Before we continue on with our verse by verse study, let's do a quick review from Genesis through Revelation as the history unfolds.

Many people think history is a boring subject, but when you begin to look at history in the light of Biblical teaching, you'll find it's the most exciting subject on earth. History, you see, is simply God's Sovereign control of the events in time. I've said so often one of the things that is hard to comprehend is God turned man loose with a free will - he is not just a puppet on a string. And yet, in spite of that free will, here we are nearly 6000 years after it all began with man, and here we are right on God's timetable. His timetable is not off 1 month, and this is one of the miracles of Biblical history.

Now I'm going to go to the timeline. For so long chronologers assumed that Christ was born at what we call 0, and that in 4000 BC Adam was created. Then, thanks to archeology, some years ago they put together the fact that because of King Herod's rule and reign and death, that Christ had to have been born at 4 BC according to our now Gregorian calendar. So, if Adam was created 4004 BC instead of 4000 and Christ was born 4 BC, then that puts Christ crucifixion at 29 AD instead of 33 AD. I know a lot of people wonder, "Well, why do you put His crucifixion at 29 AD? I always thought He was crucified at 33? Well He was but I'm going with the newer findings that Christ was born at 4 BC instead of 0.

Now that brings up another thing which amazes me and that is how many will call or write and ask, "What does AD stand for?" I had a lady call and say, "I asked my pastor, and he didn't know. I asked everybody in my Church, and nobody could tell me what AD stood for. Some said after death, but that doesn't figure." And it doesn't because AD goes back to 0 according to the Gregorian calendar. So I'm also going to put that on the board for the sake of so many. AD comes from the two Latin words Anno Domini. And of course from Anno we get our word Annual, and Domini means Master or Lord. So then AD stands for the year of our Lord. And everything before His birth is referred to as BC. And everything on this side of His birth we refer to as the year of our Lord or AD.
Now thanks to the powers that be and archeology etc., **they've got to get Christ out of the picture one way or another** so they've changed these nomenclatures from BC (Before Christ) to BCE (Before Common Era.) And AD (year of our Lord) is now referred to as CE or (Common Era.) Now where they get all of this I don't know, but this is what they are now doing. I told one of our guides in Israel one time, "You know, it's amazing what people will do just to push God out of the picture." Now that's all they're trying to do when they change things like this. There's no other reason. Instead of recognizing our calendars are based on Christ's birth they've pushed that out of men's thinking and changed it to something that means nothing - "common era." But I guess it's the best thing they could come up with - I guess that still has a reference to the letter C. So be aware of these things. Our normal approach to these things will still be BC and AD.

Now getting back to the timeline, we find Adam was created way back in 4004 BC. Adam's race and that whole generation up to the flood covered a period of approximately 1600 years. I always tell people that this is all in round figures. So that means at about 2400 BC the flood took place. I think it's worthy of mention that this first 1600 years of mankind is recorded in the first 11 chapters of Genesis. Just the first 11 chapters of Genesis cover that 1600-year period of time from the creation of Adam until that whole Generation was destroyed by Noah's flood.

Then the time of Noah's flood to the next event in Biblical history, which was the Tower of Babel, and that is only 200 years after the flood, or 2200 years BC. And at the Tower of Babel the nations made their appearance and God separated them by virtue of the confusion of languages and so forth. Then another 200 years of time goes by, and as a result of the false and pagan religions and idolatry that came about at the Tower of Babel.

God now has to do something totally different at approximately 2000 BC, and He lets this whole human race coming from Adam, just flow on like a river; and out of that river of humanity we have the call of one man that we call Abraham. As a result we have the appearance of the Nation of Israel, the Jew. That covers everything then from Genesis chapter 12 until we go into the Book of Acts chapter 8. God at that time is dealing with Jew only with a few exceptions. So everything from Genesis chapter 12 and the Abrahamic Covenant to Acts chapter 8 is dealing with the Nation of Israel, giving them the Law and the Temple, with the idea that one day God would funnel them back in that filthy, ungodly river of humanity, and bring them a knowledge of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Now that was the noble plan of God and His Sovereignty. Of course we know that it didn't work because Israel didn't believe it, but at least God offered it to the Nation of Israel.
Now on our timeline then we go from 2000 BC (from the call of Abraham) to 1500 BC and we have Moses - and Moses gives Israel the Law. Then, 1000 BC brings about the appearance of King David, and Solomon, his son. Solomon builds the first Temple, and that is all within a few years of 1000 BC. Then we can go all the way to the birth of Christ at 4 BC and then we have the Cross of Christ and that took place at 29 AD.

King David and Solomon and his glorious Temple that he built were only on the scene about 350 to 400 years. Now in our reckoning of time that's a long time, but over a time span of 2000 years that's not very long. Now Solomon's Temple, or the first Temple, was a glorious one. It was so beautiful, and it took about 40 years to construct. It was one of the wonders of the ancient world, yet it only stood about 360 years. Then the next real important thing on our timeline is at about 606 BC in history or about 400 years after the Temple was built. Nebuchadnezzar comes into Jerusalem and the Babylonian Empire destroys the Temple and Jerusalem, and Israel goes into captivity, and you know about the Babylonian captivity.

Now the reason I like to bring out the Babylonian captivity is again, it points out a fact of history that most people totally overlook, and that is common to the activities of those conquering empires, they literally emptied the land of Israel of most of the Jews. They took them East to Babylon, and then 70 years later the next empire, the Medes and Persians under King Cyrus gave them a decree that the Jews were now free to go back to their homeland in Jerusalem, and they also had the permission to rebuild their Temple. Now here's where a part of history comes in that you'll pick up when we get into the New Testament. Most of the Jews that were out there in Babylonian as a result of the captivity did not go back to Palestine and Jerusalem. Only 44,000 went back out of several million. What happened to the rest of them? Well they got comfortable out there in the Gentile world and became astute at banking and business, and so as a result those Jews began to migrate to every corner of the then-known world. Now why am I making a point of that? Now turn in your Bible if you will to Acts chapter 2. Now if you don't know history then this don't make much sense, but if you realize that the Jews from 606 BC had now been migrating all over the then known world. Any place where there was a city of any population of note, Jews established businesses, and synagogues and what have you. Now you see that makes sense then when you read Acts chapter 2 as you come down to verse 5.

Acts 2:5

"And there were (for this feast at Pentecost) dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, (it doesn't say Jews and Gentiles) devout men, (keepers of the Law and Temple worship) out of every nation under heaven."
Well how did they get into every nation under Heaven? Because when they were taken out to Babylon in 606 BC instead of going back to Jerusalem when they were free to do so, they scattered throughout the then known world. Now the other thing I like to point out on this same basis is a little later on in the Book of Acts we come to the apostle Paul who begins his missionary journeys first through out Asia Minor then over to Greece and finally to Rome. And every place the apostle goes what does he find? Jews and synagogues. Now they've been out there several hundred years because those Jews in the Babylonian captivity never chose to go back to the land of Israel. Now do you see how history has to be understood? Otherwise this verse in Acts wouldn't make sense when we read that they were from every nation under Heaven.

Then another important reason I use 606 BC is because Jesus spoke of it as the beginning of the time of the Gentiles. And what He meant by that was from that point in time when the Temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 606 BC all the way up until we have the 2d coming of Christ, Jerusalem, for the most part, has been under the heavy boot of Gentile armies. Since Nebuchadnezzar'sg overthrow of Jerusalem the Nation of Israel has been under one Gentile power after another. Now, lately we feel that they are more or less a sovereign state, but if you know anything about the land of Israel they are anything but. They are still under the heavy hand of the UN and the United States government and they're not as free as we'd like to think they are. Now when the anti-Christ comes in and sets up his rule and reign from the Temple during the Tribulation, then they will surely be back under the boot of the Gentile armies.

Now back to our timeline. We have in about 400 BC, the restored Temple built by Ezra and Nehemiah. And that was the Temple that was in Jerusalem when Jesus makes His appearance at His first coming. It was a restored Temple and remember Ezra and Nehemiah had limited resources so they couldn't make a beautiful Temple like Solomon had built. Then old King Herod (who wasn't even a believer, but he loved to build) took it upon himself to make the Temple on Mount Moriah, once again, a wonder of the ancient world. So when Christ began His earthly ministry the Temple was once again simply beautiful. That Temple then in turn was destroyed in 70 AD by the Roman general Titus, and at that time the Jews were once again sent out into a complete dispersion. A few stayed in Jerusalem and the areas of Israel, but for the most part the Jews were once again sent out into every nation under Heaven. That all took place in 70 AD.

Shortly before that and after the original day of Pentecost when Israel was no longer going to believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, God sent them back into the mainstream of humanity, not now to be the evangelist, but simply to be that wondering Jew, that nation of people who was steeped in spiritual blindness, and unbelief. Now God is going to do something totally different and on our timeline I
usually mark it like this (Church Age) It's the out-calling of the Body of Christ which we call the Church Age. Now that is only a Pauline revelation so that is going to prepare the world then for the next event on God's calendar and our timeline which is the Rapture or the out-calling of the Church, which is His Body.

Now since this is all a Pauline revelation and has nothing to do with Old Testament prophecy, it has nothing to do with Christ and His earthly ministry and the Nation of Israel, so consequently I feel it has to be taken out of the way before God can pick up with the Nation of Israel and bring about that final seven years of the Tribulation and the appearance of the Anti-christ. Now, hopefully my timeline will make some sense, especially if you'll just put it down on paper yourself. I wish people could just get to the place where they can sit down with a sheet of paper, draw a line across it and then just begin to unfold all these historical events. This is the easiest way to witness that I can possibly think of.

Folks have got to understand that all of these things lead up to the crucifixion of Christ. And through the crucifixion of Christ, Israel continued to reject that He was the promised one so God raised up that other apostle, the Apostle Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles whom we will be looking at in our next lesson as we begin our study in Ephesians. **So Paul becomes the apostle to the Gentiles, he becomes the spokesman for God now during this age of Grace, the Church Age. This is where so many people are missing it, they simply don't know how to rightly divide the Word of God as Paul instructed us to do.** Most think that the Word is divided with the beginning of the New Testament, but if you read carefully you will find that everything from Genesis chapter 12 to the conversion of Saul of Tarsus in Acts chapter 9 is God primarily dealing with the Nation of Israel, which is completely separate from the Church, and all you have to do is look at the language in the Four Gospels and the first 8 chapters of Acts. Don't try to fit something in the Scriptures that God didn't fit in. It's so obvious that God was only dealing with the Nation of Israel until we get to Paul.

Nothing gets my hackles up more than when someone calls or writes and says, "I'm not going to go by what Paul says, but rather I'm going to go by what Jesus says because what Jesus says is in the Bible, and if the Bible says it then I believe it." Well I've gotten to the place when I get a response like that, that I say, "Well, OK so you're going to do what the Bible says? If that's the case then turn with me to the Book of Leviticus chapter 5, and then you're still going to sit there and tell me you're going to do what the Bible says?" See this is where it gets ridiculous, and this is just one example. I could stand here all afternoon and give you example after example. You can't do what the Bible says all the time because not everything the Bible says is for us. Most of it is really written to the Nation of Israel. What the Bible says for us, you'd
better confine yourself from Romans to Hebrews. In fact even Hebrews is written primarily to Jews. So let's just look at Leviticus chapter 5.

**Leviticus 5:2**

"Or if a soul (or person) touch any unclean thing, whether it be a carcass of an unclean beast, or a carcass of unclean cattle, or the carcass of unclean creeping things, and if it be hidden from him: he also shall be unclean, and guilty."

You might say you'll never touch a dead cow. Hey this is touching anything that is dead. You might be out mowing your lawn, and you see a dead bird - you're going to move it out of the way to the trash can and therefore you've touched something dead. Let's read on, and the only way a person can overcome that situation is in verse 6.

**Leviticus 5:6**

"And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin."

Now how many people are going to do that? If they have a brain in their head, then nobody will, for this isn't for us today. This is Israel under the Law. My goodness if I had to go to the Temple in Jerusalem every time I touched a dead animal I'd be spending most of my time on overseas flights. But we don't. We're not under that kind of Law. And this is just one example. Over and over the Old Testament gives instructions that don't apply to us, and it would be ridiculous if you tried to keep all of this. But the Bible says it, of course it does, but it said it to Israel under the Law. A good one in the New Testament is during Jesus' ministry that doesn't apply to us and the Church Age is found in Mark chapter 16. Remember this was written to the Nation of Israel under the Law. Matthew 15:24 & Romans 15:8 tell us that Jesus came only to the Nation of Israel. God hadn't forgotten about the Gentiles, but it just wasn't time for the apostle Paul to come on the scene for us. God is an orderly God and never mixed Law and Grace.

**Mark 16:15-18**

"And he (Jesus) said unto them, Go ye (the believing Jew) into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (remember the Gospel we believe for salvation had not been revealed to Paul at this time. Paul doesn't come on the scene for several more years with the Gospel of Grace as we find in I Corinthians 15:1-4) 16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned. 17. And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out


So here is where it becomes so appropriate to recognize that the apostle Paul is the Gentile apostle. The apostle Paul writes that which pertains to us as Gentiles in the Church Age, and all we can do with our Old Testament is use it for building blocks of learning. This is what the apostle Paul tells us in another verse on that same line. Come back to Romans chapter 15:4.

**Romans 15:4**

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime (in the Old Testament) were written for our learning, (not for our doctrine, but rather for our learning) that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

Now getting back to our timeline, we find that after the Church is gone (and we feel we're getting very close to that time), since the Church is completely insulated from everything written to the Nation of Israel under prophecy we feel it has to be taken out, and then the next great event in human history will be the appearance of the anti-Christ, the seven years of Tribulation (and don't forget that's exactly according to God's timetable coming all the way from the Book of Daniel). And then at the end of the seven years of Tribulation, Christ will return at His 2nd coming and then as soon as He sets up His Kingdom there with His capital in Jerusalem, we enter into that 1000-year millennial reign of Christ, and when that ends we'll go into eternity. Now that is basically the whole scheme of everything from Genesis to Revelation. And when you've got that understood then you have the battle 3/4 won.
Now we're going to look at something just a little bit different this lesson. Instead of the timeline of all of Scripture, we're going to look at a different timeline that covers Paul's Church Epistles. The reason I like to teach these things is to show how intrinsically, how beautifully, all the Bible fits together. Everything fits from Genesis to Revelation, and everything is so programmed that no human could have ever dreamed it up. Now we're going to see that there are seven of Paul's epistles that were written to the Church, and they're called the Church epistles. Now do you think that the apostle Paul sat there and beat his brains out wondering, "Well how can I divide this up so I can come up with the number `seven'?" And we know `seven' is God's perfect number.

Paul didn't do that, I mean Paul just wrote those letters as it was appropriate and it just fell out that there were seven of them that were written directly for the Church. In the Book of Romans we find that he comes out with seven distinct things that God had accomplished with the Nation of Israel. Now do you think Paul sat there trying to figure all that out? No way! All of this just points out the inspiration of everything, even to the way they were lined up in our New Testament, which is not according to the chronological order that he wrote them. But the Holy Spirit put them in the way they were supposed to be when men of God put the New Testament together.

Now I've previously made the point that all the Books of the New Testament are sometimes in various copies of antiquity in different orders. In other words, New Testaments in libraries across the world are not always Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Even the Four Gospels may be mixed up, and the same way with the little epistles of Peter and John, as they're not always in that order. But every one of Paul's epistles are always (in every copy of the New Testament that's available) in the same order that we have them today. Now that tells us that the Holy Spirit was in total control when the men who met (in approximately 350 AD) put the cannon of Scripture together, formulating our New Testament. So always remember that God has particularly brooded over these Pauline epistles because they are the one appropriate for us today. Now let's turn for a moment to II Timothy 3. Our lesson is going to be in Ephesians chapter 1, and we'll be looking at Ephesians verse by verse, but before we do that let's look at II Timothy, where the apostle Paul writes in verse 16 -
"All scripture (the whole Bible from cover to cover) is given by inspiration of God,..."

Now you know nothing irks me more when (even) good men, and I'm sure they mean well, for example will say Luke was a Gentile. Remember Luke wrote a good portion of our New Testament, the Book of Luke and Acts and I've said for years that he was not a Gentile, but rather he was a Jew. And now I'm getting articles from out in television land proving almost beyond a shadow of doubt that Luke was indeed a Jew. I always just based it on a verse in Romans where Paul says -

Romans 3:1-2

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? 2. Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them (the Jew) were committed the oracles (Word) of God."

Now how in the world can you make a statement like that and then have something like the Book of Luke and Acts written by a Gentile? Well I'm sorry but it just won't fit, and so on that basis I've always felt that Luke was a Jew. Now granted he had a Roman name, but Paul did also (see Saul was Paul's Jewish name). Paul was a Roman name and I think much of the same thing happened with Luke. You know they tell us Luke must have been a tremendous diarist. In other words he must have kept a perfect diary every day, especially as he traveled. No. I'm sure a lot of these things were in Luke's mind, as he remembered things that took place, but he didn't write the Scripture from what was in his memory. Luke wrote the Scripture as the Holy Spirit inspired him to write it, and it was the same way with the gospel writers.

They may have remembered a lot of the things that took place in Christ's earthly ministry, but they didn't write from what they remembered. They wrote from what the Holy Spirit inspired them to write, and always remember that. All writers of Scripture even though they were part and parcel of that point in time and their personality shines through because of it, yet what they wrote was not from notes they had gathered, it wasn't from hearsay, but as the Holy Spirit moved them to write. Now looking at verse 16 again.

II Timothy 3:16a

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, (good teaching) for reproof, (when things have to be straightened out) for correction,..." (for someone who gets off course)
Now driving up here today I was mulling this word *correction* over in my mind, and I remembered when we were putting men on the moon. And as those rockets were going though space that they had to constantly correct their trajectory because if they were off just a fraction of a degree with the distance involved they would have missed the moon by who knows how much. So what did they constantly have to do? Correct. Now that's what the Scripture has to do. **It's so easy to get off course, but the Scripture is here to bring us back on course, and that's what correction stands for.** So the Scriptures are profitable -

*II Timothy 3:16b*

"...for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"

Now it's kind of unique then that all of Paul's Church letters especially the seven that we're going to put on the board, all fall into doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness. I've said before that all Scripture from Genesis to Revelation is a progressive revelation. In other word, as we come up through the Old Testament, God is always revealing something that the fellows back there didn't know. We come into the New Testament, and God begins to reveal things that weren't in the Old Testament, and especially when we get to the apostle Paul's writings. Revelations that were never hinted in the Old Testament, revelation that Jesus never spoke of.

But within the letters of Paul and especially the seven Church letters that we're going to be looking at on the board, again it's a progressive revelation going from the beginning of his writings to the end, but it's going to be under this format. First doctrine, then reproof, then correction, and last instruction in righteousness. Now I point that out only to show you how beautifully this Book is put together. Paul didn't sit down and say, "Now how can I do this, I've got to be able to put doctrine first, I've got to somehow be able to write in the area of reproof." No. I don't think the apostle Paul, when he wrote his letters, even realized that he was writing Scripture. I think that he would have been aghast if he could have seen down through the corridors of history what his writing has become. Paul just wrote as the Holy Spirit inspired him to write, and fired the letter off to these various Churches by courier.

