the end of the Law, and we must never forget that. And yet so much of our preaching and teaching today is in that area before the Cross. And that's why they can hang onto all this legalism. That's why they can hang on to all the commandments because they are not recognizing that the Cross completely finished it. The Lord Himself nailed those things to the Cross. Yes including the Ten Commandments. We're not under their binding power. Now we're under their moral principles. Absolutely we are. We still live under the moral code of the Ten Commandments, I'll never take that away. In fact Paul makes that so clear in Romans Chapter 13. It's so obvious that they still have a valid role in our Christian experience. But it's not a religious dogma.
Romans 13:8,9

"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath (already) fulfilled the law. (the work of the Cross was love epitomized. It was God's love for mankind that nailed Him to the Cross. And as a result He fulfilled the demands of the Law) 9. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness. Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

That obvious enough isn't it? But it's not a legalistic, pressurized system whereby we have to say, "Oh I don't dare do that. I can't do that because there is a law against it." No we've been set free. But like I always say, "That's not license." As soon as we come under this law of love we no longer want to break these commandments. We have now the indwelling Holy Spirit who directs our thinking and actions. Now that is not to say that we're going to be sinless, because we're human. And as long as we're here in the flesh we're still going to fail, but the Lord has made provisions for that. Now coming back to Galatians Chapter 2, and again I want to look at verse 5. Let verse 5 just sink into your thinking. Paul is under pressure to give up this Gospel of Grace, and add Law-keeping and circumcision, but he says:

Galatians 2:5

"To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; (today I guess we'd say not for a minute) that the truth of the gospel (Paul's Gospel) might continue with you.".

Now just stop and think? What if Paul would have given up?
LESSON THREE * PART IV

THE GOSPEL OF THE CIRCUMCISION AND THE GOSPEL OF THE UNCIRCUMCISION

GALATIANS 1:15 - 2:9

Now to pick up where we left off in Galatians Chapter 2, and remember this little Book was written to clarify that we're not under Law, but rather Grace, and never lose sight of that. It was written to Gentile congregations and so it is just as appropriate for you and I today Now we had just finished our comments on verse 5 in the last lesson, and remember the setting. The Church up in Antioch, which was up in Syria, has become predominately Gentile where Paul and Barnabas have now been laboring as well as moving out from Antioch into the Gentile world of Asia Minor and Greece. But everywhere they go their little congregations are constantly being subjected to the Judaisers who are trying to bring them under the Law of Moses. They are claiming that Paul's converts cannot be saved unless they keep the Law of Moses, practice circumcision, and so forth.

So finally after many, many years this all comes to a head, and Paul and Barnabas, by the Lord's own direction sends them up to Jerusalem to confront Peter and the hierarchy there. So this is what Paul is rehearsing in Galatians Chapter 2. Now we're going to take just a moment here in Galatians and we're going to go back and pick up Luke's account of this same meeting in Acts Chapter 15. Now verse 6:

Galatians 2:6

"But of these who seemed to be somewhat,..."

Now read that carefully, what does that tell you? What does that imply. Hey, they are not what they thought they were. Now I'm not being disrespectful of Peter and the eleven. No way. I'm going to be just as anxious to see Peter, James, and John and the rest of them as anybody else. But in the whole economy of things, here they have been promoting Christ as the Messiah of Israel, and His coming Kingship, and His Kingdom, but Israel is rejecting it. Now that wasn't Peter's fault. He had done all he could. He had preached his heart out all through those early Chapters of Acts. But Israel could not believe that anything good could come out of Nazareth. Well in God's Divine purposes then as Israel kept slipping and slipping away in unbelief, then naturally Peter and the eleven and these Jewish leaders of Jerusalem were losing their clout. Because the whole system was falling through the cracks. But God isn't going to be out of it, so as Israel is slipping in unbelief, rejecting all this, God has now
turned to what people? Well the Gentiles. So as the Jews are going dow, the Gentiles are coming up, and this is Paul's ministry. Looking at verse 6 again:

**Galatians 2:6a**

"But of these who seemed to be somewhat,..."

These had to be the Twelve and the elders of the congregation at Jerusalem, but they no longer had the power, rightfully, as God had entrusted to them. Let me show you what I'm talking about. Come with me to the Book of Acts Chapter 4, and again watch every word of this. Let's begin with verse 32, and much the same thing has taken place in Chapter 2. Where they begin to have all things common, and they lived out of what I call the common kitty. Now this kitty is still operating in Chapter 4 which is probably a year or two later.

**Acts 4:32-37**

"And the multitude of them that believed (that is of these Jews now at Jerusalem) were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. (in other words they took all their wealth, whatever they had, and they brought it into a common kitty.)

33. And with great power (don't miss that) gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all,

34. Neither was there any among them that lacked:(remember there was thousands of these Jewish believers that were living out of this kitty.)

