Through the Bible with Les Feldick, Book 37

Lesson One • Part I

Paul Dispenses Grace - Ephesians 3:1-7

Let’s pick up where we left off in the last lesson which will be verse 1 of chapter 3 in the Book of Ephesians. Now we won’t get very far today because of the deep spiritual things that Paul is teaching us.

You know as Iris and I drive the 90 miles up here to Tulsa to tape I usually don’t say a word as I’m mulling all these things over and over. I’ve always taught my classes over the years that, if you can get a grasp of Genesis chapter 3, which gives you the account of the fall of man, and the beginning of sin, and the curse (and Romans chapter 3, which gives the remedy for it, and where you find the first real instance of salvation by faith, and faith alone), then you’ve got a good share of the Bible understood. But as we were driving up today I came up with the thought, that we must add Ephesians chapter 3 to the other chapter 3’s that I just mentioned.

This chapter just simply explodes with things that most people never hear in Church. I can’t think of a single Sunday School lesson in all of my years in Church, nor a single Sunday morning sermon that was taken from Ephesians chapter 3, and I see I’ve got heads nodding all over this room. It’s a fact, preachers and teachers ignore this like it’s a plague, it’s as if they don’t want to be bothered with it. But here it is, and it’s just so full of what you and I as Grace age believers have to understand. What it really amounts to is that all of these revelations that have been given to the apostle Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, had been kept hidden and secret in the mind of God until revealed to this man.

Now people don’t like to admit that, and it’s simply because they’re so much more comfortable in preaching and teaching Christ’s earthly ministry. And teaching His earthly ministry is all well and good. I never take anything away from Jesus Christ and His ministry, and I think people who hear me teach know that. In fact I probably elevate Him far above what most people do. I’ve always used the expression, would to God that more people would ask, "Who in the world is Jesus Christ?" If you really ask, most Church people do not really know Who He is. They do not know Him as the Creator of everything. He’s the sustainer of everything as well as the Person of the Godhead who stepped out of that Triune God, and became flesh in order to go the way of the Cross. Well all of these things come out in Ephesians chapter 3.
Ephesians 3:1a

"For this cause..."

What’s Paul speaking of when he says, "For this cause?" Well everything that he’d just expounded on in the first two chapters. Back up to chapter 2, verses 8 and 9 and you’ll see what I’m talking about. These are verses I’m sure you’ve seen in salvation tracts and so forth, but again this is the highlight of these two chapters that I think Paul is talking about.

Ephesians 2:8-9

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; (and that’s where I get + nothing, because there’s nothing after that word faith.) and that not of yourselves: (there’s nothing you and I can do. Why? Because) it is the gift of God: (now how much work do you do for a gift? Nothing. The minute you do even a penny’s worth it’s no longer a gift, but rather it something you’ve worked for.) 9. Not of works, lest any man should boast." Well you don’t see that brought out anywhere else in Scripture until we get to the apostle Paul, and his letters to Gentiles. Now back to chapter 3.

Ephesians 3:1a

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for (what people?) you Gentiles."

Most people don’t like to admit that. Most people can’t see that his apostleship was uniquely directed to the Gentiles. Now Paul still had a heart for his Jewish people. In fact it was such a heavy heart that he was willing to suffer eternal doom if they could be saved. So don’t ever accuse Paul of having turned his back on his own people, but always remember that God was the One that designated at the Damascus road conversion that Paul was going to send him far hence to the Gentiles. Up until that time, from Abraham to when Paul is sent to the Gentiles, salvation for those 2,000 years was mainly for the Nation of Israel. God dealt with the Nation of Israel though the prophets, and through Christ’s earthly ministry, through Peter and the eleven, but the Jews continued to reject their message of that day. So now God does something totally different, and that’s the best word that I can put on it. In fact, turn over to the Book of Philippians, and let me show you. We’ll get back to Ephesians in just a moment. Here he’s still talking to Gentiles, and look what he says to them.

Philippians 1:10
"That ye may approve things that are excellent: (different) that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;"

Now in the King James the translator wrote excellent. But the word excellent in the Greek everywhere else in Scripture is translated "different" Now read it in that light.

Philippians 1:10a

"That ye may approve things that are different:..."

And indeed it is different. This whole Gospel of the Grace of God is something so different than anything that has ever been laid on Israel, or anyone else for that matter, and is something that is just mind boggling. That God could now turn to the whole human race without benefit of religion, priesthood, or temple, but rather He goes straight to the heart of the believer, and transforms him, makes him a new person, and then places him into the Body of Christ. Now coming back to Ephesians chapter 3.

Ephesians 3:1-2a

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. 2. If ye have heard..."

Now we’ve got to stop for a moment again. You want to remember that by the time Paul writes Ephesians it’s somewhere around 64 or 65 AD. He’s now a prisoner in Rome, and that’s why we call it one of his prison epistles. This means that he’s been out there among those pagan Gentiles now for some 25 years. Now that’s not very long, and it took a long time to convince these Gentile pagans, not only to believe the Gospel of their salvation, but of this whole new lifestyle that they had embraced. So that’s why he puts it in this kind of language.

Ephesians 3:2

"If ye have heard..."

It’s a good possibility that they hadn’t heard yet. Even though the believers of Ephesus were the ones he was writing to, we’ve got to realize that there were multitudes around these believers who had not believed at all. But this is the way he puts it.

Ephesians 3:2
"If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward."

Dispensation is word that I have refrained from using on the program purposely, simply because too many people have heard nothing but bad things about the word, even though they don’t have any idea why. So I’ve known from day one that I had to be careful how I use this word, because I would turn people off before they would give me a minute to listen. But I think by now I have built enough credibility across the country that people won’t get turned off when I use the word dispensation. Remember Paul uses that word even in chapter 1 verse 10, so it’s very Scriptural.

_Ephesians 1:10_

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of time..."

We dealt with that several lessons back, but now in chapter 3 he deals with the dispensation of the Grace of God. Well to quality a dispensation, it’s just a simple word from which we get the word stewardship or dispensing. If we go to a pharmacy and give him our prescription, he then dispenses what the doctor has ordered, but along with dispensing the product he also gives you explicit instructions. You don’t just take that medicine haphazardly, but rather you follow the instructions that came with the dispensing. Now bringing it back into the Scriptures, a dispensation was a period of time during which God laid particular dispensational instructions to the human race.

The best way I can illustrate dispensation from the secular world is our own presidential administration. And the one I like to use on this is the administration of Jimmy Carter and the one followed by Ronald Reagan. These were men with two totally different ideologies, but yet they both led the country under the same constitution. For a moment let’s go back to the Carter years, as he builds his own administration. He appoints his own cabinet, he appoints men who have the same ideology that he does concerning how the country should be administered to. It wasn’t so much the 4 years he was in the White House that made his administration, but rather what made the Carter administration was the ideology that he promoted by whatever he suggested to congress or how he handled foreign affairs, that’s what marked the Carter administration, but it ended.

Then there was transition period, and from that dispensation of the Carter years we went to someone with a totally different view and that was Ronald Reagan. He too was under the same constitution, and his term of office also came to the place where it ended. Whether he served 4 or 8 years is moot. What counted was the kind of
ideology that his administration promoted for the country. So in short what makes an administration was, "What were they dispensing?" Now you can bring that into Scripture and I think you have a beautiful analogy.

When God called Moses and the Nation of Israel out of Egypt, he brought them around Mt. Sinai. He called Moses up into the mountain. What did He give to Moses? Law. And Law was a dispensation. It was a dispensing to the Nation of Israel, God’s demands upon the Nation as to how they were to worship, how they were to live; and all these things were part of that dispensation of Law. Whether it went 500 years or 1500 years is moot. What’s important is, what did God give Moses to tell the children of Israel? The Law.

And of course the Law was in 3 parts. It was first and foremost the moral Law, the Ten Commandments. It was the ritual law - how to worship, and how to approach God with the sacrifices, and priesthood and so forth. Then it also had the civil law - how to deal with your neighbor and how to settle disputes and so forth. That was all dispensed at Mt. Sinai. But Law ended all of that. The Cross ended the Law, because that was when everything was fulfilled dispensationally of Law. But you see God in His wisdom could keep things secret as we see in Deuteronomy 29:29.

_Deuteronomy 29:29a_

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

That means God can keep things totally secret as long as He wants to. And then He will reveal certain things when He is good and ready, and we’ve seen that all the way up through human history. So even though all the ramification of the Law was fulfilled at the Cross, yet we find that when we come into the early chapter of Acts, not a word has been said, "That you’re no longer under the Law." There’s not a word that’s been said, "That you no longer have to go to the temple, or keep the commandments as a system."

That doesn’t come until this man Paul comes and says, "That if you have heard the dispensation of the Grace of God." This is in total opposition to Law, and is now dispensed by Paul. Now if you will come back with me to I Corinthians chapter 4, and while you’re looking for it let me remind you how dispensation was used in the Old Testament. When God was approaching Abraham, about beginning a nation through him and he didn’t yet have a son, and so what did Abraham say to God?

_Genesis 15:2_
"And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?"

What was Abraham saying? Eliezer was the man who managed all of Abraham’s wealth. Not only did Eliezer dispense orders to the servants, but he also dispensed when to sell and when to buy. Now you want to remember Abraham was wealthy. Now why am I saying all of this? Because this is what Paul claims to be concerning the Grace of God. Have you got I Corinthians chapter 4? Let’s start with verse 1.

I Corinthians 4:1

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and (what’s your next word?) stewards of the mysteries of God."

Now if you’re a Bible student you will catch on real quick that Paul is always referring to the mysteries that were revealed to him. And what are mysteries? Secrets. And Who kept them secret until revealed to this man? God did. And when God called Paul out of the religion of Judaism, and saved him on the road to Damascus, **He sent him down to Mt. Sinai and poured out on him for 3 years all the revelations of the mysteries.** There are all kinds of mysteries that Paul speaks of in his writings, and since they were revealed to him he then became the steward of those mysteries. And if he was the steward of them then he was the administrator of them. When we understand that, then this Book becomes as plain as a 300 watt light bulb. It just lays right out in front of you. **Of course this is a whole new administration or dispensation.**

You’re going to find doctrinal things in Paul’s writings that you won’t find anywhere else in Scripture. But he doesn’t cancel what went before, it’s just an advance on it. Because now we’re coming from the very small knowledge that they had way in the beginning, and it’s just building, and building, and finally the promised Messiah came, and the Nation of Israel was in the promised land, they had the temple, but yet what did they do with the Messiah. **They crucified Him, and the Jews continued to reject Him in those early chapters of Acts, and in so many words God says, "That’s the end of that dispensation of Law, we’re now going to dispense something totally new."** It was just like moving from Jimmy Carter to Ronald Reagan. If you know anything about politics, it was as different as night and day between those two administrations. Well so is Grace and Law! You cannot mix them because they are so diverse, but it’s the same God. God never changes, but He changes His programs. Now God says, **"Instead of all of the things that the Law demanded, I’ve already settled it on the Cross, now if you will just believe it I’ll do everything that needs to be done."** People write constantly and proclaim, **"Oh what freedom they have found!"**
We’ve come now all these 2000 years and we’re still reveling in this same Gospel that was begun by this apostle, and that is it’s by faith and God’s Grace alone. Now I’m talking about salvation. I’m not saying that you’re saved by Faith + Nothing, and then you just go on and drift. No, No. But for salvation it’s Faith and Faith alone, and then when that happens God begins to work in and through us, and He doesn’t expect us to become tremendous saints over night.
Now we’ll be going right back to where we left off in the last lesson and that will be in verse 2. This Bible is for everybody not just for a certain group of people, and we want to be able to teach it in such a way that you can study it on your own, and search the Scriptures and see if these things are really so. The Book of Acts calls people who do that Bereans.

Acts 17:10-11

"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

So after these believers hear Paul they searched the Scriptures (of course that was the Old Testament in those days) to see if what Paul was teaching was in accord with the Scriptures. So now let’s just pick the Scriptures apart word by word,

Ephesians 3:2a

"If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God..."

Now that’s where we stopped in the last lesson, and we’re going to stay stopped for a bit, because I’m still not quite through with what I wanted to get across so far as, "why does Paul define this dispensation of the Grace of God?" Now always remember every word that Paul writes, as well as every word that the Old Testament writers write, was inspired by the Holy Spirit. None of these writings was just the will of a person. Even when Paul in so many words says, "this is my idea" it’s still inspired, and never lose sight of that. Every word is here because the Holy Spirit wants it here. So when Paul says in Romans.

Romans 11:13a

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles,..."

Now that’s not an egotistical man talking, but rather that’s the Holy Spirit speaking exactly what He wants Paul to write. So in verse 2 let’s see what he says.

Ephesians 3:2a
"If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God..."

We spent nearly the whole last lesson defining a dispensation, and I hope it was clear enough. Now what is so different about Grace? **In Exodus chapter 3, up on Mount Sinai, God, spoke to Moses, and gave to him the Law, and then Moses takes the Law down the mountain and dispenses it to the Nation of Israel.** So this was the dispensation of Law, and that’s the way we look at it in Scriptures. Now some 1500 years later after the Damascus Road experience for Paul, the same God does something different, which is His prerogative, because He’s Sovereign. **Now He calls out to Mount Sinai, a different man whom we know as the apostle Paul. And to Paul God reveals these doctrines of Grace, and Paul in turn dispenses these doctrines of Grace, not so much to the Nation of Israel, but to the Gentile world.**

(Mt. Sinai -Moses - Law - Nation of Israel)

The Cross

(Mt. Sinai - Paul - Grace - Gentile world)

Now of course in both cases the Law is going to have an influence on Gentiles, and Grace is going to have an influence on the Jew. But as a group the dispensation of Law was given through Moses to Israel, and the dispensation of Grace was given through the apostle Paul to the Gentiles. Now there’s only one other place in the New Testament where that term is used explicitly, and that will be in Acts chapter 20, and let’s look at verse 24. Now in all the other places in Paul’s writings he may refer to this Gospel as the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of God, My Gospel, and various others, but here in Acts chapter 24 and in Ephesians he refers to it as the Grace of God.

**Acts 20:24**

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

Do you see how plain that is? Paul’s whole ministry was to proclaim the Gospel of the Grace of God. Now I think it may be appropriate if we come back to Ephesians chapter 3, that now for a moment we can look at the word **"Grace."**

**Ephesians 3:2a**

"If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace..."
Now like I said in the last lesson, "very few people have any idea of the Grace of God." I don’t claim to know all that much, because it’s beyond human understanding. How a Sovereign, Eternal, Creator God would do what He did simply because He loved the human race. He took on human flesh, walked among men for three years on the dusty roads of Israel, and then ended up going to the Cross to suffer the most horrible death ever invented, all because of His love for mankind. And through that death on the Cross He was able to pay the price of redemption for the whole human race, not just for a few chosen ones, but for the whole race. Now listen, that’s GRACE!

And that’s beyond our comprehension. He didn’t have to do that. He could have just zapped the human race and started over. But from day one, from the time that Adam and Eve first sinned in the Garden of Eden, on up to the rebellious multitudes just before the flood, on up to the tower of Babel when again that group of humanity met in pagan consort, God could have zapped them, but He didn’t. He let them go on until He was able to find one man 200 years later in the Ur of the Chaldees we know as Abraham, and begin again something totally different, all because He refused to give up on the human race. And why didn’t He? GRACE!

So everything that God does, and the patience of God toward the human race is all because of His Grace. Now I call that one of God’s attributes. It is something that is in the very make-up of the eternal God that prompted Him to pour out all this unmerited favor and love on a rebellious human race. All we have to do is just look around us today, and just stop and think for a moment, why does God put up with it when everything is flying in His face in total rebellion? All God would have to do is speak the Word and we’d all be gone. But God doesn’t do that, and why doesn’t He? GRACE!

Now you see under the Law that wasn’t the case. Law was demanding, Law as I’ve said so often is what? Severe! It was severe, and there was no bending it. If you broke the Law back in it’s pure early stages, invariably the penalty was death? So that was the Law, and there wasn’t Grace in that except it was the Grace of God getting a way for man to come back, but in reality Law was legalism, it was severe, it was the very opposite of Grace. But now on this side of the Cross we have the same God who gave the Law and all of it’s severity to Moses for Israel, God now opens the window of heaven and through this apostle’s writings we have the opening of the door of GRACE!

Now some people say, "Well don’t you make too much of Paul?" No. Paul knew only one thing, and that was "Christ crucified for our sins, and risen from the dead," and you can’t find that anywhere else in Scripture that you are to believe that for salvation except in Paul’s writings. So we don’t elevate Paul above that. But you see God, as He kept things secret as we saw in our last lesson, has decided that it’s
through this man that He would reveal the things that had been kept secret. That’s why Paul, over and over, uses the term "revelation," how God revealed to me such and such, and he writes over and over again.

Now the other argument that we sometimes get, and praise the Lord we don’t get many. We get very few arguments from all the mail we get, and when we do get an argument its usually over water baptism. And in every instance the party will try to make it sound that if you’re not baptized in water, then you can’t be saved. And when I write back and answer that this is what Paul has said, then they’ll come right back and say, "But we go by what the Bible says, not what Paul says, or we use the whole Bible, we don’t just use Paul."

Well if that be the case, and you’re going to argue that you do what the whole Bible says then I take you right back to Leviticus chapter 5. This is a fun exercise, it really is, because it says it so plainly. Now I could use any other portion of the Old Testament, but this one says it so clearly, and it’s not real deep theologically. It’s just an everyday possibility for anyone of us.

**Leviticus 5:1-2**

"And if a soul (or person) sin, and hear the voice of swaring, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it: if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity. (he has to tell the priest what someone has said or he’s guilty.)

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. Now for sake of time come on down to verse 5.

**Leviticus 5:5**

"And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing: 6. And he shall (that’s a command) bring his trespass offering unto the LORD for his sin which he that 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 do you know what I say? That’s what the Bible says. Isn’t it? Just as plain as day. Do you bring a sacrificial offering when you touch anything dead? No. Does God expect you to do it? No. Why? Because this was Law. This is all part of what Moses instructed Israel, and we’re not under that economy. But we’re under the economy of Grace with the apostle Paul. So when people say I go by what all the Bible says, they get their foot in their mouth before they can turn around, because there are so many
things back here that cannot be done today. So what’s the difference? You’ve got to separate Law from Grace.

