Now this half hour is going to be a little different than what you’re use to. This is primarily for so many of you out in television that have so many questions about us and our ministry.

I’ll never forget: I hadn’t been on one of our Minnesota stations but a week or two, and a lady called and said, "Who in the world are you anyway?" Well that was just the first one, and we get that question time and time again, "Who are you? Where did you come from? Do you pastor a Church?" So the powers that be that help me in the ministry thought that maybe it would be a good idea to just put together a 30 minute situation that will be a little different from the routine. So we’re going to show you a segment of time when they came down to the ranch, and some friends came in to do some testimonies.

The tape isn’t very long, and as soon as we finish that, we’ll probably have about 15 minutes left and we’re going to devote that strictly to the plan of salvation. Again, we get so many questions about salvation. "How can I know that I’m saved? How can I know that I’ll go to heaven when I die?" So we’re going to cover that in the last part of this half hour by just simply using the Scriptures. For now though we’ll just roll the tape that was made down at the ranch, when Jeff and Gary, and some of our class friends came down, and we’ll just let the tape speak for itself.

**Transcriber:** As the tape begins it shows Les on his tractor carrying a large 1000 pound bale of hay out to where his cattle are. We see him use his tractor to unroll the bale of hay, and the cattle begin to feed on the hay. We also see him as he walks through his beautiful black herd, and pets them with the love that only a rancher can have for his cattle. The tape also reveals Les & Iris’ beautiful old ranch home, and the old kitchen table that Les is always talking about. It also shows Iris serving a delicious "Okie stew" she had fixed for her guests that day.

**Narrator:** "Grass roots. Down to earth. Real. Pure. These are words that are synonymous with one man in particular, Les Feldick. In this day of high speed communication, global community, cell phones and instant coffee, you can always count on one man to keep it simple. Les Feldick has been teaching the Word of God
for years, making the Bible come to life in an understandable, deep and pure way. Les Feldick is where family and faith is part and parcel of who he is, an Oklahoma rancher and farmer. Les brings insight to the Word of God without pride and ego. They say you can tell a man’s character by looking at his family, friends, and his life. Les, along with his wife Iris, have a long legacy of integrity, wrapped up in love and affection. That’s not only evident in his family life, but also in his ministry. What you see is what you get – Les Feldick."

Les: "We had both heard of each other, but we’d never met. So one afternoon, it was a beautiful winter and spring in Hot Springs Arkansas, and I came in from golfing and I stopped for a cup of coffee, and a lady who knew Iris real well, in fact she was you’re Sunday school teacher wasn’t she? (Iris answers "yes.") (Les continues on) I had met this lady one time, and she said, "You’ve got to get a date with Iris!" I said, "Why?" She said, "You’ve got to meet Iris, just call her!" I said, "Just make a blind date?" She said, "Make it a blind date." So I did. Iris lived up on the third floor of the nurse’s quarters, and I had to wait down in the lobby, and when she stepped out of that elevator, I’ll tell you what –

Transcriber: "As Les and Iris are speaking of their courtship, and marriage, the tape shows beautiful still pictures, and a glimpse of what Les saw the first time he saw Iris. It also shows some of their wedding pictures."

Iris: "It was love at first sight."

Les: "She was the prettiest thing I had ever seen. So that was the beginning of a whirlwind courtship, and a gorgeous spring."

Iris: "Four months later we were married, June 21st 1953."

Les: "So after we got out of the service, we went up to Iowa, and started farming, and began to have our family. We raised our kids up there, and then in 1975 we moved down here to Oklahoma."

Iris: "We weren’t here four weeks, and we were Church hunting you know, looking around for a home Church. There was a home missionary guy that got the idea, probably from Sunday school that Les could teach a class, and Les agreed to teach the class every Monday morning."

Les: "So it wasn’t long until the missionary’s relatives who lived over the mountain, as we say here in Oklahoma, also wanted a Bible study. After a couple of months then the women wanted to know why they couldn’t also have a class after the men went to work, so we simply had a cup of coffee, and taught the women’s class after that. Then
one thing led to another, and a lady that was in the women’s class, who was the head of what they called adult education at the college in Wilburton, wanted to know if I wanted to teach a "religion" class?" So we took that opportunity, and went into Eastern State college at Wilburton, and taught there, with a paid enrollment, with never less than 45 people, and we taught there for 13 years. And as a result of that the college, we started an extension class over at McAlester, which was also tuition paid, and my goodness – the first class we had at McAlester, we had 100 tuition paid people."

"Then we started a class in Tahlequah in 1990, and out of that Tahlequah class, a young man came and approached Gary at channel 47 here in Tulsa with a tape of one of our classes. Gary picked up on it, and thought it was something that could fly, but he thought it would take about $24,000 to get us through the first year. Not having any money, we put the proposition in front of the two classes at Wilburton and McAlester, and just asked them to put on a little slip of paper what they thought they could give above their Church tithe. We didn’t want to take anything away from their local Churches, and when Iris and I got home on Thursday night after the two classes, we took all of the pieces of paper and added them up, and it was $100 less than $24,000. So that was our fleece and Gary knows the rest of the story, we got started taping up here in the fall of 1990, and we’ve been going ever since."

Narrator: "Over the years, Through the Bible with Les Feldick has touched the lives of thousands all across the country. Insight and understanding the Word of God has been a major focus of Les' teachings, with an emphasis on practical application."

Pat Burger: "Over the years, we’ve become personal friends of Les and Iris. They’ve visited in our home, and we’ve visited in theirs. They are a wonderful down-home people, and they live what they teach. Les has such a talent, such a gift, a God-given gift, for making the Bible easy to understand."

Andy Martin: "He doesn’t have his own agenda, he’s not trying to convince you of anything, as he wants you to study and learn. You’re free to read and understand, and if you question him or feel he’s wrong, he’ll visit with you about it, he’s not a bit shy. He’ll go into the Scripture and show you what’s in the Scripture."