The Book of Romans he sent to Rome from Corinth with Phoebe, a lady. Other letters went with some of his other friends such as Titus and Timothy, but I don't think he had any idea that this was going to become what we call cannon of Scripture. But whether he knew it or not **he put it out with this very format of doctrine, reproof, correction and then instruction in righteousness.**
Now I'm going to put again a timeline of sort dealing with Paul's epistles and we'll start back here with his letter that was written during early missionary travels. Most people are aware of his missionary travel when he left Antioch and went up into Asia Minor, Derbe, and so forth. And then later on in his second journey he went all the way over to Greece, and so forth. Those journeys began about 40 AD, when he came back from Arabia and his three years of instruction with the Lord and Mount Sinai which began about 37 AD. These letters then became what we now know as Romans, I Corinthians and II Corinthians, and then came the Book of Galatians.

Romans was written about 64 AD, and Galatians was written earlier than that in about 60 AD. Then the Corinthian letters were written somewhere around 61 or 62 AD. Those four letters then were written during his time of missionary travels and so forth. By virtue of the Jews being in every city in the Roman Empire, wherever the apostle Paul went, where did he go first? To the Jew, to the Synagogue. So being a Jew himself and having been steeped in Judaism, having a love for his kinsman according to the flesh as he calls them, he would always go first to the Jew. He would expound to them out of the Old Testament because you want to remember that there is no New Testament. Even the Four Gospels weren't written until after Paul had written his letters, so he couldn't even tell people, "If you want to know a little more about Jesus and His earthly ministry, then read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John." So, everywhere he went he had to simply speak the Word verbally, because there was nothing written until he began his letters.

Now over here on the far right of our makeshift timeline we're going to come to I & II Thessalonians which are going to be at the very end of the seven letters to the churches, and they're going to be the ones that are "instruction in righteousness." But the amazing thing is, even though they're at the end of the line of revelation given Paul, these were written first, probably about 57 or 58 AD. But the Holy Spirit, even though He prompted the apostle Paul to write them early, saw fit to put them at the end in our New Testament order. Now then, I want you to turn to Acts chapter 28. Now again, this is all history as well as Bible study, because if you understand the historical setting, then you can understand where the apostle is coming from and why the Holy Spirit does what He does.

Now remember his missionaries journeys up into Asia Minor beginning about 40 AD around the city of Antioch up in Syria. During those years from 40 AD until he goes to prison probably in about 64 AD, but during this period of time of about 25 years, he is constantly appealing to the Jew on the basis of the Old Testament, but he has now written Romans which is the Book of Doctrine. So even though Galatians was written earlier, yet the Holy Spirit put Romans in our New Testament exactly where it belongs because all Scripture is given and is profitable for first of all "Doctrine." Then the next 2 Books that we studied I & II Corinthians were for the
next part of the format and that was for "Reproof." You'll remember when we studied the Corinthian letters, what did they need reproof in? All the problems they were having. They had immorality, they had dissension in the Church, they had divisions, they were having problems with legal matters with one another. They had problems with what they could eat and couldn't eat. The Church was just beset with all kinds of problems. So Paul had to reproof them with those two letters of I & II Corinthians. But they're still appropriate for us even today.

Then you come to the Book of Galatians, even though it was written earlier, but is 4th in the order of the Church epistles. Now we have a Book that was written for "correction." Do you remember what the Galatians needed to correct? Where were they slipping off course to? Legalism. They were slipping off course, and going back into legalism. So the Book of Galatians was written to simply bring them back on course. You're not under Law, but rather under Grace, the whole six chapters of that little Book were on that theme, and that theme alone. But if you remember when we were in Galatians, what was he constantly referring to? Abraham. And then we used the allegory of Isaac and Ishmael as pictures of Law and Grace, see? Constantly flipping back into the Old Testament, and using the Jews as examples and appealing to the Jews to come out of their blindness, and out of their legalism, and step into the light of God's Grace. Now that covered this whole period of time while Paul was roaming the Roman Empire, establishing Churches. Now do you still have Acts 28? All of a sudden there's an interruption in Paul's ministry, and he's going to be arrested, and he's going to be taken to prison in Rome. So let's look at that. Remember Paul had arrived at Rome after all the shipwrecks and turmoil of getting from Caeserea in Israel.

**Acts 28:17**

"And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews (that is the Jewish community in Rome.) together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, (Israel) or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans;"

Now you all remember how the Jews hated the apostle Paul. They treated him just like he treated them earlier. So they were constantly after his life, trying to kill him one way or another. Then you remember the Romans took him under their wings and he had to appeal to Caesar, now he is in Rome waiting for justice to be meted out. Now verse 18 & 19.

**Acts 28:18-20**
"Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. 19. But when the Jews spake against it, (that is his message of salvation) I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; (and that's why he's in Rome.) not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. 20. For this cause (because he had no controversy that had caused his arrest) therefore have I called for you, to see you, and speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain."

See the man never lost his love for his kinsmen according to the flesh. Even in spite of the fact that they were constantly trying to put him to death. They were trying to upset his ministry, but Paul never lost his love for them. Now after these Jewish leaders in Rome had come to meet with him where he was under house arrest. We find in verse 25-

Acts 28:25-27

"And when they agreed not among themselves, (that is these Jewish leaders at home) they departed, (in other words they left. They couldn't agree on anything) after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias (Isaiah) the prophet unto our fathers, 26. Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: 27. For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

In other words, Israel has been constantly covered with a veneer of blindness even way back in Isaiah's day. And here Paul is saying the same thing. "I'm in the same situation. I have tried to get you see the truth, but you would not." All right now, verse 28. Now remember where Paul is. He's in Rome in prison. Now he says-

Acts 28:28

"Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."

Now he had told them earlier in his ministry that if they're not going to believe it, then we'll go to the Gentiles, so this isn't the first time, but it's the final time. He told them earlier, "I'm going to go to the Gentiles," and of course he always did, but he would still come back and appeal to the Nation of Israel. But now it's final as we saw in verse 28.

Acts 28:28
"Be know therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." It doesn't say they will all believe it, but rather they will hear it. And now verse 29.

Acts 28:29

"And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning (or arguing) among themselves."

Now you say, "What are you bringing all this out for?" Well, you see this makes again a point of departure of the Jews in Paul's writing of the Gospel of Grace written to the Church, and I'm going to do it like this. On our timeline we have Romans, I & II Corinthians and Galatians. But now I would like to draw another timeline above the first elementary timeline. And now we reach a plateau that goes above Romans, I & II Corinthians and Galatians and when we get now up to the letter of Ephesians we come to what we call the prison epistles or prison letters. After Acts 28, while in prison, Paul writes Ephesians, Philippians and Colossian, we're going to have the same format that we had on the first line with Romans, I & II Corinthians, and Galatians. Except now Ephesians is now going to be a higher level of doctrine. Philippians is going to be a higher level of reproof, and Colossians is going to be a higher level of correction. Now you won't see that until we get to it verse by verse, but now here's the point I want to make. Once Paul makes this jump up into higher or deeper spiritual truths you will find there is no longer any mention of a Jew or the Old Testament. Now isn't that amazing? After the statement of Acts 28-

Acts 28:28

"Be it know therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles and that they will hear it."

There is not another word out of the Old Testament, and not once is the Jew mentioned again in the inspired letters of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, and what's the purpose? Well, as soon as we get into these prison epistles and higher or deeper Church truths, we're no longer concerned with that demarcation between Jew and Gentiles because now God is dealing with the whole human race on one level. Every person that is saved comes into the Body of Christ on the same level whether he's Jew or Gentile.

The Jew has lost his identity so far as the Church Age is concerned as such. And this is what we have to be aware of that this is in God's purposes that now the whole idea is the bringing together of Jew and Gentile into one Body, and there is no difference. Now this is what a lot of even our messianic Jews, I think, are beginning to turn away
from, and this is this Pauline teaching that for the Age of Grace there is no difference. A Jew has to be saved today as a sinner, as a fallen son of Adam just exactly like you and I (Gentiles), and too many of them are losing sight of that. They're trying to jump back up into that place of privilege that they enjoyed before, and listen it's not there, and they have to understand that. We are now all one in Christ, and in these prison epistles of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, there is no dividing between Jew and Gentiles. There is no reference to the Old Testament, and it's all for a purpose.

Now this again leads to my teaching over and over that people have to get out of the Four Gospels and get into Paul's writings because the Four Gospels are still 90% Jewish. All of that has now been set aside, and is no longer in God's program. Now that doesn't mean that you throw it away anymore than you throw away the Old Testament. But it's just as ridiculous to say, "Well I go by what Jesus says" as it is what we discussed in the first lesson about touching dead things, and bringing a sacrifice to the Temple. It's the same difference. So we have to put all these things in the perspective of the unfolding and the progressive revelation even of the letters of the apostle Paul. So in our next lesson we're going to start a verse by verse study of Ephesians and be constantly aware that God is no longer making any reference to the Jew or to the Old Testament, and it's for His own purposes.
Before we start the Book of Ephesians I had one more segment of this unfolding of the Church epistles of Paul, and that is the I & II Thessalonian letters. Now again we came through Paul's original ministry among the area, especially Asia minor and Greece, Corinth, and the letters to the Romans and Corinthians, Galatians. Then we saw beginning with Acts 28:28 from his time in prison he writes what we call the prison epistles of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians. These three Books are just a jump up doctrinally, in depth, and understanding from what you had back in Romans, the Corinthians, and Galatians. Then we come to earlier letters that were written, but they're really final in their content, and those are I & II Thessalonians which can now follow the format of doctrine, reproof, correction and now we go to instruction in righteousness. And again it's up on a higher plane even than what we have in the prison epistles because in I & II Thessalonians, where does the Word take us? Up to glory! Remember I Thessalonians chapter 4?

*I Thessalonians 4:17*

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." And in II Thessalonians Paul speaks of the Church being taken out of the way in verse 7, and in verse 8 we find.

*II Thessalonians 2:8a*

"And then shall that Wicked (one) be revealed...."

So those two letters then take us on up to that which we are all waiting for, and that is the fruition of everything, when we will finally be in glory with our crucified, resurrected, and ascended Lord. Now let's get right into the meat of the Book of Ephesians.

*Ephesians 1:1a*

"Paul, and apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,..."

Paul didn't just one day say, "Hmm, I think I'll just become an apostle. I like the way people look up to Peter, James, and John. I just think I'll become an apostle." No that's not the way it was. You want to remember he was the one who hated Jesus of
Nazareth. He hated anything associated with the Christ of Calvary. He thought Christ was destroying his pet religion, Judaism. But God in His grace saved him on the road to Damascus, and immediately gave instructions that, "**This man would be going to the non-Jew, the Gentiles with a whole new format,**" This format was not based on Judaism or Law, not based on the Old Testament - but a whole new revelation of new truths that had never been revealed before.

He sent him out among those pagan Gentiles, and how the poor man was constantly confronted with the abject immorality of his day. It was unbelievable, and yet out of that wickedness and out gross pagan immorality the man turned the Roman empire upside down by simply preaching the Gospel that Paul was given to preach to us. Paul wasn't a crusader, he wasn't a great politician, he wasn't a great moralist, but he preached the Gospel of the Grace of God. Now then as he ends up in prison because of his apostleship, he's going to be writing these next three letters from prison. So he's an apostle not of his own will, **but by the will of God.**

New then this apostle is writing this particular letter to the saints there in Ephesus. And how many times have you heard me say over the years, "to whom does Paul always write?" The Believer. The Christian. He doesn't write to the unsaved world. Not that he didn't have a heart for them, but Paul knew that which too many people today don't understand, "You don't just simply win the lost by screaming at them, and preaching at them, but rather you win the lost by discipling the believer." And when that believer is discipled and can go out there among the ungodly world, and reflect the righteousness of Christ, he's going to have an impact on lost people. And then the unsaved is going to say, "Hey what must I do to have what you've got?" And then there's your opportunity. "**Oh you believe that Christ died for you. You believe with all your heart that He rose from the dead for you, and you will be saved.**" (Reference I Corinthians 15:1-4)" The Book declares it, and it cannot lie.

Now I have to be careful because I had someone else call the other day with this question. "Well Les what do you mean when you say `only believe?'" Well I don't mean just a superficial mental ascent to these things, I mean that when you honestly with all your being, say, "I believe this with all my heart without a doubt, I believe from cover to cover, but I believe especially that when Christ died He died for me, and when I believe that He arose from the dead, He rose to give me that same resurrection power." And that of course is what we call faith, and it's by that and that alone that we enter in to this relationship that Paul is always expounding on. So he writes to the saints. And now looking at verse 1 again we find.

**Ephesians 1:1**
"Paul, and apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful (now the last three words in this verse are the key to the whole letter) in Christ Jesus:"

Now what kind of a phrase is that? It's a prepositional phrase. Now I think there are 93 prepositional phrases in this six chapter of Ephesians that always denote our position. Such as "In Christ, In whom, In Him, or similar." The whole six chapters are constantly driving that home that we are now in a peculiar position as believers. You see back here in Romans the whole idea of the letter of Romans was to show that we were nothing but hell-bound, filthy, wicked sinners. Every one of us were capable of going to the very depth of sin, now that's what Romans shows us. Then the remedy for it is the Gospel, that Christ has already forgiven us. He's already died for us, His blood has already paid the payment, He arose from the dead, and all we have to do to appropriate it is to believe it, now that's the Book of Romans.

Romans is so doctrinal, it's so basic, and then in Corinthians with all the problems that had to be reproved, and Galatians trying to go back into legalism, and how that had to be corrected. But here in this little Book of Ephesians we're not going to deal with any of those things. Here we're going to deal with hammering home the fact that you are now positioned in Christ, in the Body, and to find the roots of that position, we're going to see it in verse 3. Where are we now positioned? In the heavenlies. Do you see that? We're not an earthly people, but rather a heavenly people. However we are on the earth, but everything that we constantly think about, everything that makes up our being even as we live, work, and move in this old sin-cursed world is our position in the heavenlies. That should be uppermost in our thinking.

So now Paul's letter to the believers in the area of Ephesus probably went out to the other cities in that area. I'm sure it got to Colosse, and probably up to Troas, and maybe even got inland as far as Antioch, and Derbe. Isn't it amazing that as these various letters of Paul went out to the various congregations back there in the ancient world where there were no copy machines, and no instant communication, that they didn't get lost.

Somebody was providentially aware that, "Hey these letters are important, and we'd better protect them. Somehow or other they were kept intact for 300+ years before the Church fathers put them together and put them into what we call the Scriptures. Now that in itself is miraculous. These were just simple letters that were sent out to a congregation, and they only had the one copy, and I doubt they took the trouble to laboriously hand write each one of these for a Church. This letter especially was sent to be circulated among all the Churches in the area
around Ephesus, and yet it never got lost. It's just amazing." This is just a little
tidbit that too often we forget that makes this Book supernatural. Now verse 2.

Ephesians 1:2-3

"Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath (it's already
done) **blessed us with all** (not a Cadillac in every believer's garage. Not a seven
bedroom home, but rather we are already have) **spiritual blessings in heavenly places
in Christ:**"

Now remember that all of our earthly blessings will only last till we die. Some of us
might get past 90, but most of us are going to come to the end of the road somewhere
after 70 or 80, that is if the Rapture doesn't happen first, and we trust it will. happen
soon. But remember these material blessings are here for such a little while. How did
the Psalmist put it? "A blade of grass shoots up in the morning, and in the afternoon
it's withered and gone." Another good example is up in the north country of
Minnesota when it's real cold. Boy you get a -30 degree morning and every breath just
becomes a cloud of vapor, but how long does it last? Puff and it's gone. Now that's
what the Bible compares our earthly life span to.

But these spiritual blessings, how long will they last? All eternity. Forever! The world
scoffs and thinks we're a bunch of nuts, and they think we have to give up all the good
times, and we have to shun these things, and we're almost living a life of sacrifice.
Nothing could be farther from the truth. We don't even have an appetite for those
things. Like I told one fellow when he asked me, "Why don't I ever see you in this
particular saloon on Saturday night?" And I said, "Look, for the same reason I don't
see you in Church on Sunday morning. I would be just as miserable in your saloon on
Saturday night as you would be in Church on Sunday morning." And that says it all
doesn't it? Our appetite is now on things spiritual because the Lord has given us
enough insight that spiritual things are going to last forever - not just 70 years.

In fact it won't be that long. All you have to do is watch some of your entertainers and
some of your wealthy athletes, how long can they enjoy the fast lane? Not very long
because the body can't take it. Then when they've reached 50, their health is shot and
what for? Where as you and I, we may shun those things not because we're missing
them although the world thinks we are. And the end result is our heavenly position
comes to the fore.

Ephesians 1:3b
"...spiritual blessings in heavenly places (and how are we seated in the heavenlies?) in Christ."

Now I have to take you back to I Corinthians chapter 12 where Paul is back here in the area of the elementary things, but nevertheless it's all part of our Christian experience.

I Corinthians 12:12

"For as the body (the human body) is one, and hath many members, (hands, feet, toes, etc.) and all the members of that one body, being many, (being many) are one body: so also is Christ." In other words He's made up of all of these believers that have come into the Body of Christ ever since the beginning of the Church age. And here we are in Christ, how did we get there? Look at verse 13.

I Corinthians 12:13a

"For by one Spirit (the Holy Spirit) are we all (not just a few of the most spiritual) baptized..."

Now what does the word `baptized' really mean? To be inundated, to be completely inundated. Homer or Plato, one of the Greek classical writers, spoke of a ship being baptized at sea. Well if a ship gets baptized at sea, what happened to it? Hey it was sunk, it went down, but it was baptized, why? Because that ocean water filled every nook and cranny of that ship as it went down. And that's what a baptism does, it just simply inundates the person. But remember this isn't water, this is the invisible person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.

And he has inundated us in Christ. And when does He inundate us? The very moment we believe the Gospel for our salvation. You don't feel a thing, I mean you're not going to shake your head and get the water out of your eyes. You're not going to somehow say, "Ooh, something is happening to me." No it's a silent, unfeeling work of the Holy Spirit, and how do I know it happened? By Faith! See again you come back to all these writings of Paul coming up through these epistles of doctrine, reproof, correction; they are all based on faith + nothing. They were reproved because they had lost sight of what God had instructed. In other words they had gotten blinded by lack of faith. And it was the same way going back into legalism. Why were they leaving Paul's doctrine of faith + nothing? Because their faith grew weak, and you come up into the Ephesian letters it's that way. How are we going to come close to comprehending that we are already seated in the heavenlies? By faith. I can sit on that tractor when it's 110 degrees and I don't feel like I'm in Heaven. But yet I can sit there
in that 110-degree heat and I can reflect on this and by faith where do I know I really am? In the heavenlies, now that's what faith does. So coming back to verse 13.