Paul will never tell you that if you touch something dead, you go and offer a sacrifice some place does he? No. So always keep these things straight that when I say we have to listen to the apostle Paul the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13), that doesn’t mean we don’t read the rest of Scripture. That doesn’t mean it isn’t profitable - of course it is, because it shows us the very mind of a Holy God. It shows us what it was like to live under the yoke of bondage which was what the Law really was. It’s what Peter called it in Acts chapter 15, and it’s what Paul called it in Galatians. It was a yoke of bondage, but now under Paul’s teaching of Grace, we’ve been set free from all that. Now coming back to Ephesians chapter 3 for a split second, and I know I used some of this in the last lesson, but let it sink in. It’s so important!

_Ephesians 3:2_

"If ye have heard of the dispensation (or the economy, or the administration) of the grace of God (and like I’ve shown that Law came to Israel through Moses. How in the world did the doctrines of Grace get to the Gentiles? Well the next part of the verse tells us) which is given me to you-ward:"

Do you see what that says? You have no idea how many times I’ve had someone at my now famous kitchen table, and I will tell them this very concept, that all of our doctrines of Grace come from Paul. They’ll always say, "Well where do you get that?" Well here’s one good example, and this is just one. They’ll read that verse, and say, "I don’t see what you’re getting at." Then I always come back and say, "Well then you didn’t read it." And they always come back with, "Yeah I did." So I have them read it as many times as it takes, usually about 3 or 4 times, and then they normally say, "Oh I never saw that before." I dare say there are multitudes just exactly like that. And here it is, "The dispensation of the Grace of God which was given to Paul, and Paul through inspiration and by the Grace of God have brought it to us Gentiles.

Now isn’t that easy? Now let me show you from Scripture what we’re talking about. My there’s so much of it I hardly know where to start. Come back with me to II Corinthians. I was debating whether to use Galatians first or Corinthians, but just for sake of chronological order of the Bible we’ll start here in II Corinthians. Remember just like Paul had to deal in I Corinthians with the Corinthian believers who wanted to follow Peter’s teachings rather than Paul. Others wanted to follow Jesus’ earthly ministry teachings rather than Paul, and their whole concept was that Paul was something less than those fellows at Jerusalem. And this is what Paul had to overcome
and we covered this in detail when we taught the Corinthian letters. But this is just review.

**II Corinthians 11:5**

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

Wow! What does that say? I was not a half of step behind Peter. See, they were trying to put Peter up above him. And that the chiepest apostle would have to be Peter most people would say. Now if Paul’s not behind him, where is he? Well he’s either beside him or ahead of him. Now for the next one, stay in the same chapter and come down to verse 22. Now this verse puts Paul out a step ahead. This is speaking of the Jerusalem leadership which would include the twelve, as well as some of the other head people of the Jerusalem assembly.

**II Corinthians 11:22-23a**

"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:..."

See how plain that is? That’s the Holy Spirit writing through the pen of the apostle Paul, that Paul is more the minister of Christ than anybody back there at Jerusalem. And this is what we have to understand.

Now let’s go on to one more in the next chapter.

**II Corinthians 12:11**

"I am become a fool in glorying; (and Paul didn’t like to boast, but he had to in order to convince especially the Corinthians that he was a special instrument in God’s hand) ye have compelled me: (you’ve forced me) for I ought to have been commended of you: (it was this man who had brought these people out of their abject paganism. It was his message that set them free, and brought them into a relationship with Christ. It was this man’s Gospel that brought these pagans into a life of morality and hope for eternity) for in nothing am I behind the very chiepest apostles, though I be nothing."

Evidently there were some Jewish believers in the congregation who knew all about Peter and the eleven, and were stirring up these Gentile believers saying that Paul didn’t have the authority to lead the Corinthians. So Paul tells them he’s not behind Peter one bit, in fact he’s in front of him. So that should tell you that Paul is the man that is given, and ordained of God to go to the non-Jew, the Gentiles, and he claims it
over and over, the same as God did back when He was talking to Ananias back in Acts chapter 9.

**Acts 9:15a**

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

Now turn on over to the Book of Galatians chapter 1, and this is all to back up his claim in Ephesians chapter 3:2:

**Ephesians 3:2b**

"...the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:" And the you-ward is speaking of Gentiles. So now let’s look in Galatians 1.

**Galatians 1:11**

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. (Paul is saying he’s not following in some other man’s footsteps) 12. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it. But by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Paul got all of his doctrines of Grace, to include this Gospel we must believe for salvation, from Jesus Christ Himself. It was a revealing, a secret that had been kept secret in the mind of God according to the verses we looked at in the last lesson. So here in verse 12 that’s what Paul is claiming. That what had been kept secret and is now revealed to this apostle, came by revelation of Jesus Christ. Now when I teach Paul’s epistles I always emphasize that this revelation was after our Lord’s death, burial, and resurrection, and that makes all the difference in the world.

See Jesus couldn’t even preach His death, burial, and resurrection for salvation, because it hadn’t even happened yet. He tried to tell the twelve about it, but they never got it, according to Luke 18:31-34, but it just wasn’t in the economy of that system of Law for Israel and the Jews to understand the Gospel of Grace. It just wasn’t meant to be! So now let’s look at what Paul says in verse 15.

**Galatians 1:15**

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

The other night I took the Strong’s concordance, and I counted all the times that Grace was used between Matthew 1:1 and Acts chapter 9. How many times do you suppose it was? Sixteen times, and then it wasn’t even used as a doctrinal term, but rather as the word Grace. From Acts chapter 9 until the end of Paul’s letters I counted eighty-four times Paul had used that word. Six times more is the word Grace referred to in Paul’s epistles than everything that went before his writing. Now that’s shocking isn’t it? And yet it shouldn’t be, because this is the apostle of Grace. I have a book at home, I think the title is The Apostle of the Soul Set Free. It was a biography of the apostle Paul. I didn’t like the book all that much, but I sure did like the title. Now that says it all doesn’t it? Now in the short time we have left let’s look at verse 16.

*Galatians 1:16a*

"To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen;..." (Gentiles)

That’s Paul specific calling, to take this Gospel of Grace to the Gentile world. And that’s why I put it this way over the years, that as the Law was given to Moses on Mt. Sinai for Israel, Paul goes out to Mt. Sinai, and God gave him the doctrines of Grace for us. Now that’s beyond human comprehension. Now finishing the verse.

*Galatians 1:16b-17a*

"...immediately 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..." (that would be Mt. Sinai)

Then Paul goes on to say that this whole mystery of the Gospel was revealed to him, and that why I’m always stressing Paul’s apostleship, and spending most of our time in his letters.
Lesson One • Part III

Paul Dispenses Grace - Ephesians 3:1-7

Now we’re into an area of Scripture that a lackadaisical Christian won’t get into. But for those of you who really love the Word, and love the Lord, and love to study, of course Ephesians is a tremendous little Book that’s only 6 chapters long. But the whole idea of this Book is for us to understand who we are in Christ. It doesn’t matter whether we’re rich or poor, Jew or Gentile that is not the point. We are all one when we become members of the Body of Christ, which we’ll be seeing later even in this chapter.

Now picking up where we left off in the last lesson, we had gotten down to verse 3 where Paul again is taking credit for having the revelation of the mystery or the secret that has been held in the mind of God ever since the world began, which you pick up down in verse 9. In fact let’s just read verse 9 so that you’ll see why I’m spending so much time on this up here in the first 2 or 3 verses.

**Ephesians 3:9a**

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, (secrets) which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God,..."

See, that goes right back to our first lesson this afternoon where God has the ability to hide things because He’s Sovereign. (Deuteronomy 29:29) As we teach we always try to be Biblical, it isn’t just my idea, or some denomination’s idea, but what does the Word of God really say? So these things have been hidden in the mind of God ever since the very onset of human history, but now are revealed particularly through this apostle. Now always remember when we speak of the apostle Paul as having the revelations there were other men that followed in his footsteps. We know that Barnabas started out with his ministry, and then came Silas, and then you have Apollos who comes into the picture. Then of course Timothy and Titus, and then there were also probably others, but they were all working in Paul’s footsteps, and each were proclaiming Paul’s Gospel of Grace. Paul makes that so plain in his second letter to Timothy.

**II Timothy 4:1a-2**

"I charge thee therefore before God,...2. Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (And now verse 5 and 6)
II Timothy 4:5-6

"But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. 6. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

Paul is going to be taken off the scene, but he is charging the young man Timothy to continue with these mysteries you might say, that have been revealed to this unique individual. So now back to verse 3, where Paul tells us about these secrets.

Ephesians 3:3-4

"How that by revelation (by revealing) he made known unto me the mystery; (these things that had been kept secret) (as I wrote afore in few words, (in chapters 1 and 2) 4. Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)"

Now what in the world can he be talking about unless it’s something that had never before been revealed. This is the idea then of the revelations of the mystery. All right let’s go back to Romans so we can put some other Scripture verses with this. Romans is the foundational Book of Paul’s letters so far as doctrine in concerned. And yet Romans does not relay some of these deeper things that we’re already seeing in Ephesians, but he does make one reference to all this in his closing remarks in chapter 16.

This is a verse that I’ll refer to time and time again, because it says so much that most of Christendom hears nothing of. And why preachers and teachers avoid it I’ll never know, but I would love for people to just call me if they hear a sermon on Romans 16:25, because I’d like to know about it. So those of you out there who are pastors and are listening to me, goodness sake preach a sermon now and then on this verse, because this is what people have to hear.

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 the revelation of the mystery, (we have to proclaim the message) which was kept secret since the world begin."

See, Paul was the very first one to preach this Gospel that Jesus died for you, was buried and rose again. No one else in Scripture preaches this as a salvation doctrine. This had been kept secret in the mind of God since the world began until revealed to this apostle, and you just can’t get around it. I’ve had people ridiculously
try to tell me that Adam was saved by believing the Gospel. Isn’t that ridiculous? The Gospel hadn’t been revealed. All Adam and Eve did for salvation was do what God instructed them to do. Abel did what God instructed him to do, but they certainly didn’t know anything about the death, burial and resurrection and a crucifixion. They couldn’t have or this verse would be a lie.

They couldn’t have crucifixion because crucifixion wasn’t invented until the Romans thought it up, Sovereignly of course. No one had a concept, according to Paul, of the Gospel as we now know it. In fact let’s go all the way back to Peter’s first little epistle. And this was written at the end of Peter’s ministry, just as well as II Timothy is written at the end of Paul’s ministry, and I think they were both martyred within a year or so of each other. So this Scripture was written at about 65 or 66 AD, and Peter writes starting in verse 10 of chapter 1.

*I Peter 1:10-11*

"Of which salvation (as we now know in the age of Grace, and I’m sure he is now alluding to Paul’s Gospel at least somewhat.) the prophets (Old Testament writers) have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: (now look at the next verse) 11. Searching (they were looking, and looking for something they couldn’t find. And they never did find it.) what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

Now when I teach my classes here in Oklahoma we have time for questions and discussion, these things come up and we can cover them in detail. Now all the way though the Old Testament, in fact I usually put it this way on the board: all the way through the Old Testament you have two parallel lines of thoughts, they’re just like two railroad tracks. All the way up through the Old Testament, especially from Genesis chapter 12. "One of them is the coming of a suffering Savior, and the other one is the coming of a ruling King." Scattered throughout the Old Testament there are verses that allude either to the first one or the second one. I remember reading many many years ago where some of the ancient Rabbi’s were all hung up on the situation around Rachel and the birth of Benjamin. And those of you who know your Old Testament know that as Rachel was dying she named Benjamin.

*Genesis 35:18*

"And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin."
Benoni was "the son of my suffering." But Benjamin was "the son of my strength." Well the Rabbi’s could deduce that this was either the name of a suffering Saviour, which would be Benoni. Or Benjamin the son of my strength which depicted a ruling King, so for centuries were hung up about this. Well how could this be unless they would have two Messiahs So that was also in their thoughts, "Maybe there are two Messiahs instead of one." So when the Messiah came He had to be first the suffering Savior, you know that. He couldn’t be the King until He’d redeemed the Nation of Israel. So for most Jewish people today, bless their heart, they still can’t reconcile the fact that He has already fulfilled the "Benoni" part, but are waiting for the soon return of His Second Coming to be the ruling King. It’s the same Person, but fulfilling both roles 2000 years apart. Now this is exactly what Peter is talking about. Now read it again.

I Peter 1:11

"Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them (as they wrote by inspiration) did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, (the Benoni) and the glory that should follow." (which was the Kingdom Age where He will rule and reign as King)

But did they ever figure it out? No. Was it their fault? No, because they weren’t supposed to as that was all kept secret in the mind of God. Now after reading Romans 16:25 a moment ago where Paul says "it’s the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mysteries," let’s come on to I Corinthians chapter 4, and look at another one. Remember Paul writes here to the Gentiles at Corinth so in effect he’s writing more or less to us.

I Corinthians 4:1

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God."

Now I told you in a lesson or two back that a part of the administration of the Grace of God, or a part of the dispensation of God was that there had to be an administrator. Abraham spoke of it way back when he was promised a son, and said, "Lord all I have is this Eliezer of Damascus who is the steward of my property." Eliezer was the administrator, so that’s a perfect analogy. Now let’s come back to what we used earlier.

Here we have a corporation, and we have a gentlemen at the very top, he’s the chief executive officer. This gentlemen has gotten his education, he’s probably gotten his degree in business administration, he goes and gets a masters degree from Harvard,
and he works his way up through the ranks, and all of a sudden he’s the chief executive officer of this great corporation. Now he’s worked hard to get to that position, and he’s being paid well for it. What is expected of him? To be a good administrator. That’s his job. **Now that’s exactly what Paul is telling every one of us, that as soon as you get a good grasp on these mysteries, on these revelations that have been given to the apostle Paul, what are we to do with it? Pass them on!** Administrate them, dispense them, do you see that?

But oh Christendom is so slow to react, and I keep thinking all the time of some of the great Bible teachers of generations back who saw the apostasy that was coming. They were almost pleading then already that the average Christian would get skilled in the Word of God so that when the apostasy would come that we could by person to person pass these things on. So this is what the apostle is saying, in verse 1, "**that we are to be stewards of these secrets of God that are now revealed**" Now reading verse 2.

**I Corinthians 4:2**

"**Moreover it is required in stewards, (or managers,) that a man be found faithful.**"

We’re not to be sloppy, we’re not to be careless. We are to be constantly passing the Word on, and showing folks, what does it say. Not what you think it says, not what I say, or some preacher says, but show them what does the Word say. So we’re to be faithful stewards of the mysteries. Well let’s come on over to another favorite one of mine, and that of course is I Corinthians 15:51. And we’re getting closer and closer to this portion of Scripture being fulfilled. I think it’s a lot closer than most people like to think. Notice the word **mystery** just jumps off the page at you.

**I Corinthians 15:51-52**

"**Behold I shew you a mystery;** (Paul is going to tell us something here something that has never even been hinted at anywhere else in the Bible. The Old Testament knew nothing of it. Jesus never referred to it, although He knew about it. He too kept it secret, and the mystery is that) **We shall not all sleep,** (or die physically) **but we shall all be changed,** (we can’t go to glory in this old body of flesh, so we’re going to have to be changed. Now reading verse 52,) **In a moment,** (a finely split particle of time. It’s actually less than a second) **in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the (believing) dead shall be raised incorruptible,** (like Christ’s resurrected body) **and we shall be changed.**"

Those believers who are alive when this happens will be changed! Now that’s what the Scriptures say, this isn’t my idea, but rather this is what the Book says. We will be
made incorruptible, because you see this corruptible body can’t go into glory so it has to be changed, and it will be in that split second. Well that’s all part of what Paul calls the mysteries. Since we’re in this chapter, let’s go back to those first four verses and look at another mystery that was only given to Paul. We’ve used these verses over and over because they are so paramount to our being ready for the mystery of what we just read. This passage is the Gospel of the Grace of God that all must believe in order to be changed at the Rapture of the Church we just read about. Here it is, this is the Gospel of the Grace of God, and according to Romans 16:25 it had been kept secret since the world began before being given to Paul. In fact Paul says it’s "his Gospel," and the reason he could make such a statement was it was given to him for mankind by the crucified risen Lord in glory.

*I Corinthians 15:1-3a*

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand: 2. By which (the Gospel) also ye are saved, (now that’s as plain as you can get it.) if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. (now here’s the Gospel we must believe) 3. For I delivered unto you first..."

And he was the first one to reveal the Gospel of Grace. So here the Holy Spirit is absolutely true in having him write that I delivered it unto you first of all. Why? Because Paul was the one to whom it was first revealed, and oh that’s so hard for people to swallow. Oh they say what did Jesus preach if that’s the case? Well He preached the Gospel of the Kingdom. The Gospel of the Kingdom was a whole different message than the Gospel of Grace that was given Paul. Also remember Jesus preached that which was still under the Law. Every word that Jesus taught and preached in His earthly ministry was to the Nation of Israel under the Law. Never once did Jesus tell someone, "Well you don’t have to go to the temple, you don’t have to take sacrifices, you don’t have to keep the Law, because you’re under Grace." Most people think that’s the way it was, but nothing could be further from the truth. Read your Bible and see what it says.

On the other hand that was Paul’s message. They didn’t have to keep the law, they weren’t under the demands of the law, but rather the Gentile Body of Christ is under Grace. Paul got into trouble more than once by proclaiming that message, because he had Jewish converts that still wanted to be under the Law. Now reading on as we were about to finish the Gospel that God had given him for us in the Church Age.

*I Corinthians 15:3-4*
"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, (and here is what Paul received. This was the revelation) how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures: 4. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

Now folks that the Gospel! And when we believe that then God does everything else. He has already forgiven us, and so He imputes it on our behalf, He sanctifies us, He justifies us, He glorifies us, He baptizes us into the Body, He does all those good things when we believe this Gospel. And this Gospel was all part of the mysteries that had been given to Paul. These mysteries had never been revealed before, and I’ve begged people constantly to just go back anywhere else in Scripture, "Are you going to find this message for salvation?" Why of course not. You won’t find this message any place else. This simply is the message of the Gospel of the Grace of God, or as Paul says in another place "we preached Christ crucified, and risen again." I don’t want to belabor the point, but oh if we can just get folks to understand that these mysteries, these secrets that God never revealed until He revealed them to this chosen vessel to take it to the Gentile world. Now coming back to Ephesians chapter 3.