35. And laid them down at the apostles' feet: (because they were in control) and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. (Remember they were waiting for Christ to come back and set up His Kingdom)

36. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (same Barnabas that was in Galatians Chapter 2 with Paul) (which is being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, 37. Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.'"

Even Barnabas, that good man who was probably coming up in the leadership, he, too, laid every penny of what he had gotten for his sold real-estate at the feet of the apostles. They were in control, they were the leadership. Now it's these same apostles that Paul by inspiration of the Holy Spirit is led to say for our purposes:

**Galatians 2:6**
"But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatasoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) (so in God's view Peter was no greater than anybody else.) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:"

Something else to remember is that when you see Scripture repeat something, as you see in this verse it being repeated for emphasis, He's driving the point home that these men no longer had the preeminence of God's dealing with the human race that they had enjoyed back in the earthly ministries and the early days of Acts. It was slipping away from them. And the reason Paul says at the end of verse 6 "that in conference added nothing to me," was because they had no comprehension of these revelations that the apostle Paul had been receiving from the ascended Lord. They knew only Jesus in the flesh, they knew Jesus that 40 days in Acts after His resurrection of course, but they knew nothing of the ascended Lord. And Paul had received all of his from the ascended Lord in glory. Now one more verse and we've got to go back to Acts Chapter 15.

Galatians 2:7

"But contrariwise, (or on the other hand) when they (the Twelve in particular) saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision (the Gentiles) was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision (Jew) was unto Peter;"

Now you know that because we saw that four lessons ago. **Jesus chose the Twelve, and He commanded them in Matthew 10:5,6 not to go to a Gentile but go only to lost sheep of the house of Israel. So the Twelve were apostles of what people? Israel!** You know I've said as long as I've been teaching that you can't show me one record from scripture that these Twelve men ever had a ministry among the Gentiles. Now I won't take away the fact that they may have visited with the Gentiles, as we know Peter went up to Antioch. **But to actually have a ministry among the Gentiles there's not a word of record of that in this Book.** They were the apostles of Israel and the Jews, and they understood that. A lot of people today don't understand that, but those Twelve men did.

So in verse 7 again, Paul says that the Twelve are now beginning to understand that as he was given the Gospel for the Gentiles (I Corinthians 15:1-4) it was from the same God, and the same kind of authority that they had received the Gospel of the circumcision or the Jews which was the Gospel of the Kingdom. Now come back to Acts 15 and we've mentioned before that this will be Luke's account of the same thing we find in Galatians Chapter 2 which is Paul's account in the first person. But now look what Luke writes in Acts Chapter 15. We've already looked at a few of the early verses in the chapter. But let's jump in at verse 5 and review it.
"But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. 6. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider this matter. 7. And when there had been (past tense) much disputing,..."

Now I don't know how long this disputing went on, and again with no disrespect to our Jewish people, have you ever seen two or three Jews get into an argument? I tell you what, it's interesting. I know we've had it happen in the hotel in Jerusalem, and even though we couldn't understand a word they said, I know that the fur would have liked to have flown. Because they can really get after it, and I bet they did here also. There was much disputing, and they weren't making any bones about what they believed. Now reading on:

"And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up,..."

Now I'd like to make a point of words. If he rose up he must have been seated. Now in the midst of all this disputing I have to think that these Jews weren't just seated in a conference room, but they were nose to nose standing, and going at this tooth and toenail. And remember in Galatians Chapter 2, Paul said "that he would not give in for a minute." Then all of a sudden Peter, who had been over there seated nonchalantly, just sort of taking it all in, and not all that interested, finally is nudged by the Holy Spirit, Who says, "Peter get up, come on speak up." So that's what happened.

"...Peter rose up and said unto them, 'Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago (12 years) God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.'"

What's Peter referring to? Chapter 10 of Acts, the house of Cornelius. And you all remember that account. How that Peter and 6 other Jewish believers went up to the Gentile home of the Roman officer Cornelius. And while Peter hadn't even finished preaching, hadn't said a word yet about repenting and being baptized, what happened? The Holy Spirit came down and signified to those 7 Jews that those Gentiles had become believers. Without an invitation, without walking down an aisle, without repenting, without baptizing, all of a sudden Peter was just stopped in his tracks, and here these Gentiles are evidencing their salvation by faith, and faith alone.
It was not yet Paul's Gospel, but rather only that Jesus was the Christ, but they had believed it, and the Holy Spirit came upon those Gentiles evidenced with tongues, which was a manifestation that the Holy Spirit had come upon them. And Peter had to just stop for moment he was flabbergasted, and as he was thinking, "Hey, this isn't the right order of salvation. This isn't the way it's supposed to go. My goodness I should have been able to say, 'Have you repented? I have to be able to baptize you, and then the Holy Spirit would come.'" But none of that happened. Some of you are looking at me with kind of a blank stare. It's been a long time since we covered that so let's look at it for a moment in Acts Chapter 10.