_I Corinthians 1:13_

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body whether we be Jews or Gentiles,..."

Not a body of Jews and a body of Gentiles, but rather one Body. We're going to see this really come to fruition when we get on a little farther in Ephesians. This is one of the great parts of the mysteries now revealed to the apostle Paul in this particular Book, and that is the Jew loses his identify when he comes into the Body of Christ. I remember the very first time when I went up to Minnesota for a seminar and at the first break there was a lady came up to me and said, "Now Les I'm a Jew, but I'm a believer. If the Lord comes tonight since I'm a Jew will I be left behind, and just you Gentiles go in the Rapture? I said, "Well heavens no. If you're a believer whether you're Jew or Gentile and you're in the Body of Christ, then we all go." She was so relieved, and that gave her so much comfort. Now finishing the last part of verse 13.

_I Corinthians 12:13b_

"...whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

Now Iris and I just love it when people invite us into their home. I'd much rather do that than stay in some motel. But every home we go to, I mean it's so exciting when we sit down at that dinner table and I don't have to press the subject, they do, and what do you suppose we talk about? The Book, the Lord, and there's never any feeling of, "Oh I wish we could get these people to talk about the Lord." It just comes out so easily, because we're all members of the Body of Christ. Now occasionally we may be in a home where it isn't that way. And in that case you can almost sense that they do not have that love for the Word of God. You can tell it right away. If it's a strain to talk about the things of God, if it's a strain to talk about Scripture, then you know there's something lacking,, but that's not very often the case. Now looking at verse 13 again.

_I Corinthians 12:13_

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all (every last believer) made to drink into one Spirit." (that One Holy Spirit). So now coming back to Ephesians chapter 1, let's look at verse 3 again.
Ephesians 1:3

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:"

See there's not a word in here about material blessings, but we hear a lot about material blessings from the name it and claim it people. But the apostle Paul never mentions that. Paul never tells us that if we are believers, whether we're carnal or spiritual, that we're going to be blessed with millions. Never! All Paul is concerned about is, "Do you realize how rich you are in Grace?" And whether we're rich or poor, that's beside the point, because we're all one in Christ, and this is what people have to understand. God isn't promising you and I that we're going to become millionaires, in fact far from it. Many of us are probably going to go all the way through life with just the very bare necessaries. But what have we all got? All these Spiritual blessings in Christ. Now verse 4.

Ephesians 1:4

"According as he (Christ Himself) hath chosen us in him (when?) before the foundation of the world,..."

Now I know that's mind-boggling, and I know it throws a curve at a lot of people. You have some that take it clear off to the end of the boondocks in a false teaching that God has already determined who's going to be saved and who's going to be lost, and there's nothing that you can do about it. They also say, "There's no use to evangelize because if God hasn't foreordained them then they don't stand a chance anyway." No way, that's not what it means at all. Now we know that God knew from eternity past who would become believers, but that does not excuse us from taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth, and to make everyone aware of their opportunity for salvation.

In other words, when we were teaching Romans chapter 9, remember how I taught it? Over here on the right hand we had whosoever will may come, but over here on the other side we have this verse in Ephesians that says you were chosen before the foundation of the world. Now humanly speaking, can you understand that? I can't and I don't think you can. It is impossible for a human being to understand that over here we have whosoever will may come. And over here we have chosen before the foundation of the world was formed. The two are counter to each other, but is it a problem for God? No, and that's where I leave it.

Leave it in God's hands, because the best I can do is bring the two to the middle. Just as you respond to whosoever will, and you come to that invitation, the Lord Jesus shouts throughout all of Heaven, "I chose him before the foundation of the
And that's the best way I can explain it, but to say I understand it, I don't. I've just got to leave it in the hands of God, because this is what the Word says. Just revel in those two statements. That yes, you exercised your free will when you responded to the Gospel. But on the other hand God could honestly say, "I chose you before anything was ever created." It's a glorious thought isn't it?
LESSON ONE * PART IV

DOCTRINE, REPROOF, CORRECTION, INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS - EPHESIANS 1:1-6

Let's pick up where we left off in the last lesson which was in verse 4. Now we never claim to have all the answers but rather all we try to do is to get folks to search the Scriptures and the Scripture says that you will find eternal life. All I can hope to do as I teach is to whet people's appetite to begin to study and read their own Bible, and enjoy it. And according to our mail I guess we're succeeding to a greater degree than we ever dreamed of. In fact, when we first started up here at channel 47 in Tulsa, Iris and I had kind of determined that it would last about six months and then would die a natural death, but here we are seven years later and it's just keeps on growing, and the Lord just keeps on blessing. Now for our study.

In our last lesson we ended with the concept in verse 4 that we are chosen in Christ, in that position that we now enjoy in the heavenlies. It was not a surprise to God when we were saved, because He said, "Well I knew that from eternity past." And in the next verse or two, when we come to predestination, it isn't that we were predestined to salvation or Hell but rather to this position that we enjoy in Christ. Now look at verse 4 again.

Ephesians 1:4

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy..."

Now `holy' doesn't mean that we stick our nose in the air, and that we're better than everybody else, and that we are simultaneously, physically perfect, but rather it just simply means that God has set us apart for His own purposes. You want to remember even back in the Temple worship, the utensils that were used like the shovels to take out the ashes, were holy. Well what did it mean? They couldn't be used for any other purpose. In other words, the priest couldn't say, "Well I'm going to take the shovel home tonight fellows, because my fireplace needs cleaning." That would never work because those utensils were holy and set apart only for God's purposes. That's exactly where we are. We, so far as God is concerned, have been set aside and we are intrinsically in His program to be used as He sees fit, because after all, we are His. Verse 4 again:

Ephesians 1:4b

"...that we should be holy and without blame before him..."
Wow! **Without blame?** Everyone of us are sinners saved by Grace, but we still have the old sin nature, and we all still sin. Then Paul has the audacity to say that we are "blameless." Yes. Let me take you back to I Corinthians for a moment to chapter 1. And remember the Corinthians were carnal, they were not a spiritual congregation. They were nowhere near understanding Ephesians. They just simply hadn't come that far yet. They had been saved out of abject paganism, and all of it's immorality, but to understand this position in the heavenlies? No, the Corinthians hadn't gotten that far. So what can Paul write and tell them?

**I Corinthians 1:6-7**

"*Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: (by virtue of their salvation)* 7. **So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:"

Paul was already like us today, waiting for the Rapture. He honestly thought it was going to take place in his life time. He had no idea that God would wait now almost 2000 years filling up the Body of Christ with believers. Now verse 8.

**I Corinthians 1:8**

"*Who shall also confirm you unto the end, (even these carnal Christians. Remember that's not license to sin, but it just shows you how far the Grace of God will reach down) that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Now there are just lots of people who don't like to read that, but that's what the Word says. Many try to make it a lot harder to get to Heaven than God does. So even these Christians at Corinth who were failing miserably, if the Lord would have come they wouldn't stand at the judgment seat of Christ shaking in their boots, and shameful for all their unconfessed sins, they were already under the Blood. They were already forgiven, and that's the Grace of God. But we can't make license of that because then a person's salvation experience is doubted. I personally cannot believe that a true born-again child of God will test God's Grace. But if we do slip and fall, and the Lord should come and we come into His presence, then we're blameless because that's what the Book says. Remember you see throughout Paul's writings that we have been cleansed, and forgiven, we're justified from all things by virtue of our faith in that finished work of the Cross. Now back to Ephesians chapter 1.

**Ephesians 1:4b**

"*...that we should be holy and without blame before him...*"
And how can that be? Because of what Christ has done on our behalf. Not because we merit or deserve it, but because of His matchless Grace. Now in verse 4 I stopped in front of "...in love." purposely because I think it reads better.

_Ephesians 1:4b-5_

"...we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (what did He do?) 5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,"

Remember when we were back in Galatians we dealt with the word `adoption.' Remember the word _adoption_ in the Greek did not mean to take a child from a union and legally make him ours. The word _adoption_ in the Greek and Roman society was to train that young son of the father so that when he became of age that child who was now tutored and prepared, he could come right up along side the father and have full responsibility. Now you put that into our position as believers, the moment we're saved we don't have to go through a long period of training and preparation but immediately where does God position us? **Equal with Christ the Son. A joint-heir!** And that is all by virtue of the Grace of God that he has predestined us to that glorious position of being right with Christ in the Body, in the heavenlies. Now looking at verse 5 again.

_Ephesians 1:5a_

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself,..."

Now to the average believer this probably puts you to sleep. I got a kick out of my own pastor last Sunday morning as he was in the Book of Romans and what he said was so apropos. He said, "In my sermon this morning it's going to put some of you right straight to sleep. Some of you it's going to make mad, and some of you are really going to enjoy it and grow from it." Well I'm sure that's almost always the case. And it's the same way here in this passage. The average believer, oh he's saved, but he doesn't have a hunger for these deeper things and so he just nods his head and off he drops to sleep. But if you are really interested in all that God has done on your behalf when Christ died for you and arose from the dead, then these things are exciting. To think that we are positioned with Christ in the heavenlies, and that one day it's going to come to fruition.

Now back to my display of the seven churches on the board. Here on the left side we come now through this lower level of the elementary things of our sinful estate and how the Gospel has saved and justified it. How we need that reproof, and correction
constantly, as we saw in the Books of Romans, I and II Corinthians, and Galatians. But now we jump up a notch into this area of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians - we're going to go into deeper doctrines, and into deeper areas of reproof, but oh listen what's it all coming to? When we can make this final step up and we get into that which is the glory, and we'll no longer be tied to the things of this world, but we'll be in His presence as presented in I Thessalonians when He removes the Church by way of the Rapture. (Reference I Thessalonians 4:13-18) We're going to enjoy all the blessings of glory. How does Paul put it? Turn back with me for a moment to Romans chapter 8. This says it better than I ever could.

**Romans 8:17-18**

"And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; (now you all know what it means to be a joint-heir. That means what's His is also ours) if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (that's still future - that's what we're waiting for.) 18. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time (and you know how that man suffered as he rehearsed back in II Corinthians chapter 11:23-28) are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in (angels? No but rather in) us."

Oh we sometimes think God's forgotten about these things, but He hasn't for it's coming. I was reminded at break time by someone who said they had been watching the program that was taped back in 1994 or 1995, and I thought the Lord was coming then. That reminds me of a cartoon that I saw recently showing an old fellow sitting in front of his cave's door. And across the top of the door he had written the end is near, but then he added "er." So here today in 1998 the end is a lot nearer than it was back when I taught those lessons. So don't give up, God is on the throne, it is still going to happen, and we just keep getting closer and closer with each passing day. Now Ephesians verse 5 continuing - we have been adopted-

**Ephesians 1:5b**

"...according to the good pleasure of (who's will?) his will."

Remember what Paul said about his apostleship? Turn back with me to the very first verse. How did Paul become an apostle? Not by his will, but by God's will.

**Ephesians 1:1a**

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,..."
How did we become a child of God? Not by our will, but rather by God's will. Now that doesn't take away our free choice, because again we have to constantly remember -

*John 6:44a*

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:"

Let me show you another one of my favorites. Come back to Acts chapter 16 and let's look at Lydia, because it says it all. We have come into this glorious position in the heavenlies by His will. It wasn't my idea, but rather He made the first move, and I responded. Maybe not as quickly as I should have, but I think that can apply to most of us. We didn't respond when God began to woo us, but thank God at least we finally did. Now here in Acts chapter 16 they're up there in Philippi in Northern Greece.

*Acts 16:14*

''And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatiria, which worshipped God, (see she was religious. She was probably a Jewish lady) heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, (now when the Lord opened her heart what did she do?) that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.''

Now do you see the format? Here she is a religious lady to be sure, but LOST. And along comes the apostle Paul and begins to explain to her the works of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. God opened her heart, but what did she do? She listened and responded. Do you see that? I think that's the perfect Scriptural explanation of how salvation works. God opens the heart, but He doesn't force His way in. He opens our understanding, but He doesn't force us. And He leaves it with us, so we can choose or reject.

I got a kick out of a letter from someone in our television audience and it was almost identical with an illustration that I have used in years gone by. Remember when we were kids? I for one just lived for recess, because during that 15 or 20 minutes of recess I loved to play ball. That's all I went to school for. And so as soon as we got on the play yard somebody would always have the bat and ball and we would literally put out a call across the yard that we were going to have a ball game. Well some of the kids would go to the merry-go-round. Some would go to the swings, but for those who came over to the ball diamond we would hurry and choose up sides and we could have a short ball game. Now I've always made this analogy - when we went out to the ball diamond and literally yelled at all the kids, "Come on, we're going to have a ball game." What were we doing? We were putting out the call. And those who came
down to the ball diamond were chosen. The call went out to the whole playground but only they that responded ended up chosen to play ball.

And I think it's still an appropriate illustration of this very concept here of Lydia. The Lord opened her heart. In other words the Lord said, "Come on Lydia." She could have said, "No I'm not interested." But she attended or listened to and acted on the things that were spoken by Paul. And it hasn't changed one iota. It's just like I said in the last lesson, over here on this side we still have that option of responding to or rejecting the offer of salvation, but over here God knew from eternity past what we would do. So when we responded it was just like it was with Lydia - I think the Lord shouted all across Heaven, "I knew she would!" That didn't catch God by surprise. Now let's come back to the Book of Ephesians chapter 1. So God has placed us in this position as joint-heirs with Christ according to the good pleasure of his will. Now verse 6.

**Ephesians 1:6a**

"To the praise of the glory of his grace...."

Now I guess if I have trumpeted any one word in the years that we've been doing this program it's that word 'Grace.' Hey, we deserve none of this or nothing in this world. But what we have and what we enjoy whether it's spiritual or material or physical it's all by the Grace of God. I don't deserve it and I don't think you do either, but it's all by His Grace. Now continued on in verse 6.

**Ephesians 1:6b**

"... wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

There's that prepositional phrase again. What does it mean to be in the beloved? In Christ! Why am I in Christ? Why are you in Christ? Simply by His Grace. He could have let us slip out into an eternity lost and without hope, but by His Grace He presented us with the plan of salvation and we've responded. Here we are now positionally accepted in the beloved. Now another verse comes to mind in the Book of Colossians chapter 3. Now this is another one of these seven Church prison epistles and is on a higher plane of understanding than the first four Books were. So Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians are in that next step up in the area of doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. The Colossians also had some problems. They were trying to enter into the realms of angelic beings and so forth, and so Colossians had to correct them and bring them back on line. Now chapter 3 starting with verse 1.
**Colossians 3:1-2**

"If ye then be risen with Christ, (in other words you have experienced His death, burial, and resurrection by faith. If you have gone through that then) seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. (they become now far more important) 2. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

Remember back in the gospels, Jesus said something similar to that-

**Matthew 6:33**

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

Now there's absolutely nothing wrong with things provided our priorities are right. Now if things are more important than spiritual then it's wrong. But if you have your spiritual priorities where they belong, and all these things have been added, so be it. God isn't tight, but on the other hand we can't demand them of Him. But if He has seen fit in Grace to bless us with things there's nothing wrong as long as they are in the right order of priorities. All right now Colossians 3:3 And here's the reason we are to set our affections on things above.

**Colossians 3:3**

"For ye are dead, (Wow! I thought I was living. Old Adam is dead. God reckons that old sin nature of you and I as believers as dead,) and your life is hid with Christ in God."

Now again there is that two-fold position of the believer. We are in Christ, and in God, and nothing can touch us in that glorious safe, secure position. Now when I talk about something safe and secure like this I've always used the analogy in past lessons of the black walnut. You peel off that outer shell, and then you crack the next shell, and way down in the middle you find that delicious meat. All right you can find this so often that we are positioned in that place of safety. And there are two analogies in the Old Testament. When the Jews, on the night of the Passover, were standing at that kitchen table ready to eat the Passover lamb, what was going on around them? The death angel. And the wailing was already sounding across Egypt, but the Jews were safe and secure for only one reason. The blood was on the door. Then the next one I always like to use is Noah and his family in the ark. The horrors and the ravages of the flood were just totally demolishing everything on the planet, but Noah and his family were safe and secure because that wood ark had been lined
with *pitch*, and *pitch* in the Hebrew meant atonement. So there they were in the midst of the horrors of the flood and they were safe. So you and I, in the midst of all of the wickedness that's taking place on the earth tonight, we're in Christ and we're safe. We have nothing to worry about. Paul says, "Don't worry about he who can destroy the body, when he can't destroy the soul."
LESSON TWO * PART I

THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIME

EPHESIANS 1:6-10

Now in our last lesson we got down to verse 6, and you remember in our last few lessons in Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians begin what I call deeper spiritual things than what we've had even from Romans, the Corinthians and Galatians. In these 3 books we take a jump up from the fundamentals to that which are deeper, more profound, Church truths. Paul wrote what we call his prison epistles - Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon while in prison in Rome shortly before he was martyred. So again we always like to make mention of the fact that in these prison epistles there is no single mention of the Old Testament or to the Jew, because now everything has flowed into this teaching of the Body of Christ in which there is no distinction. There is no Jew, there is no Gentile, so far as a division of their background, so we've all become one as members of the Body of Christ.

So we have to keep this in mind that as we study these prison epistles that this is strictly Church ground, and there is no other portion of Scripture that is so profoundly directed to the position of the Church Age believer. You won't find these things back in the Old Testament, or the Four Gospels, or even in Acts, and I might say even in the letters of Romans and Corinthians. There is not this emphasis on our position in Christ. And as I said in a previous lesson there are over 90 times that Paul uses the prepositional phrase, "In Him, In Christ, In Whom" these are depicting our position. I hate to repeat, and repeat, but it's the only way it sinks in. So all the things that we're going to be looking at are primarily directed to our position in Christ.

Now the Jew knew nothing of that concept. He knew his Covenant relationship, he knew all the promises that God had made to their forefathers, but they knew nothing of a position in Christ. Now even for us today it's hard for us to comprehend, but we've got to take these things by faith. I don't feel like I'm in Christ in Heaven, but I know that I am because the Word says I am. And this is where every believer has to come to understand that what the Bible says is true, and we take it by faith. We don't necessarily feel it, emotions are not dealt with. Now emotions are fine up to a point, but emotions can never take the place of good Biblical doctrine. So even though we may not feel like it, yet on the basis of God's Word, that's where we are. We are in Christ, in the heavenlies, and we are part and parcel of everything that God has been building on ever since He began with Adam in the Garden of Eden. Now continuing on where we stopped in our last lesson that He has already predestined us into the position, and that what that word adoption means up in verse 5.
Ephesians 1:5-6

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. 6. To the praise of the glory of his grace, (we don't deserve any of this. We haven't earned it or merited it, but it's all of Grace that God has seen fit to do this on our behalf.) wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

That's how we're accepted in God's eyes is because of where we are in Christ. God cannot reject us, because then He would have to reject the Son Himself, and that He'll never do. And so in view of our position then we are in the beloved. Now in verse 7 we have another prepositional phrase.

Ephesians 1:7a

"In whom (in the beloved, and Who's the beloved? Christ) we have (we're not working for it, and we're not hoping for it, but we have already the) redemption through his blood,..."