Ephesians 3:5

"Which in other ages (or generations) was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;"

Well I’ve already alluded to them as being Barnabas, Silas, Apollos, Titus, and Timothy, and then there were other great men that followed after that. But it all begin with this man and his commitment to take the Gospel to the Gentile world. I had such a touching letter the other day from a person who was describing all the sufferings they had been through, and it was awful. It was almost more than what one person should have. But he said, "You know Les, until I started hearing you teach Paul, I would get so bitter, and I would blame God for all my troubles and sufferings, but now whenever pain comes, I just say, "Thank you Lord, because if Paul can do it, if he was sold out to serve You then I can be also." This is what Paul tried to get across, that his suffering for the sake of the Gospel was to encourage us. Because otherwise all I have to do is be a true servant like Paul was and then everything will go smooth. But you see it doesn’t always work like that. So no matter how loyal Paul was to his Lord, yet he suffered, and suffered and finally he died the martyr’s death. So this is a lesson for us, that this is why he says, "Be ye followers of me, as I follow Christ." Remember Paul was just as human as you and I.
Now back to Ephesians chapter 3, and we’ll jump in at verse 6. Remember all of these things that we just looked at in these first 3 or 4 verses now tie into verse 6.

**Ephesians 3:6**

"That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promises in Christ by the gospel."

Now up to the writings of Paul this is something totally unknown in Scripture. Isaiah didn’t write about it, Zechariah didn’t write about it, Jesus didn’t talk about it, Peter didn’t talk about it. Why? Because it was something that was totally kept secret in the mind of God, that there would be a period of time where God would go to the pagan Gentile world without the Nation of Israel. Now all the verses we looked at earlier in the Old Testament that referred to the Gentiles getting the light, it was to be through the Nation of Israel. They would be the vehicle to accomplish that, but when Israel rejected the Messiah, and refused to accept Him for what He said He was, then that began to change God’s program. Remember, God never changes, but His programs do. Israel had the chance to be the light for the Gentiles.

Then even after Peter and the eleven preached their hearts out in those early chapters of Acts, for the most part what is the Nation of Israel doing with it? They’re walking it under foot. In effect they were saying, "We’re not interested, thank you! And I always use Acts chapter 7, the stoning of Stephen, as the crescendo of that rejection. We’ll not have that man Jesus of Nazareth to rule over us." And so they stoned Stephen. After the stoning of Stephen the first thing we’re introduced to is Saul of Tarsus, whom God said, "He would send to the Gentile world."

So the Holy Spirit keeps repeating all of this through the apostle Paul. None of this was known before, because it was supposed to go through the Nation of Israel. Now we don’t want to take anything away from the Jewish people because they have given us this Book. Every word in this Bible was written by a Jew! So they were still the vehicle which God used for that purpose. But when it came to this Gospel of Grace going to the Gentile world, they were left out. So this one little Jew almost single-handedly in the early going turned the Roman empire inside out. The more you think about it, the more you have to be amazed at the tenacity of this little Jew. I think he was short in stature, but he was long on energy and toughness. And as I said in our closing remarks in our last lesson, in spite of all the suffering and beatings, shipwrecks, and all the other taunts and torments that were thrown at him, he never
slowed down. He just continued to preach the Gospel of Grace to the Gentile world.

Now in the last verse we looked at we come to a word that is strictly Pauline. I’ve begged my listeners over the years, whether it’s in my weekly classes or whether it’s on television, if you can ever find an Old Testament prophet referring to the Gentile Body of Christ, then you let me know where you found it. If you can find a place where Jesus in His earthly ministry ever referred to the Body of Christ I want you to show it to me. If you ever find Peter in the early chapters of Acts refer to this Body of Christ, show it to me, because I haven’t been able to find it.

But on the other hand, Paul is constantly referring to "The Body of Christ." Consequently it has to be what I call a Pauline phenomenon. This, as I’ve said so often, is why I am so adamantly in favor of the pre-tribulation rapture. The Body of Christ will not fit in the Tribulation, which is Jewish. It would be as out of place as fish out of water, and it would flop even more, because we just don’t belong there. So we have to realize that some of the things are confined to what we call "the revelation of the mysteries." So let’s read verse 6 again.

_Ephesians 3:6_

"That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers, of his (God’s) promise in Christ by the gospel:"

So as you see by believing the Gospel makes all of this possible. The Gospel of the Grace of God, that He’s going to save hell bound sinners if they’ll just simply believe with all their heart that Christ died for them. Now I always have to stop and qualify that. I’m not talking about an easy believism. I’m not talking about someone who says, "Oh yeah I believe that Jesus died, and I think I believe that He rose from the dead." I’m not talking about that kind of person. I’m talking about the person who just out of his whole being rests on the fact that Christ died for his sins, and rose from the dead. We believe it. We’d be willing to be martyred for it, because that’s the very heart and soul of our life, and that’s that Christ died and rose from the dead, and as a result of our believing it then He has now placed us into the Body.

Now for a moment let’s come back to I Corinthians chapter 12, and again these are all verses that we’ve looked at before. When we taught I Corinthians we brought in these verses in Ephesians. And now since we’re in Ephesians we’ll use the Corinthian verses. And some day, if the Lord tarries and we get into Colossians, we’ll come back and use Ephesians and Corinthians with Colossians, because you see this is the way the Scriptures work.
I Corinthians 12:12-13a

"For as the body (this human body) is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body: (so Paul is talking about the human body with all of it’s members, our hands, feet, eyes, all of these members make up our physical body.) so also is Christ." (or the Body of Christ, the Church!) 13. For by one (Holy) Spirit are we all...

I always have to stop at the word "all" because we have so many groups today that maintain that unless you have done this or that then you’re not spiritual, or some even go so far to say that you’re not even saved. But you see Paul doesn’t do that. Paul says that every believer, whether he’s a giant in the faith, or is weak and still carnal, all have been baptized into the One Body of Christ. I read sometime ago that in California alone there’s something like 1500 denominations. That’s not according to this Book. Regardless, if we’re a believer of the Gospel we have been placed into the One Body of Christ. Now look how Paul defines it.

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; (remember slavery or servitude was still part of the Roman world so those were the two classes of people. To be in servitude you had nothing, you had no property, and no rights, but on the other hand those that were free could have had whatever. But in the Body of Christ there is no distinction.) and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

The work of the Holy Spirit places every believer into the Body of Christ. That’s the only Baptism that you have in Paul’s epistles. The Holy Spirit places that believer of the Gospel into the Body of Christ the moment he believes. And just like our bodies, when they were in our mothers womb, as they were finally completed, and all the functions of the body were now ready, we were delivered. All right now, the same thing happens with the Body of Christ. When the last soul is saved and the Body is complete, then the Lord is going to call the whole Body of Christ, the Church, out and up to glory in what we call the Rapture. I think we’re getting so close, in fact we’re closer than we like to think.

I tell people constantly, that if you’re getting in a hurry for the Lord to come, then you get out, share the Gospel, and become a soul winner. Go out and talk to people about the glories of salvation, because we’re living in a materialistic world to be sure, but the world still knows that they’re hungry for something. You know Sharon came up when I had the circles on the board a few lessons ago, and I had shown that it was the
spirit that died, and how it needs to be generated. She said "This is why people are hungry." Yeah it is. **It’s a vacuum that has to be filled with the power of God.**

So the moment we believe the Holy Spirit baptizes us, or places us, into the Body of Christ regardless of our status in life And remember no one has greater access to the Spirit than anyone else. Now verse 14.

**I Corinthians 12:14**

"**For the body** (whether you’re speaking of the human body or the Body of Christ,) **is not one member, but many.**"

And we’re all members of that same Body of Christ. Now just to show you how much emphasis the apostle Paul puts on this term "The Body of Christ" let me show you by hitting just a few of them. Look for example in I Corinthians chapter 12. And in verse 26 he’s referring to the human body.

**I Corinthians 12:26-27**

"**And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it;** (you hit your thumb with a hammer, you hurt all over.) **or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.** (if you have an extra delicious dessert, boy you just revel in it. And the analogy is it’s the same with the Body of Christ. If a fellow believer is hurting, then we all hurt. If a fellow believer is being sumptuously blessed, we can all be blessed with him, and that’s the beauty of it. Now the next verse.) 27. **Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.**"

Now let’s look at another one for a moment in Ephesians chapter 1, and let’s just drop down to verse 22 and 23.

**Ephesians 1:22-23**

"**And hath put all things under his feet,** (the Triune God has put all things under the feet of Christ) **and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,** 23. **Which is his body** (I read it that way purposely, because at the end of verse 22 there’s just a comma so you continue to read. Do you see what a difference that makes to read it like that? and the Body is) **the fulness** (or complement) **of him that filleth all in all.**"

And remember when we taught this a few lessons ago, I made the analogy that it’s the same word that is spoken of as Eve was the helpmate or the complement for Adam, which meant that Adam was not complete until he had the wife. **Well Christ is looking at it in the same way. He’s waiting, and waiting, and waiting for His**
Bride, the Body of Christ to finally be consummated with Him in glory. And so He is the head over all things to the Body, which is His Church.

Then across the page to Ephesians 2:16 we find another one, and all of these are just complementing what he says in chapter 3 of Ephesians, that all of these revelations of the mysteries were to bring about this one Body.

*Ephesians 2:16a*

"And that he might reconcile both (back up in verse 14 the both is Jew and Gentile) unto God in one body by the cross,..."

That’s why Paul says, "*We preach crucified, and risen again.*" It’s that death, burial and resurrection of Paul’s Gospel that makes the appearance and consummation of the Body of Christ possible. I would like to get a couple more before we quit. And this one is over in chapter 4. These verses that keep popping up about the Body of Christ, so if you don’t remember anything else this afternoon you’ll remember that Paul is constantly teaching the Body of Christ, and it’s the only portion of Scripture that teaches it. It’s absolutely not in the Bible anywhere except in Paul’s writings.

*Ephesians 4:12*

"*For the perfecting (or the maturing ) of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*"

Now let’s go to Colossians chapter 2 for a moment, and drop down to verse 16 and 17, but before we read those two verses, I can’t miss verse 14 since we’re so close to it, because I just simply love that verse.

*Colossians 2:14-15*

"*Blotting out the handwritings of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, (that includes everything that was in the Jewish law and ordinances to include Leviticus chapter 5, the first 5 or 6 verses that we use so often dealing with having to bring sacrifices for touching anything dead) and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15. And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*"

Now I think those are the powers of Satan. Satan was utterly defeated at the Cross and resurrection tomb, and we never again have to succumb to his power because it’s broken. Now verse 16. Because the work of the Cross, because of the out pouring of the Grace of God, he tells us the following.
Colossians 2:16-17

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: (see that was all Law, and they were all crucified with Christ. But they had their place. How?) 17. Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body (which is here and now) is of Christ."

I mean the Body of Christ is real. Oh we can’t see it in it’s whole, but we can experience it as we fellowship with like-minded believers. Just be aware that as you read Paul’s epistles that this term Body of Christ is a Pauline doctrine that comes out of the revelation of the mysteries, these things that were kept secret until they were revealed to this apostle. Now let’s come back to Ephesians chapter 3, and verse 7.

Ephesians 3:7a

"Whereof (to be the apostle of the Gentiles) I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God..."

Now remember what I taught earlier this afternoon at the times through human history God had reason enough to just wipe out the human race. Over and over He could have done that. I’ve been reading a book lately, a biography of a little girl who came out of the Ukraine during the communist rule of Russia, and the torment that people went through. First by the communists, and then along comes the Nazi army, and being taken back to Germany to become prisoners and slaves. She begins her story when she’s just an infant, and by the time that WW II is at it’s height she was 4 or 5 years old. She told of the horrors of all of that period of history, and all because of evil men.

Why didn’t God just zap them? Well He didn’t because of His Grace. Even a man like Hitler, as evil and wicked as he was, did God love Him enough to save him? Sure He did. Had Hitler recognized his shortcomings, God would have saved him. Now that’s beyond our comprehension, but He would have. But we look at from the point, "Why didn’t God zap them, because that’s what they deserved." But oh the Grace of God that the ungodly knows nothing of. How does Paul put it in Romans chapter 5?

Romans 5:20b

"...But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: Now looking at verse 7 again in Ephesians chapter 3.

Ephesians 3:7a
"Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God, given unto me ..."

Now Paul’s not writing from an egotistical standpoint, but rather he’s writing through the power and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God Himself. Now completing verse 7 we find the following.

_Ephesians 3:7b_

"... by the effectual working of his power."

The power was of God. Paul was just simply the clay, he was just the instrument that God was using. It was God’s power that turned the Roman empire inside out, Paul was just the instrument. But again had Paul not been willing to suffer for the sake of the Gospel, could God have used him? Well of course not, and it’s the same way with anyone of us. God can’t use us unless we’re willing and pliable, and will let Him do what needs to be done. That power of course was epitomized, it was released at the resurrection. **At His resurrection the power of God became all sufficient to fight all the powers of the Satanic forces, death and everything that went with it.**
Lesson Two • Part I

Unsearchable Riches of Christ - Eph. 3:8-21

Now we’re still in book 37, and I guess we’ll just keep on printing them until the Lord comes for us in the Rapture, or He takes me home to be with Him, or we finish the Book. As we teach the Book it’s so refreshing to hear people tell me that they have finally been able to see what the Book really says. I had a fellow call the other day who said, "For 20 years I was going down the wrong road, and it was so hard to admit that I had been wrong, and that I had been led wrong. But as you taught, the Word is what convinced me, as you showed me what the Book said as well as what it didn’t say." So we’re just going to keep on teaching the Book and hope others also can come out of their works religion, and come into the knowledge and freedom of God’s wonderful GRACE! Now we’re ready to start our study for today, and that would be in verse 8, we find Paul telling us Gentiles about God’s Grace.

Ephesians 3:8

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;"

Now here again, what is he emphasizing? Gentiles. I want you to realize that Paul is always emphasizing his message was to the Gentiles who are the non-Jews, although some Jews were certainly responding to his message. But for the most part they didn’t. In fact if you will remember when we were studying back in the Corinthian and Galatian letters, who were the people that were opposing Paul’s preaching to the Gentiles? Well, the Jewish people. These Jews thought that Christ was an impostor, and they certainly thought that Paul was, and so they were doing everything they could to disrupt his ministry. Nevertheless, Paul still had a fair amount of Jews in his congregations. Archaeologists confirm that a good number of early Church believers were Jews. They found proof of that away from Jerusalem, especially up in the area East of Galilee. But by the end of the first century they had just totally dropped out of the picture, and with exceptions here and there, most of Paul’s converts were Gentiles. Now looking at verse 8 again.

Ephesians 3:8a

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints,..."

Here Paul says that he was least of all the saints. Now you know, how many people stop to think what a direct opposite that is of the "twelve" Because what were the twelve always debating? "Who’s going to be the greatest. Who’s going to sit next to
the Lord. Who’s the greatest." But this man says "I’m the least." Paul never claimed to be the greatest except by inspiration back in I Corinthians, when he had to prove to those people that his apostleship had become the most superior of the apostles. That he was not one step behind Peter and the others, but now he was a step ahead by virtue of his revelations. But as an egotist he had none. He had absolutely no pride in himself other than the fact that he was the apostle to the Gentiles.

When I read this verse I have to think of an old time Bible teacher, William R. Newell. Many of you have heard of him and many of you haven’t, but he’s the one who authored the words to your well-known hymn *At Calvary*. In fact the next time you’re in church and you sing that song, just look at the top of the page and you’ll see that the author of the words was William R. Newell. Well, William R. Newell made the statement, "I can envision that one day when the Bride is introduced to Christ, Paul is going to be the honored one to introduce them". And this was his reasoning. When the disciples were debating who would be the greatest, what was Jesus’ answer? "He that is the least." Then when Paul says that he’s the least, then that must have been what the Lord was referring to.

Well be that as it may, we’re not going to make a big deal of it, but nevertheless this man is now again, by inspiration, even though he puts his own person down, yet he lets us know that the Grace of God has made it possible for him to be the minister, and the revealer of all these secrets by virtue of his being commissioned to go to the Gentile world. Now as you come on to the last part of verse 8 I think I could just about shoot a whole 1/2 hour on this alone. I’m not saying that I will, but look what it says.

*Ephesians 3:8b*

"...that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ:"

Do you know what that means? **That means that you and I could spend almost the rest of our lives digging through Scripture, and literally bring up the riches of Christ, and we could never exhaust it.** What are the unsearchable riches of Christ? Well as I was mulling this over in my own mind over the last several days, I just had to go all the way back to eternity past. That was when the Triune God first came together in what the Book of Acts calls a counsel. And at that counsel meeting of the Triune God they literally laid out the blueprint for the whole universe and the appearance of the planet earth to be inhabited, and the whole 6000 years of human history. You see this was all blueprinted way back there in eternity past, and became part of the "unsearchable riches of Christ."
Now as you follow all of that with what knowledge you have of the Scriptures, you’ve got enough that you can begin to think how that God in His foreknowledge formulated not only the appearance of man, Adam and Eve, but knowing that they would sin, set in motion immediately afterwards, the plan of redemption. And then that plan of redemption would demand that the Creator Himself, the One who called everything into being in the first place would become flesh. Not created instantly as Adam was, but instead he goes through that whole human process of 9 months in the womb. He was born as a babe in the manger in Bethlehem, comes through the normal growing up process of a young man in Nazareth, and until the age of 30 hardly anybody caught on to Who He was except that one instant when He was 12 years old, and He was left behind at the temple. Other than that, in Scripture at least, there’s no record that anybody had any idea, not just Who He was, but what He was. Here He is walking on those little dusty roads of Israel, and Who was He? The Creator God Himself! Now that’s all part of the "unsearchable riches of Christ."