Lee Ann Rainwater: "My granny Vi, was one of Les’ first viewers when he first came out on TV, and to hear Les tell it, she was one of the first people to have ever written him a letter. To granny, Les meant it all, he was the first Bible teacher that ever got granny interested in the Word, not just a Bible story, but really into who Jesus was, and what He means to us as believers."
**Gloria Gibson:** "I’m very thankful to Les and the ministry. I know that with his teaching ability, his dedication, the hard work that he puts in and the effort of driving to all of the locations of the classes, but I also know it’s the work of the Holy Spirit through each one of us and through him where our knowledge grows. We learn and there’s understanding and I’m really thankful for him and the ministry and just the knowledge that I’ve gained through it. I wouldn’t trade it. And for the viewers that are watching, if you can get the program on their TV stations, then they should tune in."

**Jerry Pool:** "That very first night that Lorna and I were at Les' class, we started in Genesis and I guess the good Lord had someone ask the question about salvation. During the weekly classes, Les will just stop right where he’s at and say, "We’ll just run those things down." Well, it might take an hour or two. So someone asked a question about salvation and Les shared with the class, I Corinthians 15:1-4 – Paul’s gospel – and I looked at that and said, "I can’t believe it!" And so it just opened up a new world to me."

**Sharon Martin:** "His teaching has just opened our eyes, it really has. I was saved as a young person, I was only eight years old. I had been in church all my life. But the change that Les has made for me is to take me beyond those favorite Bible passages – the ones that we all know – and take me beyond the Bible stories that were taught – and take me really into the Word. One of his phrases is "What does the Bible say, and what does it not say?" And that’s what has really helped me to listen and learn as I read, and to listen to other people as they teach."

**Leyce Burger:** "Les can teach you how to study the Bible and to think and compare one verse with the next. And that’s the only way I’ve ever got anything out of the Bible."

**Jessie Craig:** "The whole thing excites me and I want to share it with everybody. I think that’s the biggest thing. We do get the tapes and books and when it’s possible, we share with our co-workers and just whoever will listen."

**Les:** "What I feel good about is that they aren’t looking to Les Feldick. It’s just that Les has been able to get them into the Word and see it for themselves. Because I wouldn’t want people to just go and say, "Well this is what Les said." That won’t cut it anymore than when they say, "This is what my church says." We have to get people to understand what the Word of God says and what it doesn’t say, which is just as important. And so that’s what thrills us when we get all these letters which say, "For the first time in my life I’m understanding my Bible and am enjoying my Bible and I’m searching the Scriptures." This is what we want."
"Les Feldick Ministries is an outreach where Les, Iris and the entire family do everything from sending out tapes and accounting, to opening mail, answering the phone, and reading letters."

"Our oldest son was the first of the three kids to come back home. He had gotten his degree and worked for a company and he just decided that he’d had enough of it and wanted to know if he could come back and work in the ranching with me. So that was in 1990 and it was that very Fall that we began the television ministry, which we could not have done had Greg not been here to hold things in order while we’re gone. And then just when we needed somebody to take care of the computers and answer the phone, Todd and Kim came back. He’s our youngest, and his wife. They left a good job out of Washington State University and came back and worked in with us. Kim just jumped in and has been so much help for the ministry. Then we had to have somebody do the accounting and the bookkeeping and my daughter, Laura, came in and became adept with the QuickBooks bookkeeping system on the computer. So now all the kids are back home and they’re all involved in the ministry. They all help when we need help with the ranching and so it’s just a family effort."

"Proceeds from the show go directly into teaching the Word of God and getting the message out. God has instructed the Body of Christ to be good stewards of His gifts and Les Feldick Ministries takes that instruction to heart."

"Some of the people that were interviewed for this have been contributing every month ever since we first started. And others have come in and have become just as faithful. I know we have one couple, in particular, that has given a fair amount every month and she says, so typically, "Now that we understand the Scriptures and have learned how to study them, we can share it with others and it’s such fun." And she always underlines the word, "Fun". And it is. When you get adept at the Scriptures, it is just so thrilling to share them with other people. And so these are the rewarding things that have happened."

"You can be assured that your financial gifts are used with the utmost integrity and ethics and that Les and Iris truly care about the well-being of their partners. Les Feldick Ministries. Enriched understanding of the Word of God."

"SALVATION"

Now I will finish this half hour segment by stressing some salvation verses, so to those of you here in the studio I’m going to have you turn with me to II Peter, chapter 3. Now you say, "Here you’re such a proponent of Paul’s writings and Paul’s Gospel, but yet you’re going to start this salvation mini-lesson with Peter?" Well I’m doing this purposely. I laid awake most of the night last night trying to figure out the best
way to do this. See, most of the Christian world hangs on Peter’s message and Christ’s earthly ministry, and they almost completely ignore Paul’s message. I’ve said it so often that they almost treat Paul like an ugly step-child. So with that in mind, I’m going to show you what Peter says about Paul and Paul’s message. Then after that, we’ll naturally go back to the writings of Paul to pick up our plan of salvation. You must remember that Peter writes this about the same time that Paul writes his prison epistles. I think they are both martyred within a year of one another in probably 66-67 AD. So this is not Peter writing from Pentecost, but rather this is Peter writing some 30 years later. Now look what he says.

II Peter 3:15

"And account (or understand) that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation; (see that’s the number one reason for this whole Book, is to bring lost humanity to a knowledge of salvation) even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;" Now remember by the time Peter writes this, most of Paul’s epistles have been written and are circulating among the primitive Churches.

II Peter 3:16a

"As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; (what things? Salvation! How to be saved, and how to know you’re saved. So Peter says, ‘That Paul is speaking of these things’) in which are some things hard to be understood,..." Even at this late date, I don’t think Peter could comprehend that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was now turning to the Gentile world. Not through him and the other eleven apostles, but through this one man, the apostle Paul.

II Peter 3:16b

"...in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, (twist) as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

Turn back to Romans chapter 3. I am reminded of a paper that a lady in one of my classes the other night gave to me. She said, "Les, look at this because as far as I’m concerned it does nothing but confuse everything." Well I was reading it yesterday, and I read portions of it to Iris, and she said, "Do you know what that reminds me of? Your story about the blender." Most of you remember that story. I had a young man come up one day and said, "Les, this is the first time the Bible makes sense. Up till now everything that I’ve ever heard is just like throwing it into a blender, turning it up on high, and they ladle it out to me, and then wonder why I get sick to my stomach."
Well that’s exactly what this particular article was doing. It had everything all mixed up. It had enough of what we call Biblical Truth that would take the unsuspecting and they would think the author knew what he was talking about. Then he totally mixed it all up with Old Testament Scriptures and the four gospels. He used one or two verses from Paul, and then ridiculed the whole idea that the Lord is coming back one day soon. Well you see, that’s exactly what Peter is talking about. They may be the head of some denomination and have a big title, but he had totally twisted the Scriptures, and as Peter says, "Probably to his own destruction."