Now I remember years and years ago a good friend of mine from another denomination came to visit one morning, and he was all distraught. His denomination, which was one of the big ones in America, had literally called in all the old hymn books, and they were going to dispense new ones to all the congregations of that denomination in which there was no more reference to the blood of Christ. They had taken out all those old hymns like, "There's Power in the Blood" and "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood". They just took them all out of those hymn books. Well if they want to do that then they can just throw away the New Testament also. You've got to remember that our hope of eternity rests on that blood of Christ! So here in verse 7 we have that statement again.

Ephesians 1:7a

"In whom we have redemption through his blood,..." Now you can't throw that out. We can't ignore that. So it's redemption through His blood which also brings about -

Ephesians 1:7b

"...the forgiveness of sins, (and again it's not because we've merited it, but) according to the richness of his grace;"

And this is all beyond human comprehension. How that God would do all this before we even came on the scene, and doing it with the foreknowledge that we would one
day be His, and we would be in Him, and we would be redeemed, and forgiven. Alright as I was thinking on these things the past several days, you want to remember that redemption is not a Pauline invention, but rather redemption comes all the way from the Garden of Eden. At this time I'm not going all the way back to Genesis, but remember when God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden, they were His. Isn't that right? They fellowshipped with Him every day. But sin came in and He lost them, because He couldn't fellowship with them in their sin. That's why I think He had to go out into the Garden, not that he didn't know where they were, but to show us that they were now so separated from Him that what was the question that He asked first? "Where art thou?" Do you see that? Now He had never asked that before, but as soon as sin had separated them, and He had lost them, now He could asked the question, "Where are you?" Adam should have answered, "We're lost!"

It's like the parable of the little lamb in Luke chapter 15. That one out of a hundred, the only one that in the parable the shepherd concerns himself with. Why? Because that little fellow knew he was lost. The ninety and nine went out roaming in the desert in the wilderness without a shepherd, and sheep without a shepherd are lost, but what's the difference? They don't know it! The little lamb knew he was in trouble, and so he was bleating his head off, but the rest, while roaming around, never knew they were. Well that's what it means to be separated when God lost the human race. Now we can go back to the Old Testament. Come back if you will to Job chapter 19. And this is one of the earlier uses of the word redemption in the Old Testament, and Job understood it.

Job 19:25a

"For I know that my redeemer liveth,..."

Do you see how plain that is? Maybe we should stop first and define the word "redeemed" What does it mean? To lose control of something, and then pay the price to buy it back. Now that's redemption. A thought just came to mind and most of you may have heard this same illustration. I've read this story more than once, but it is heart touching, as well as making the point. The story is about a little fellow who had spent the whole winter just laboriously building this beautiful little sail boat. So one day his parents took him out to the beach, and he played with that beautiful little sail boat, and it was all that he could hope for. But being a child something got his attention and he left his boat for awhile and when he came back for his boat it was gone. And oh he wept bitter tears because he had done so much to build that little boat, and for the short time he got to play with it he had enjoyed it. But now it was lost, it was gone.
Months later he and his mom were walking down the street, here in the window of a pawn shop was his little boat. He was absolutely elated. So he goes into the shop keeper, and says, "That's my boat, I want it." The shop keeper says, "No sonny, that's my boat, I paid for it, and if you want it you're going to have to pay me." So the little fellow says, "How much do you want for it?" So the price was such and such, and far more than the little fellow had. So he told the shop keeper that he would have to find a way to get the money to buy his little boat. The little lad did odd jobs all winter by shoveling snow, and in the summer mowed grass, and finally one day he had enough to go back to the pawn shop for his boat. So he went up to the counter and told the keeper, "I want my boat!" The guy said, "Have you got the money?" And he said, "Yes!" and he plunked it down, and so he took his boat, and as he was going down the street holding that boat, he said, "Little boat, I made you, I lost you, but I have bought you back, and you're mine."

Well now that's just a simple little heart touching story of a little lad, but listen that's just exactly what God did. God lost us when Adam sinned, and for 2000 years God prepares the world for the coming of the Redeemer, and all the Old Testament like Job are looking for the time when the Redeemer would come. Now come on up to the Book of Isaiah chapter 59 because I want you to see this whole concept of a Redeemer is not Pauline. Paul puts the cap on it, Paul puts the frosting on the cake, but ever since Adam sinned God has been preparing for the coming of this Redeemer. Like the little boy out there scooping snow, and mowing lawns, he was getting ready for the day when he could go back in and pay the price of redemption. And that's exactly what God did also. Now verse 20. This is all prophecy yet, this is all looking forward.

*Isaiah 59:20*

"And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD."

So here we have the promise of this coming Redeemer. Now let's skip over into the New Testament and stop at Romans chapter 3. Now like I said Paul puts the frosting on the cake so far as the price of redemption is concerned. Here Paul comes to this graphic conclusion that a lot of people don't believe even today. They think they're good enough, they think that somehow God is going to let them slip in. No He won't because the Scripture says -

*Romans 3:23*

"For all have sinned, (every human being from Adam on) and come short of the glory of God:"

But we know God didn't stop there. He immediately got busy and started preparing for the coming of a Redeemer. So now verse 24.

**Romans 3:24**

"Being justified freely (even though we're sinners) by his grace through the redemption (see, there it is again) that is in Christ Jesus:"

Through the whole process of buying us back. That's what it was all for, that He could pay the price of redemption which had to be the **blood of Christ**. Speaking of the blood of Christ that's another 1/2 hour lesson in itself. Why is the blood so unique? Well it was divine. You want to remember that Joseph was not the father of the baby Jesus, but rather it was God. And as I've pointed out over the years, the blood circulatory system always originates with the father. So Christ's blood originated with God Himself, and so when Christ was born it was divine blood that coursed though His veins. When His blood was shed it wasn't just the blood of another human being, but rather the divine blood of God Himself, so this was then the price of redemption. Now verse 25.

**Romans 3:25a**

"Whom God hath set forth (that is in Christ Jesus in verse 24) to be a propitiation (now that is what God has done. That's the place of sacrifice and offerings, mercy, and Grace. God did all that, but it was) through faith in his blood,..."

If we don't believe in the shed blood of Christ and it's power for atonement we're as lost as a goose, and you might as well mark it down. There will be no one in Heaven unless he's been redeemed by faith in the blood of Christ! Now I'm getting right down to the nitty gritty on that as that is the Truth in the Word of God. **The blood of Christ is the only purchase price for our redemption, and we have to appropriate it by our faith. We believe it, we trust in it.** Now continuing on in verse 25.

**Romans 3:25b**

"...to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past,..."

In other words the blood of Christ covered all the sins all the way back to Adam, and all the way forward to the very last person that will be born. So it was a complete purchase price for mankind's redemption. Now let's look at another one in the Book of Hebrews, and we could look at lots of them as the references for the blood of Christ
are plentiful. Even here in Hebrews there are so many that I can't begin to touch on all of them, so I'll hit the ones that are most emphatic.

Hebrews 9:11

"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;"

Now we're teaching the Book of Hebrews in our Muskogee class on Saturday nights, and I always remind my class that the little Book of Hebrews is constantly referring to that which was good, the Law, Judaism, but Paul comes along and with this Gospel of Grace, and we'll see in our next program the revelation of the mysteries, that it's all so much better. So all through Hebrews we see this constant comparison of that which was good, but now we have something that is far better. And here it is in this verse. Oh their earthly tabernacle was beautiful, it was functional, they could take it down and move it at the drop of a hat, and it did everything they needed, but it was patterned after something in Heaven, the one which was far better. Now verse 12. Now the blood of goats and calves did its work as they covered the sins of Israel, but it was nothing when compared to the Blood of Christ. Now lets read the whole verse.

Hebrews 9:12.

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, (that is up in Heaven) having (past tense, it's all done) obtained eternal redemption for us."

Over and over we see the blood of Christ has paid the price of redemption that had to be paid in order for God to regain control of fallen man, and He's done it, it's been paid in full. Verse 13 -

Hebrews 9:13

"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: (even those things back there were good) 14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

Then I have to bring you down to verse 22, a verse I've used for a long, long time. This verse is one of the absolutes of Scripture. Now we know that we're decrying the fact that our society is rotting at the seams because we have lost our absolutes. We no longer as a society say, "Well these are absolutes." But you see the Scriptures does
say these things. And when you ignore these absolutes then you're on thin ice. You're sliding to your doom. And here is one of them.

**Hebrews 9:22**

'*And almost all things are by the law purged with blood;* (and here is what I'm talking about) *and without the shedding of blood is no remission.'*

Now folks we've got to hang on to that. We dare not side track it because it's an absolute. Now let's move on to the Book of I Peter, chapter 1. Even Peter agrees with Paul 100 % in his theology.

**I Peter 1:18-19**

"*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19. But (we are redeemed) with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:"

Well we may have time for one more verse in the Book of Revelation chapter 5 Can you find it in 10 seconds? Well anyway it's back there in verse 9 that He was worthy because we've been redeemed to God by His Blood.
LESSON TWO * PART II

THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIME

EPHESIANS 1:6-10

Now since we spent the whole last lesson on one verse I suppose it's time to move on to verse 8. Do you realize how many times Paul uses the word Grace? It just pops up constantly. Compare to the rest of Scripture where the word is hardly ever used. Well it's because Paul is writing about Grace in the Age of Grace. God's unmerited favor has been poured out on the whole human race and we're going to see that in this lesson. How all of this has been building, and building until finally we're moving closer and closer to the end of this whole time that God has allotted to the planet earth.

Ephesians 1:8

"Wherein (Grace in verse 7) he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;"

You know I had a letter the other day that said, "How do you explain the abundant life?" Now a lot of times I like to throw these questions right back at people. How would you explain the abundant life? Well you can't put it into words really, and I guess when I do write and answer that question, I'm going to say, "Listen, it's that complete package of the Grace of God that has given me the assurance of salvation, eternity in God's presence. It has given the assurance that God is in total control of every moment of my life. I don't have to worry and fret that all of a sudden I've been cut loose, and I'm without hope. I don't have to feel that I'm under a constant burden of guilt. Now that's some of the abundant life that Christ has promised for this earthly sojourn."

It's a life maybe not always of happiness, maybe our circumstances are not always the greatest, but the joy is there. So regardless of our circumstances we have the joy that Paul speaks of so much in the Book of Philippians. Paul is always saying in that Book, "Rejoice" And do you remember what kind of places Paul was in? In the dungeons of prison, shipwrecked, in the water, and under the scourging, and yet the man could constantly say, "be joyful." Well that's the abundant life. It doesn't mean that we're going to have two Cadillacs in our garage, or the biggest house in town. But the abundant life is that we have been redeemed, we have eternal life, we have the hope of glory, we have that constant assurance that He knows all about us. We have access into the throne room of Heaven. We can pray at any time, and any place so that's all part of the abundant life. But it's not limited to just the abundant life, look what He's giving us here.
*Ephesians 1:8b*

"...wisdom and prudence;"

Now what's the word *prudence*? I think I can wrap it up better than Webster's dictionary. Prudence is just common horse sense! Isn't it? When you are prudent you merely have good sense. Now if you can have wisdom and with it some good common horse sense, then you've got the abundant life. God has given all this to you and I as believers free. We haven't had to grovel in the ground, we haven't had to climb the steps to St. Peter, we haven't had to go across the ocean. He's given all this to us, here and now. And it's abounding, it's more than we can handle, and how do we appropriate all this? By faith. I don't always feel or sense it, but I come back to the Word and here it is, and I can believe it. Now that is what God is looking for, and the more we believe, I think the more He'll bless us. Remember there's nothing that pleases the heart of God more than the faith of a human being. For you see it's unbelief that He's going to hold in the strongest light against mankind. Remember when we looked at those verses in the Book of Hebrews?

*Hebrews 3:18-19*

"And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? 19. So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." And the opposite of unbelief is FAITH! So here it is now then. We've appropriated His Grace -

*Ephesians 1:8*

"Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;"

Now what's the problem with Christendom today? They don't have that kind of wisdom. Oh they may be saved but they're out there floundering in ignorance of the Scripture. I just had a phone call this morning from a gentlemen. He said he had been to seminary, and the further he went in those seminary courses the further they were taking him from the truth. So he dropped out, and had discovered our lessons on the Internet, and realized what they were teaching in the seminary was running contrary to the Book. Well this is the beauty of God's Grace. He'll pour out wisdom and common sense to any of us who will appropriate it by faith, but we have to stay in the Book to get it. We're not just going to be able to leave it up to the pastors. Now I'm not putting the fault totally on pastors, because they're overloaded a lot of the time, but the average individual has to learn to get into the Word, and seek these things out. Now in verse 9 and 10, we're going to spend the next little while, maybe 2 or 3 lessons in them.
Ephesians 1:9a

"Having made known unto us (Paul) the mystery of his will,..."

What's another word for "mystery"? Secret. Oh let's go back and look at it in Deuteronomy 29:29 I was talking to a gentlemen recently that said, "Les after I saw that verse I just used it over and over, because it just says it all with regards to the revelations of the apostle Paul when he claims that these things were kept secret and that they were revealed to him and him alone from the ascended Christ." Sometimes people will ask me, "Now are you taking things away from what Jesus said during his earthly ministry?" No I don't take it away, but I know one thing, what He said from His ascended place in glory carries a lot more weight for us today than what He said to the Jew under the Law. And of course everything that Christ says from glory is through the apostle Paul. Now here it is.

Deuteronomy 29:29

"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: (what kind of things? Secret things. Now what's a secret? Something that nobody else knows anything about.) but those things which are revealed (that's from the word where we get revelation) belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."

Now of course here Moses was writing under the Law, but he's dealing with the same God. The same God that we deal with has told us the same thing. That He has kept things secret until He saw fit to reveal it. Now back to Ephesians 1 again for a moment then we'll be going to Romans. Verse 9 again.

Ephesians 1:9

"Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself;"

In other words, where does everything start and finish? In the mind of God. Now let's go back to Romans a moment and look at one of my favorite verses.

Romans 16:25

"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel (do you see how Paul uses the personal pronoun) and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since (Christ earthly ministry?"
Since Peter's message? No, but rather since anything was ever created. God has kept all of this secret, since) *the world began.*"

Now that's the reason Jesus couldn't preach Paul's Gospel, that's why Peter couldn't preach it, because Paul's Gospel was still kept totally secret in the mind of God until Paul received it. What is the revelation of the secret then? How that because of that price of redemption as we saw in the last lesson, because it has been accomplished, the work of the Cross is done, because of the power of His resurrection, God can now pour out on the human race this whole package of Grace and revealed truths that come from the pen of the apostle Paul. *In it we have all of the truths that the Church needs today.* You don't have to go anywhere else to get the truth that we need. Now that doesn't mean you throw away the rest of your Bible.

All the Bible is going to work for its common end, but if we would just see Christendom tonight spend 90% of its time in Paul's epistles, and 10% of their time in the rest of the Bible we'd see things begin to happen. But it's the other way around, most people spend 90% of their time in the Four Gospels and Old Testament, and they look at Paul's epistles like they're waste paper, and that makes old Satan happy. The expression I get from one of my fellow ranchers is, "They treat you like an unlovely step-child." Well I think that's the way most of Christendom treats Paul, like an unlovely step-child that they really don't want anything to do with, but you know they've got to admit he's there. *Now I see that all the time, but you see in Paul's writings is where we have to be, because it was to this man that these secrets that had been held in the mind of God were finally revealed.* Now just for a moment let's turn to Ephesians chapter 3 to show you what I'm talking about.

*Ephesians 3:8*

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, (this unmerited favor poured out from the very heart of God) that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;"

Now it's interesting if you want to really do some language work. This word *unsearchable* really means "you can't find the beginning of it." It just goes back so far that you can't trace it, and it began before Christ ever created anything. Now reading on, and remember what we're talking about. It was revealed only to the apostle Paul.

*Ephesians 3:9*
"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, (this secret) which from the beginning of the world (age) hath been hid (the same word in Deuteronomy 29:29) in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:"

That's the mystery, this whole package of revealed truths that now comes only from the pen of the apostle Paul. Let's name a few of these truths that was revealed only to this apostle. 1. Our beautiful salvation Gospel as recorded in I Corinthians 15:1-4, and Romans 16:25. 2. Redemption by the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Our redemption price has been paid. 3. He has justified us. 4. He has forgiven us. 5. He has given us the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

6. He has baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ, and what am I always saying about that term? You won't find that term Body of Christ anywhere else in Scripture except in Paul's writings. And there he refers to this Body of Christ, this composition of saved people, black or white, rich or poor, east or west, it makes no difference. Every believer becomes a member of this Body of Christ. That's one of the revelations of the mystery. It had never been revealed to anyone before.

7. Another one of the mysteries given Paul is the rapture of the Church this sudden out-calling of the saints when we meet the Lord in the air is another one. I get such a kick out of people sending me articles and books about the Church going into or through the Tribulation. And I just can't read them when I see where they're headed. I just lay them down. They're all doing the same thing. They are ignoring the apostle Paul. I know where they're coming from, Matthew 24 where Jesus is speaking to the Nation of Israel, and His second coming to the earth. Now listen, you and I aren't concerned about the Second Coming, we're concerned about the out-calling of the Body of Christ, the Rapture to meet the Lord in the air, and that is strictly a Pauline revelation. No body else even mentions such a thing.

Yes, all the rest of Scripture speaks of the Second Coming, and it is coming, but before that happens, we're out of here, because we won't fit in that Tribulation scenario. It's like trying to put a square peg in a round hole; the Church won't fit. The Tribulation is God dealing with the Nation of Israel, the Tribulation comes out of all the prophet's statements of the Old Testament. The only time Paul even mentions it is in II Thessalonians chapter 2, where he makes it so plain that after we have departed then shall appear that man of sin, and the Tribulation, and all the rest of it. Otherwise the Second Coming has nothing to do with Paul's teachings. I just get so frustrated, why do people keep sending me this stuff that the Church will go into or through the Tribulation when all they would have to do is read Paul's I Corinthians 15:52-58 and I Thessalonians 4:13-18. He's the only one that has had these secrets revealed concerning the Church. So remember the Rapture and the Second Coming are two different events - separate by at least seven years.
Now there's nothing secret about the prophetic things that the Old Testament prophets wrote about. There was nothing secret about Christ coming to the Nation of Israel was there? Why it was even revealed where He would be born. It was revealed unto Mary that His name would be called Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. There's nothing secret about that. The Old Testament in Psalms and Isaiah were full of crucifixion, His burial and resurrection, it was all back there, it wasn't secret. It's the same way with the Book of Revelation. There's nothing in that Book that's a secret. It all fits with the Old Testament prophecy. All you have to do is read Joel and Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and they all fit with Revelation, that's not a secret. But when you come to these things like we're looking at now, that here we are by God's Grace having wisdom and prudence poured out on us, the like of which has never happened before, nor will it happen again once the Church is removed. I mean, we're on separate special grounds as believers of the Church Age. Now let's look at another one of the mysteries in Colossians I think I've already mentioned 6 or 7 of them, and we haven't touched on all of them.