Now listen, you start mulling that all over and we can sort of say "Yeah I can believe that." But listen, to really comprehend how that God accomplished it all without a hitch, without any detours, and the day came when He came to the Nation of Israel, and for 3 years presented Himself to the nation, miracle after miracle. Showing His love and compassion for those people in spite of their unbelief, He didn’t give up on them. Never once does the Scriptures say that He left in disgust, and thought "So what! They’ll never listen anyway." No, He never gave up on them. And then finally as Philippians tells us, "He so graphically died the death of the Cross, the most awful death ever invented." Now listen that’s all part of these "unsearchable riches of Christ."

And it was all foreordained, it was all blueprinted. And through His death, and the shedding of His blood, the eternal Triune God could now reckon all of men’s sin as on Him. Now we can’t comprehend that, at least I can’t. Even today in any 24 hour period when we look at the mayhem that’s going on around the world like Yugoslavia, and other places in the world that’s in constant bloodshed. China in terrible persecution, Russia where they’re under horrible pressure, the whole planet tonight is at war. And yet in spite of all the suffering and the all the sin, I can stand here and tell you that all that sin that has ever been, that’s happening now, and will happen in the future was laid on Christ. Hey I can’t comprehend that, and I don’t think anyone else can either. That’s the "unsearchable riches of Christ."

He was able, by being the Creator God Himself, to take upon Himself all the sins of this world. And we’re just getting a little glimpse of it. I still maintain without apology, after having just come back from overseas. Listen, morality in America is still head and shoulders above the rest of the world. As bad as we’re getting, and we’re getting worse by the day, but yet I still maintain America is a long way from
catching up with the rest of the world when it comes to immoral practices. **But God in His Grace continues to look down on sinful men and is willing to save to the uttermost anyone that would just simply believe that He did all of this for you and I. But the vast majority won’t believe, so don’t get discouraged, because they never have.** Now that’s all part of the "unsearchable riches of Christ."

You know I always shock people when I tell them that here we come from Adam all the way up for 1600 years to Noah’s flood. There were just as many people on the planet then as there are now, and how many believers were spared? **Eight!** Now isn’t that something. That’s all God had left after 1600 years. Then we come to the time of Elijah, and Elijah thought he was the only one left at that time. But of course God knew better, because he told Elijah that He still had **7000** left that had not bowed their knee to Baal. Now let’s say there was 7,000,000 Israelites at that time, but only 7000 were believers, what percentage is that? **1/10 of 1 percent.** All of this to show you the "unsearchable riches of Christ."

Now let’s go on a little further to what Paul has been teaching here in Ephesians, and that is that the moment we believe God does something else that’s beyond human understanding. **He places us into the Body of Christ in which we all become members around the world. This invisible, and yet visible consortium of believers, and we are all made one with Christ.** Hey that’s beyond human understanding, but again that’s all part of the "unsearchable riches of Christ."

We’re all looking forward very soon I think of the "**Rapture,**" the out-calling of the Church. How in the world is it going to happen? Have you ever stopped to think about that? You want to remember that 1/2 of the people are on the bottom side of the earth. Are they going to come zooming up and around? I’ve had some try to say that the Rapture would take place segmental so that every section of the globe would have it’s own Rapture, but I don’t think that’s going to work, **but nevertheless God is going to take every believer off the planet in a split second.** How’s He going to do it? Well we can’t begin to comprehend it. Oh again it’s all part of the "**unsearchable riches of Christ.**"

How can He take a Hell-bound sinner, and by just by virtue of his faith, make him a heaven-bound saint. Not that we become sinless, but oh listen, we completely have a change of appetite. I’ve had so many calls in the past couple of weeks from people who fell into sin. I mean gross sin, and their argument always was, the individual with whom they experienced this fall was a professing believer, and this professing believer said, "Well after all, I’m saved, and didn’t have anything to worry about." I said, "That’s not what my Bible tells me." We don’t have that kind of license. You’ve heard me say it over and over that Grace is not license. **Being able to do anything is not the unsearchable riches of Christ.**
My Bible does not tell us that just because the Grace of God abounds, I can go out and do an immoral thing, and God’s going to wink at it. The Scripture definitely warns us against those things. I’ve been trying to come up with an illustration of how can I put it that a true believer will never find themselves in that kind of a situation unless it is just a momentary lapse, which can happen. But to just deliberately walk into something like this and practice it over a period of time, I just can’t believe it. So I came up with this illustration, going back to the Book of Romans chapter 3, and let’s look at verse 23 and 24.

**Romans 3:23-24**

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (that’s everyone of us. But look at the next verse.) 24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:"

Now you all know what redemption means? That’s the process of God buying us **back out of the slavery of sin.** When I teach Romans chapter 3 I always use the analogy of the Roman slave market, and I think it’s a very appropriate one, because it was very real. As the Romans would go out with their legions and they would conquer other people they would bring back, especially the younger people who were capable of slave duty, to Rome and they would end up in the slave market. And I drew the analogy, here we have a young blond, blue eyed fellow from northern Europe who finds himself in this market. Now that slave market was awful, because if you were bought out as a common slave you could end up doing any kind of horrible slave labor to include being sold to shipmasters to row their ships. It was awful, it was hot, and when they died, they just pitched them overboard. And if these slaves were not bought they could end up in the coliseums as meat for the wild animals. So that was the prospect of a Roman slave market.

But there was also the good side. They could have a benefactor come and buy them out of the slave market. Say a benevolent slave owner would buy a slave and clean him up, give him a whole new set of clothes, give him light duty around his estate of trimming the lawns and so forth, and remember the Romans lived sumptuously. So here’s this young slave who’s been bought out of that horrible situation, and given this beautiful place to work, and have all the best food. Then one day this benevolent Roman owner comes and says, "Young man I’m going to go one step further, I’m going to give you your freedom. I have bought your citizenship. You are free to go and do whatever you want to do." Now the analogy I’ve always used before is, "What’s this young man going to say? ‘Listen you’ve done so much for me, and I have learned to love you so much, I don’t want my freedom, but rather I want to stay here and serve you the rest of my life.’"
Now that’s where I’ve always left that analogy. But you know what a lot of Christians are doing now? **What if this same young man would say, "I want to stay right here and serve you, but once a week can I go back into the slave market?"** Now isn’t that ridiculous? Isn’t that as ridiculous as you can get? Here he’s been spared the horrors of the slave market, and that’s where every lost person is, they’re in Satan’s slave market. Christ paid the price of redemption, He bought us out of it, and then we have the audacity to say, **"But can’t I just go back and get a taste of that sinful world once in a while?"** Listen that’s what Christians are doing when they go back into the world! And to me it just does not fit. I’m not saying we’re going to be perfect, of course we’re not. We all fail, we all sin, but to go back into gross sin, and just glibly say, **"Oh well, I’m saved and don’t have anything to worry about."** I don’t think a true believer can look at it that way.

When a true believer sins, they’re going to be convicted as David was. And when David saw his sin, what does the Book of Psalms say he does? He wept tears of repentance, and oh how he bemoaned the fact that not only had he sinned against the humans that were involved, but against God. And when we sin, this is what we have to come back and realize. Well all of this I just sort of lob into the "**Unsearchable Riches of Christ.**" It’s beyond human comprehension. I can’t understand it, and I don’t think anyone else can. But does that mean, we just close our eyes, and say, "Forget it, I can’t understand it anyway?" No. **You just keep digging, and learning, and keep getting more and more excited about what Christ has done for us. And not only just for the here and now, but for all of eternity to come.** Just like Paul says in I Corinthians chapter 2.

*I Corinthians 2:9*

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

And that’s about as much as it tells us what we’re going to enjoy in eternity. We don’t know because the Bible doesn’t tell us, but we know it’s going to be fabulous. **What God has in store for us is going to be a million times better than the things you and I like to do down here, and it’s all because of the "unsearchable riches of Christ."** Oh to have the knowledge that we can come into the very throne room of heaven in prayer and petitions is simply incomprehensible. Isn’t it? Just think we can immediately come into the very throne room, without having to go through any rituals. We don’t have to go into some prescribed place, at a prescribed time or God won’t hear us. As you sit there and as I speak you can be in an attitude of prayer, and you’re right in the throne room. Now that’s all part of the "**unsearchable riches of Christ.**"
But I think the crowning act of all of it is that He could take a sinner, save him by Grace, and make him a brand new person. Totally new, totally different, a changed appetite, a changed lifestyle. The kind of a change that even the world around them can’t miss. So many times husbands who have wives who are lost will ask, "Well what can I do to convince my wife that she needs God’s saving Grace." Or wives will call or write, "What can I do to convince my husband that he needs God’s saving Grace?" Well invariably I’ll take them back to the little letter of Peter, and what does Peter say? "Don’t preach at them. Don’t try to drag them to church or drag them in front of the television, and say, "You’ve got to listen to what Les says." But rather what do you do? You just live such an outpouring of God’s love in front of that person, that sooner or later they’ll finally get the drift, "You’ve got something that I need!" It may take 6 months or a year or years, but you can rest assured that when you’ve done what God expects you to do, then that lost person is going to be faced with the reality of the love of God. And that’s all part of the "unsearchable riches of Christ."
As I look at the classroom setting again today I see many different denominations represented here. Each denomination practices and believes different things, but the one thing each must believe is that our Lord Jesus Christ died for them, was buried and rose again. When we believe that for salvation then God sees our faith, and places us into the Body of Christ, as we see in I Corinthians 15:1-4 and I Corinthians 12:13. We can tell by our mail that we are certainly reaching people from every imaginable background. Remember when we come before the throne, whether it’s the Great White throne for lost people or the Bema seat in heaven for believers, the Lord isn’t going to ask you, "Well did you follow what your church taught?" But rather we’re going to be judged on the basis of what does the Bible say. Never lose sight of that because eternity is going to reveal what you have done with His Word!

So to begin this study together turn in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 3, and come down to verse 9. In the last lesson we spent the whole lesson on verse 8, teaching that we are to be seeking out the unsearchable riches of Christ.

**Ephesians 3:9**

"And to make all men (notice men is italicized so it wasn’t in the original, but rather has been added by the translators. So he’s writing to make all) see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world (or age) hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."

Oh, people have a hard time swallowing the fact that Christ created everything. But for now let’s go back up to the first part of the verse where Paul is now in his apostleship, and by writing, his letters are reaching out so that everybody might be able to understand what it is to come into this fellowship. Now when we speak of fellowship I think even the secular world even speaks of it. You can have your various service and lodge organizations and after all, when everything is said and done, what’s the purpose of their meetings? Well, to fellowship one with another. Now it’s the same way here. Paul is trying to bring out the fact that to become a believer of these Pauline truths brings us into a fellowship of like-minded people.

Now I’ve stressed this over the years on the program, that when you are a true believer you can go a thousand miles from home, and get into a fellowship of like-minded believers and you’re not a stranger over 5 minutes. Why? Because we have that like-mindedness of what we are in Christ by virtue of simply believing what He
has done on our behalf. All right now he’s trying to help everyone see what is the fellowship of the mystery.

 Ephesians 3:9a

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery,..."

Now not everyone is going to agree with me, and I don’t expect them too, and they don’t have to, but to me when Paul speaks of the mysteries, then he’s speaking about this whole volume of revealed truths that had never been revealed before. Now that’s what the idea of a mystery is. It was a secret, so that means no one knew about them except God Himself. Now this the whole concept behind Paul’s teaching, that beginning with his revelations of the mysteries, God is now opening up to the human race, through this apostle, concepts that had never been revealed before. Now I’m not going to put the mysteries on just a singular mystery. I know some footnotes claim that the mystery was that God would make up the Body of Christ with Jews and Gentiles. Now I disagree with that, because that’s only part of the mystery. The mystery is this whole volume of the Pauline truths. And you can start these mysteries out with, "What is man?"

The Old Testament doesn’t really tell you, but when you get to Romans chapter 5, and I Corinthians chapter 15, Paul reveals "that man is a created being who has fallen from his relationship with the Creator." And only Paul points that out. Now remember Jesus alluded to this in His earthly ministry by making the remarks that they were hypocrites, and sinful, but Jesus never really let them know why they were that way. Do you see the difference? And the same way in the Old Testament. There’s a Scripture that tells us that "the heart is wicked," but how did the heart get that way? Let me show you what I’m talking about. Come back with me to Romans chapter 5 because I like to use Scripture as we can, because I’d rather you read it for yourself than listen to me any day.

 Romans 5:12a

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin;..."

Now that’s the only place in Scripture that you can find that sin and death are synonymous. But here Paul makes it so plain that they are. This is part of the revelations that you won’t find anywhere else. Now reading on.

 Romans 5:12b

"...and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."
Now just flip over a few pages to I Corinthians chapter 15, and let’s drop in at verse 45.

I Corinthians 15:45-47

"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. (describing Christ) 46. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 47. The first man (Adam) is of the earth, earthy: the second man (or second Adam) is the Lord from heaven."

Now you see that’s a concept that was never revealed before in Scripture, at least not this clearly, and what does it tell us? That Adam, the head of the federal race, the created one, was the one that plunged the whole human race into rebellion. For which there could only be one remedy, and that would be what? The second Adam which was Christ. This Adam wasn’t a created being as Adam was, but rather this Adam was God Himself. And He came to set everything straight that Adam had corrupted, and you won’t find that anywhere but in Paul’s writings. That all goes back to what I said in the last lesson, "Searching out the unsearchable riches of Christ." I guess before Paul’s revelations it was unsearchable. They had no way of understanding everything that had unfolded, because God had been keeping all of this secret.

But now with the revelations that were given to this apostle, yes, I can do like I did in the last lesson, and go all the way back and reconstruct how God has been unfolding everything, and will continue to unfold out into eternity. And all because of these revelations of the mysteries. Now coming back to Ephesians chapter 3. Some of the other parts of this revelation were that God would justify sinful men by simply believing the Gospel. Now listen you can’t find that any place else, it’s just not in there. But oh here Paul makes it so plain, that in the revelation of the mystery, how that Christ died for your sins, was buried and rose from the dead, and when we believe it then we can become all things in Christ. I’m not going to spend a lot of time on the mysteries, because we’ve still got other references as we go on up through the Scriptures in the days to come. Now reading verse 9 again.

Ephesians 3:9a

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, (these revealed Pauline truths) which from the beginning of the world (age. That only goes back to Adam) hath been hid..."
Now you see how often this word is coming along? I know people think I repeat a lot, and I do it purposely, because it’s the only way we learn, but that’s what the Bible does also. Do you realize how many times the Scriptures repeat and repeat? Sometimes it’s in a short span, and other times over a period of 4 or 5 different books, but it’s still repeating, and repeating, and repeating. Why? Because it’s the only way that it soaks in. I’m getting less apt to apologize for repeating, because of our mail. Most people, when they write say, "it takes repeating over and over before it soaks in."

Now for a lot of you, you’ve heard it ever since you were little, but you’ve also got to remember that there’s a lot of people out there who have heard none of this. So all these revelations were hid in the mind of God until He revealed them to this apostle. **God didn’t tell the Old Testament prophets, or share it with His disciples in His earthly ministry. He didn’t reveal it to Peter and the eleven in the Book of Acts, but now God is ready to turn to the Gentile world. He’s going to let Israel go out into a dispersion, and into a spiritual blindness, and now he’s revealing for His own intent and purposes things that had never been revealed before. And this is what you have to look for, and only Paul is the one to reveal it.**

In fact let’s go back again for a little touch of review, back to Galatians chapter 1 where he makes it so plain that it was a revelation from the ascended Lord and not from the twelve in Jerusalem. Now we know that when Paul first began his earthly ministry of the missionary journeys and so forth, the only Scripture that he had was the Old Testament. But based on those Old Testament promises and that Christ had come and had died, shed His blood, he could now preach the mysteries. But they don’t become a printed fact until Paul’s letters appear, and that’s why I can stand here and tell you without any argument that you won’t find these things written previously because they’re not back there, but yet it was all building on it.

**Galatians 1:11-12**

"**But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.** (do you see how plain that is? Why?) 12. **For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, (by men) but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.**"

Now the first thing you have to ask yourself, "**Where is Jesus Christ when Paul gets the revelations?**" Well He’s in heaven, He’s already finished the work of the Cross, He’s already experienced the power of the resurrection, He’s already ascended back to the Father’s right hand. And now some years after Pentecost, He has saved this fellow on the road to Damascus, now the ascended Lord revealed it. Now whether the Lord came down and Person to person taught the apostle back there at Mt. Sinai, or whether it was through visions, the Bible doesn’t say. But this we do
know, that all of the things that this man is now teaching and preaching and writing were revealed from the ascended Lord in glory. And now come on down to verse 16, we find Paul’s whole purpose for coming on the human scene was this.

*Galatians 1:16-17*

"To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; (Gentiles) immediately 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, and returned again unto Damascus."

See what Paul is saying? "I didn’t go up to Jerusalem and ask Peter, James, and John, ‘Hey fill me in. Tell me what you know about this Jesus of Nazareth.’" That’s not what happened, because God didn’t want him to have any of their input whatsoever because they were still tainted with their legalism. When you’re steeped in legalism as much as they were, you never get over it. In fact a verse I like to use to prove this is in the Book of II Peter. Also remember that Peter writes his two letters about the same time Paul writes these prison epistles. It’s just before both of them are martyred, and about 30 years after Pentecost. Peter is writing to believing Jews:

*II Peter 3:15-16a*

"And account (or understand) that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation; (do you realize that the major purpose of this Bible from cover to cover is to bring lost people to a knowledge of salvation) even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16. As also in all his epistles, (Romans through Hebrews) speaking in them of these things; (of salvation) in which in his epistles are some things hard to be understood,..."

Now you would have thought that by now Peter would have been such a deep thinking theologian that he wouldn’t have had any problem. My he should have been able to discern what Paul was writing about, and said "He’s telling you right because I’ve known all of this for years." But you see that’s not the case. Here after all these years, Peter by inspiration still says, "that in Paul’s epistles are somethings (salvation) hard to be understood." Now that’s quite an admission isn’t it? That’s a lot more than most people will say today. But Peter had to admit that after his legalistic, law keeping background, to be able to read and understand, and yes, swallow, some of these things was hard for Peter to do, and he shares it with his fellow believing Jews. Now finishing the verse.

*II Peter 3:16b*
"...which (speaking of Paul’s epistles) they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, (twist) as they do also the other scriptures, (and what’s going to be their end results?) unto their own destruction."