So what we have to do (and you don’t have to have to be a theologian), is just simply search out. "what" does Paul say about salvation. Not what Jesus said, because everything Jesus said was to the Jew under the Law, and that can’t be appropriate for us today. Peter and the eleven still preached everything to Israel that was still under the Law. But this apostle, which has been designated as the apostle of the Gentiles in Romans 11:13, and other areas where he declares that he is the authority for the Church.

Now that doesn’t mean that you throw away the rest of your Bible, as everything builds. Just like our secular education, for example. Do you think an electrical engineer that’s up into the higher echelons in Silicon Valley and the computer world would have made it, if he hadn’t had his 4th and 5th grade arithmetic? I don’t think so. I think that everything rests on these things that are elementary and they just come right on up. Well it’s the same way with the Scriptures - you don’t throw away everything besides Paul, but rather you hone in on what Paul says. Now the first step of faith for salvation is to believe this verse.

*Romans 3:23*

"For all (every human being) have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"

Why? Because, we’re sons of Adam. Every human being was in the federal head of the human race, Adam, and when Adam sinned the curse fell on every human being that would ever be born. So we’re born sinners. You know I’ve put on the board so many times, " We’re not sinners because we sin, but rather we sin because we’re born sinners." So this is what this verse is saying, and our first step for salvation, is to believe what God has said concerning our Adamic background. We are lost, we are without hope, we have come short of the glory of God! Now when you realize and believe that, then that’s the first step of faith." God said it, I didn’t! You don’t have to wait for some preacher to tell you that. You just simply know that God says, "YOU ARE LOST!" You have been separated from Him by virtue of Adam. Now I’m going to back up a page or so to chapter 1 in the Book of Romans. You’ll notice as we go through these verses on how to obtain salvation, that these verses are now where
Peter said to go, we’re in Paul’s epistles. Every word I’m going to use in these next few moments will come from Paul.

**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;…"

Notice there’s not a word in here about baptism, or any other works, but only to every one that believeth. Believing, and faith, and trusting all mean the same thing. So this Gospel has to be appropriated by believing it.

**Romans 1:16b**

"…to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Now turn all the way to Ephesians 1:13. This is where we have almost the same kind of thinking from the pen of the apostle Paul. These are all so clear. People have told me they can’t understand the King James version, but even a child can understand this, and look what it says.

**Ephesians 1:13a**

"In whom (Christ of verse 12) ye also trusted, (placed your faith,) after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation:…" See how plain that is? So what do we have to do first? Realize that we’re lost, realize in ourselves we are undone, we’re children of Adam. Then we have to hear the Word of Truth, which is the Gospel of your salvation.

**Ephesians 1:13b**

"...in whom also after that ye believed, (that Gospel of Truth, then God immediately seals you.) ye were sealed, with that Holy Spirit of promise,"

Now I think we’re ready to look at Paul’s Gospel that saves us, and we find that in I Corinthians 15:1-4. I maintain that this is the clearest presentation of the Gospel that we need for salvation of any portion of Scripture. This says it all! John 3:16 doesn’t say it all, unless you take Paul’s Gospel and feed it in. But again like Peter says, "They twist the Scriptures." Well what does that mean? Again I was thinking last night, years ago in a cold Iowa winter, families would put together jigsaw puzzles. And you know how kids are? They think they’ve got a piece that fits, and if it doesn’t, what do they try to do? They try to work it on down, and force it in. But does that
make it right? No. So it’s the same way with the Word of God. How many people are twisting it, and then they try to push it in and make it fit their particular creed or beliefs. But you see you can’t do that, it has to fit perfectly. Now here’s that beautiful Gospel that you’ll find only in Paul’s writings.

I Corinthians 15:1-2

"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 also ye are saved, (See, the whole idea of God’s purposes is salvation, to be saved.) if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you…"

We have to know what to believe. Now verse 3 and 4.

I Corinthians 15:3a

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, (only Paul received this Gospel) how that Christ died for our sins…" Sins that we each inherited from Adam.

I Corinthians 15:4a

"And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"

Now folks that’s the Gospel of Salvation! Do you see how simple that is? And once we’ve realized our lostness, and believe that Gospel then God has promised that when we believe in our heart that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again, then He will move in and grant us salvation. It’s all of Grace, there’s no works involved, nor can be. Let me show you in Ephesians chapter 2.

Ephesians 2:8

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."
Lesson One • Part II

Les & Iris’ Story – Salvation – Time-Line

I Thessalonians 1:1 – 2:14

I have taken the time and put two timelines on the board. We have found that the timeline just makes everything more understandable for most people. If you realize that all of this top timeline is exactly like the bottom timeline with one exception. In the bottom line, where you and I are today, we’ve opened up a parenthetical part of it called the Age of Grace, or Paul’s apostleship, or the Church Age, the Body of Christ, that is not on the top timeline.

What I like to point out, is that all the Old Testament from Adam to Noah’s Flood, to the Tower of Babel (and then at the mid-point between Adam and the cross) is the call of Abraham where we have the beginning of the Nation of Israel and the Jewish people. We find that the Nation of Israel and the Jews all started in Genesis chapter 12. This the beginning of everything concerning the promise of the coming Messiah, Redeemer, and Saviour. This portion of Scripture is also called the Abrahamic Covenant. I spend a lot of time in the Abrahamic Covenant because of its intrinsic importance to even the Church Age.

**Genesis 12:1a**

"Now the LORD had said…" (back in chapter 11.)

And of course that’s a point to be made. The first 2000 years from Adam till the call of Abraham are covered in the first 11 chapters of the Bible. The rest of your Old Testament from Genesis chapter 12 and the call of Abraham, all the way up until the beginning of the New Testament, is another 2000 years, and all the Old Testament is pointing to that period in time. So remember the first 11 chapters covers 2000 years, and the rest of the Old Testament, the next 2000. But it’s all directed down to this nation that will come as a result of this covenant with Abraham.