*Colossians 1:23b,24*

"... whereof I Paul am made a minister; (Paul has to let us know that he's God's authority.) 24. Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, (not His body of flesh, but what") which is the church: ""

Now you don't find Peter using that term. You don't find Jesus in His earthly ministry talking about the Body of Christ, because all He dealt with was Israel and the prophetic. But in Paul's writings he's constantly reminding us that we are members of the Body of Christ, a special combination of believers from every walk of life, from every corner of the globe, by virtue of having believed the Gospel. Now verse 25.

*Colossians 1:25-26*

"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, (Gentiles) to fulfil (or bring to completion) the word of God; 26. Even the mystery (the secret) which hath been hid (most people don't even want to read that. I think they must close their eyes when they come to some of these words, but here it is, these things which have been hidden) from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints."

Now that's from the pen of the apostle Paul. Oh goodness go on up into chapter 2.

*Colossians 2:2-3*
"That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, (listen this isn't Greek, this is all so plain if we'll just read and study it) to the acknowledgment of the mystery (secrets) of God, and of the Father, and of Christ: 3. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Because He's God! But what are we reading? He has now seen fit by His Grace to release these things that had been kept secret, and is now sharing them with us through the apostle Paul. God has never revealed these truths before. Now just for a moment let's go to II Corinthians chapter 11. We studied these verses during our Corinthian study, but they've blessed my heart so that I've been using them over and over. You see this is what we've got to get people to understand. Oh they only want to go by what Jesus said. Well that's all right up to a point, but Jesus didn't reveal the mysteries in His earthly ministries. Some say, "Oh I'm going by what Peter says", but Peter didn't have be mysteries. But look at what Paul says in verse 5

**II Corinthians 11:5**

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

He's not a step behind Peter in authority, in fact he's ahead of Peter. Then he repeats it again in verse 22 and 23, and he's referring to the Twelve in Jerusalem.

**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) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft."

Then come into chapter 12, and drop down to verse 11. And again Paul is defending that apostleship here. He is trying to show the authority he has as the apostle to the Gentiles.

**II Corinthians 12:11**

'I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: (what did he mean by that? Well they were putting him down. They were constantly saying, `Now wait a minute Paul, you're all right, but after all Peter had more authority. Peter is the big wheel in Jerusalem.' And others used Apollos as their example, but look what Paul says) for I ought to have been commended of you; (Paul was the one that brought them out of
pagan darkness, not Peter, not Apollos) *for in nothing am I behind the very chiepest apostles*, (but in his humility he says) *though I be nothing*.

Paul has now become uppermost in authority. The Twelve are now behind him. They are still beating a dead horse, so to speak, because God has turned from Israel, and they were the apostles for Israel. (Galatians 2:9) God had now turned to the whole human race, and this was all part and parcel of the revelations of mysteries which had been hidden in God, but now have been revealed to this man. *And I'm sure just like the Church today, Paul was up against himself when he said, "All in Asia have turned against me."*
LESSON TWO * PART III

THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIME

EPHESIANS 1:6-10

It's our goal to get folks once again, or even for the first time, into reading and studying the Book, and hopefully understanding it to see what it says, and what it doesn't say. Now let's just get back into where we left off in the last lesson. This Book of Ephesians is profound. I mean it's not just something that we're going to gloss over to get rid of, but rather we're going to take it verse by verse. Now I think it will take maybe this lesson and maybe the next one for verse 10. Most people will read this verse, and say, "Well how could you spend 60 minutes on this verse. Well the answer is easy! Before we start with verse 10 let's back up a bit to pick up the flow.

Ephesians 1:7-9

"In whom (in Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8. Wherein (Grace) he (Christ) hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9. Having made known unto us the mystery (or secret) of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself."

Now remember I made the comment in the last lesson that everything begins and ends in and with God. Especially when we teach the covenants in the Old Testament, when God made that Covenant with Abraham in spite of all the weakness of the Nation of Israel, and the children of Abraham, did it break the Covenant? No, because you see it began with God and it's going to end with God. And it's the same way with all these promises of Scripture, they begin and end in God Himself. Now verse 10.

Ephesians 1:10a

"That in the dispensation (or administration or that period of time) of the fulness of times..."

In other words, when human history will finally be brought to the full, when it will finally wound down, and we feel that's it's going to be 7000 years. We've already come 6000 years, so we know there's a 1000 years left which no doubt will be this fullness of time we see in this verse which is still awaiting the human race. Now continuing on, and we've got to keep the thought here. Remember "having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself." Remember God is Sovereign, and He can do it anyway He sees
fit. God can keep things secret if He sees fit, and we saw that he did until He reveals many of these things to the apostle Paul. Now here is going to be the fruition of the whole program.

**Ephesians 1:10**

*"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times* (when it will all wind up) *he* (Christ) *might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:"*

Now most of you know where I'm going next already, especially with the line on the board. But before we go back to that I would like for you to turn ahead a few pages to the Book of Colossians chapter 2. I could just about go back to verse 1, but we haven't got time for that so just drop in at verse 8.

**Colossians 2:8-9**

*"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men,* (Wow! That hits a lot of people right in the face doesn't it? Oh how many people hang onto tradition? Here we're warned against it. Be careful, don't hang on the tradition of men, and) *after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.* (Why?) *9. For in him* (Christ) *dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*"

All the Godhead is in Christ epitomized, and that's what it says. He is up there in Heaven, not in some invisible mist like spirit world, but bodily! The same body that He left with at the Mount of Olives in Acts chapter 1, and ascended into glory. Now before we go back and take a run at our timeline again come back to Ephesians 1, because repetition is the only way these things finally soak in.

**Ephesians 1:9b-10**

*"...according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times* (when God is going to deal with the human race in a particular way, which we call the 1000 year reign of Christ) *he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and on earth, even to him:"*

Ok, Heaven and earth. Take your Bible and let's go back to Genesis 1:1, and you'll find way back here that we're going to have the earth made ready for Adam and Eve. But even before we get to the Abrahamic Covenant of Genesis chapter 12 where it all of a sudden becomes a reality, in verse 1 of the Bible we have two spheres of God's
influence and what are they? Heaven and Earth. Now remember what you just read in Ephesians? The He might bring in one all things in Christ, both which are in **Heaven and on Earth**. Now you can't ignore that. Now we're going separate them, and then we're going to see how they all come together. But here in Genesis 1:1 we find -

**Genesis 1:1**

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

Now for sake of time let's go all the way to chapter 12 where the flood is now history. The tower of Babel is history, and the whole human race is on the scene, and remember we're not billions yet since we're only about 400 years this side of the flood, but there's still lots of people, probably a few million. But here we are at 2000 BC and we have the beginning of the Jewish nation or the call of Abraham. Now look at what it says.

**Genesis 12:1**

"Now the LORD had said unto Abram, (Abraham) 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:'"

Now land means what it says, and it says what it means. Where is land? On the planet. Now we're not talking about something up in Heaven, we're talking about something on the planet earth. Now verse 2. God says to this one man -

**Genesis 12:2-3**

"And I will make of thee a great nation, (and of course it's the Nation of Israel) 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."

Now hang onto that in your mind, and come all the way over to chapter 13, and let's just drop in at verse 14.

**Genesis 13:14-17**

"And the LORD said unto Abram, (Abraham) after that Lot was separated from him, 'Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: 15. For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. 16. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed
also be numbered. 17. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.'"

Now here's my reason for doing all this. Is this a heavenly promise or an earthly promise? Well it's earthly! All of this is earthly. You're going to have a geographical area of land over there on the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, and I'm going to multiply you as the sand of the seashore (people). Now this is all earthly. Everything that God is going to continue to promise this man, in fact let's just take a brief run at some of this. Come on up to Genesis 46, and by now several hundred years have elapsed. Abraham has come and gone. Isaac has come and gone. Jacob is now filling the scene with his 12 sons, and Joseph, one of his sons, is down in Egypt. Famine has hit Canaan and the rest of the world, but Joseph has the remedy because he piled up the grain in the good years. Now remember God has told Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to "stay in Canaan. Don't you go down into Egypt, because you'll get into trouble, and the family knew that. But now God does something different. How can God now tell them to go down in Egypt? Well because He's a Sovereign God, and God can do whatever He wants to do. It's now time for Jacob to do something that was anathema to him before. God says, "Go down into Egypt for I have a reason." Now in verse 1.

**Genesis 46:1-2**

"And Israel (Jacob) took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. (Beer-sheba is down south of Jerusalem about 80 miles, and is almost due east of Goshen in Egypt where Israel would finally go into slavery) 2. And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob, And he said, Here am I. 3. And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt: for I will there (in Egypt) make of thee a great nation:"

Was that a heavenly promise or an earthly one? Earthly. There is nothing of heavenly here. This is an earthly people with earthly promises, and now Jacob is told to go on down into Egypt where his son Joseph is, because in God's eternal purposes what's going to happen? The Jews are going to have a population explosion, and they're going to come out of Egypt some 215 years later with a population of 5-7 million people. And that number would be more numerous than any other nation in the Middle East. All right then, God's purposes required that they had to go down into Egypt, they had to go into slavery, they had to be ready to come out when Moses led them out. It was all part of the divine purpose, but what I'm emphasizing is, it was all earthly. Remember that's why we came here from Ephesians 1:10.

Now all the way up through the Old Testament we see that God never speaks of the Nation of Israel going to Heaven. When they die or the nation becomes a full
participant in the Covenant promises, it's always on the earth, and never lose sight of that. All the promises that God makes to the Nation of Israel are earthly promises. When you understand that then when Christ begins to minister to the Nation of Israel in Matthew it's the same thing. Jesus doesn't tell them to prepare for the glory land, they're to prepare for what? This coming Kingdom of which their Messiah is going to be the King.

Let me take you all the way up to Daniel chapter 2. Let's drop in at verse 35, and of course Daniel is interpreting the dream that King Nebuchadnezzar had, and this is part of the dream. The king sees this great image with the head of gold and the chest of silver, and the belly of brass, and the legs of iron and the feet and toes made of iron mixed with clay. This was a picture of all the great Gentile Empires that were in proximity with Israel. That's why I do not feel that America herself is in prophecy. Remember all prophecy deals only with the nations of world that had something to do with Israel in the past, and America hasn't. Now there may be a lot of Jews in America, but that doesn't count for that.

But all the nations in the Old Testament historical setting that had proximity with Israel are in prophecy. So we have all these empires. First the great one was the Babylon, then came the Medes and Persians, then the Greeks, and finally the Romans. These were all in the area of Jerusalem and had to do with the Nation of Israel. Then lastly the ten toes of iron and clay, we feel are the revived Roman Empire which I think is western Europe as we see it coming to the forefront even today. Watch western Europe because it's coming up, up and just be aware. European companies are buying up American companies, and we're losing our clout, and they're gaining. We know that the day will come when Western Europe will be the empire of the world.

Now verse 35. So as this whole Gentile system then finally prepares for its demise, the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the Tribulation-

**Daniel 2:35a**

"Then was the iron, the clay,..."

This image was standing so Daniel is starting with the feet. It's like a giant roller is going to come and smash it, and start rolling over its feet. This represents the coming of Christ, and He will destroy first the empire that is contemporary with that day which is the revived Roman empire. And then in this revived Romans empire are all the remains of the previous empires. Now if you know anything about history, you know that banking, and business, and money for usury began at Babylon. That's why the Jews settled down so quickly in Babylon. Then came the Medes and Persians and many of their attributes are still with us today. Then the Greek culture is still very evident also, and the Romans were very careful not to destroy these cultures, and
integrated them into their own empire. So much of Greek philosophy, architecture and literature are still with us. Now comes the Roman empire, and the primary thing that is still with us today that began with Rome was our whole system of courts and law. Rome was the first empire to declare a man innocent until he was proven guilty. See that's why the apostle Paul appealed to Rome, because even Israel wouldn't give him a fair trial. That's when he told them, "Since you won't give me a fair shake then I appeal to Caesar." Paul knew that in Caesar's court he would have as good a chance to be proven innocent, and then be released. That's what you have in all those previous empires, but now look what happens when Christ comes -

Daniel 2:35

"Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; (totally annihilated) and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone (which is Christ at His Second Coming) that smote the image (and destroyed the world system) became a great mountain, (or Kingdom) and filled the whole earth."

Notice it filled the whole earth. See how plain this is? Now let's back up for a moment to the Book of Isaiah chapter 2, and verse 2. Remember this earthly aspect is all we're talking about in the Ephesians 1:10 when all things are going to be finally consummated in that final dispensation, or final 1000 years. That's why I wanted to come back here and reconstruct the earthly promises, because they're all going to be aligned with the heavenly promises of the Church, and it's all going to come under one umbrella of Christ. Now they're not going to be mixed like a lot of folks are trying to do today. They're still going to maintain their separate entities, but they're both under the headship of Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Now we'll be dealing with the heavenly part when we finish the earthly.

Isaiah 2:2

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, (that is in that final seven years that Ephesians is talking about) that the mountain (or the Kingdom) of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, (now remember a mountain in Old Testament symbolism is a kingdom. So His Kingdom is going to be above all the other kingdoms) and shall be exalted above the hills; (now no doubt under His rule there will be smaller kingdoms among the Gentile nations) and all nations shall flow unto it."

Why? Because it's going to be the hub of the planet. Jerusalem the capital of this earthly Kingdom will be the center of the whole world activity. I guess we could use
Washington DC as an example today. We are the super power, the only one left, and so everything sort of flows to Washington today, and everything flows back from it. Well Washington is not going to last that long, but Jerusalem will. Christ, when He sets up His Kingdom, it's going to be headed up in Jerusalem. Now let's look at another one in the Old Testament in Zechariah chapter 14. The first 3 verses is about the battle of Armageddon, and we're hearing a lot about that. When all the armies of the world are going to gather in the Middle East.

That's why I'm not too shook up about the Y2K problem, because if everything crashes like they tell us it will these armies would never get to the Middle East, but they're going to get there. So I'm not looking for a total crash, there may be some blips but, I'm not all that shook up because according to God's time plan it's just too early. Now if we were already out of here by way of the Rapture, and the Tribulation had begun, and that would fit with the middle of the Tribulation, then I'd say maybe, but it's just too early. It's just not time for the world to collapse, so I'm not jumping on that band wagon at all. But here in these verses we have the battle of Armageddon, and all the nations of the world are going to come together and be destroyed at the Second Coming of Christ. Let's begin with verse 4.

**Zechariah 14:4a**

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

Remember that's earthly, not heavenly. Now come on up to verse 9.

**Zechariah 14:9**

"And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one."
LESSON TWO * PART IV

THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIME

EPHESIANS 1:6-10

Now it's time to get back into the Book where we left off in the last lesson. We're still in Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 10, so let's go back there for a moment. After that we'll pick up where we left off in the last lesson with the continued concept of the earthly and heavenly in Scripture. But before we read verse 10 let's back up to verse 8 and 9 to pick up the flow.

Ephesians 1:8-9

"Wherein (Grace in verse 7) he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9. Having made known unto us the mystery (or secret) of his will (which we saw that God has a right to keep everything secret, and He can reveal it when He's ready, and not until) according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:"

In other words as I've said several times this afternoon, "Everything begins and ends with and in God!" He created everything, He set everything in motion and He's going to bring it to His own end! I have taught for 25 years that the world is not going to be blown up with nuclear bombs during this age of Grace. All of that will take place when God is ready to do it Himself. Now I don't deny that there will be nuclear warfare during the seven years of Tribulation, but God is in control, and it won't happen until He's ready for it to happen. Now we come down to verse 10.

Ephesians 1:10

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times (which I feel is the 1000 year millennial rule and reign of Christ on the earth) he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:"

Now we took the concept in the last lesson that the spheres that God has been dealing with through history is Heaven and earth. We went back to Genesis 1:1 where in the beginning God created Heaven and earth, and you can keep those two things separated all through Scripture. You can't mix them because the heavenly things are those which were revealed only to the apostle Paul in the mysteries, the Body of Christ, we are the heavenly connection. All the rest of God's history is earthly. The Nation of Israel, and all that was around them were earthly, and when Israel rejected everything then God turned to the Gentiles, and began to work in the heavenlies.
Now we really didn't finish the earthly concept of it in the last lesson. I guess I should put it on the board now that beginning with the call of Abraham at 2000 BC the Nation of Israel began. God pulls that little nation out of the rest of humanity, and sets them apart. Then when Christ starts His earthly ministry to the Nation of Israel, the Jew, there were only two exceptions where he ministered to Gentiles, and don't let anyone ever try to tell you that He went to Jews and Gentiles. I guess I'd better back that statement up, so turn with me to Matthew chapter 10. There are so many people that get confused with the false teaching that Jesus ministered to the Gentiles. The Scriptures make it so clear that He did not. He couldn't because He came to the Nation of Israel to fulfill the earthly Covenant that He made with Abraham. Also the later covenants, which were also under the Abrahamic Covenant, the Davidic, the Mosaic, and the Palestinian as we call it because it was referring to the land of Palestine.

Someone asked me why I used the word 'Palestine.' Well it's in the Scriptures, and refers to Israel as the land of Palestine. So I use the term only because of its geographical clarity. We know where Palestine is. Now Matthew chapter 10. In this chapter Jesus has just called out the 12 disciples. Now verse 5.

Matthew 10:5-6

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, `Go not unto the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans (who were half breeds) enter ye not: (but here was His command) 6. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'" (God's earthly people)

So Christ's earthly ministry was confined to His earthly people Israel, and there were only two exceptions, and I'll show you one of them right now as it's right in chapter 15. People wonder how I remember a portion of Scripture like this. Well I just know that's it's an odd number chapter. So here it is. You all know the account, and I think everybody out in television does also, but you probably don't understand the ramifications of it.

Matthew 15:21-23

"Then Jesus went thence and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. (these two cities were up there on the Mediterranean Sea coast, and the area as we know it today as Lebanon, and it was two Gentiles cities. But He doesn't go into the cities so much, as He comes to the border area.) 22. And behold, a woman of Canaan (a Gentile) came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.'" (or demon) 23. But he (Jesus) answered her not a word. (now what does that imply? He ignored her, because she's a Gentile. Remember He has a ministry only to the Nation
of Israel.) And his disciples came and besought him, saying, `Send her away: for she crieth after us.'"

Now this had no doubt been going on for a few days. Everywhere they went here was this Canaanite woman probably making a nuisance of herself, and so the disciples were getting out of sorts, and saying, "Lord she's a Gentile and we don't have anything to with her so get rid of her, send her away." Well, the Lord has something else on His mind, and so now verse 24, so He answers to the Twelve.

Matthew 15:24

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

Do you see how plain that is? Now in plain English what the Lord is saying is, "I do not have a ministry except to the Jew." That's what He said in Matthew chapter 10, and now He's saying it again. Now in a while here she is again.

Matthew 15:25

"Then came she and worshipped him, (I think she literally fell down on her knees in front of him) saying, `Lord, help me.'"