That’s tough language, that when people take the things of Paul and twist them, and the only reason they twist them is to try to make them fit with Christ’s earthly ministry, and that’s what they do all the time. And if they can’t twist them enough to make it fit, then they throw it aside and won’t have anything to do with his writings. And you see good old Peter saw that. He saw that people were twisting the writings of Paul, but when they do it their end is their own destruction. Their own eternal doom. Now back to Ephesians 3. So all of these revelations given Paul had been hid in the mind of God. It’s the same God who created all things by Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 3:9b

"...who created all things by Jesus Christ:"

Again the Old Testament never gives us a hint that it was Jesus the Lord, the Messiah Who was the Creator, but you see Paul repeats it over and over. When we get to the Book of Colossians, my goodness he makes it as plain as day, that Christ was the visible manifestation of the invisible God by Whom also He created the world. So this isn’t just a quirk of the pen or a translator’s mistake, because Paul makes it so known. Then John comes back with this same statement in the Book of Revelation, that Christ was the Creator of everything. Now let’s move on to verse 10. So all of these mysteries that God has kept secret were revealed to this apostle.

Ephesians 3:10

"To the intent that now (not going back to pre-Pauline time, but from Paul’s time forward to the intent that now) unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places (or heavenlies) might be known by the church (the Body of Christ) the manifold wisdom of God."

Now you know I’ve read that verse for years, and I dare say that almost every Bible reader has, and we don’t really catch what it says. All of this has been revealed to you and I as a member of the Body of Christ with an intent, and what is it? That with our knowledge we can actually go unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies which would be categorized in what type of being? The angels. Do you see that? So we being the Body of Christ might let the angels know the manifold wisdom of God. Do you catch it? Now this is mind boggling, and I know it is. Do you know that you sit here in this room, that when you get a comprehension of the
mysteries of Paul then you know things that the angels don’t understand. That’s right, I’m not stretching it. The angels never could comprehend the Grace of God to save people. But we now have a knowledge that can actually reveal to the angelic host in heaven what God has done in and through us. Now listen, that’s beyond human understanding, but that’s what it says. Now read it again in that light.

*Ephesians 3:10*

"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

Now what’s the manifold wisdom of God? Well I trust each of you know what a manifold is. A manifold on the engine of your car is the one that has many ports or holes. How ever many cylinders you’ve got in your car, then you have that many holes in the manifold. And all manifold means is "many." Now all the various facets of the wisdom and knowledge of God have been imparted to us when we begin to comprehend these mysteries. And this manifold wisdom is what God wants every believer to partake of and share it with others. I’ve shared so often on this program, "Would to God that the church on the corner, the congregations, would teach their people, instead of just preaching at them."

I had a letter from someone the other day that said, "Every time I go into a bookstore all I see are all these books on "how to."' Hey we don’t need books on how to. But if you will just get into the Book and begin to understand the manifold wisdom of God and all those things take care of themselves. But we’re being inundated by all these books that are keeping people from the Book. I’ve never read one of those books that shows the manifold wisdom of God. Now verse 11. I shouldn’t start this verse with one minute to go, but we’ll read it and then come back to it in the next lesson. This revealed wisdom that we can acutely show to the principalities and powers in the heavenlies is going to be according to the eternal purpose. Now let’s read it.

*Ephesians 1:11*

"According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:"

Now as we close what’s the eternal purpose? The whole scheme of Scripture is to see lost people saved. God doesn’t want any person to go to Hell, but rather He wants everyone to be saved if that could only happen. But what’s the second purpose of Scripture? For us to be used of God to reveal these things that may spare someone from an eternal doom.
Lesson Two • Part III
Unsearchable Riches of Christ - Eph. 3:8-21

Now as we begin this lesson turn to Ephesians chapter 3 and verse 11 where Paul writes to the Church Age believers the following.

Ephesians 3:11

"According to the eternal purpose which he (the God of verse 10) purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:"

Now that’s not the end of the sentence, but I’m going to stop there for a minute, and I’m going to have you turn with me to II Timothy chapter 1. I’m going to hone in on verse 9, but I want to begin in verse 7, and lead up to what Paul says in verse 9.

II Timothy 1:7

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind..."

Now that brings up a question that I don’t have time to deliberate here. Should believers ever have mental problems? I’m not saying could they, but should they? No, we really shouldn’t. I know it’s a possibility, but really we shouldn’t have mental problems. We should never be plagued with depression, which is one of the forerunners of a lot of mental problems. Because what have we got going for us? And we’ve got it so good here in America. Last night, for some reason I just wasn’t sleeping very well, I was thinking of those poor people in Yugoslavia, and Albania, and we’re so spoiled. I’ve told my classes over the years, and it’s almost my every morning prayer, "Lord I know I’m spoiled."

How could I handle it if all of a sudden Texas was a sovereign country, and they would just literally move up to the eastern half of Oklahoma, which looks like is the size of Kosovo, all the way from I-35 to the Arkansas border, and would just literally cleanse the land of all of us? And they would just literally over-run us to where we died or had to flee to Arkansas, Kansas, or Missouri, and leave everything behind. Have you ever thought of it that way? Now God loves them, and they hurt, I tell you it’s absolutely awful. You can almost get emotional when you read and see the horrors of that situation. But anyway the Scripture says we are not to fear, but to have power, and love, and a sound mind. Now verse 8.

II Timothy 1:8
"Be not thou ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me has prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;"

Now you see you can have all kinds of preaching and the world doesn’t get upset with that. The only time the world will get upset with preaching is when the power of God begins to transform lives, now that the world doesn’t want. The world’s going to fight that tooth and toenail. But you see Paul says even though the power of God is being exemplified, we still don’t have to fear, because He is Sovereign. He is the One who is supreme. Now verse 9 is the verse I wanted to get to, and the verse starts off by referring to the power of God in verse 9.

**II Timothy 1:9**

"Who (God) hath saved us, (already) and called us with an holy calling, (now holy doesn’t mean angelically pure or sinless, but rather we’re set apart. Remember even the vessels in the temple were holy, because they were set apart only for temple use. So we are set apart for God’s purposes) not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

Now that goes back to the unsearchable again doesn’t it? How in the world can I comprehend that before anything was ever created, God already knew me for what I am, and where I am. He knew you the same way. There was absolutely nothing hidden from God, and it was all in His divine purposes, His whole scheme of things, as it was laid out from eternity past. Now back to Ephesians chapter 3. So look at verse 11 again. Remember every thing that we comprehend of the mysteries are all part of His eternal purpose.

**Ephesians 3:11**

"According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:"

Now all that means is, "Why did Christ come?" Well we always teach that first and foremost, He came to the Nation of Israel to be their Messiah, and King. But the overall purpose was to die for the sins of mankind, and be the Saviour of the whole human race, and be our Lord for all eternity. Now verse 12. Remember when we started the Book of Ephesians I told you there were over 90 times that you have the prepositional phrase "IN HIM, IN WHOM, IN CHRIST," because this little letter is positional!

Where are we as believers? We’re not just members of a local church on the corner, although that’s certainly applicable. **But we’re members of the bigger universal**
picture, we’re members of the Body of Christ if we have believed the Gospel for our salvation! (Reference, I Corinthians 15:1-4). When we have been placed into the Body of Christ we have a union with Christ that the world knows nothing of. Now you want to remember that a lot of church members are not in the Body of Christ! I mean a lot of them. I hope with all my heart that I’m wrong, but I don’t think I am. We have multitudes of church people who have never had this kind of a salvation experience where God places them into the Body.

Baptism has always been a controversy from the very onset of Christianity. People get all hung up if you don’t practice it according their format of baptism. But listen, Paul puts baptism way down at the very bottom of everything, because that’s not the important thing. The important thing is "are you in the Body of Christ?" Listen, I don’t care what denomination you belong to, you know as you look out over your congregation, that there are people who have been baptized that are no more saved than the dog out there on the street. You know that and I know that. They have no new life, they have no love for the Word, and they have no love for the Lord, but they’ve been baptized in water. So baptism is not what counts, what counts is, "are we in the Body of Christ? Are we positioned where God want to position us?" Now verse 12.

**Ephesians 3:12a**

"In whom we have boldness..."

What does most religion do to people? That’s right. It just put them down in the dust where they grovel. And they live in superstition, and fear. Now that’s what religion does, but oh listen to be in the Body of Christ gives us a boldness that the world again knows nothing of. Now read on.)

**Ephesians 3:12b**

"... and access with confidence by the faith of him." We have access to the very throne room of God. Now jump ahead in your Bible to the Book of Hebrews chapter 4, and let’s look at this.

**Hebrews 4:16**

"Let us (believers) therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Now isn’t that something? That’s not what religion teaches. Religion is going to make you go through all kinds of contortions, and rituals, but you and I as believers have
instant access to the Father all day long, 24 hours a day. The throne room is always open, it’s unbelievable isn’t it? Now back to Ephesians chapter 3. Let’s look at verse 12 again.

Ephesians 3:12

"In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith (or faithfulness) of him."

I hope I’m not doing any injustice when I use the word faithfulness in that verse. Because after all it’s Christ’s faithfulness that makes every thing that we enjoy possible. And when I say faithfulness, I mean that He has never failed. He will never fail! We will never have to wonder. "Did He really do it all? Did He really finish the work of salvation? We never have to question that as believers!" We know He did and He is faithful, and we can place our confidence in that faithfulness. Now then we’ve got time to go into a prayer of the apostle on behalf of you and I as believers. It’s one of the 2 or 3 prayers of the apostle Paul.

Ephesians 3:13

"Wherefore (because of this position we’ve been placed in. Because of the revelations of the mystery. ) I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory."

We know the apostle suffered beyond our imagination for the sake of the Gospel going to these Gentiles. Now verse 14.

Ephesians 3:14

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,"

In other words, here comes a prayer of the apostle on behalf of you and I as believers.

Ephesians 3:15-16

"Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16. That he (Christ) would grant you, (the believer) according to the riches of his glory, (in other words, everything that is Christ’s in glory, the whole bank of heaven has been made available to you and I. It’s all there for us. And) to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;"
Now I think I remember a long time ago putting a term on the board, and I think it’s about time we did it again. And that is the Greek word, "Pneuma Hagion."

The Pneuma of course is the spirit, but the Hagion really means "the power from on high." Now the Pneuma Hagion is precipitated by the indwelling spirit. But when we live from day to day and the spirit is within us, we aren’t always drawing on the Pneuma Hagion. What do you suppose I pray for every morning before I come up to tape four programs? The Pneuma Hagion. I don’t have to pray for the Holy Spirit, because I know I have Him. But oh I pray for the power from on high, and I think it behooves everyone of us as we go through life, and face various trials and decisions to pray for out-pouring of the power on high, the Pneuma Hagion. I think this is what Paul is speaking of in verse 16.

**Ephesians 3:16b**

"to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man."

And where is the spirit? In the inner man. He’s there all the time. The Holy Spirit never leaves us, you’ve got Him. But you can ask for an increase of His power. Now verse 17 as we continue his prayer.

**Ephesians 3:17a**

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;..."

And what’s faith? "Taking God at His Word!" So often people will says, "Well how do I know that I’ve been placed into the Body of Christ? Because the Bible says so. That’s all we have to go on. We don’t get a diploma, we don’t get a great big emotional high, we don’t see the trees ten shades greener, or the sun more red than before, or any of that. But rather we just simply take His Word for what it says. Another term I like for faith is "God said it and I believe it!"

How do I know that I have the indwelling Spirit? Because Paul says so. Let’s go back and look at it again, because it’s been a long time since we have. Turn with me to I Corinthians chapter 3, and come down to verse 16, and this is plain simple language.

**I Corinthians 3:16**

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

Now again to just point out Paul’s revelations and I think this is all part of the mysteries, did you ever read that the believers were indwelt by the Holy Spirit of this
in the Old Testament? No way. Now they knew of the Holy Spirit, but you want to remember like David and Sampson, the Holy Spirit would come upon them, but He wasn’t there permanently, He could leave at the drop of a hat. And of course that’s what happened to Sampson. When the Holy left off with Sampson he was as weak as a dish rag. But when the Spirit was upon him, he had all kinds of power.

Now here Paul is making it so plain then that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. How do I know the Holy Spirit lives within me? I don’t feel Him in there. I don’t hear Him talking to me. I’m not one of those who hears God talk out loud. **I’ve never yet heard Him talk audibly to me. Now I think He affects our thoughts, and as we study the Scriptures God speaks to us through His Word.** But to hear Him say, "Now Les I want you to do this." I’ve never had that happen, and I’m a little bit dubious when people talk like that, because the Bible doesn’t teach that. But we do have the indwelling Person of the Holy Spirit living within us. Now back to Ephesians chapter 3. So Christ in the Person of the Holy Spirit is dwelling in our hearts as believers. By faith is the only way of knowing.

*Ephesians 3:17b-18*

"...that ye being rooted and grounded in love, 18. May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;"

Now when I come to that verse, I don’t have a lot of mathematical background but I’ve got enough to know that you and I in all our geometry, and trigonometry, how many dimensions do we normally think of? Three. How many are listed here in verse 18? Four. Now I read the other day where scientists think there are as many as 10 dimensions. Can you imagine, ten? I **just thrilled of the fact that there’s a supernatural fourth one.** I don’t know what they’re going to do with the other six. But nevertheless this is a supernatural dimension, because we live in the world of three. Now when I say that I think this is in the realm of the spiritual, that’s exactly what I mean. **There is a dimension to the Christian life that the secular world cannot explain.** I don’t think you and I can explain it either. But it is a dimension that brings us up into an understanding of the things of God that we don’t get until we become a believer. Now let me come back and show that in I Corinthians chapter 2. We’ll start with verse 9.

*I Corinthians 2:9*

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."
Boy that’s quite a statement isn’t it? But the flip side, God has revealed those things to us by His Spirit. Now I’ve got to stop for a moment. I wonder how many times people have asked me, and I dare say that everyone of you have wondered, "What are we going to do in eternity?" I see heads nodding. Oh you wish I could tell you don’t you? Well I can’t! All I know is that we’re all going be busy, we’re going to be active, and we are **not** just going to sit on a cloud and strum a harp. That I know, but beyond that I can’t begin to tell you, because God has kept this from us. But this much I do know, eternity is going to be so fabulous that anything you can think of on this planet’s existence is just going to pale into insufficiency compared to the joys, and pleasures that God is preparing for us. But we do have a glimpse because the Holy Spirit has given us an inkling of it. Verse 10.

*I Corinthians 2:10-11a*

"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?..."

Now let me stop for a moment and give an example. You take out here in the secular, material world, if you have somebody who is a real expert in his field, for example an auto mechanic. This auto mechanic just loves his work. Greasy and dirty as it may be, it doesn’t make a difference. He loves being a mechanic. Now let me ask you, if you were to ask that fellow a question about the workings of the gasoline engine in your car, is he going to be real timid and just walk away? No. What’s he going to do? Hey he’s going to let you know everything he knows about an engine. He’s going to be proud of his knowledge. Isn’t that right? Now **that’s exactly what God wants us to be with the Word of God. We should be so confident in our knowledge that when somebody asks us a question, we don’t try to avoid them and the question. But instead we’re willing to open the Scriptures for the answers.** Well I see our time is gone and we’ll have to finish this in the next lesson.
Lesson Two • Part IV

Unsearchable Riches of Christ - Eph. 3:8-21

Now in the last lesson we were in I Corinthians when time ran out on us, so we’ll pick up where we left off in those verses in just a moment, but first let’s look again at our text in Ephesians chapter 3. Remember Paul is writing to believers.

**Ephesians 3:17-19a**

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, 18. May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19. And to know the love of Christ,..."

For us to comprehend these things is the desire of God, and of this apostle for every believer. This isn’t just for the clergy, or teachers, and the theologians in the seminary, but rather this is for every believer. Now coming back to I Corinthians chapter 2 we find that the apostle makes it so plain how these things are understood by the average believer. And remember, the Corinthian believers are the weakest, the most carnal of all of Paul’s congregation. They had a lot of hang ups, but he could still write these things to them in language that they could understand. **And if they could, I think any of us can.** Let’s read verse 10 again as we start.

**I Corinthians 2:10**

"But God hath revealed (the things that have not been seen or heard in verse 9. God has revealed) them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

How many believers today go into the deep things of God? Precious, precious few. Hopefully we’re lighting the fire under a lot of people, and evidently we are because a lot of people write, "**For the first time in my life I’m studying my Bible.**" These people are reading and enjoying the Word of God, and that’s all we can ask people to do. That means far more to me than you’ll ever know. So how do we know the deep things of God?

**I Corinthians 2:11b**

"...even so the (deep) things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

So the Holy Spirit is the One that has to enlighten us and teach us, and direct us through the Scriptures. Now it certainly helps in Bible study to have a good reference
Bible. Get a good one and hopefully one with some footnotes to clarify some things that may be a little hard to understand, Just learn to do Bible study, comparing Scripture with Scripture. Now verse 12.

*I Corinthians 2:12*

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, (we’re not looking at this from a secular point of view. We’re not looking at this from what we have learned from education and experience in the material,) but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

Now this is what we have to recognize. You can’t go into this and say, "Well I’m going to learn what this Bible says no matter what." It just won’t work that way, because we have to depend on the Spirit of God. Now being human I like words of encouragement, and over and over people have written that they have prayed that God would open the Scripture to them. And then the next day they found our program on television, and we’ve had letter after letter that said 10 minutes into the program they’ll recognize what’s going on, and say,"THANK YOU LORD THIS IS WHAT WE WERE LOOKING FOR" But I can’t do it, because it has to be the Spirit that opens understanding. Now reading on.

*I Corinthians 2:13*

"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; (and how does the Holy Spirit teach?) comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

You have to constantly compare these various concepts of Scripture with other concepts and you’ll see how they all fit. They fit just like a jigsaw puzzle. You know it’s been a long time since Iris and I have put a jigsaw puzzle together, but how would you like to put one together if somebody had taken out a few of the pieces and put in a few from another puzzle, and you had no picture to go by? What would that be like? Oh it would be pandemonium, it would drive you up the wall. Because number one, you would have no frame of reference, you would have no idea where this color is on the edge unless you’ve got the picture. And number two, after you get a lot of it together you’ve got pieces that don’t belong in the puzzle. No matter how hard you try to fit them in they simply won’t fit!