Now verse 43, and Peter is in the home of Cornelius. We don't know how many Gentiles were there, it was a household so it couldn't have been that many. It was probably his immediately family, and maybe some of his closest Roman officers, I don't know, but anyhow Peter has now been preaching, and hasn't said a word about the work of the Cross for salvation like Paul would have done, but all Peter could rehearse is that this Jesus of Nazareth who had appeared to the Nation of Israel, had been crucified, killed but had been raised from the dead and was alive. So Peter says:

Acts 10:43

"To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name (see, not through his finished work of the Cross. Peter as yet does not know Paul's Gospel, but Peter does know that the name of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, the Son of God was the vehicle for salvation so he says) whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. (he hasn't said a word about repenting, he hasn't said a word about baptizing. But look what happened.) 44. While Peter yet spake these words, (he's still preaching and) the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. (why? They had become believers. They had believed what Peter was saying.) 45. And they of the circumcision (remember there were six Jews that went with Peter) which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Hey, if Gentiles had been saved for the past eight years since Pentecost why would they have been astonished? But Gentiles haven't been saved. This is the very first instance, and it was an astonishing fact to them that Gentiles could be saved without adhering to the rituals of Judaism, and proselytizing. But here they simply believed and the Holy Spirit manifested their faith, and then Peter had to hurry up and try to get the horse back up in front of the cart so what does he say? "Oh, we've got to baptize them." That sounds familiar also doesn't it.

Acts 10:47
"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

Now let's go back because you always have to compare Scripture with Scripture or you won't know what I'm driving at. Come back to Chapter 2, and verse 38. It's obvious what it says, you don't have to be a theologian, Anybody can understand what this verse says. Remember here Peter is speaking only to Jews.

Acts 2:36

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (then verse 38)

Acts 2:38

"Then Peter said unto them, (1) Repent, and be (2) baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the (3) remission of sins, and ye shall receive the (4) gift of the Holy Ghost."

Now you don't have to be a seminary professor to understand that. That was the criteria. They were to repent, they were to be baptized in water, they would receive forgiveness of sins, and then the Holy Spirit would come upon them. The four steps. Now come back to Chapter 10 for a moment, and see how that has been totally reversed when you get into the Gentile economy. Now remember this is just the first step of opening the door to Gentiles.

Acts 10:44

"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word."

Peter hadn't said a word about repentance, he hadn't said a word about baptism, and while he spoke, merely concerning Who Jesus was, and what had happened to Him they believed it and the Holy Spirit came upon as evidence of their faith. Without baptism, without repentance, what did they do? They just believed. And just believing is Paul Gospel, but this is merely the beginning of it. Now come back to Acts Chapter 15 and this is what Peter is making reference to.

Acts 15:7a

"And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, `Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago...'"
How long ago? 12 years according to my reckoning. Now normally you would think that Peter and those six Jews saw what could happen if you would just approach Gentiles with the Gospel. They would have just gone out across the Roman empire. But they didn't, but rather where did they go? Back to Jerusalem. And when they got there they got called on the carpet for going to the Gentiles in Acts 11:1-3.

Acts 11:1-3

"And the apostles, and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, 3. Saying, `Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.'"

Then Peter had to calm them down by saying in effect, "God showed us that He was in it." But then they all forgot about it. For 12 years there was not another mention of these Gentiles in the house of Cornelius being saved until now in Chapter 15. Here is where I like the Sovereign working of a Sovereign God. I maintain that yes, God wanted the house of Cornelius to be saved, but what was the bigger purpose? To come to Paul's defense in this counsel in Jerusalem. If Peter would not have remembered what had happened at the house of Cornelius, they never would have let Paul go back to Antioch with freedom to preach his Gospel. They would plagued him every inch of the way. But they didn't because Peter realized- "Hey, 12 years ago God showed me He could save Gentiles without going through all we demand." Now look at it again in the text.

Acts 15:7

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

It doesn't say to repent and be baptized. It says that they should believe. Now verse 8.

Acts 15:8-10

"And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, (to show Peter that God had done it.) giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; 9. And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. (Now Peter says in recollection, in realizing what God tried to show me-) 10. Now therefore why tempt (test) ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, (these believers up in Antioch) which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"
That was the Law. That was a burden, see? Then in verse 11 Peter says, "Paul's right!"

Acts 15:11

"But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."

Now I'm going to make a comment, as we go back to Galatians Chapter 2. I'm sure that Peter forgot 90% of what he said in that verse in the years to come. Because he still could not give into the fact that Paul's Gospel had now superseded his Gospel and position. And that's why he writes in his little Epistle of II Peter:

II Peter 3:15-16a

"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16. As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; (of salvation in verse 15) in which are some things hard to be understood,..."


Galatians 2:9

"And when James, Cephas (Peter) and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, (Gentiles) and they unto the circumcision, (Jews).