**Genesis 12:1**

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

Now on the surface of course you don’t get the real reason for God doing this. But after you’ve studied with me for a little while, and the Nation of Israel makes it’s
appearance and we get into the Book of Joshua, then Joshua makes it so plain why God had to separate Abraham from his family. They were all idolaters.

Joshua 24:2b

"...Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor; and they served other gods."

Terah, the father of Abraham, was an idolater. So in order for God to bring this man into a relationship with the One True God, he had to make a break with idolatry. So the purpose of verse 1, is to show God said, "Separate yourself from your family, your hometown of Ur, and get out of there. Turn your back on idolatry and go to a land that I will show you." Now here comes the covenant.

Genesis 12:2a

"And I will make of thee a great nation,..."

Now I usually break this down into 3 categories. 1. The promise of a nation of people. 2. God would put them in a geographic area of land. 3. And then at a future day He will come Himself as the Messiah, the King, and rule the Nation of Israel over an earthly kingdom. Now that doesn’t explicitly say that here, I know it doesn’t, but as you study the Old Testament, it becomes rather evident.

Genesis 12:2-3

"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: (now here comes the crowning part of the covenant made with this man Abraham.) and in thee (Abraham) shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Now on the surface, that’s hard to understand, but as we study the Old Testament economy from the call of Abraham, and his son Isaac, and the grandson, Jacob, and the 12 sons of Jacob who form the Nation of Israel, everything keeps moving along. The land of Canaan is deeded to Abraham as a homeland for this new nation of people. But everything all the way up through the Old Testament is preparing this little nation, coming out of one man, for the coming of their Messiah, King, and Redeemer, whom we know of course as Jesus of Nazareth.

So at 2000 BC with the call of Abraham, we have the beginning of the Nation of Israel. Now I’ve always put it this way - from Abraham until the beginning of the
Church Age here on the lower timeline, you can say God was dealing with Jew only with a few Gentile exceptions. I always have to make that point. Yes there were exceptions to the Jew only aspect. Rahab, in Jericho, was not part of the family of Abraham. She was a non-Jew, she was a Gentile, she was an exception. Then there were the people of Nineveh, and that’s why Jonah didn’t want to go. Those Gentiles weren’t to have anything to do with the promises of Israel, but God made an exception, and sent him anyway. Then there was Ruth, the Moabite. The Jews were to have nothing to do with a Moabite. But Naomi and her husband Elimelech went down into Moab, which was contrary to the Laws of God, but we find that God blessed them anyway, and of course when Ruth came back with Naomi she came in as part and parcel of the family of the Messiah, although she was a Gentile, but she’s what we call an exception. So all the way up through the Old Testament and the call of Abraham to the coming of Christ, it’s Jew only, with these occasional exceptions.

And then in response to the covenant given to Abraham we have the coming of the King. Turn on over to the Book of Matthew chapter 3. This is where there’s a man that was prophesied in the Old Testament - John the Baptist. So I call him an extension of the Old Testament prophets. He’s prophesied as a messenger, or a herald who would announce to the Nation of Israel their King.

Matthew 3:1,2

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2. And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The Kingdom as a whole wasn’t at hand yet, but rather what part of the Kingdom was? The King! The King was ready to make His appearance, and so all through His earthly ministry as we’ve stressed over and over, the purpose for all of His workings of signs, wonders, and miracles, was to prove to the Nation of Israel who He was. They were to have understood that He was the prophesied Messiah and King, which had been prophesied all the way up from the onset of the Abrahamic Covenant. This covenant nation would one day have their King.

Now back to our two timelines we have on the board. These two timelines show you how the Old Testament in Psalms chapter 2 lays out the prophetic program, (the top timeline), and the bottom timeline which includes the Body of Christ, the Church, that was never revealed until the apostle Paul. I call Psalms chapter 2 the outline of this Old Testament program based on this Abrahamic Covenant. This is the outline of what’s going to happen once the Nation of Israel has made its appearance, and the prophets have come on the scene. You’ve got King David and all the Psalms, the Mosaic system, the tabernacle, the Ten Commandments. Everything has come as a
result of that covenant that God made with Abraham. Now in Psalms chapter 2, we get a timeline all its own, and that’s what this top line is.

*Psalm 2:1-2.a*

"Why do the heathen rage, *(the non-Jew world)* and the people *(Israel)* imagine a vain thing? 2. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers *(of Israel)* take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,"

Now, at the time of Christ’s arrest, who was involved? Well the Romans and the religious leaders of Israel together. They consorted together to arrest Him, and then they put Him on trial, and who was demanding His death? Israel, the Jew. Who carried it out? Rome. So you can’t separate the blame. You can’t say the Jews killed the Christ. On the other hand the Jews can’t say, "We didn’t have anything to do with it, the Romans killed Him." You see they were both guilty. And that puts the whole world then under the anathema of having rejected and killed the promised King and Messiah of Israel. Now continuing on.

*Psalms 2:3-4*

"Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. *(we’ll not have this man to rule over us. In verse 4 what was God’s reaction?)* 4. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision" God laughed at the absurdity of the thing. How in the world could they not recognize who He was after 3 years of constant working of miracles? But they didn’t, and they crucified Him. Now the first word in verse 5 is a time word. *(then)* It doesn’t name the day, month or year, but in generalities, after they have rejected the anointed One -

*Psalms 2:5*

"Then shall he *(God)* speak unto them *(the whole world)* in his wrath, *(not love and mercy, and Grace)* and vex them In his sore displeasure."

Now that’s my top line. As you come along through it and they’ve rejected and crucified the Messiah, the next event on that line would be the wrath and vexation which of course, comes from the prophecies given to Daniel in chapter 9, which is the last 7 years of the 490 years that the prophet Daniel prophesied upon the Nation of Israel. That will be the 7 years of tribulation that is yet to come. Now we know from archeological facts, and all the decrees that have been found, that from that period in Israel’s history when they had been in the Babylonian captivity, and Nehemiah was given permission to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the city wall till the time of Christ’s crucifixion (Palm Sunday really) that was 483 of the 490 years that had been
prophesied. Then according to the timeline, those next 7 years of vexation would follow immediately and then that would complete the 490 years of the prophecy given to Daniel.