Listen, that’s what too many Bible studies do. And it don’t take you very long to recognize, "Hey this doesn’t fit." Of course it doesn’t, because it’s not supposed to. But when you keep the Scripture with Scripture, and keep Law and Grace separated, then it all falls into place so beautifully from cover to cover with no contradictions.
Remember God changes His programs but God never changes like I said early while teaching this Book of Ephesians. **Of course the Dispensation of Grace that was given to the apostle Paul is a whole different economy than the Dispensation of Law.** Remember several lesson ago I showed you how ridiculous it is when people say, "But I go by the whole Bible, and not what Paul teaches?" And I took you to the Book of Leviticus chapter 5, where if anybody touches something that is dead, then he has to bring a particular sacrifice to the priest. Now that’s what the Bible says! But when people say things like that they put their foot in their mouth, don’t they?

**And it’s the same way with the teachings of Jesus’ earthly ministry.** He was teaching directly to the Nation of Israel. As we find in Matthew chapter 21 He was teaching one of His parables. This just says it all.

*Matthew 21:45*

"And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them."

Not us in the Church Age, but them, the Nation of Israel. And it was to them that it was appropriate, not to us. Now a lot of His teachings are applicable, don’t get me wrong. Jesus never taught anything that was completely out in left field, but He’s constantly driving his teaching home to the Nation of Israel. And in all of His parables, the only true meaning was as it sat with the Nation of Israel. **When you take those things out of the Four Gospels and try to bring it into Paul’s teachings you’ve got some puzzle pieces that don’t belong there, and they won’t fit, although preachers and teachers try to make them fit.** Here is the secret to why they won’t fit.

*Matthew 21:45*

"And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them."

Now that’s what the Book says. Now coming back to I Corinthians chapter 2, and finish the study on the deep things of God. Let’s pick up with verse 13. This is all part and parcel of what Paul is enlarging on in Ephesians chapter 3, when he prays, "That we have the might and the power of the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of spiritual discernment."

*I Corinthians 2:13*
"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

All right, now what’s Paul saying? "How many people lean on what men have said?" Now I know the philosophers of ancient Greece said some tremendously appropriate things, and they made a lot of sense, but they’re not Scripture. They’re still the things that men teach. On the other hand, when you take the things that the Holy Spirit has prompted men to write, and we bring this into focus, now we have something more than what men teach. Now we have the spiritual. Now verse 14.

I Corinthians 2:14

"But the natural man (the unbeliever. I don’t care if he’s in church every Sunday. If he’s still unsaved and in the natural he) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; (it's impossible for him. Why?) for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

So when you’re talking with unbelievers, and you try to express some of the deeper things in Scripture, then expect them to look at you with a blank look because they can’t help it. The Bible says, "They can not know about these things. The spiritual things must be spiritually discerned." So the unbelieving world will argue and fuss with you and give you all their ideas, but listen, it’s nothing but secular gibberish. But when they finally get the Spirit of God, then they can certainly comprehend. That’s why Paul makes it so common for the believer to understand these deep things of God, and he expects us to. Now let’s go back to the Book of Ephesians.

Ephesians 3:17-18

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, (that is the love of God that brought us unto Himself. That we ) 18. May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;"

We can step into the whole spectrum of spiritual understanding, and the unbelieving world can’t get that. But oh listen, for us, it’s all here if we’ll just search it out. Now then verse 19.

Ephesians 3:19

"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." (Read that verse again)
Ephesians 3:19a

"And to know the love of Christ,..."

Remember a program or two back when we were following the "unsearchable riches of Christ?" And I mentioned, "How can you and I, mere mortals, comprehend the fact that the Eternal Sovereign Creator God condescended to be born of an ordinary little lady in Israel, to be born under the humble circumstances of Bethlehem, and then go through 30 years on this old planet for the sole purpose of going to that Cross." Now listen that’s beyond human comprehension. But what did it? "The Love of God!" How God loves the human race! And how He paid the very extent of the very riches of heaven to accomplish a plan of redemption!

Now remember lost humanity is under the clutches, chains and control of a powerful, powerful being. Oh, never lose sight of that. And in order for God to bring salvation to the human race, first after taking upon Himself all the sins of this human race, He also had to break the powers of Satan. He literally had to break the bands of Satan that held everything in it’s power, which He accomplished at the Cross. And then again you repeat that for every believer that is saved, then God has to do it all over again, breaking the power of the Satanic forces that hold us. Keep your hands in Ephesians, but for a moment let’s come back to II Corinthians chapter 4, and look at this for a moment so you can see what I’m talking about.

II Corinthians 4:3-4

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: (now remember every human being on the face is lost until they’re saved) 4. In whom (in lost people) the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

So who’s the culprit? Who is keeping lost people lost? Well Satan is! We’re in a society that you almost cringe to use the term, "Satan." People think you’re a fundamentalist kook if you use that term. But listen, the Bible explicitly tells us that his power is tremendous, and only the power of God can break his blinding the unbeliever. And that’s where I think prayer comes in. Oh let me give you another one that I use. Come back to Acts chapter 16, and Paul has been up in northern Greece, and comes to Philippi.

Acts 16:13-14

"And on the sabbath (remember that early on in Paul’s ministry, he’s still coming out of the law background, and this of course was the Saturday Sabbath, and so these
were Jewish women no doubt) we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. 14. And a certain woman named Lydia a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, (she was Jewish and worshipping the God of Abraham, and this Lydia) heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, (now before the Lord could open her heart to believe Paul’s Gospel, what other power did God have to exercise? He had to break the blinding power of Satan. This Lydia was no different than anybody else. Just because she believed in God, doesn’t mean she wasn’t blind to the truth of the Gospel, for she was blinded. But here we have the perfect account of how the Lord opened her eyes, and heart, the Lord broke the bands of Satan) that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." (Lydia believed Paul’s Gospel and became a believer.)

Now this is all part and parcel of what we’re up against even in our own day. Satan has blinded the eyes of those that believe not and only the power of God can open their understanding. Now let’s come back to Ephesians chapter 3, and let’s read verse 19 again.

**Ephesians 3:19**

"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

We can’t comprehend what love it took to drive Him to the Cross. And all the fulness of God is what we’re to be filled with. Now I don’t think any of us understand what that is do we? I don’t think there’s ever been a human alive, at least not on this side of the apostle Paul that has really understood the fulness of God. We can’t even come close, but potentially it’s there for us. Now verse 20. Here Paul ends this prayer.

**Ephesians 3:20**

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,"

What a prayer request on behalf of you and I. Just for a moment let’s come over to the Book of Colossians and look at another prayer for believers.

**Colossians 1:9**

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, (that is their salvation, we) do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his
**Colossians 1:10-14**

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, (remember God never tells us to be a thorn in people. We are not to be obnoxious, or to make a fools of ourselves, but rather we are to be a living example of the love of the One who died for us.) being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; (now that’s a constant thing isn’t it? We don’t get all this knowledge of God all at once, and say, ‘well I’ve arrived.’) 11. Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; 12. Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14. In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:'"

My goodness, what a prayer request for us. And that’s for every believer, not just for the preachers and teachers, but rather it’s for everyone of us. Now back to Ephesians and we’ll wind up the chapter.

**Ephesians 3:21**

"Unto him be glory in the church (the Body of Christ) by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

In other words this isn’t the end. Eternity is out there in front of us, but our Lord Jesus Christ will never change. He is the same, yesterday, today, and forever!
Lesson Three • Part I

The Seven Unities of the Church

Ephesians 4:1-11

Again we just give the Lord all the praise and glory for the way He’s using this ministry to touch lives. We’re always just dumfounded at the way He uses us as we never claim to be anything more than a common ordinary Sunday School teacher But we are just thrilled that folk are coming to know the Lord Jesus Christ, and are learning to study His Word.

Now again we’re going to go right into the Scriptures, we want to use every moment that we can to search the Scriptures, and today we’ll begin with Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 1. Right off the bat, like Paul does so often he says "therefore." And the reason he’s always using "therefore" is to remind us to constantly go back and see what he has just taught. Always remember the Scripture from Genesis to Revelation is a progressive unfolding of God’s program of the ages. And in Paul’s seven Church letters especially, you always have doctrine, reproof, corrections, and instruction in righteousness. In fact let’s go to II Timothy chapter 3 for a moment so I can make my point. Here the Spirit has inspired the apostle to write something that is more than meets the eye.

II Timothy 3:16

"All scripture (from Genesis through Revelation) is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"

Now that applies to the whole Scripture, but it has a unique application to Paul’s seven Church letters, as we refer to them. And, the first 3 would be Romans, the two Corinthians, and Galatians. The next three are where we are now and that would be Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. And then the 7th would be the two Thessalonians letters. At this time I would like to remind you again that in these first letters of Romans, the Corinthians, and Galatians, we have doctrine, correction, reproof, and then we jumped up a level in the prison epistles which get into even higher ground spiritually, in Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. Then later we will go even on a higher level than those last three when we get to the two Thessalonians letters which will be instructions in righteousness, because they refer to the Lord’s coming.
Always keep those formats in mind as we study these seven Church letters of Paul. Now that should tell us that Ephesians is primarily "doctrinal." It’s not so much practical as doctrinal. What’s doctrine? Doctrine is what God expects us to believe! Doctrine is teaching, and today there is so little doctrine. I remember talking to an individual on one of our tours to Israel, and he was from one of these ecumenical groups. But as we were speaking to this young man in the hotel lobby, I started asking him some questions about his ecumenical group and he said, "Now Les, remember, we don’t deal with anything doctrinal." I said, "Well then that says it all. That just tells me exactly where you’re coming from, because if you don’t have doctrine, you’ve got nothing. You might as well shut the Book and go home, because we have to rest on doctrine of what does God expects us to believe. And He has laid it out so plainly for the Church Age through this apostle." But I know we’re living in a time now like that young man, where people think that doctrine doesn’t count. They think all we have to do is get along with our neighbors, and do the best we can, and somehow they’ll make it, but you see that’s not what the Scripture teaches. The Scriptures says, "Thus saith the Lord!"

Now coming back to Ephesians chapter 4, and remember we’re up on a higher level of teaching doctrine than even Romans was. And this is what we’re looking for. "What does God want us to believe, and what are we to share in a teaching mode with those round about us, which would be primarily believers?" Doctrine is primarily for the believer. Now it doesn’t leave the unbeliever without doctrine of course, but once we become a believer, then we have to be established in our faith with doctrine.

Ephesians 4:1

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech (or beg of) you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

Now we hold this to almost any profession don’t we? I don’t think any of us would like to have a personal physician, someone we commit our health and well being to, if he was someone that you couldn’t trust, and wasn’t adhering to the vocation that he was called. I know I wouldn’t want that kind of doctor taking care of my family. Well Paul is bringing that same analogy into the life of every believer. God has called us to this particular role in the midst of an ungodly world to live a life that literally reflects our vocation and our calling. Now verse 2. It’s so practical, we’re not to be arrogant, or puffed up and give people the impression that we’re better than they are, or that we know more than they do.

Ephesians 4:2
"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing (or putting up with) one another in love;"

There is so much of that lacking today. How many local churches, and I don’t care what denomination you can think of, are in a constant turmoil because of the lack of love one for another? Just because somebody doesn’t agree right down to the last jot and tittle then hatred comes up, and that was one of the things that Paul had to admonish the Corinthians about. So here he comes now to this higher level of the Christian walk, that we do not walk with arrogance and pride, but with lowliness and meekness.

Now meekness doesn’t mean you’re a milque-toast. There use to be a cartoon character by that name who was always being walked on because he didn’t have any backbone. But that’s not what the word meek means. Do you remember who was called the meekest of all men? Moses. Now all of you know what a man’s man Moses was. I’ve always pointed out that he was the second highest man in Egypt being a military man, it meant that he was a civil engineer, it meant he was a politician, Moses was not a milque-toast. And then the best one of all was when he had to flee Egypt and goes out into Midian, and comes up to the well, and here the priest of Midian’s seven daughters watering their livestock. Well other shepherds come up about that time, and try to drive them away, but what does Moses do? Single-handedly drove them all away. Well that’s certainly not a milque-toast, I mean that’s a man’s man, but he was still meek.

So what does that tell you? To be meek just simply means that we know what we stand for, but we can do these things in the spirit of love, patience, and diplomacy, without raising the ire of people. So I think this is exactly what Paul is expecting you and I as believers to do. Now verse 3.

Ephesians 4:3

"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Now I’ll probably be mentioning it more than once, especially when we get to verses 4, 5, and 6, that I am not ecumenical, and I think you all know that by now. I’m anything but. I’m probably closer to what they call the exclusiveness. The Bible is, it’s a narrow Book! The Bible makes stipulations that God has laid on the human race, and those things are not broad and open-ended, but rather they are particular. As such I will never bend! I’d rather just quit what I’m trying to do, as to compromise, and be as they say, ecumenical. So what we’re going to find here, is that in the spirit and the bonds of love, and peace, yet we’re going to stick to what the Word teaches. Now then we come down to verse 4, and this is where I really wanted to spend most of our
time this afternoon, the singleness of purpose, in these next few verse. This is not a broad reign that just brings in the multitudes, this is going to do just the opposite. This is going to bring us down into the narrow reigns of God’s dealing with the human race. Now verse 4.

_Ephesians 4:4a_

"There is one body,..."

Now that means exactly what it says. For example, let me take you all the way back to Genesis chapter 11. In chapter 10 you’ve got the three sons of Noah coming off the ark, and they begin to repopulate. You’ve got all the genealogy of those three sons, and let’s start with verse 1 of chapter 11.

_Genesis 11:1-3_

"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. 2. and it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar: and they dwelt there. 3. and they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar."

Now look at verse 4. Here, the offspring of the three sons of Noah, have already by God been delineated into three actual lines of the human race that would develop, but they’ve all stayed together. Now look at what God had made evidently so clear.

_Genesis 11:4_

"And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

They were saying, "we’re not going to be scattered." Well we’ve got to back all the way up to when they first came off the ark, and that would be in chapter 9, and this is what they were making reference to. Now remember these people were just as human as we are. They knew what God had said, they had a memory, they passed it from one generation to the next. Although in this case there was only 200 years time that had elapsed since the flood, and back then most people lived that long. But look what God told them in Genesis chapter 9:1

_Genesis 9:1_
"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."

God didn’t say replenish the Middle East, He didn’t say replenish the fertile crescent, but rather replenish the earth. And what did that imply? That they were to move out, they were to pioneer the very fringes of civilization. But what was the response of these people at Babel? We’re not going to do it! We’re not going to be scattered, we’re going to stay here and be one. Ok, but God had said in so many words, scatter. Now look at the Church today. Come back to the Book of Ephesians, and I think you’ll get what I’m driving at. Now the admonition is that the Body of Christ is to be one. Singular in purpose around the whole planet, the Body is to be one, but what has happened to the Church?

Now when I say the Church, I’m talking about the whole gamut of Christianity. It’s fragmented. Hundreds and hundreds of groups, and denominations and divisions and so forth, and that’s not what God intended. See what has happened. God told those people in Genesis to scatter, and they said, "No, we’re going to stay together and be one." What God has said in Ephesians is for them to be one, and now there are many. Man has fragmented the Church. It’s is amazing how Satan can always bring about just exactly the opposite of what God intended. Back here in Ephesians, God’s first intentions for the true Church made up of born again, regenerated, blood-bought believers were to be one. One in mind, one in purpose, and instead we’ve got thousands of fragmented groups all claiming to have some sort of Christianity.

But there is only one true Body of Christ, in which there are no unbelievers. In the true Body there are no professing Christians without salvation in the Body of Christ. Only a true believer ends up in the Body of Christ. Let me show you what I’m driving at in verses that we’ve used before. Come with me to I Corinthians chapter 12, and let’s start at verse 12. Here Paul is using the analogy of the human body.

I Corinthians 12:12-13

"For as the body (the 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, the true Church) 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 made to drink (or partake) into one Spirit." One Spirit is putting us into the One Body of Christ. Now verse 14.

I Corinthians 12:14
"For the body (or the human element or the Body of Christ) is not one members, but many." Now come over in that same chapter to verse 27. Paul is emphasizing this concept of the Body of Christ.

*I Corinthians 12:27*

"Now ye (believers) are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

Then we don’t find all that much mentioned of the Body of Christ until we get into the higher things in Ephesians. So let’s look for example in chapter 1 and drop down to verse 23, and here Paul makes another reference to the Body of Christ. Remember Paul is the only one that refers to the Body of Christ, the true Church. In fact let’s start with verse 22. This is God speaking of the Son.

*Ephesians 1:22-23*

"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23. Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

So this is only a Pauline term, "The Body of Christ." And if you come on over to chapter 3 there again he makes reference that through one of the mysteries given to him that Gentiles are included in the Body.

*Ephesians 3:6*

"That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:"

The Body of Christ, that consortium of only the true believer. Now I’ve made this comment before, and while I’m talking you can be turning to Hebrews chapter 13, because I’ve just got one more verse I want to use in reference to the Body. I’ve made reference to it over and over on the program, I don’t care what denominational handle people may have, all the members of that local church no doubt have been baptized and memorized by what ever rituals the church demands. But I can ask people eye to eye, "Are all your Church member true believers?" And most people will almost think it’s a ridiculous question. "You know, they’re not," they will answer.

In fact I got a letter last week that asked the question, "What do you mean when you speak of a true believer?" I’m not talking about someone who has simply made a profession, and has joined the local church or organization, but rather I’m talking about someone who has truly and completely placed their faith, by believing in their heart, that Jesus died for their sins, was buried, and rose again, +
NOTHING else for their salvation. And as a result of that salvation, they have a whole changed attitude toward life, toward others, and as John’s little epistle says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." And when you pass from death unto life, you’re going to have a love for the Word of God, like you never had before.

We’re getting letter after letter, where people are telling us, "I’m finally loving the Word of God." Well that’s a sign of being a true believer. The professing Christian that is merely a church member, he’s not that concerned about what the Bible says. He’s not that concerned about spending most of his or her time with fellow believers, and so when we have come to that place of completely without anything else, trusted the "Gospel" for our eternal salvation, then yes, we’re a true believer. Now that doesn’t mean that everybody is going to be as Spiritual as the next person, as there is certainly room for different levels of that within the Body of Christ.