Now notice how she drops the term, `thou Son of David' because that was strictly a Jewish address, and as a Gentile she couldn't use that legitimately so she learned something anyway, so now she just says, `Lord help me' And again in verse 26 look at Jesus' answer.

Matthew 15:26

"But he answered and said, `It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.'"

Well who were the children? Israel, the Jews. Who were the dogs? Gentiles. The Lord says, `I can't take that which is on the table of Israel, and give it to Gentiles. Why? Because of the Covenant promises. He was there to fulfill the covenants made back here to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The prophets prophesied the coming of the Messiah to Israel, and there's not a word in there that the Gentiles were to receive any of the blessing of Israel. They couldn't, because it was Covenant ground, and that was only for the offspring of Abraham. So again Jesus says -

Matthew 15:26
"...It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs."

You go back into Psalms chapter 23, and when the psalmist says -

**Psalms 23:5a**

"Thou preparest a table before me..."

Now what was this table before me? This place of privilege that only Israel could enjoy so they literally feasted at the Lord's table. How? They had the Word of God. You're looking at me kind of blank so turn with me for a moment to Romans chapter 3, and this is exactly what it meant. They were feasting at the Lord's table because of their Covenant position. You can also pick this up in other various places of Scripture. We Gentiles were never feasting at the Lord's table when God was dealing with Israel. Today of course, yes, we're in that place of privilege, but back here it's only the Jew. Now verse 1, and here Paul says-

**Romans 3:1**

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? (in other words, what benefit is it to be a member of the Nation of Israel?) 2. Much every way: chiefly, (They had everything going for them, from the Ten Commandants, the Temple, the priesthood, they had the sacrifices, they had the prescribed approach to Jehovah, they had the land and the people, they had everything going for them, and the miracles God was constantly working in the Nation of Israel with miracles. So they had a lot of things going for them, but chiefly what was their number one blessing?) because that unto them were committed the oracles (Word) of God."

See that is what has blessed America the most the past 200 years, above all the nations of the world. America up until the last 50 years rested on this Book. All of our forefathers were believers of this Book. Now they might not have been what we would call born again Christians, but at least they were men enough to admit that America operated on the principles of this Book. All right now that was Israel's blessing, they had the Word of God. Do you see that? Now flip back again to Matthew and let's finish that portion. So this was the table at which the Jews were literally feasting, the Word of God. And they were a privileged people. Now reading verse 26.

**Matthew 15:26-28**

"But he answered and said, `It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.' (but she comes back and says ) 27. And she said, `Truth, Lord; (in other words she recognized that, but) yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their
masters' table.' 28. Then Jesus answered and said, unto her, `O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt,' And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

In other words, He could heal a Gentile if He wanted to, but you see He was under the Sovereign agreement with Israel, and Abraham, and the Covenant promises that He could not pour out Grace to Gentiles until Israel had every opportunity to hear the offer of the King and the Kingdom, and when they rejected it, yes, then God turns to the Gentile world through the apostle Paul. Now I'm not quite ready to leave off with the earthly aspect of Ephesians 1:10, and I know we won't get much further than the earthly aspect in this lesson and we'll have to pick the heavenly aspect up in our next lesson. Now continuing on with the earthly kingdom aspect in Scripture, let's go back to Matthew 1:1. Now this will substantiate what I just said, that God could not break His Covenant promises with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

**Matthew 1:1**

"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

Now that's as far as it goes. It doesn't go on back to Adam, but rather from Christ's birth back to Abraham. Why is that? The reason is Matthew is going to present Christ as the King of the nation Israel, Israel's Messiah. Matthew is going to present Him as the fulfillment of these Covenant promises made to Abraham, and so there is no need to go any further back, because this is where everything begins so far as Israel is concerned. Now come on up to chapter 3, and now we find that Jesus' birth has been recorded, and John the Baptist is beginning to announce the coming of the King, and now verse 2. And this is John the Baptist's message.

**Matthew 3:2**

"And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Now that doesn't sound earthly does it? It sounds heavenly, but where was this heavenly Kingdom going to be? On the earth. All of the things that we see in the Old Testament were that this glorious Kingdom is going to be on the earth, but it's going to be Heaven on earth, because Christ is going to be King. So the whole concept now is that the King is in the midst of Israel, they are being offered the opportunity to enter into all these earthly promises which are going to come to fruition. But of course according to Ephesians 1:10 that couldn't happen until the Gentiles complement had also been completed, which was the Church. When we enter into the Kingdom economy like it says in that verse, "everything is going to come under
Christ's headship." The earthly people of Israel, and their earthly kingdom, and all the ramifications of the heavenly people, the Body of Christ. All right we're going to leave the Body of Christ at least for now for a later time, and continue on with the earthly concept.

So if you will come with me a little further in Matthew, and go to chapter 19. In this chapter again we're in His earthly ministry, and He's been proclaiming to the Nation of Israel that He is the Messiah, the Christ, and He's been proving it with miracles, and signs, and wonders. Now verse 27.

**Matthew 19:27**

"Then answered Peter and said unto him, 'Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" In other words, what shall we have for following Christ? Well Peter's not talking about his salvation, he's already got that. That was established back in chapter 16, and verse 16. When Peter said,

**Matthew 16:16b**

"...Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

So what Peter is saying here is much like what Abraham said back in Genesis chapter 15. Remember God promised Abraham the land, and promised him all these other things, and then the great man of faith still said what?

**Genesis 15:8**

"And he said, 'Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?'" Then the Lord gave him a title deed. Well here in Matthew chapter 19 Peter is the same way. The Lord just got through telling him a few weeks before -

**Matthew 16:17b**

"...Blessed art thou Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

But Peter comes back and says, "Well what else are we going to have for following you?" Do you see that? Oh they're so human. Does Jesus dress him down for saying that? No. Jesus answers and says-

**Matthew 19:28**
"And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you. That ye which have followed me, (the Twelve minus Judas) in the regeneration (when the earth is brought back, and made like it was in the Garden of Eden, which will be this 1000 year reign with Christ on the earth) when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory (Christ laid aside His glory while down here, and went to the Cross. But in this 1000 year reign He will once again be in His glory. This is when He's going to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords), ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

When you put all this together, Scripture is so logical. Do you see why Peter was up tight when the spot Judas had vacated was empty? Peter thought the King would be coming back at any moment in Acts chapter 1, and wondered, "We have 12 thrones to fill for the Nation of Israel, and we've only got 11 disciples." So what did they do? Hey, they filled it real quick with the 12th man. That was the first item on the agenda after the Lord ascended. They had to get a replacement for Judas. So they chose Matthias.

Acts 1:26

"And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles."

Well all of this is just to show that God was promising to the Nation of Israel this earthly kingdom. Then finishing up the earthly kingdom concept come into the Book of Acts chapter 1. Come on down to verse 3. Now the Lord has been crucified, He's been resurrected, and has been walking among the disciples for 40 days.

Acts 1:3

"To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion (His death, burial, and resurrection) by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:" 

Now we've always got to separate the two terms. Matthew over and over says the Kingdom of Heaven, and here in Acts chapter 1, and 28 we have the Kingdom of God. Well the best way I can differentiate is the Kingdom of God is that whole sphere of God's influence, of His Sovereignty. Whether it's Heaven or the outer fringes of space, whether it's hell, or earth, anything that's under God's domain is included in that "Kingdom of God." Now that's a big subject. I mean anybody could talk about the Kingdom of God for days on end, so the Lord didn't have any trouble doing that for 40 days. But within the Kingdom of God is going to be that glorious Kingdom on this planet called "The kingdom of Heaven" that everything is waiting for. It's
just like those of us sitting here in Oklahoma, we're in the United States of America, but we're in Oklahoma. Well that's the way I like to liken it to. Now verse 6.

*Acts 1:6*

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

Do you see how plain that is? What kingdom were they talking about? The earthly kingdom over which their Messiah would one day rule and reign.
LESSON THREE * PART I

THE COUNSEL OF THE GODHEAD

EPHESIANS 1:10-13

In our last two lessons we started in Ephesians 1:10 and during those two lessons we only got about half way through the verse. Remember we were dealing with the earthly and heavenly aspect when all things would be one under Christ in His 1000 year reign. We pretty much took care of the earthly aspect in those last two lessons, but we still have just a bit more in Acts. After that we'll start the heavenly aspect. Let's read that verse again and pick up where we left off on our Ephesians timeline.

Ephesians 1:10

"That in the dispensation (or that period of time or that administration) of the fulness of times (which would be that final 1000 years of human history which we refer to constantly as the millennial reign that) he might gather together in one all things in Christ,..."

"In Him" is a prepositional phrase and always refers to our position in Christ. You know one of my sons asked the other day a logical question concerning the Bible. "Well how do we know we're in Christ? We don't look or feel any different, do we? " Well you know what my answer was. We take all that by faith, because the Book says that when we believed we became a member of the Body of Christ. The Book says we were baptized into the Body of Christ by a work of the Holy Spirit. At the same time we were justified, glorified, forgiven, and all the other things that come with salvation the moment we believe. Did you feel any of that? You don't all of a sudden get a diploma, but we take it by faith, this is what the Bible has claimed. Now reading on in verse 10. Now here is where we divided the earthly and heavenly aspect.

Ephesians 1:10b

"... both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:"

So in the two previous chapters we took the premise that beginning way back in Genesis chapter 12, God started dealing with one little nation in particular, the earthly people, Israel. Now that's as far as we came with our timeline. From Adam to Abraham was about 2000 years, and then 2000 before Christ we had the appearance of Abraham, and the Nation of Israel. From Genesis chapter 12 until we get well into the Book of Acts it's primarily, but not exclusively, God dealing with Jew only. Now let me show you where I picked up the term Jew only, and I use it without apology.
Except I usually add the phrase "with exceptions." See those exceptions were also in the Old Testament economy. In God's Sovereign Grace He did send Jonah to Ninevah, a Gentile city. By His Sovereign Grace, the spies ended up on the wall of Jericho, and met Rahab. Naomi by His Grace met Ruth and brought her back to Bethlehem. Now those were all exceptions of Gentiles. But for the most part it has been Jew only. Let's go back to Acts chapter 11 and look at it. This verse refers back to the time of Stephen's martyrdom, which was about seven years after Pentecost.

Acts 11:19

"Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen (back in chapter 7) travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only."

Now that's what the Book says, that's not my idea, I'm not being a bigot or anything like that. The Book makes it so plain that as these believing Jews, who had followed Christ, probably in His earthly ministry, or had responded to Peter and those eleven preaching in the early chapter of Acts, because of Saul's persecution had fled Jerusalem, had gone as far north as Antioch in Syria, but wherever they went they preached the **Word to Jews only.** Remember there's not a New Testament yet, that would come much later, so what did they have? The Old Testament, which was written to the Jew. But remember that fits right in with Jesus' earthly ministry, and I showed you the verses, He commanded the Twelve -

Matthew 10:5b-6

"...Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: 6. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

People have such a hard time swallowing that. I can remember a couple of years ago when we were teaching in Israel, and we were having our Bible class after dinner in the hotel, and there were some other tour groups that also came in and attended. The other tour groups hadn't been with us before as we taught, and all of a sudden some felt that they had been hit in the face with the concept that Christ didn't come but to the Jews only. And I remember this one fellow in particular got angry. He was as red as a beet, and finally exploded, and said,"**You mean to tell me that Jesus did not have anything to do with the Gentiles?**" I said, "I'm not telling you, but rather that's what the Book tells you. Christ came only to the Jew, and when Israel rejected Him, then yes, He's going to turn to the Gentiles, and we'll see that next in our timeline." But I want it understood from the Scriptures all the way from Genesis 12, and the call of Abraham till we get way into the Book of Acts it's Jew only with exceptions. In our
last lesson we stopped in Acts chapter 1, verse 6, and maybe that's a good jumping off place.

*Acts 1:6*

"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

Jesus did not ridicule them for being ignorant, or foolish for thinking that an earthly kingdom would be set up. But just the opposite -

*Acts 1:7*

"And he said unto them, 'It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.'"

The kingdom is coming, and don't you ever forget or doubt that the kingdom is coming to this earth. Now the world has already been waiting, since that verse, over 1900 years, but in God's mind that was only a couple of days. Remember a thousand years is only as a day, and a day is as a thousand years in God's sight.

*II Peter 3:8*

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

Now for this timeline review I'm going to come on through Acts real quickly, and now let's drop in at Acts chapter 2. Now we're going to see how Israel is still being approached with the same message that Jesus and the Twelve proclaimed in His three years of ministry. Now in verse 22 of Acts chapter 2 we find Peter speaking on the day of Pentecost, and look who he is talking to. And again people miss this in order to make their doctrine fit. **But you see the called-out Body of Gentile believers, the Church, won't fit in these verses.** God is still dealing only with the Jew, the Nation of Israel.

*Acts 2:22*

"Ye men of Israel, (and you Gentiles? No.) hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know."
So there's no question who Peter is talking to. He's talking only to Jews. And again Peter brings these Jews down to the same message that Jesus and the Twelve preached, and he almost repeats it word for word in verse 38.

Acts 2:38

"Then Peter said unto them, (these Jews, the children of Israel) 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.'"

Now that was the very process for the nation to become believers. Believe that Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah, repent and be baptized in water. As soon as you get to the Gentile plan then the whole format is inverted. We'll look at that a little bit later. But now coming on up through the Scriptures, we find that Peter keeps preaching his heart out, and now come all the way up to Acts chapter 7. Here it's about seven years after Acts 2:38 and Pentecost. And here again someone sent me a timeline the other day from someone who in 1920 had this same timeline that I use. He too had Stephen about seven years after Pentecost. Let's start at verse 2, because I want people to see who Peter and Stephen were talking to. That's very crucial in being able to separate the Scriptures. If you can't separate the Scripture, then how are you going to be able to receive this beautiful free gift that God offers to everyone.

Acts 7:2

"And he (Stephen) said, 'Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; (or listen to me) The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, (now who alone can claim Abraham as their father? The Jew!) when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,'"

Then Stephen comes all the way up from Abraham, and builds on the Abrahamic Covenant, the promises made to this nation, and finally comes all the way up toward the end of the chapter, and he puts it on the Jewish religious leaders.

Acts 7:51-52

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 52. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; (the Messiah) of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murders:"

Now you analyze those two verses, does that fit a Gentile? No that wouldn't fit Gentiles. Gentiles' fathers didn't persecute the prophets, but Israel's did. So always be
careful that you don't just spread this out over people who are not involved. This is strictly for the Jew, it's still Jew only.

Acts 7:53

"Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, (the Nation of Israel again) and have not kept it" Now after that you know what happens to Stephen.

Acts 7:57-58

"Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him 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."

Remember when we were in the Book of Acts I called this the scenario of Israel's rejection. This is where they hit the high point of unbelief and rejection. "We'll not have Jesus of Nazareth to rule over us. He was an impostor, He could have never been the Messiah." And of course Saul of Tarsus was egging them on. Then you remember we get into chapter 9, and now this is where we come to that fork in the road. Where God has finally left off dealing with the Nation of Israel, and He's going to do something totally different. This is something that has never been imagined by Peter or the eleven. Jesus never betrayed what was about to happen, because God in His Grace is now going to do something totally out of the secret recesses of His own mind, and here it is. I guess we might as well start right with verse 1.

Acts 9:1-2

"And Saul, (who was holding the clothes of those who stoned Stephen) yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples (here it's not the Twelve) of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2. And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."

Then of course you know the account. Outside of Damascus the Lord I think struck him down with this beam from Heaven, probably a laser beam as we understand them now.

Acts 9:4-5a

"And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' 5. And he said, 'Who art thou Lord?...'' (Jehovah)
You want to remember that Saul was a deeply religious man. Oh he was a murderer, he was one who slaughtered Jewish believers, but it was all in the name of his religion. Remember anybody that is religious certainly has a concept, whoever their God is, that he's up above. I don't know of any religion that looks at God being down, it's always up. So when this event comes from above with the stream of light, and the voice, immediately Saul knows it's got to be God that he's dealing with, so that's why the question, "Who art thou, Lord?" But in the original it really should have been, "Who art thou, Jehovah?" Because that's who Saul understood. Jehovah was the God of Abraham. Well what answer did Saul get for his question?

Acts 9:5b

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

Now imagine the man's reaction when he heard that. The One that he thought was such an impostor and blasphemer, and the One whose name he was trying to just simply obliterate from Jewish thinking was the same Jehovah that had called Abraham. He was the One that had spoken to Moses, that had spoken to David, and He was the same One that was now speaking from Heaven after having been crucified, buried, and risen from the dead. No wonder the man became what he was. What an experience Saul had when he heard that voice from Heaven say, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Well remember God always works the ends into the middle. So while He's dealing outside the city with Saul, He's dealing in the city with Ananias. So now let's drop all the way down to verse 11. This is just a quick review of our timeline.

Acts 9:11

"And the Lord said unto him, (Ananias) `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.'"

I'll bet he was praying. I mean after he's gone years now suppressing the name of Jesus of Nazareth as a blasphemer, as a demon, and as the worst of worst could be, and then suddenly realize that it was the God that he thought he served, I bet he did pray. I don't blame him. So the Lord says, "behold, he prayeth."

Acts 9:12-15a

"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: (the believing Jews) 14. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15. But...'' But is one of my favorite words in Scripture. That may all be true Ananias, but the flip side is -

Acts 9:15

''But the Lord said unto him, `Go thy way: for he (Saul) is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles,...'''' All of a sudden God is going to do something that He had not done before. You've not seen anything like this. Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 10?

Matthew 10:5

''These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them saying, `Go not into the way of the Gentiles,...''''

And all the way up through His earthly ministry we have seen that He ignored the Gentiles, and as late as the Passover Feast, and the Greeks wanted to see Jesus, but He didn't respond to them. He didn't tell His disciples, ''Well bring them in to me.'' All He told Andrew and Philip was to tell those Greeks that the hour cometh, speaking of His death, burial, and resurrection. Gentiles would have to wait until that finished work of the Cross could be presented as a saving Gospel for them as we find in I Corinthians 15:1-4. Now reading on in verse 16, here in Acts chapter 9.

Acts 9:16

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

Then of course we know that the apostle Paul from that point on goes out to a three year seminary training at Mt. Sinai, where he was revealed the mysteries. And one of those mysteries was the Gospel of the Grace of God by which Gentiles are saved. It's not limited to Gentiles, but as much as it was Jew only back here when God was dealing with Israel, with a few exceptions. Now we have something totally different happening, God is now pulling out another group of people for His name which we call the Church, or the Body of Christ. It is mainly made up of Gentiles, with the exceptions of a few Jews. So you have two comparisons. Here you have Jew only with a few Gentile exceptions, and now we have predominately Gentiles, but with some Jewish exceptions. And the two you might say just cross over.