That’s all the Old Testament was looking for as we have just read in Psalm chapter 2. The coming of the King. Yes He would be rejected. He would die. He would be raised from the dead. Then would come the wrath and vexation. But what’s the next verse in Psalm chapter 2? In spite of everything man has done, they can’t upset God’s program.

Psalm 2:6

"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."

Do see how plain that is? My, it’s just comes up out of the Old Testament prophecies. The 483 years are fulfilled, and then comes the 7 years of Tribulation of wrath and vexation, to complete the 490 years, and then what would happen? The King would return and set up His Kingdom, and from the Old Testament account that would just go right on into eternity. But we know now from our own point in time that’s not the way it happened. I don’t care whether it was Isaiah, Daniel, or Joel, this top line was their timeline. And even in Christ’s earthly ministry, those 3 years and Peter ministering after the crucifixion on the day of Pentecost, all they were looking for was the fulfillment of this Old Testament format. Now turn to Acts chapter 2.

Actually this is just a review, but at least we can hit the high points. But here on the day of Pentecost, we find Peter and the eleven supernaturally empowered to proclaim to the Nation of Israel that this Jesus whom they had crucified, had risen from the dead, and he was alive and well. Consequently what could He do? He could still fulfill all the prophecies of the Abrahamic Covenant. He could still bring in the King and the Kingdom. But Peter says, "We can’t skip this 7 years of wrath and vexation. So look what Peter writes beginning with verse 15. Remember this is the day of Pentecost

Acts 2:15-18

"For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; (and what did Joel prophesy?) 17. And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters (that is Israel) shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18. And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and thy shall prophesy:"

Now Peter is quoting from Joel, but he doesn’t stop with verse 18. Normally that’s where Peter should have stopped. Had Peter understood that this Old Testament program was no longer valid, he should have stopped right there, like Jesus did in Luke chapter 4. But remember Peter doesn’t have the foreknowledge that Jesus had. So Peter, relying on the Old Testament prophecies, just keeps right on quoting Joel, and look what happens next.

Acts 2:19-20

"And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke; 20. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:"

I always stop and ask my classes, did that happen? No, that hasn’t happened yet. But is it going to? You’d better believe it. So what happened? God intervened in Grace, and He just literally opened up the Old Testament program and He interjected parenthetically the Church Age, the Body of Christ. And the Church Age is totally revealed only by the apostle Paul. You won’t find anything of the Church back in the Old Testament, or on this top timeline, because that was all centered on Israel.

But when Israel, even after the crucifixion, continued to reject the King and Kingdom, God shoved that final 7 years clear out into the future. He opened up this top line, and I should go ahead and erase it because He opened it up, and now for 1900 + years, Israel has been out of the loop. They’re out in dispersion. But like Paul says in Romans 11, "Is God through with Israel? Don’t you believe it." People try to tell us that they’ve been set aside forever because they killed the Messiah, so He’s through with the Jew. Paul says, "Oh God forbid." God has simply given us 1900 + years of Grace whereby Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, is now the spokesman. And as we saw in the first lesson, that’s why Peter said, "Now for salvation you have to go to the epistles of Paul." The disciples of Jesus were apostles of Israel, they were under the Law, but as soon as God commissions Saul of Tarsus, who becomes Paul, then you see we come under these doctrines of Grace, which we find all the way up through Paul’s epistles from Romans through Philemon and so this is what makes all the difference. Now the 3 _ and 3 _ years of Tribulation, has been pushed out into the future. However, the world is still going to face that terrible time. Then Christ will return and yet be the King and head up the Kingdom.

Now I’ve noticed in all the various books and articles that people send me when they’re confused, they can’t figure out who’s right and who’s wrong. But every single time, it’s because the authors have been mixing all this top line with this bottom line. They’re trying to force this top line of Israel into this bottom line where the Body of Christ is, and it just won’t work. As soon as they start funneling these things from the
top line of Israel and the Law into the bottom line where the Body of Christ is, you’ll have nothing but confusion. So always separate them.

And the best way I can point this out is to turn to Acts chapter 2, and drop down to verses 36, 37, and 38. Now this is Peter on the day of Pentecost and he is winding up his message to the Jews. Whenever somebody gets hung up on verse 38, I always ask them, why don’t you read verse 36 to see who Peter is speaking to, but people don’t want to see that verse. Do you realize how much of Christendom picks and chooses. That’s what they do, they like this, and that, but don’t want the rest of it. Hey, you can’t do that. You have to take it all.

Acts 2:36

"Therefore let all the house of Israel (now there are no Gentiles which primarily fills the Body of Christ in the house of Israel.) know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. 37. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, (Jews to Jews) what shall we (the Nation of Israel) do?"

What should Israel do? Now verse 38 was appropriate for Israel, because it’s exactly what John the Baptist taught the nation to do.

Acts 2:38

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

Well come on over to Paul as we saw in our last half hour, and let’s look at Romans 1:16, we’ll use it again, and oh what a difference. We Gentiles don’t cry out, "What must we do?" The question for us is personal. "What must I do?" And what’s the answer? "Believe the Gospel."

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; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Now turn the page to chapter 3 in the few seconds we have left.

Romans 3:24-26
"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, to 
declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the 
forbearance of God: 26. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he 
might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

And I don’t see any water baptism in that verse, and hopefully you can see the 
difference between what the Nation of Israel had to do for salvation under the 
preaching of Peter and what the Body of Christ must do under the preaching of the 
apostle Paul.
Lesson One • Part III
Les & Iris’ Story – Salvation – Time-Line

I Thessalonians 1:1 – 2:14

Now in a moment we’re going to start in I Thessalonians 1:1. But before we do, I’d like to give a brief historical background of this letter. I’ve got a makeshift map on the board of the area that Paul is in in this study. We have our Mediterranean Sea, and up here is Asia Minor in Scripture, it’s Turkey in our geography today. Here we have Ephesus which was one of the earliest Churches on Paul’s journey from Antioch up in Asia Minor, and then he came back to Antioch. Then I believe it was on his third missionary journey, he went up through central Asia Minor, and you remember when he got here on the sea coast, he was intending on coming back to east to Asia, but instead the Spirit appeared to him in a vision and said, "Come over to us in Macedonia and help us."