Now even here in Hebrews chapter 13 we also find the Body of Christ. You want to remember that Hebrews was written primarily to Jewish believers.

*Hebrews 13:3*

"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body."

So even these Jewish believers, to whom the Book of Hebrews was addressed, and does not make that much reference to the Church Body as Paul does in the Church epistle, nevertheless these Jewish believers were considered by the apostle as members of the Body of Christ.

Now I don’t put Old Testament believers into the Body of Christ. I know there are some that would disagree with that, but I just can’t see them in the Body. Now they’re saved, and in a division all their own, and of course that’s why we make that separation as we teach that God dealt with Israel on the one hand, but He’s dealing with the whole world’s population over here on this side of the Cross in the calling out of the Body of Christ. These are two separate entities, and even in eternity, I don’t think we’ll ever lose that identity. I think the Body of Christ, and the Covenant people of Israel will always be separate. God has a special role for each of them, and I can find nothing in Scripture that refutes that.
Lesson Three • Part II

The Seven Unities of the Church

Ephesians 4:1-11

Now getting back to these seven unities of the Church, let’s look at the second one as we begin our study. Let me point out again that this is another one of those times that the apostle Paul ends up with seven distinct items. Remember back in Romans we had one of those, and again in the Corinthian letters, if I recall correctly. I made the point when we were teaching back then, "Do you think the apostle Paul sat there and put all his notes together, trying to figure out how he could make a letter that would make sense? And some how or other he had to make it sound supernatural so he had to get groups of seven ever so often? Do you think he did that?" No way. I don’t think he ever put a note down, I don’t think Paul ever made an outline in his life.

Remember he always used a secretary except when he wrote the Book of Galatians, so he always dictated, and I can just see the little apostle as he paced up and down the floor, and can you imagine how hard it was to keep these thoughts flowing, and yet slow enough so someone could write it. Well, of course that was the work of the Holy Spirit, that every word that came from the man’s mind was Holy Spirit directed. So here is another one of those unique situations where he comes up with seven distinct qualities of the Church. Now let’s look at the second one of these seven.

Ephesians 4:4b

"...and one Spirit,..."

So there is one true Body, and now we find that there is one true Holy Spirit. Now let’s compare Scripture with Scripture by going back to I John chapter 4 and we might as well start with verse 1. And remember why we came here. Ephesians says, "There is one Spirit."

I John 4:1-3

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. (now here is where believers must know which Spirit is of God, and which spirit is of Satan) 2. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

Of course that spirit of anti-christ is in the world and has been ever since Satan beguiled Eve back in the Garden of Eden. Now one of the classic examples of the power of satanic spirits is found in the Book of Exodus chapter 7. Here we have Moses and Aaron approaching Pharaoh, the King of Egypt at that time before any of the plagues had come about, and they’re merely trying to convince Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go. To release them out of their slavery, and to be completely separated from Egypt, and of course you know what followed. But as they approached Pharaoh for the first time, and they’re doing exactly what God told them to do, let’s read and see what happened.

Exodus 7:10-12

"And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: (the Lord is in full control) and Aaron (with the Lord’s instructions) cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. 11. Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: (these are Satan emissaries) now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. 12. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: (where are they getting their power? From Satan, and his evil spirits. Now here is the comforting part of this whole passage) but Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods."

Which of course shows us that God was still supreme. But never fail to understand that the spirits of the Satanic powers are real, and numerous, and it’s up to us to determine which spirit are we dealing with. Now I’m comfortable with the fact that as believers, the satanic spirits cannot have any kind of control over us, because our Spirit power is sufficient to withstand all the powers of the evil one. But we have to understand that they are there, and we have to deal with them. In fact jumping ahead a little bit in Ephesians let’s look for a moment at chapter 6, and maybe this will make my point. This tells us that the satanic powers are out there.

Ephesians 6:11

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Now the Scripture could just as well have said it the other way around.

"Put on the whole armour of God, so that you can stand for God." But the Scriptures don’t say that. Instead it tells us to prepare for our adversary. Then go into verse 12, and here’s the reason we’re to put on that armour.

Ephesians 6:12
"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Do you see how plain that is? Now these are all spirit powers that you and I have to discern, "The only one we should be directed by is the One and only Spirit that has anything to do with us, which of course is the Holy Spirit." Now for a moment I’d like to bring you back to the Book of Romans, because all the way up through the Old Testament there is rare reference to the Holy Spirit. It is back there, but not enough that you can say it was a real doctrine for those people.

Jesus of course in His earthly ministry, before He ascended, breathed on the disciples, and said, "receive the Holy Ghost." Then He also promised the coming of the Holy Spirit in John chapter 14, so we know it was a promised phenomena, but we don’t have a lot of information concerning the Holy Spirit except in Acts chapter 2, when He came down on the day of Pentecost. But when you really begin to understand the Holy Spirit’s working in the lives of you and I, as Body of Christ believers of the Gospel, you find that in Romans chapter 8. In the first 7 chapters of Romans you have almost no reference to the Holy Spirit, but now you break into chapter 8, and He’s all through the chapter:

**Romans 8:1-2**

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2. For the law (the operating fact of our life, the law) of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

In other words, what is the power that gives us the assurance of our salvation? The One Holy Spirit. And you don’t get any of this until we get to this chapter. Now come on down to verse 4.

**Romans 8:4**

"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, (as believers) who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Do you see what a difference it makes? Now verse 5, and oh how Paul just explains the working of the Holy Spirit now for us as believers.

**Romans 8:5**
"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but (the flip side is) they that are after the Spirit (they mind) the things of the Spirit." Then you come on down to verse 9, speaking to us as believers.

Romans 8:9

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

A person that does not have the Spirit of Christ is not in the Body of Christ. And oh we could go all the way through this whole chapter, and see this constant reference to the Spirit. In fact just glance at this chapter, and the word Spirit just jumps up at you off the page. For example in verse 15.

Romans 8:15-16

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:" Then come all the way down to verse 23.

Romans 8:23a

"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit,..."

Oh goodness, and now come back over to the Book of Ephesians chapter 1, and this is the One Spirit that Paul is dealing with now in Ephesians chapter 4. And it’s up to us to discern are we dealing with the true Holy Spirit, or are we dabbling in another spirit? It so evident today that a lot of people are dabbling in the evil spirits. Oh the spirit of anti-christ is every where. Remember many of them claim to be the right one, but what did the Lord tell the people in His own day and time?

Matthew 7:21-23

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
The whole purpose of this is that we discern, are we on true solid ground, or are we being hood-winked into something which is totally false. Now Ephesians chapter 1, verse 13, and 14.

**Ephesians 1:13-14**

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also (that is the center part of the Gospel, that Christ, died, was buried and rose again for you) after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, 14. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

Well on and on we could go, that as members of the Body of Christ, we are now under the control of the Holy Spirit. It’s the Holy Spirit that placed us into the Body, it’s the Holy Spirit Who directs us in our daily life, it’s the Holy Spirit Who gives us comfort. It’s the Holy Spirit Who reveals the truth of Scripture, but we have to make sure that we’re listening to the right spirit. That’s why John makes it so plain that we’re to test them, we’re to try them, lest we be led astray. Now I won’t have time to do justice to the next one in Ephesians 4, verse 4. The next one of the seven unities is hope.

**Ephesians 4:4b**

"...even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;"

Now there are so many verses dealing with hope, I hardly know where to start. I guess we’ll just trust the Spirit’s leading again to take us where we need to go. Let’s go first to I Corinthians chapter 13, the love chapter, and we’re going to drop down to the very last verse. Now in this chapter Paul has been dealing primarily with love, hasn’t he? The King James word for love here is charity, but coming to verse 13, and it’s an amazing statement.

**I Corinthians 13:13**

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, (love) these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

But what was the second one? Hope. Now the casual reader I’m sure would never notice it, but as you read Paul’s epistles from this day forward, I want you to be aware how often these three words will just pop up. They will just jump off the page at you, and they are, "Faith, Hope, and Charity. They may not do it all at once, maybe only one or two at a time, but throughout his letters you’re going see a constant reference to Faith, Hope, and Charity. And the reason for this is that chapter 13 says, these are
the only three that will remain. Everything else that is further up in the chapter is going to fade off the scene, but those three are going to remain.

Now Scriptural hope is not something that we say, "Well I hope it doesn’t do such and such, or I hope I don’t get sick," or anything like that. **Scriptural hope is manifest truth that we can rest upon.** Now I’m going to take you back to Romans again to chapter 8 where we just were, but I want to look at another part of it. We’ll almost have to read these whole series of verses, because they’re all connected and even when we were here a little earlier, I hated to jump in on verse 23 by itself. So let’s begin with verse 18.

**Romans 8:18-19**

"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, (remember the word we’re honing in on is hope) 19. For the earnest expectation of the creature (creation) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God,"

That’s when we come into that place that everything even today is pointing to. When we’re going to rule and reign with Christ in that earthly Kingdom with the curse lifted. And I don’t think it’s that far off. Now verse 20.

**Romans 8:20**

"For the creature (creation) was made subject to vanity, (the curse) not willingly, (in other words creation didn’t do anything to bring in the curse, but rather Adam did. So creation fell not willingly, ) but by reason of him who hath subjected the same (all of creation) in hope, 21. Because the creature (creation) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption (which is the curse) into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (during the Kingdom age) 22. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23. And not only they, (the objects of creation) but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, (that is to say) the redemption of our body. 24. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25. But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

Now let’s go all the way back to Genesis chapter 3, and see what Paul was talking about when he said, "all of creation was submerged under the curse." As soon as the curse fell, God also gave creation, what? **Hope!** Now look at it.

**Genesis 3:14-15**
"And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: (there’s God dealing with the creature that Satan used, as well as Satan himself.) 15. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Now this was the reference to the work of the Cross. So just as soon as the curse fell, as a result of Adam’s sin, God subjected that same creation in hope. And what was the hope? The work of the Cross, the coming of the Seed of the woman. Then the curse is passed on in verse 16 and 17 so far as Adam was concerned that he would now live under the curse, and so forth. But what I wanted you see, was that when Romans 8 says, "That all of creation is looking for the day, when the hope will be realized that they’ve been lifted out from under the curse."

Oh goodness, a verse just comes to mind, and I didn’t intend to do, but stop in Isaiah chapter 11, as we make our way back to Ephesians. To me this is such a beautiful illustration of the curse being lifted, and this is something that all of creation including you and I as believers are looking for. Now we have a hard time comprehending this, but the Scripture says it and I believe it. Even the wild animals that are subjected to the curse, and they’re under constant fear from their predators, whatever it may be, yet one day that fear will be no more. Now this is what all of creation is looking for. The curse will be lifted, and creation can revert back to the way God first created it. And look how beautiful this is.

_Isaiah 11:6a_

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,..."

If it wasn’t for his carnivorous character, a wolf would be a beautiful animal. I just love that big massive head, and those upright ears, I mean they’re beautiful. But we have a feeling of detestation, because they’re such enemies of so many other creatures. But oh the day is coming when they’re going to lay down with the lamb!

_Isaiah 11:6b-7_

"...and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; (or baby goat) and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; (in the same pasture. The same pasture that Psalm chapter 23 talks about. Oh the still waters, no turmoil, no death, and then in the midst of all this) and a little child shall lead them. 7. And the cow and the bear shall feed; (together) their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox."
Now what is this? This is the curse removed, and this is the hope that lieth in everything of God’s creation.
Lesson Three • Part III

The Seven Unities of the Church

Ephesians 4:1-11

Now I always like to remind folk that this class is non denominational, not that I’m not a member of a local church, but for the sake of reaching people we are just going to stick by what the Word says. I suppose that some of my own denomination don’t always agree with me, and all I can say to that is if you can show me from the Book that I’m wrong then fine, but if not, don’t come at me with tradition. Remember tradition in the Scripture is always portrayed in a bad light, and a lot of tradition has been totally misguided. All we like the people to do is search the Scriptures and our letters and phone calls are proof that we’re making some headway. Over and over they say, "They had never realized what the Bible really said, but now they have become students of the Scripture." And of course that’s all we can ask, if people will just search the Scripture and look at what it says, and what it doesn’t say.

I thought that we’d finish all of chapter 4 today, but now it looks like we’ll be lucky to finish just a few verses. But once we get into these deeper things, I just can’t skip over what I think are little details that make it so interesting. Now in verse 5 let’s continue our teachings of these seven things that make up a unity in the Body of Christ, and they are, "The one Body, The one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all." And the one we’ll start with in this lesson is "one Lord."

Ephesians 4:5a

"One Lord,..."

Now we’re living in a world where we’re seeing the New Age Movement and the Oriental religions being pushed. These and others are coming in, and it’s so tragic that this stuff can be taught in our public schools and no one says a word about it. And the reason for that is, it’s all in the name of education. But as you know you can’t take a Bible to school, or pray in school anymore, but the ridiculousness of all this is there are so many gods coming up in this world, and yet you and I as believers are admonished that doctrinally that there is only one Lord. Now what I like to show here is the word "Lord" coming out of the Old Testament back in Genesis chapter 2. In fact let’s turn back there and look at it for a moment.

You have to remember back in the Old Testament you have the word Lord used in two different ways. You have it used all capitalized, "LORD" and you also have it used "Lord." In this chapter is a good example of what I’m talking about. Now all the
way through Genesis chapter 1 we just see the word, "God." God said this, God did this, God was pleased and so forth. But now all of a sudden in chapter 2, and verse 4 we see something different.

*Genesis 2:4*

"These are the generations of the heavens, and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and heavens."

Was it a typographical error? No. It’s exactly the way it’s supposed to be. Here we now have LORD in capitals. Those of you who have heard me teach Genesis, it’s from this "LORD" that we really get the Old Testament term, "Jehovah."

Where as "Lord" in the small case is the word "Adonai," and in the Hebrew is translated over and over throughout the Scriptures as "Master". Now that makes all the difference in the world. It’s the same God, but you see Paul is using the term, "Lord" here in Ephesians as the Master part of our Saviour and our Lord. Now coming back to the Book of Ephesians we have, "one Lord" and I think we can literally take it out of the Old Testament setting that we have "one Master!"

If I remember correctly the disciples referred to the Lord most times as "Master" didn’t they? It was such an appropriate term, because indeed that’s what He is. So when we come back to Paul’s teaching of the Lord being our Master, then that means everything, because we’re his bond slave as it were. He is the benevolent Master, He is never hard to serve, and so consequently we have a Lord that we can serve with all the energy that’s in our being, because He is so benevolent toward us. I just don’t know how else to put it. He is the only Lord that we serve. He doesn’t have these other aspects that the pagan gods have. So we have one Lord, one Master. Now for the next one.

*Ephesians 4:5b*

"...one faith,..."

Boy, now I could stay here all day couldn’t I? Stop and think of the world in general. How many different faiths are there? Why we couldn’t even begin to count the number of what they call various faiths . And even in Christendom, and I have to qualify that when I use that word, **I’m not talking about the "Body of Christ" the True Church.** When I use the word Christendom, I’m talking about anybody and everybody that uses the New Testament to some degree or other for the basis of what they practice. So within the realm of Christendom, how many faiths? Even among Protestants look at them. You have the Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans,
Assemblies of God, and so forth. They’ve broken Christendom down to these various faith. But what does the Scripture say? **There is only one faith!** We are to stand for this one faith. Now turn with me to the little Book of Jude. Now we’re not to be adversarial, just for the sake of being argumentative, but on the other hand we are to never compromise our faith, which we trust is the one faith that Paul is talking about.

**Jude 1:3**

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith,..."

The faith, not just your faith, but rather the faith! Well what’s the faith? Well let’s just go back and look at some of the places that Paul use that word. I’m always stressing that Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles, **Paul is basically the Church Age apostle**, and so let’s come back to his letter to the Romans in chapter 3. He uses this word "faith" over, and over throughout his letters.

Now I trust that each of you already know my definition of the word faith? It’s simply, "**taking God at His Word!**" That is never a bad definition. Faith is always taking God at His Word. God said it, and I believe it, and God reckons that as our faith. There is only one of those. You just can’t simply say, "Well I look at it this way," and someone else says, "I look at it from a different view point." No, Paul says, "**There is only one faith.**" It’s like I said in the first lesson this afternoon, **this Book is narrow.** This Book is not something that you can just look at it from 15 different directions, and say, "Well we’re all going to the same place." No way! **When Paul tells us in I Corinthians 15:1-4, and Romans 10:9-10 that for salvation we must believe in our heart that Jesus died for our sins, was buried and rose again then that’s narrow.**

Now have you got Romans chapter 3? And let’s start at verse 23.

**Romans 3:23-25a**

"For all have sinned, (because of Adam) and come short of the glory of God; 24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,..."

All right let’s use my definition here for the word faith, and let’s just feed it in here. "**Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation**"...(our everything) **through taking God at His Word concerning His blood.** So what he’s saying is "I’m going to take God at His Word about what He has said about His Blood." I haven’t got time
in this lesson to look at the various verses concerning the blood of Christ. But from your own knowledge of Scripture, what is the one major attribute of the blood of Christ? What does it do? "Cleanses us from all sin!" Do you see that? We know that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin, we also know that the blood of Christ is the power that has been able to withstand all the evil forces of Satan that would destroy us.

Again let me just take you back to the night of the Passover. Why did those Jews stand there at their kitchen table eating that roasted lamb with no fear and trepidation of the death angel that was striking all over Egypt? Because the blood was on the door! Remember that? And that blood was their mark of safety, and it’s the same way with us. Why are you and I as believers safe? We’re under the blood! So I have to tell people this constantly, that Satan can’t touch us because we’re under the blood. How do I know I’m under the blood? The Bible says so, and if the Bible says so, then I just simply take God at His Word. So this is a good example.

Now let’s just back up a page here in Romans to chapter 1. This is a well known verse, and the word faith itself isn’t in here, but the synonymous word is. I’ve always said there are three words in Scripture that all mean the same thing. What are they? Faith, Believe, and Trust. They’re all the same thing. Now look at them here in verse 16.