Israel goes out into the nations of the world into a dispersion even unto our own present day. The Body of Christ on the other hand is pulled off and becomes a unique group of people, and they are waiting for their period of human history
which will be the out-calling or the Rapture. After we're taken out of the way, then at that time once again God will pick up and deal with Israel for the seven years of Tribulation, and then you'll have the Second Coming when Christ will stand once again on the earth. We'll look at that if we can in the next lesson. Now let's look at some of the heavenly aspects of Ephesians 1:10. Go back and look at some Scriptures concerning Paul's ministry. Let's stop at Romans 16:25. This verse uses language that I'm afraid very few people, if they read it, comprehend it. But I'm afraid most people don't even read it. Very few people understand what Paul is saying in this tremendous verse.

**Romans 16:25**

"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to (not the prophets, not the Old Testament, not the Abrahamic Covenant, not the teaching of Jesus in His earthly ministry, not the teaching by Peter in the Book of Acts, but) the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world begin."

Paul's Gospel had been kept secret in the mind of God since time began. Now that's what the Bible says, that's not something I made up. This is what the Scripture says, that this Gospel that Paul is now going to start presenting to the Gentile world has been kept secret. Maybe I should have used this verse first, so in the moments we have left let's come back to Acts chapter 15. Because here in Acts 15 is more or less the introduction to it. I'm sure that when James, when he spoke, had no real comprehension of what he was saying. He couldn't have, because nothing like that had ever been revealed before. I think he was just inspired to say what he said without really understanding the ramification of it all. But here in Acts 15 after they've had this big run in with Paul and Barnabas, that Paul and Barnabas could not be preaching salvation to Gentiles without adhering to circumcision and Law keeping, they finally are convinced that yes, Paul's on the right track, and so James makes this tremendous statement.

**Acts 15:14-16**

"Simeon (Peter) hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them (the Gentiles) a people for his name. 15. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 16. After this (after the calling out a Gentile people, that's you and I today) I (God) will return and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins therof, and I will set it up:" Now in verse 17 to back up what I'm saying -

**Acts 15:17-18**
"That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, (this had never been revealed before. But now even James has a little bit of insight that since Paul's Gospel has been revealed, and it's primarily for the Gentile world then yes, God is going to call out a people for His name. And it's going to be the Gentiles who are going to hear it) upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. 18. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Now what does that tell you? Oh the Sovereign God is in control of everything, and nothing catches Him by surprise.
LESSON THREE * PART II

THE COUNSEL OF THE GODHEAD

EPHESIANS 1:10-13

Now let's just pick right up where we left off in the last lesson. We're still in verse 10, but we're getting ready to move on soon. Remember, Ephesians 1:10 is where Paul writes -

Ephesians 1:10

"That is the dispensation of the fulness of times (referring to the 1000 year reign of Christ) he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, (the heavenly things,) and which are on earth; (the earthly) even in him:"

Now you can be turning to Galatians chapter 1, and while you do that I want to remind you that all the way up through the Old Testament dealing with the Nation of Israel under the Abrahamic Covenant, including Christ's earthly ministry, including the early chapters of Acts, all of that is God dealing with His earthly people, Israel. Remember, Israel had nothing but earthly promises. The Jew knew nothing of dying and going to Heaven, all the Jew understood, as Job puts it so beautifully back there in chapter 19-

Job 19:25-26

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: (Job didn't say, 'I'll see Him in Heaven) 26. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God;"

So all the promises given to Israel were earthly, and never lose sight of that. Their Temple was in Jerusalem, it was earthly. And when you get to the Book of Hebrews which I think Paul wrote, and we find him constantly comparing there that which was good back in the past when God resided in the Temple, in the Shekinah glory, it's all earthly. Today in the Church Age you and I aren't connected to a Temple on the earth, but rather we're connected to the Jerusalem, which is in Heaven.

So I think the heavenly aspect started from the time of Paul's commissioning to go to the Gentiles, and the Body of Christ, the Church. That is heavenly, whereas Israel is earthly, and hopefully we can tie this whole period of human history coming together. After that time we can go into the Kingdom Age, the 1000 year reign which Ephesians 1:10 is referring to. At that time He will be King of Kings, and Lord of Lords when
everything of the heavenly and earthly will come under His reign, and rule. Well that's just sort of a preview of what's to come. Now if you will come back to Galatians chapter 1 and let's pursue a little more of the heavenly concept of all of this. I think we pretty much gave you an overview of the earthly promises made to Israel. We know Israel rejected it, they crucified their Messiah, and God immediately turned to the apostle Paul to go to the Gentiles. Now in Galatians 1:11 is where we have the real basis of that, after you've left off with Acts chapter 9. Now Paul has been out among the Gentile world, and at this time we are some 28 or 29 years after Pentecost.

_Galatians 1:11-12_

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me (now be careful how you read this. When Paul says "The Gospel which was preached of me," he's referring to the Pauline message of I Corinthians 15:1-4, and that message ) is not after man. 12. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, (by other men) but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Well what's Paul saying? At his conversion on the road to Damascus when the Lord spoke to him and said, "I'm going to send you far hence to the Gentiles" Paul didn't immediately head back to Jerusalem and check in with Peter and the eleven. But instead the Lord sends him in the opposite direction down to Mount Sinai in Arabia, and evidently for three years the Lord just laid on this man the whole revelation of all of these things that were never hinted at in Scripture before. And this is what I try to emphasize to people, do you realize that all the way up through the Old Testament, all the way up through the Four Gospels, and the early chapter of Acts, that you never once see the term "The Body of Christ?" You don't see that term until you get to Paul.

Now once Paul begins his ministry never does he use the term, "The Gospel of the Kingdom as Jesus and the Twelve did." Why? Because that gospel was associated with the Twelve. Just as they couldn't use the term the Body of Christ, Paul can't use the term the Gospel of the Kingdom. Do you see that? As I showed you before there is this fork in the road in the Bible, and that fork starts with the apostle Paul at his conversion on the road to Damascus. God comes up to the point where Israel rejected everything of the Covenant promises, and when that happened God says, "I'll do something totally different." So with the apostle Paul, He went to the Gentile. Now Paul lays this out so beautifully here in these verses. We've covered them lots of times on the program, and I know this is repetition to a lot of you.

_Galatians 1:13a_
"For ye have heard of my conversation (my manner of living) in time past in the Jews' religion,..."

Now here I always have to stop. What's a religion? Oh I've defined it so often as I teach. Religion is always a compilation of the effort of man to somehow appease a Holy God. Now that's religion. I don't care if it's the Oriental, Protestant, Catholicism, Judaism, or whatever. Religion is always man's attempt to somehow merit favor with God. Now you want to remember that the Jews religion at the time that Paul was practicing it here in Christ's earthly ministry, and shortly after, that's all it was. There was nothing of the power of God in it, and you want to realize that the Law given back here to Moses was about 1500 BC.

But from that time, the religion of Judaism was in a constant state of degeneration. Usually things are in that constant state. Very seldom does something reach a peak of more or less perfection and stay there, it always degenerates down. Remember every thing is always going into a less usable state. So you've got to realize that from the beginning of Judaism, if we want to call it that, and the giving of Law to Moses, and then coming through the prophets and so forth, by the time you get to the time of Christ's earthly ministry, it was nothing but a dead man-made religion. There was nothing left of the power of God in it. Oh they went through the Temple worship, and all that was involved there. I just had a verse come to mind in Isaiah. I've been sharing with my Oklahoma classes the last few weeks that even Israel's religion came up into God nostrils as a stench. I shook a few people up the other night, I know I did when I said I wonder how many Church services around the world on Sunday morning make God feel the same way about them as He does here in Isaiah. I'm in Isaiah chapter 1, and let's just begin with verse 11. Now this is where mankind can get to when they follow their own devices.

Isaiah 1:11-13

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: (well didn't God instruct them to bring sacrifice? Well sure He did. Now read on) I am full (today we'd say, `I've had it.'). of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. 12. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? (I'm sure God is speaking of the Temple complex. Now look at verse 13.) 13. Bring no more vain oblations; (that was part of their sacrificial worship. God says, `Don't bring any more, because I've had it with them.' Now do you have the picture?) incense is an abomination unto me; (now listen weren't they instructed to burn incense as a sweet smell to God? Sure they were, and they were still doing all of this exactly according to the Book. Now let's read on and I'll tell you what
the problem was.) the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity even the solemn meeting."

Now remember all that we've read was what God had instructed for worship, but now He's saying, "I'm fed up with this and can't stand to look at it."

Isaiah 1:14-15

"Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them." (now this is God speaking to the Nation of Israel.) 15. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood."

Now what was the major point of controversy God has here with the Nation of Israel? They were doing everything right, oh they wouldn't dream of approaching Temple worship and not do it exactly right. I mean to the last jot and tittle they did it right, but what were they lacking? Faith! There was no faith associated with all this, and it had become nothing but a dead religion. And isn't that exactly where Christendom is tonight? Oh look all the things we do in Church, but how many people have faith to appropriate the real truth of it? And this is what God is looking for - just simple faith.

Hebrews 11:6a

"But without faith it is impossible to please him:..."

Now coming back to Galatians chapter 1 if you will. So this is just exactly what Paul is talking about. Paul says that he was such a religious Jew. He was like all the rest of the Israelites doing everything according to the Book, but he was destitute of real faith, and consequently he too was blind with regard to Who Jesus really was. You've heard me say so many times that Israel should have known Who Jesus was. Israel could have known Who Jesus was, but why didn't they? They didn't really believe the Word of God! Now we're in the same situation in America tonight. We know the Lord is coming, but we don't know when. Now I'm one that thinks it's not very far away, and yet most people have no concept where we are in God's timetable. On top of that, most wouldn't believe it if you told them. Why? They have no faith. Now continuing in Galatians chapter 1.

Galatians 1:13-15-17a

"For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church (church here is the Jewish assemblies.) of God, and wasted it." 14. And profited in the Jews religion above many my equals
in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. 15. But (now here's the flip-side again. Oh he was a religious Jew, he was doing everything that the Book instructed, but) when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, (and in the next verse we have the purpose) 16. To reveal his Son (the Lord Jesus) in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; (Gentiles, the non-Jew world)immediately (again Paul puts the emphasis on that he did not go to Jerusalem and check in with the Twelve, but) I conferred not with flesh and blood: 17. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, ..."

Now if you want to know where he went in Arabia, just turn the page in Galatians and go over to chapter 4. This is to show you what was in Arabia where he went.

Galatians 4:25a

"For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia,..."

So I have to feel that just as surely as God gave the Law to Moses up there on Mt. Sinai back in the Book of Exodus, and Moses took it down to the children of Israel, so this man Paul went to the same Mt. Sinai, and received all the revelations of our doctrines of Grace, and he came down and took it to the Gentile world, and what a difference that has made. Then Paul goes on through the rest of the chapter, and says in verse 18 -

Galatians 1:18-19

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

Paul had 3 years alone with the Lord. While I was teaching II Corinthians I had made the point that one of the main points of controversy that the Corinthians had with Paul was that he didn't have that 3 years with Jesus that Peter had. Now it's obvious that the disciples had walked those dusty trails of the Nation of Israel for 3 years, we all know that. But after thinking about it those Corinthians were wrong, because Paul also had 3 years with Christ. In fact Paul even had it better as he had 3 years down there at Mt. Sinai with no one around but the Lord Himself. So Paul could come back and say, "Oh yes, Peter had his 3 years, and I had my 3 years.

I always have said, that God evens everything up. Here we've got 2000 years, where God dealt primarily with the Nation of Israel. It was Jew only with a few Gentile exceptions. Now since Paul and the beginning of the Body of Christ again it's been nearly 2000 years that God has been filling the Body of Christ with Gentiles, with a few Jewish exceptions. It always balances out. God is never out
of balance. I had a gentlemen call the other day wanting to put our program on his station. He said what I really like about your program is that you have balance. Well thank you, because that's what we try to maintain. We're not going to go clear off on the right or left till we get off balance. You just have to keep your eyes on the Word of God and not get too far off in either direction. So everything that God is in is always balanced. So yes, Peter had three years with the Lord here while dealing only with the Jew. Paul had three years here at the onset of his Gentile ministry. Now verse 19.

Galatians 1:19-21

"But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. (this James was not one of the Twelve) 20. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. 21. Afterwards (his stop at Jerusalem for 15 days) I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;"

Now of course that's the area of Antioch, and his hometown of Tarsus, so this was the beginning now of Paul's ministry, and a calling out of a people for the Lord's name, but from what people? From among the Gentiles. What's happening to those people? Come back with me for a moment to I Corinthians chapter 12. And now you will notice that this is all fresh language. This is something that you've never heard before in Scripture, and this is all a result of that 3 years of revelation, and the outpouring of the Grace of God on this apostle of the Gentiles. In verse 12 Paul uses the human body as a comparison.

I Corinthians 12:12

"For as the body (human body) is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ...."

Or the Body of Christ. All believers have been brought into that Body, we never lose our individuality, but we're all part of the composite. Now how do we get into this Body of Christ? Next verse -

I Corinthians 12:13a

"For by one Spirit (Holy Spirit.) are we all baptized into one body,..."

Now here is the only true baptism for us today. This is the true baptism that everybody better have or they're not going to be in glory. Now that's it! If you have this baptism then your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and we're going to see each other in glory there's no doubt about it.
Paul says that by the one Holy Spirit we're all baptized into one body. Not just some, but all believers are baptized into the Body of Christ. This is a work of the Holy Spirit, that at the moment of salvation He places us into the Body of Christ. You know I'm always using the analogy of the baby in the mother's womb. For 9 months what does that mother's body do? Adding cells to that little body in her womb. Starting from invisible, and for every day for 9 months cells are being added until the last cells are in place, and what happens? Delivery! A full term baby delivered, now it's like that for the Body of Christ. For the last 1900 + years now God has been adding believers into that Body. He does that one at a time, and He knows every one of them from around the world. Now reading the rest of verse 13.

*I Corinthians 12:13b*

"...whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink (or partake) into one Spirit."

Now that's the Body of Christ that has been forming ever since it began back here in Acts chapter 9 with the conversion of the apostle Paul. At least that's what I gather from the Scriptures. When is this Body going to be complete and Raptured out? Let's go back to Romans chapter 11. And while we're in Romans I might as well show you another verse that is so appropriate, and very few people know it's in their Bible, and that's verse 13. That's the one Jerry reminded me of years and years ago. He said, "I never knew this was in my Bible, so repeat it every chance you get."

*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 takes a back seat to no one. Now that was free for nothing, but now come on over to verse 25. This is why I had you turn here, as we wanted to see when the Body of Christ was going to be Raptured out. Now this doesn't show a day or hour, or a month or year, but when that last cell, or person, is brought into the Body of Christ.

*Romans 11:25*

"For I would not brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (or secret) lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; (and here's what we're supposed to know) that blindness in part (or a certain period of time, not forever, ) is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."
Now we're getting close to that time, and it will happen when the fullness or completion of the Gentiles is brought in. Now what does that tell you? Israel is out in the world tonight in a spiritual blindness, and has been for almost 2000 years. But the day is coming when once again their spiritual eyes will be flipped open and they're going to see and recognize their Messiah. Israel, as I've said so often, will be born in a day, but before that happens the Church, the Body of Christ, has to be brought to the full when that last person is brought in, and then the Church is taken out of the way for the seven years of Tribulation. Well in the few moments we have left let me show you our heavenly connection in the Book of Colossians. These are heavenly promises, we know Israel was never told something like this.

**Colossians 1:13**

"*Who hath delivered us* (speaking of God the Father) *from the power of darkness, and hath* (already) *translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:*

Well where is the kingdom of His Son tonight? Well it's in Heaven, and so we have that heavenly connection, with heavenly promises.
LESSON THREE * PART III

THE COUNSEL OF THE GODHEAD

EPHESIANS 1:10-13

Now we'll be turning back again to Ephesians chapter 1. I'm going to touch on verse 10 just for a few moments.

**Ephesians 1:10**

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both in heaven, (heavenly) and which are on earth; (earthly) even in him:

Everything is going to be brought together under His headship. Now if I could just, for a moment, recap the earthly and heavenly aspect of that verse. From the call of Abraham especially now, everything concerning the Nation of Israel, including the prophets and psalms, were all written for the benefit of Israel. In fact let me show you a verse to prove that so you don't think I'm just making this up. In Romans chapter 3 is the Scripture we want to look at.

**Romans 3:1**

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?..."

Do you see what those two questions say? Why was Israel in such a preeminent position, and why were they feasting at Jehovah's table? Why did Paul write in Romans chapter 11, did they dwell on the root and fatness of Abraham? Because they were so privileged, and this is what Paul is alluding to. Just look at all the privileges that Israel had. They had the beautiful Temple, and early on, the presence of the Shekinah glory. They had the miracle working power of God. They had the priesthood, but what was the preeminence that they had going for them? The next verse tells us this:

**Romans 3:2.**

"Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."

They had the Word of God, and that's what put Israel in such an invincible position. All during this time when God was dealing with primarily Jew only, they had the
Word of God from 1500 BC on. And the Gentiles were out there destitute of any of that. Now when you come on this side of the Cross, we find Paul becomes the apostle of the Gentiles. His Church letters are directed primarily to you and I as Gentiles in the Body of Christ, our heavenly position. And oh what a difference in the language we have when we get to Paul. Once in a while people from our television viewing audience will call me with a question, and they're hung up in the Old Testament. I always tell them that it would be so simple to understand if they would just realize to whom is it being spoken? It was written to the Jew under the Law, and that makes all the difference in the world. But most fret and fuss with it, and can't figure out why they can't understand it. Well we're not under the Law, we're not Jews. Now on the other hand the Jew today has a hard time comprehending Paul. They avoid his writings like a plague, because it's not written to the Jew, but rather to the Gentiles. So always keep that in your mind as you are reading these things.

Now let me finish recapping the earthly and heavenly if I may. So here's the earthly, the earthly Kingdom that was promised to Israel and they rejected it, and then God funnels them back into the masses of Gentile humanity. They almost lost their identity, but God kept His finger on them, and so the Jew is still out there, he's still a viable fact to be dealt with.

In the meantime the Body of Christ has been lifted out of that mass of humanity, and made separate, they are a unique group of people, and who's end is going to be when we're Raptured out, and we're getting close to that time. Maybe we should have looked at the Rapture more in detail, but for now we'll let it go because I'd like to move on to the next verse. Because now you see when the Church is out of the way God has to again pick up with the Nation of Israel where He left off back in the Book of Acts.

Remember the Nation of Israel has just been floating along, you might say, through human history out there in the nations of the world. But now as we've seen in 1948 they became a independent nation, and now God can deal with the Nation of Israel again. The Church has to be out of the way before that can happen however. Then God will finish His dealing in that seven years of Tribulation that are still future, that are still part and parcel of the Old Testament prophecies. Then when the earthly people, Israel, are ready for the coming of their King (and that is what He will be to them), the King will establish His rule and reign for 1000 years, and as Revelation says so clearly, "He shall be King of kings, and Lord of lords." In this 1000 year reign, Ephesians 1:10 becomes a fulfilled reality, where the heavenly and earthly are brought together in Christ even in Him. Now let's move on to verse 11, and that verse starts right off with a prepositional phrase.

*Ephesians 1:11a*
"In whom (Christ) also we (as members of this Body of Christ) have (already) obtained an inheritance,..."