Well Paul didn’t argue with the vision, he took a ship and went across to Philippi. And of course Philippi is clear up here in northern Greece, and over here is Italy, but as he started his ministry in Philippi, that’s where he and Silas were beaten back there in the Book of Acts chapter 13. In fact it would probably be good just to go back and look at that account. I hadn’t intended to do that, but maybe we should. Here Paul and Silas leave the Church at Antioch, and then in chapter 14 then move on into central Turkey, Asia Minor, and go into the work at Iconium, and Derbe, and Lystra then all the way up to chapter 16 is the account of what happened in Philippi.

Now of course, if you know your history, all of this was part and parcel of the Roman Empire. So Philippi was a Roman colony, and you have to know a little bit of your history to know the difference. Philippi, a Roman colony, meant that there was a Roman Garrison stationed there at the city, or like today we call them occupation troops. Where as, Thessalonica which is just the next city down toward Athens from Philippi was a free city, they didn’t have Roman troops roaming up and down the street, they just had complete freedom. Probably they helped out a couple of Roman generals in a battle sometime earlier. But any way you had these different Roman rules, but in Philippi where Paul began his ministry in Europe, you know the account, how they were beaten and thrown into the dungeon. And out of the jail experience with the earthquake setting them free, we had the salvation then of the Philippian jailer. Who, if I would have had more time in the last half hour, would have used as the counter example of Acts 2:38.
In Acts 2:38 the Jews said, "what must we do to be saved?" The Philippian jailer a Gentile in Acts 16:30, says, "what must I do to be saved?" And remember Paul does not tell him to "repent and be baptized but simply believe." Well anyway after having been beaten in Philippi he makes his way on down to the next sizeable city, which is Thessalonica, and we pick that up in chapter 17.

**Acts 17:1-2**

"Now when they (Paul and Barnabas and whoever was with him) had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews. (Now there weren’t any synagogues in Philippi, if you remember) 2. And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, (to these Jews meeting in the synagogue) and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures."

The very most you can get out of three Sabbaths would be how long? 4 weeks, assuming that he didn’t stay for the next Sabbath. So the length of time that he ministered in this city of Thessalonica was at the max 4 weeks. Some Bible students will say three weeks because of the three Sabbaths. But you see, there could be another six days extended and still be just three Sabbaths. But it was not more, evidently, than 4 weeks in this pagan Greek city.

**Acts 17:3-4**

"Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. (Now verse 4 and this was the reaction as it was almost everywhere) 4. And some of them believed, and consorted (took up with) Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few."

Now you see the Gentiles are more and more latching onto this Gospel of Grace to the consternation, of course, of the Jew. Now look at verse 5.

**Acts 17:5a**

*But the Jews which believed not,* (now there were some that did, but the majority did not) *moved with envy,…*"

Now you always have to stop here. What were they envious of? They didn’t want these pagan Gentiles coming in and having anything to do with their God. Because I told one of my classes during this past week, you ought to take your concordance sometime and just look up how many times up through the scriptures you have the three names, right in order, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Sometimes it’s in a matter of
three or four verses. "And the God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." Peter, in Acts chapter 3 will repeat it. "The God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." And so you see, they felt that they were so inclusive of their God that those Gentiles couldn’t have anything to do with Him. And when they saw Gentiles responding to Paul and Silas’ preaching, they were furious with envy. They probably said, "Those Gentiles had no business worshipping and believing in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." And so verse 5 again.

Acts 17:5-6

"But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd (unscrupulous) fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. 6 And when they found them not, (Paul and Silas had already left and escaped and were headed on down to Athens) they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also:"

Isn’t that amazing? Here into this pagan world comes one man, with two or three of his friends, but by and large, it was the work of the apostle Paul that caused these pagans to think that they were literally turning their religious world upside down, or like most people say, "right side up". But oh, what an impact this one man had on the pagan world. Now verse 7.

Acts 17:7-10

"Whom Jason hath received; and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. (That tells us that Paul was already proclaiming the coming king and His kingdom) 8. And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. 9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go. 10. And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: (which is the next little city south of Thessalonica) who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews."

They spent some time at Berea and then Paul comes down to Athens alone. Then the others, Silas and Timothy and so forth, catch up with him and then they go on down to Corinth. Realizing that this little group of believers up here in Thessalonica had only heard him teach four weeks. Can’t you imagine how his heart must have burned wondering, "How are they fairing?" Four weeks isn’t very long. I’ve had to teach people three years before they see it. But four weeks and he had a sizable group of these pagans who had become believers of his Gospel. Almost unbelievable isn’t it?
Now, that’s the backdrop, then, for these two little letters to the Thessalonians, the first that Paul writes, even while they’re at the end of his letters for the most part. Yet, as far as everything can tell, they were the earliest of his writings and they were written within a matter of weeks after having escaped Thessalonica, spent some time in Berea, a few days in Athens and evidently wrote these letters from the city of Corinth. Then Timothy, or whoever it was, took it back to the Thessalonian Church for their admonition and for their spiritual food. Now let’s take it verse by verse for a little bit.

*I Thessalonians 1:1-3*

"Paul and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church (assembly) of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ:… (that’s the same positioning that Paul teaches us in Colossians chapter 3, as we saw a week or two ago. Where are we as believers? We’re hid in Christ in God. That’s our position. These Thessalonians were the same way.) 2. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; 3. Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;"

Now, whenever the scripture repeats something in a rather short period of time, what’s my word? Emphasis!! Now let’s go down to verse 9 and what a tremendous verse. He writes to the ex-pagans, who he had only spent 4 weeks among.

*I Thessalonians 1:9*

"For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, (in other words, your testimony shows how God blessed our ministry among you) and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."

Now think about that a minute. What one word describes those people turning from their pagan idolatry to the truth of God? FAITH!!! It was their faith. They believed what God said through the apostle and when they believed it, what were they able to do? Turn their back on idolatry and accept the truth. Has anything changed? NO! It still takes faith in God’s word. And so the second one is after they had turned and exercised their faith to leave idolatry and "to cling to the God of truth" and what was the next one? "And to serve the living and true God."

Now, put that over with the work in verse 3 and what was the labor in verse 3? Here’s how you learn to compare scripture with scripture. A labor of what? Love! So now what two words have you got? Faith and love. Now come on down to verse 10.
**I Thessalonians 1:10a**

"And to wait for his Son from heaven,..."