\textit{Romans 1:16}

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it (the Gospel) is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;..." (or takes God at His Word.)

To every person that takes God at His Word. Now let’s come on over to where we were several weeks ago in chapter 2 of Ephesians. Here in verse 8 is a classic salvation verse.

\textit{Ephesians 2:8}

"For by grace are ye saved through faith: (or taking God at His Word by believing Paul’s Gospel) and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God:"

There are many we could go to - and we need to hit several. Let’s back up a page or two to the little Book of Galatians chapter 2, and verse 20. This is Paul’s own testimony.

\textit{Galatians 2:20}
"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; (so being crucified with Christ is an identification process) yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh (our everyday living) I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me,"

In other words, again what’s Paul saying? "He’s taking God at His Word." The Son of God is the One Who was declared. Now that brings me back to still another verse and that would be back to Romans chapter 1 again. I hope this all fits in your mind as at least it does in mine. Let’s begin in verse 4.

Romans 1:4-5

"And declared (that is Jesus Christ in verse 3) to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: 5. By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:"

And again what’s Paul talking about? So that people would take God at His Word. And what has the Word of God declared? "That Christ died for our sins, He paid our sin penalty, but He arose from the dead, and we must believe that for salvation." This is all taken by faith. There’s only one faith! You can’t put your faith in some other god or by believing something else. You can’t put your faith in a denomination. Our faith has to be completely centered on the One who went to the Cross, and rose from the dead. Now coming back to Ephesians and let’s go on to the next one.

Again I hope as I’m teaching these words one by one, you’re getting the picture that out there in the world around us instead of being one of any one of these we’ve got many. Oh we’ve got many so called Bodies of Christ, and they know nothing of this beautiful Gospel that we believe. We’ve got so many spirits that are working. We have so many various hopes that people are clinging to, and really they’re hopeless. We have so many gods, and not like the pagans exactly, they had gods and goddesses both, and Paul says, "No. There’s only One!" Now we have all the various faiths, and I hope you’re getting the picture. Now believe it or not, it’s the same way with the next word in this verse which is baptism. We’ve got many baptisms also.

Ephesians 4:5b

"...one baptism,"

Oh as I’ve said on the program more than once over the years, there is probably no other word in the Christian language that will set people’s hair on end
quicker than to disagree with them over baptism. And isn’t it funny. Something that is really doctrinally unimportant so far as our salvation is concerned can cause such enmity, and the sparks just fly immediately. Now let’s just look at this word for a moment. There is only one baptism, and even as your mind is floating out there among the world of Christendom, how many different kinds of baptism can you think of? Oh some sprinkle, some pour, some immerse.

I’ll never forget years back there were two churches. One baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and the other baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Other than that their teachings and their doctrines weren’t all that much different, but they wouldn’t accept one another’s members. I mean they were at complete odds simply because of the terminology that they used when they baptized. It’s ridiculous isn’t it when you really stop to think about it? But Paul says, "There aren’t four or five different modes of baptism, but only one. We’ve looked at it previously in I Corinthians chapter 12, but let’s look at it again.

I Corinthians 12:13a

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

This Spirit baptism is the only baptism that Paul knows. And as I’ve taught my classes here in Oklahoma, it’s the only baptism that will make a difference for eternity. You can be baptized in water a hundred times and it’s not going to fit you for eternity. There’s only one baptism that will do that, and it’s this one that Paul teaches here.

I Corinthians 12:13a

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body...."

This one Body is the one we talked about in the first lesson today. It doesn’t matter about our status in life, there is only one baptism that counts for eternity. And counting for eternity is what it’s all about. The moment we believe the Gospel as outlined in I Corinthians 15:1-4 and Romans 10:9-10 the Holy Spirit in His invisible, all powerful modus operandi placed the believer into the Body of Christ. That’s the one baptism that Paul talks about in Ephesians. He never mentions water baptism in this Book, because remember we made that jump up in Ephesians to higher doctrinal things, and we’re coming even from his earlier revelations to these later ones as we had it on the board earlier, and so now he can define the fact that there is only one baptism that counts for eternity.

Now I’m not putting down what denominations may demand for church membership, that’s strictly up to them, that’s not my prerogative. My prerogative is to show what
the Bible is talking about. **And it is talking about the moment we were saved we were placed into the Body of Christ! Remember the Holy Spirit never goofs up. There is never an unbeliever placed into the Body of Christ!** We as believers don’t know who’s genuinely saved and who’s not saved because we can’t examine the heart. But the Holy Spirit knows immediately the moment that faith is exercised in the Gospel.

This is the reason that local churches, and I don’t care what denomination, they have unbelievers baptized in water and into their membership, because humans cannot determine, but the Holy Spirit as He baptizes never makes a mistake.

Let’s come back to Ephesians chapter 1 for a moment and look at a verse on this. This is a good verse, and I would that you would use it over and over on your friends. I had such an interesting phone call this morning from a gentlemen down in Florida. It’s the kind of phone call that just makes your day. This gentlemen had a next of kin and a nephew that he could never approach about salvation. They just wouldn’t listen to him. But he said he got the idea to tape some of our programs, and took them some of the tapes, and he just simply asked that they watch them. He went on to say, that in no time at all that dad and his son were saved, and now they’re working with him to reach other members of the family. Well that’s as it should be, when you get that kind of salvation experience, and pass it on to others then it’s genuine. Well I see I’ve only got 30 seconds left in this lesson so let’s at least read verse 13.

**Ephesians 1:13**

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

And how did the Holy Spirit seal us? By placing us into the Body of Christ!
Lesson Three • Part IV
The Seven Unities of the Church

Ephesians 4:1-11

It’s so thrilling to hear people tell us that they have a love for the Word that they’ve never had before. That’s the reason we teach. If we can just get people back into the Book, and realize that it’s the greatest Book on earth. I mean, there’s nothing that can compare with it. I trust that most of you realize that I’m always trying to bring out how intrinsically the Word is put together. When Paul comes up with seven distinct things like these seven unities of the Church we are studying about this afternoon, that’s not just an accident. He didn’t sit there beating his head against the wall trying to figure out how he could do that. But that’s just the way the Holy Spirit keeps the Scripture flowing.

This afternoon we have been studying here in Ephesians chapter 4, and we’ve got one of these seven unities left yet. So let’s finished that one before we go on into the following verses in this chapter.

Ephesians 4:6

"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Now remember we’ve been talking about one all the way through this afternoon. One Body, one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and now one God and Father of all. Now the Jewish folks, bless their hearts, they kind of accuse us Christians of being polytheists in that we believe in a Trinity. But for the Jewish person coming out of the Old Testament, that is almost an anathema to him. So if you would go back to Deuteronomy chapter 6 for a moment, we’ll see what their reasoning is. This of course is the Jewish view of God being like Paul just said in Ephesians, "One God." Absolutely He’s One! And as we read, remember this is part and parcel of Jewish worship.

Deuteronomy 6:4

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:" And here you have all the letters capitalized. Read it again.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5
"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: 5. And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

Which of course was the bedrock of the Law. Now as you come on up through the Scriptures, even staying in the Old Testament, which was written primarily to the Jewish people, stop at Isaiah chapter 9 for a moment. Again we’ll look at a verse that we’ve looked at many times over the years, and that would be in verse 6.

**Isaiah 9:6**

"For unto us (Israel) a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be (it’s still further, but it’s coming) upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Now you see in that one verse we have all the names, not only of God the Father, but also whom? God the Son! He’s the Prince of Peace! Isn’t it amazing? And yet our Jewish friends don’t like to admit that this is a reference to Christ. But as far as Christianity is, it is. It’s a prophecy concerning the coming of the Christ child in Bethlehem, who would be their Messiah. Now come on over to Matthew chapter 3, because this was a question on my answering machine the other morning. The question was, "Where in Scripture are all 3 persons of the Godhead mentioned in the same place?"

Well here in Matthew chapter 3 it’s the most obvious, and never lose sight of the fact that we have One God, One Lord, but our view of it is in 3 Persons. The setting here is at Christ’s baptism in the river Jordan.

**Matthew 3:16-17**

"And Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: (so there in the Person of Jesus we have One of them in God the Son) and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God (there’s number 2, the Holy Spirit) descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: (and here in verse 17 you have the third One in the voice from heaven, the Father is implied) 17. . And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

There is also one more reference that is just as tantamount, and that would be in II Corinthians chapter 13, and let’s look at the last verse.

**II Corinthians 13:14**

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, (Son) and the love of God, (Father) and the communion of the Holy Ghost (Spirit) be with you all, Amen."
So you have all three persons of the Godhead mentioned here as One God. So we’re not polytheists, as we believe in the One God, the One Father of all as Paul mentions in Ephesians. So let’s come back to our text in that Book to chapter 4, and read verse 6 again.

**Ephesians 4:6**

"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

But He is also identified with the One Lord of verse 5, and the One Spirit back there in verse 4. This all has to be taken by faith, because I can’t comprehend it, and I don’t think anybody can. Three Persons as One? And yet this is the way the Bible teaches what Paul calls then in Colossians the Godhead. Now we’re going to go into another few verses before we wrap up this book, and I think these verses present a very interesting concept, which had to have taken place when Christ was crucified, and was in the grave those 3 days and 3 nights. Now verse 7.

**Ephesians 4:7**

"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

In other words, every member of the Body of Christ has a different level of responsibility of grace. I think even, yes of faith, and that’s God prerogative, as we’re all different, but we’re all members of the Body. Now verse 8.

**Ephesians 4:8**

"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."

Here, you’ve got to flash back to Acts chapter 1, when they were on the Mount of Olives and what happened? The Lord went up from their midst.

**Acts 1:11b**

"...why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

Now that’s when He ascended as we normally think of it. Now back to Ephesians and let’s read verse 8 again.

**Ephesians 4:8-10**
"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9. (Now that he ascended, (up to glory) what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10. He that descended (into the lower parts of the earth) is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that he might fill all things.)"

Now what in the world was he talking about? Well come back with me first to Matthew chapter 12. We did this several years ago when we were back in Revelation when we were dealing with the Lake of Fire, but that’s been so long ago that most of our listeners won’t even know what we were talking about. Let’s look at verse 40. Here Jesus is speaking in His earthly ministry and is responding to the Jewish people of that day.

Matthew 12:40

"For as Jonas (Jonah) was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Now that’s plain English isn’t it? The analogy is, that just as sure as Jonah went to the depth in the whale’s belly, went through a semblance of death of three days and three nights before the whale spit him out upon the shore, and in type that also was a picture of a resurrection. Jonah went on then to finish his ministry in Nineveh. Here, Jesus not only prophesied His own experience that is going to come, but He also adds His stamp of approval to the story of Jonah, which much of Christendom ridicules. Have you ever thought of that? The Lord Himself puts the stamp of approval on the story and Book of Jonah. It was an actual happening or He wouldn’t have said it. So what happened?

As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly and went into the deep, and came out alive, so also must the Jesus also must be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. So our question is, what was it like in the heart of the earth? To find out this we must go to Luke chapter 16. Our time is going so fast already in this lesson that I don’t have time to cover all these verses, but nevertheless let’s hit the highlights. This is not called a parable, but rather I have to feel that Jesus was talking about an actual happening. Today we call these things "little windows" of opportunities, and the opportunity here is we get a little a glimpse of the state of those who have died.

Luke 16:19-21

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus,
which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21. And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores." In other words, poor old Lazarus had a miserable life didn’t he? Now continuing on in verse 22.

**Luke 16:22a**

"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom:...."

Remember Abraham died 2,000 years BC. Before Jesus’ resurrection all believers went down into Paradise. In Scripture it’s always signified as going down into the center of the earth. A good example of this is the thief on the Cross, what did the Lord say to him? "Today thou shalt be with me in paradise." Now Jesus didn’t take him to heaven like some teach, but rather He took him down with Him into paradise, in the heart of the earth. Now reading on.

**Luke 16:22b**

"...the rich man also died, and was buried:"

Several weeks ago I put on the board that the soul never sleeps. The body sleeps when life passes out of it, but it will be awakened on resurrection day, but the soul never sleeps. Now it was the same way here. The rich man had died and his body was buried, and his soul had gone down into the ether part. Hell is what the Scripture calls that place.

**Luke 16:23-24**

"And in hell he (the rich man) lifted up his eyes, (he’s very conscious of what’s going on around him) being in torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24. And he cried and said, (one Jew to another) Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame."

You know the story of how Abraham couldn’t do what the rich man asked. Look at verse 26 what Abraham tells the rich man.

**Luke 16:2628**

"And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence (paradise side) to you cannot; neither can they pass to
us, that would come from thence. (hell side) 27. Then he (the rich man) said, I pray thee therefore, father, (Abraham) that thou wouldest send him (Lazarus) to my father's house: 28. For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."

Now verse 29 I always like to use when I emphasize Paul’s writing for us today in the Church Age. When Abraham was being begged by the rich man to do something for his brothers, what did Abraham say?

*Luke 16:29*

"Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."

Notice Abraham didn’t tell them, "Well they can pray to God." Abraham said, "They’ve got the written Word." And I maintain today if we could talk to the Lord and asked him a question or two, do you know what He would say? "You’ve got the letters of Paul, and in them is everything you need to know, just read them!" And that’s what Abraham said here, "They have Moses, and the prophets, they have the printed Word, and that’s all they need.

We know that Abraham and Lazarus were on the Paradise side. We also know that the rich man who was lost was over on the torment side, and there was a great fixed gulf between them, where they couldn’t go to each other. What Jesus implied then in that analogy with Jonah, was that He also went down to hell on the Paradise side during His three days and three nights after His crucifixion. And so from Paradise, as we see Paul explicitly puts it, He ascended upon high. Now coming back to that reference in the Book of Ephesians chapter 4.

*Ephesians 4:9*

"(Now that he (Christ) ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?"

This was where Abraham, Lazarus, and all the Old Testament saints were waiting for the atoning blood of the Cross so they could then enter into what we now know as heaven. Remember the blood of animals couldn’t take away sin, and so they could not go into heaven in the presence of God until the atoning blood had been shed. Thank goodness the atoning blood has been shed now, and so now with the work of the Cross finished, Christ could take Paradise out of its place in the center part of the earth, and He takes it up into glory. Hell is then enlarged to accommodate all that would go there. Now let’s read on in Ephesians chapter 4. Let’s read verse 9 in it’s entirety.
Ephesians 4:9-10

"(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first (after His death on the Cross) into the lower parts of the earth? 10. he that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)"

Now there’s a lot more here than meets the eye. What are some of the "all things" in verse 10? Well these Old Testament believers were saved by their faith, but they couldn’t be saved by the work of the Cross, because it hadn’t happened yet. That was still clear out into the future. So once Christ finished the work of the Cross and went down into Paradise and preached to those spirits in prison as Peter says, "Now what could Christ tell the Old Testament believers? ‘I died for you, my blood has been shed, the atoning blood is done.'" And so He takes them now out of the Paradise side of hell, out of the lower part of the earth up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things, because that’s what the work of the Cross did. Today in the Church Age as believers die their soul goes right into the presence of Christ in what the Bible calls the third heaven, the very abode of God.

So remember, the work of the Cross finished the whole plan of redemption for the Old Testament saints as well as for us today in the Church Age. If Christ has done everything that needed to be done, then who are we to say, "But I’ve got to do this or that to complete salvation?" In so many words we’re telling God, "You didn’t really finish it, and I’ve got to put the frosting on the cake, regardless what it might be," and God will have no part of that. We have to rest on that finished work + NOTHING!" After that move on into a life that is a testimony to the world round about us. Now in the few moments we have left, look what God has now left for the Church today. Remember Corinthians was back there in Paul’s earlier revelations, now we’ve jumped up into higher ground, and we don’t have all the things they had back in Corinthians. God has removed some of them, but look what we have left in verse 11.

Ephesians 4:11a

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets;..."

Now at the time Paul wrote this there were still apostles. He claimed to be an apostle in Romans chapter 11. Let’s look at it because I don’t want any doubt in your mind concerning Paul being an apostle.

Romans 11:13
"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office."

So here we know that as Paul writes this letter to the Ephesians, he is an authoritative apostle sent to Gentiles in particular, and the whole world in general. Now coming back to Ephesians chapter 4, verse 11. So when Paul writes Ephesians this term, "apostles" is still valid, and there may have been more than Paul, but the Scripture doesn’t reveal that. But today we know we do not have apostles any longer. This is something that has now dropped off and again I think it’s because the Word is complete as we have it, and there is no longer a need for apostles.

Now the same thing goes for prophets. If you will go back to our lessons in Corinthians, when prophecy was the gift to be desired, it was because there was no printed New Testament. Even Paul’s doctrines were not yet in print. And so until Paul’s letter and the rest of the New Testament came about, God had to have gifted men to keep the thing going from the time that the Church began until these Church letters appeared. So it was a necessity that they had prophets who were capable of the gift of prophecy. But you see, that too is no longer necessary because we have the printed Word, and we have the Holy Spirit to interpret or to understand the Word.

But the last three are still valid. Every local church that is true to the Word of God should have these kind of men functioning and active in that local Body of believers, and what are they?

Ephesians 4:11b

"...evangelist, and some, pastors and teachers;"

And that literally fills the need of the local church. If you can, find a church that has an evangelist, and they have a pastor. Now you know there’s a big difference between a pastor and evangelist. Some people have the gift of just literally orating the Gospel. They just simply have that gift. Others have a gift of just simply being a friend in need, and that’s the role of a good pastor. He can call on the sick, and he can comfort, and just fulfill a multitude of the needs of believers. Then there’s that third gifted person in a local church, and that is a teacher. Not all pastors are good teachers, and God doesn’t expect them to be. All evangelists aren’t teachers, so they are three distinct gifted kinds of men that God has placed in the local Body of believers. You show me a church that has these three things going for them, and I’ll show you a church that’s alive and well. These are the three that God has left for us today. And then in verse 12 says the whole reason for it. What’s the purpose for pastors and teachers, and evangelist?
Ephesians 4:12a

"For the perfecting (or maturing) of the saints..."

It doesn’t say a word here that it’s for lost people. It’s so that saints can become mature. And what have I taught from this little old music stand for years? The purpose for teaching the saints is that you and I can go out and win the lost. That’s God program for today.