Now in order to have an inheritance, what do you have to have? Well you have to have somebody who is going share their wealth with you. Otherwise you've nothing to inherit. For that let's look at portion a Scripture in Romans chapter 8. Now where does our inheritance originate? Ephesians has already told us that it's "in Christ," but let's also see what this says.

Romans 8:14-17

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons (or the born ones) of God. (so a believer has to have the leading of the Holy Spirit) 15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; (now Paul is talking about Law and legalism. Anytime somebody puts the Law on people, it puts those people in a place of superstition and fear, and they're scared to death that they're not doing things right, and they're not doing enough) but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, (when we're placed in Christ) whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (we can call God our Father, we have every right to do that. Now here it comes.) 16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:"

Now what do most children wait for if they have a wealthy set of parents? Their inheritance. That's normal, there's nothing wrong with that. I get a kick out of these people that go south every winter. The bumper sticker says, "I'm spending my kids' inheritance." But when parents have wealth, the kids have an inheritance. Well that's exactly what we have with God.

Romans 8:17a

"And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;..."

Now for goodness sake everybody knows what it means to be a joint heir. It means everything's equal! In other words you're not going to get just a little handout. Everything that's Christ's is ours. Now I know this is mind boggling, but it's the promises we find here, and take it by faith. The last part of verse 17 has a price with it.

Romans 8:17b

"...if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."
So there is a price to pay. Now we in America don't really know what it is to suffer for our faith. We may come under a little opposition, and of course I think that opposition is growing, but nevertheless we're still in a nation that protects our freedoms and liberties. But there are a lot of areas in the world tonight that are under intense persecution. Thousands of believers are losing their lives for their faith. But the promise is that if we do suffer we're going to certainly one day enjoy all the glory of it, as he says in verse 18.

*Romans 8:18*

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us,"

So this is part and parcel then of our salvation experience; that yes, we are now children of God, and if we're children of God then we're heirs of God. If we're heirs of God, then we're joint-heirs with Christ! Now back to Ephesians chapter 1, and looking at verse 11 again.

*Ephesians 1:11a*

"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance,..." (became joint-heirs)

That just reminds me of a gentleman up in Minnesota who started watching our program a few years ago; and he came to know the Lord, and what a testimony he's been. Last summer we were getting ready to speak in a Church west of Minneapolis, and a young man by the name of Mark came up and he knew this same gentleman in St. Paul. Mark told me he used to work for this gentleman when he was working his way through the University of Minnesota. Mark went on to tell me that he asked this gentleman this question, *Sir are you going to go to Heaven when you die?* And he always answered, *Well I hope so!* Then Mark would come right back and say, *Then you're not!* This gentleman then told me this himself.

Anyway the gentlemen told me that one day he heard our program, and the Lord just opened his eyes to the Gospel. And he's just become a real testimony to God's Grace, and he was the one telling me about this. He told me, "Mark sowed the seed when he kept asking me that question, and then you were able to reap the harvest." Had Mark not approached him time after time while working for him, I'm sure he would have never listened to me, and I'm so thankful that the Lord opened his heart. So these things are exciting, but you see it's not a hope so thing. It's not a religion, but rather it's a position that we enjoy in Christ. And like I told you in a previous lesson, how do we know that we're in Christ? By Faith! The Bible says we are, and we believe it, we
trust it. Now reading on in verse 11. We've found out in verse 11 we have an inheritance, being joint-heirs with Christ, now then we -

_Ephesians 1:11b_

"...being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:" 

Now on this verse I've got so many references that have come flying through my mind, I don't know where to go first. I think I'm going to look up the word _counsel_ first. So go back to Acts chapter 2, and let's look at this _counsel_. What's a good definition of counsel? Well a meeting of the minds. You can appoint a committee to accomplish something, and so they meet. Out of that meeting comes some real concrete results, so what do you say they did? They _counseled_. They had a meeting of the minds and agreed. Now looking at Acts chapter 2, let's see what happened in the Godhead. And in this verse we find Peter saying this. Peter is preaching to these Jews, the Nation of Israel on the day of Pentecost, and he says-

_Acts 2:23_

"*Him, (speaking of Christ) being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:*"

Do you know what that verse is saying? That's telling me that sometime way back in eternity past, before anything was ever called into being out of nothing, when it was still nothing, the Triune God had a counsel, and since they were all members of the Godhead they didn't have to deliberate for half and hour. But nevertheless the Trinity came together and in a counsel agreement set everything in motion. The three Persons of the Trinity agreed that they would create the universe, and that they would put one little planet down there called earth in the midst of it. And on that planet they would put the human race. They knew the human race would sin, it would fall out of fellowship with their Creator, and immediately after that happened He could promise a Redeemer. We get this all in Genesis chapter 3.

Then in the Old Testament the Redeemer is being prophesied all the way through. All according to this predetermine counsel of God, and then one day here He came. He came at the exact right moment in time. And when you analyze history, nothing would have ever worked out right had He come a 100 years sooner or 100 years later. But rather this Redeemer came at just exactly the right time, according to that predetermine counsel of the Godhead. See how beautifully everything fits. That verse also speaks of the foreknowledge of God. God knew everything that was ever
going to happen. It was all in that predetermined plan of the ages, way back before anything was ever created, that Christ would go to the Cross. Now coming back to Ephesians chapter 1. Everything that has been unfolding now for 6000 years of human history, not to mention however long it was before that, that the universe was already out there spinning around. But everything was -

_Ephesians 1:11b_

"...predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:"  

So everything has been right on schedule. We don't know when the Lord's coming, but He does, and it won't be 1 hour too late or too early, but it will right on schedule. **What is this purpose of God?** Now let's go to II Timothy, chapter 1, and look at that for a moment. These verses are all so good it's hard for me to know where to start, I really don't. But let's just jump in at verse 7.

_II Timothy 1:7a_

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; (now isn't that a comfort? We don't have to sit here shaking in our boots scared to death of what's going to happen tomorrow, or the next day, or down the road. We're not living under a spirit of fear,) but of power,..."

Now you want to remember that our all-powerful God is the One that spoke the Word, and created the whole universe. I recently read an interesting thing in our Sunday magazine"Parade." There's an interesting writer in there that writes an article, "Ask Marilyn." Personally I think she's a brilliant woman. Someone wrote and said, "I told my child while on the sandy beach one day that for every grain of sand there was also a star out in space." Then after he had told his 5-year-old this, he was wondering if he had told him right. What if the child backed him into the corner and told him to prove that? It is quite a statement, but do you know what her answer was? The old scientist Carl Sagan had determined scientifically that there are approximate 10,000 grains of sand in every handful of sand, I believe that is the correct figure. And from that he determined that there are more stars out in space than there are grains of sand on all the beaches of this world. Now you think about that for a while. Now I’m not saying that he was right, but I wouldn't think that he was just spitting into the wind, as we say. I think that there is validity to that. For every grain of sand there's a star out in space, and I think the Scripture also implies that. But whatever, this is a God that you and I belong to, and then some of us fear? My we have nothing to fear, but fear itself, as Roosevelt once said. But nevertheless our God is so powerful that we have absolutely nothing to fear. And here it is in this verse -
II Timothy 1:7-8

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 8. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God."

Now whenever you see that word "power" from this point on, do you know what I want you to think of? The vastness of our outer space, and that God's in total control. I've never yet read an account of an astronomer who sees a star crashing into another star. Have you? No! Now they see explosions out there and the beginnings of still another new star, but I have never read the account of someone seeing through the Hubbell or anything else an event such as one star colliding with another one. Why? Because my Bible tells me that the Creator not only created everything, but He also holds everything exactly where it belongs. Now listen if He can keep track of as many stars and celestial bodies as there are grains of sands on the beaches of this world, then I know He keeps track of me. And you can rest assured that He's keeping track of you. I mean, that's a God we're talking about that goes beyond human understanding, but that's the God of this Book. Now let's read on in verse 9, and here comes the purpose of God. This God -

II Timothy 1:9

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose (and where was that purpose originally generated? Back there in Acts chapter 2 that we look at when the Godhead came together, and precipitated everything according to their counsel. According to His own purpose) and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,"

This was already in the mind of God in that counsel that predetermined everything because He's an all-knowing God, and could do that. It all happened in that determinate counsel we read about in Acts 2:23. That's where God had us on His mind. That's why Paul could write this in Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:4a

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,..."
II Timothy 1:9b

"...not according to our works, but according to his purpose..."

Which is completely wrapped up in the Grace of God. Now let's go back to Ephesians in the moments we have left. Now doesn't that thrill you when you see how the whole Book fits together so beautifully? How that we were predestinated according to the purpose which is all under the control of the power of God. Every thing is working according to the counsel of His own will. Now verse 12. Now this is for one purpose, this is why we are, what we are, this is why, who we are.

Ephesians 1:12a

"That we should be to the praise of his glory,..."

Oh if believers could just get a little excited about this fact, that the reason we're left here, the reason that God gives us breath day after day is that we might bring praise to His glory. There's a verse in Hebrews that speaks what we should offer unto God.

Hebrews 13:15

"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."

And that is what God is looking for, and that's the whole purpose of everything!
LESSON THREE * PART IV

THE COUNSEL OF THE GODHEAD

EPHESIANS 1:10-13

We thank you so much for your support, and especially your prayers, as there is so much Satanic opposition when you handle the Word of God. We are so encouraged when folks use these little books, and our video tapes for home Bible study. Let's face it, the Church just doesn't have time for especially in-depth Bible study, so as a result we realize that more time has to be spent in the home for Bible study. Now that doesn't take away from the Church whatsoever, but rather to enhance it, and edify it.

Now back to Ephesians chapter 1 verse 13. And again we start right out with that same prepositional phrase "In whom." All the way through we've got this positional reminder that we are in Christ. That's something that nowhere else in Scripture do you hear of a group of people being actually in the Godhead itself, and in this case the Person of Christ. Speaking of the Godhead, and looking where we get this term just turn ahead to the Book of Colossians chapter 2, and we'll have to read verse 8 to pick up the flow.

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. (do you see the danger? Most of us have just been inundated with tradition. Some tradition is OK, but you've got to line it up with the Word of God, to see if it fits.) 9. For in him (Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Now that blows a lot of people's minds. Who is the Godhead? God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Now that's the Godhead, but Christ is the epitome of it as He settled down in the Godhead bodily. With that resurrected body that He left with at the Mount of Olives, and ascended into glory. Another verse just comes to mind in Isaiah. We almost looked at it in one of the 3 lessons we had earlier today, but we ran out of time before we could use it. That's the way I teach, as these Scriptures come flying through then I feel we have to stop and look at them. Now here again, this is the Christ that died for us, this is the Christ that keeps us today, this is the Christ that is coming again, and we trust real soon. This fits so beautifully with these verses in Ephesians. This is the Christ in Whom we dwell. Now verse 6, and remember this is the prophet writing to the Nation of Israel, so the pronoun "us" of course is to the nation.
Isaiah 9:6-7

"For unto us (Israel) a child is born, unto us (Israel) a son is given: and the government (this 1000 year rule and reign when He will be King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and we feel we're getting closer all the time. I mean we're getting close!) shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." So Who do you have intertwined in this one verse? God the Father, and God the Son. Now that reminds me of John chapter 14, what did Jesus tell Philip?

John 14:9

"Jesus saith unto him, 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father:...''' I know this is mind-boggling, but you've got to remember that even though it's three Persons it's one God. Now verse 7.

Isaiah 9:7

"Of the increase of his government and peace (the world has no idea what it would be like to live in total peace. And of His peace) there shall be no end, (in this coming 1000 year reign there won't even be a little brush fire war. It will be a 1000 years of peace under the rule and reign of the mighty God. And where is He going to rule from? Jerusalem) upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. (And how is it going to happen?) The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."

And in our last lesson we were seeing the power of God. His power will bring all of this about, and don't you worry whether all these things will happen. It will happen! Hey we're all human. We read these things and wonder, "Is it really going to happen?" That 1000-year reign with Christ almost sounds to good to be true, so as humans we wonder is it really going to happen. It's not that we're doubting it, but on the other hand we have to face reality, "Is all of this really going to happen?" I couldn't help but think about all of this the other night, and all of a sudden the Lord sent the thought into my mind, "But listen, everything that the Old Testament prophesied concerning His first coming happened." And I imagined those people back 1500 years before Christ couldn't even begin to imagine that all these things would happen. So I imagine that they felt the same way. Is God really meaning business with us? Yeah, He was because it all happened. So don't ever lose heart, and remember that God's Word is sure. Now back to our text in Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:13a
"In whom ye also trusted,..."
"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"

So it takes the whole complex human being to bring all this into experience. We have to have heard it, we have to think about it, we have to comprehend it, and then we have to use the mouth and verbalize it. All right, now when it says, "And how shall they hear without a preacher?" I looked that up in the Greek and preacher is a proclaimer. I like that. It's really a better word than preacher. "How shall they hear without a proclaimer." Now that's what we have to do, we have to proclaim the Gospel. We don't necessarily have to preach. We become victims of tradition lots of time, and get the idea that preaching is stomping and yelling, and getting a lot of exercise. No that's not necessarily the case. We proclaim the Word of God! Now verse 15.

Romans 10:15

"And how shall they preach, (or proclaim) except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach (proclaim) the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

Now do you have the process? God had to reveal the Gospel didn't He? And we know that He did through the apostle Paul. And the apostle Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit to put it down in print so that we can have it right in front of us, but by and large most people have to have someone to explain the Scriptures to them. Now I don't say that it's mandatory, but usually someone has to explain the Scripture to an unbeliever and bring him to the place where he can believe, and understand it. And that's what Paul is talking about here in verse 15. How can they hear unless God providentially sends someone to proclaim it. Does it take the providence of God? Yes, absolutely it does. In fact let's just look at Acts chapter 16 to prove my point. This is one of my favorite verses when it comes to this whole idea of bringing lost people to a knowledge of salvation. This is not something that we take glibly, but rather this is something that I think takes the power of God, it takes the working of the Holy Spirit, and without Whom none of us can amount to anything. My teaching amounts to nothing if the Holy Spirit isn't behind it. So here's the whole idea here in this chapter, it's the perfect example of what has to happen whenever a person is saved or made righteous.

Acts 16:14

"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, (notice she was religious, but wasn't a true believer So
she) heard us: (Luke of course was writing) whose heart the Lord opened, (who opened her heart? The Lord did. Paul didn't, and Luke didn't so what happened?) that she attended (or listened and comprehended) unto the things (the Gospel of your salvation as you have in I Corinthians 15:1-4) which were spoken of Paul."

Now in this particular verse who is the proclaimer? Well Paul is, and he is simply speaking forth the Gospel. But before this Jewish lady in Philippi could comprehend it, Who had to open her heart? The Lord does in the Person of the Holy Spirit, and that has never changed. Every person that comes to a saving knowledge of Paul's Gospel has to have their understanding opened by the work of the Holy Spirit. Remember the Holy Spirit is there for everyone. No one can ever say, "Well the Holy Spirit of God never approached me." Oh yes He does, the Holy Spirit is present, He's everywhere, and He doesn't miss a soul. Another verse comes to mind in the Gospel of John chapter 1. I think this again is just because of the presence of the Holy Spirit, otherwise this verse would be total Greek to me. This is speaking of Christ in His earthly ministry. So John writes -

**John 1:9**

"That was the true Light, (speaking of Christ) which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Now that's what it says. The light of Christ lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Well how is this done? Through the presence of the work of the Holy Spirit. Remember only lost people will appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, but not one of them will come up before Christ, and say, "I never had a chance." Because the Bible in Romans says they won't.

**Romans 1:19-20**

"Because that which may be know of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. (past tense, it's already done. That's just like the previous Scripture we looked at in John 1:9. It's done.) 20. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they (the whole lost human race) are without excuse:" 

No one will ever be able to say to God, "Well I never had a chance." There is another verse that confirms this in Titus. Now verses like these are just mind boggling, I know that they are, but the Scripture does not lie, and so we have to believe it. Remember I'm tying all these together. John says that Jesus Christ that cometh into the world has lighteth every man. Paul says in Romans that the power of
God is manifested in them so that they are without excuse. Now look what Paul says here in Titus.

*Titus 2:11*

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared (past tense) to all men."

Now don't ask me how that is. I look at the people down in the jungles of South America, whom we feel have never heard the Gospel and in the light of these verses, are they responsible? Yes they are! They're going to come before the Great White Throne as lost as lost can be, and without a word of excuse, and yet God is going to be absolutely fair and just in His judgment, and He's going to say, "You could have known!" And the only reason they didn't know is they didn't choose to know. It's just one of those things in Scripture that is hard to comprehend, and I'm the first to admit it. Now back to Ephesians chapter 1.

*Ephesians 1:13a*

"In whom ye also trusted, (or believed) after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation:...."

Many people are still confused about the Gospel. It's amazing that right here in the Bible belt, I have had untold numbers of people come to our class and tell me they have never before heard this Gospel. Jerry Pool, and others in this class this afternoon will verify that fact, and these people have been in church all their lives.

(Transcriber's note. "I had never heard the Gospel before I started attending Les' classes either. I had always been told that all I needed to do for salvation was be sorry for my sins, and to ask Jesus into my heart. One Sunday School teacher, when I was 12 even said I needed to be baptized in water to be saved. I had never been told or shown that for my ticket to Heaven, you must believe in your heart that Jesus died for you, that He was buried, and rose from the dead, and then tell God that very fact. I also didn't know that the god of this world could hide the Gospel from you as found in II Corinthians 4:3-4.") Now back to Les' teachings.

Well what's the Gospel that they've never heard? It's in I Corinthians chapter 15:1-4 and I tell people over the phone constantly. "Just read those four verses and if you can believe that in your heart, then you've got it made. I mean that's it, it's that simple. I know that I've said it on the program before that there is no simpler place in all of
Scripture where the Gospel is presented than these 4 verses. This is so simple that a child can understand it, and yet it's as much as you need.

**I Corinthians 15:1-4**

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel (not a Gospel, but the Gospel) which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand: 2. By which also ye are saved, (or made righteous) if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. (you have to know what you've believed.) 3. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, (Paul received this as part of the mysteries) how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, (it was all part of that predeterminate counsel that we read about in Acts chapter 2) 4. And that he was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures:" Now that's the Gospel. That's why in Romans 10:9-10 Paul tells us -

**Romans 10:9-10**

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

So what is that we're believing here? The same Gospel we find in I Corinthians 15:1-4. If we believe with all our heart that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again, then God saves us. **And the reason is in verse 10, as we believe that with the heart.** Now let's look at another one in that same light in which Paul is always bringing up this faith in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection for salvation. Let's turn to I Thessalonians chapter 4. I just notice that we only have 1 minute left which means we're not going to finish verse 13 are we?

**I Thessalonians 4:13**

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

In other words if we have a loved one that has passed on, we don't have to worry because we're going to see them again. And here's the reason in the next verse.

**I Thessalonians 4:14**
"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." (So here you also have this same Gospel that saves us.)