Come back and compare it with the third part of verse 3 and what’s the word? Hope! Now, where do I go first, I Corinthians or Titus? Let’s go to I Corinthians chapter 13. And you remember back, it was long time ago, when I was teaching I Corinthians 13 and we came to the last verse. Some of you should know it from memory. What three things are going to abide?

**I Corinthians 13:13a**

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity,..." (love),

And if you remember, many of you were sitting in this very same studio audience when I taught this chapter and I said, "Now if you will be aware throughout Paul’s writings, these three words just keep popping like cream on a bottle of unpasteurized milk. Some of you older ones know how that works don’t you? Remember how the cream just comes to the top? Well that’s what happens with these three words, Faith, Hope and Love. They just keep coming up and coming up. Let’s just compare verse 3 and 9 here in I Thessalonians chapter 1.

**I Thessalonians 1:3a**

"Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, ...") Comparing with the last part of verse 9.

**I Thessalonians 1:9a**

"...and how ye turned to God from idols..."

But what caused them to turn? Their faith! Back to verse 3 what was the next thing?

**I Thessalonians 1:3a**

"...and labour of love,..."

**I Thessalonians 1:9b**

"...to serve the living and true God."

Now all you have to do is close your eyes and think. What is predominant reason for serving God right now today in the year 2000? Your love, first for Him, and then for
lost humanity, and now I’m going to start adding, "untaught Christians." Oh, it’s just pitiful, and it’s getting worse by the day, how ignorant – and when I use the word ignorant, I’m not referring to a lack of brain cells. Ignorance is simply a lack of teaching. You can have somebody in Church all their life, and they’re as ignorant as ignorant can be. Why is that? They haven’t been taught anything. You ought to read our mail, and this is exactly what we hear. I don’t care whether they’re 90 years old or 50, it’s almost always the same. "I’ve been in Church all my life, and I never learned any of this before. Well now somebody is going to be held responsible. Somebody has not been fulfilling their obligations. But you see Paul had so completely instructed these ex-pagans of Thessalonica, that they did all three. They practiced their faith, by turning from idols. They immediately went into a labour of love, and then in verse 3, what were they practicing?

I Thessalonians 1:3b

"...the patience of hope..." And comparing with verse 10, this patience of hope.

I Thessalonians 1:10a

"And to wait for his Son from heaven,..."

So again he’s used all three words of Faith, Love, and Hope. Now let me show you another verse where Paul uses those same 3 words. Come over to the Book of Titus, chapter 2 for a moment. To me this is what makes studying this Book so exciting. To see how it all fits together like that jigsaw puzzle I told you about earlier. When everything fits, you know you’re on the right track. I had a letter just yesterday that asked the question, "Well how do I know who’s right? He said, "You’ve got the Baptists, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, the Pentecostals, the Catholics, Church of Christ, the Mormons, and all of this, How am I to know who is right and who is wrong?" Well you know what I write back? Whoever is purely and completely going by Paul’s epistles is the one you can trust, and the rest of them, you’d better pitch, because it’s going to be a blended turned up on high mixture that’s going to give you nothing but a Spiritual indigestion. Now look what Paul writes concerning Faith, Hope, and Love.

Titus 2:11

"For the Grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men."

What does Ephesians 2:9 say?

Ephesians 2:9
"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"

So you’re saved, how? Through Faith! So what can you label this verse? Faith. All right then the next verse.

**Titus 2:12**

"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world:"

What’s that? That’s your labour of love. Do you see it? And what’s the next verse, verse 13?

**Titus 2:13**

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;"

So we have Faith, Love, and Hope. Isn’t it amazing? I mean you just can’t escape it, these are the three things of Paul’s teaching that are appropriate even today. Much of what he wrote about in I Corinthians has fallen through the cracks scripturally, but not those three. **It is still predominant in our understanding of the Scriptures that we have to have faith, we have to have love, that’s the reason we serve, and we have to have hope.**

I thought of this during the night. Iris woke up at 3 AM and I said, "You know I haven’t slept a wink yet?" She said, "What’s the matter, are you thinking about tomorrow?" I said, "That’s all I can think about." So I don’t think I got an hour of sleep last night, because all of these things just keep coming up, coming up. And I think, how in the world can I put all of that in just four thirty minute segments? But here’s what I had to realize, that if we are exercised by our faith, and we are doing the labour of love, and we are living in that expectancy and hope that maybe today or tomorrow the Lord will come.

Do I have to go down to the book store, and I don’t say this with any malice toward book authors, but really if you have all of this going for you between these two covers, do you have to read book after book. I don’t think so. I don’t need a book on how to treat my wife, just ask her. I don’t need a book on how to treat my kids. Ask them, I’m not worried what they will tell anybody. I’ve never had to read a book on how to do this and how to do that. If you’re into this BOOK it’s going to come naturally.
And this is hard for even Christians to understand. That you don’t have to have a book that will tell you how to live victoriously, you’ve got it. Or you don’t have to have a book telling you how to pray, you’ve got it. You don’t have to have a book telling you how to study the Bible, you’ve got it. It explains itself. The Holy Spirit leads us into all truth. But oh we’re all shook up all the time by all these extraneous forces on the how to. And like I say, I’m not condemning them, but all I’m saying is, it’s really not necessary, if you can once get a handle on the Word of God. Now back to I Thessalonians.

Oh my goodness, I think we can come on down to verse 4. Now don’t lose sight of the kind of people he’s writing to. He’s only had 4 weeks with them, they were steeped in pagan idolatry, and as I have taught from this point for years, when you had paganism what was the moral climate? It was rotten through and through. They had almost no, what we call Biblical morality, and these people were no different. So Paul had brought them by simply proclaiming the Gospel, the good news out of that immoral pagan background,

I Thessalonians 1:4

"Knowing, (he didn’t have to wonder, he knew these Thessalonians were believers) brethren beloved, your election of God."

Now don’t let that word election throw a curve at you. That just simply means, that you’re cemented in. You are in the Body, you have been placed in that place of adoption that he taught back in Ephesians, which was reserved for every believer. Now verse 5.

I Thessalonians 1:5a

"For our gospel..."

The one that he and Silas, and Barnabas, had now been proclaiming to the Gentile world. The Gospel Paul defines so clearly in I Corinthians 15:1-4. A lot of times Paul uses the plural pronoun we, us, and our, but you know what he’s really meaning? Himself. I just read that again the other night that this was very typical of the writers of this day and time. In order not to become egotistical they would use the plural pronoun, and not necessarily mean plural, but rather he’s speaking of himself. So you could very safely say,

I Thessalonians 1:5-6a
"For my gospel (for that’s what he says over and over. My Gospel) came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. 6. And ye became followers of (Peter, James and John? NO that’s not what it says. But rather you became follower of) us,..."(me)

Now come all the way back to I Corinthians chapter 4. and let’s follow up on that real quick. We’ve only got a minute left, so we’ll only have time to look at a couple of them, but they say it all.

I Corinthians 4:16

"Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me."

Do you see that? Paul says, "be ye followers of me!" Now come on over to chapter 11 verse 1.

Transcribers note: As Les was looking for I Corinthians 11:1, he accidentally turned to II Corinthians 11:1, and didn’t have time to finish the verse, before time ran out. He will pick up with that thought in the next lesson

I Corinthians 11:1

"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ,"
Now in our last lesson I couldn’t find the right verse to give you as we closed, as I was in II Corinthians chapter 11 rather than I Corinthians chapter 11. That just keeps you humble you know. I’m going to finish my thought though in this half hour because we trust that most of our television audience watch us every morning. Now let’s continue on with I Corinthians chapter 11 with this admonition from the apostle Paul to follow him. You know, everybody’s got the idea that we have to walk in the footsteps of Jesus but Paul doesn’t teach that. We follow Paul, who follows Christ. So actually yes, Christ is preeminent in our life – not Paul. Christ is the one who died for us, not Paul. But Paul is the one who has been commissioned to be our apostle. And it’s through his writings that we have the Word of God for Church Age believers. Now let’s jump back in where we should have ended in I Corinthians chapter 11, verse 1.

_I Corinthians 11:1_

"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

Now the next time he says it is in Philippians chapter 3, verse 17. And you know I’m always stressing the apostle Paul did not have an ounce of conceit or egotism. He was probably as humble as could be. But the Holy Spirit led him to say these things so that we can get it straight. Otherwise it would get confusing if we were told that, yes, Paul’s got the message, but we follow in the footsteps of somebody else. So we follow Paul, who followed Christ.

_Philippians 3:17-19_

"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. 18. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19. Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind (what kind of things?) earthly things."

They are materialistic and consequently that flies in the face of Paul’s admonition to be first and foremost, spiritual. And then God will provide our material needs. Now let’s go back to I Thessalonians where we left off. We’re now ready for verse 7. Let’s read verse 6 again to just pick up the flow.
"And ye became followers of us, (speaking of himself) and the Lord, (he follows the Lord and we follow him) having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: 7. So that ye were ensamples to all that believe (in other words, to all new Christians throughout Greece. Remember Greece, in Paul’s day, was divided into two states, Macedonia to the north and Achaia down to the south.) in Macedonia and Achaia. 8. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith (It was their faith that so astounded their fellow Greek people.) to Godward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. 9. For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, (and this is the verse we covered in our last half hour) and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;(that was the response of love) 10. And to wait (the blessed hope. And Paul thought that the Lord would come in his lifetime. Now, of course, we think the same thing. We think the Lord’s going to come in our lifetime and I think we’re appropriate in that attitude.) for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

Now I have to feel that the wrath to come here is not speaking of Hellfire, not the Lake of Fire, but it’s speaking of the Tribulation wrath. It’s speaking of that wrath and vexation that Psalms 2 prophesied would come upon the world after the world had rejected the Messiah. And as we showed in our timeline this afternoon how that now the period of time has been opened up to include the Church Age and as soon as the Church Age is completed and the last believer has been brought in, then, of course he has to take it out of the way and continue on where he left off with the Nation of Israel.

I may have shared it before on this program, but early on in our television ministry I had a young Jewish listener out in California who was an Orthodox Jewish fellow and he was under the tutelage of the Rabbis and he was in a Yeshiva and he would call periodically and we had a lot of good conversations. I’ll never forget the one that hit me the hardest. He said, "Les I know that you’d like to convert all of us Jews and make us believers. But if that were the case, and the Lord would come as you expect Him to come, there wouldn’t be any Jews left here to fulfill prophecy!" TRUE!!! Isn’t that exactly true? There has to be the Nation of Israel, on the scene, to fulfill the program that initiated with Abraham. And so we can’t expect every Jew to become a believer. They have to be here for when Christ once again deals with them on the basis of the Abrahamic Covenant. So never lose sight of that.

That doesn’t mean we don’t have a concern for Jewish people. Of course we do. But on the other hand we have to realize the nation is going to have to be intact. That’s
why I’m not too worried about this peace process. I know Israel is going to get squeezed. Israel is going to come under a lot of pressure to give up the Golan and the West Bank. But you rest assured they’re not going to push Israel into the sea. Because the Nation of Israel is merely there as a prop on God’s stage, waiting for the curtain to be lifted and the final days would be brought to fruition. Now let’s go on the chapter 2 of I Thessalonians and verse1.

I Thessalonians 2:1

"For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:"

Boy, I guess not. Here he comes into this pagan city, no doubt still stiff and sore. Some of you have played football. Some of you have done various kinds of work. Gardening, haying, etc. And the next day, how do you feel? Like somebody has just beaten you with ball bats. Well, they had him! Paul and Silas had just been beaten up there in Philippi with the scourges of the Romans and cast down into the dungeon without benefit of antiseptics or antibiotics, and so I can imagine that by the time these men walked into Thessalonica they were, as we would say, as stiff as a board. They must have been physically miserable. But, in spite of it, what an impact they had on that pagan city, so that they were able to establish a little local congregation of believers in just four weeks time. I have to just keep emphasizing that. Can you imagine doing that in four weeks out of paganism. And then be able to have them so establish that in spite of all the pressure of persecution that you know came upon them from two quarters.

From the Jewish element, who hated everything Paul was doing, as well as from the pagan element who, of course, had nothing to do with Christianity. In fact, come back with me again to where we were in the beginning our Thessalonian study to Acts chapter 17 and jumping in at verse 10. Okay, here they come from Philippi to Thessalonica down to Berea and that’s where we’re going to pick it up here in the Acts account. And then he goes on down to Athens and down to Corinth, where he writes these two little letters, probably in close proximity back to the church up there in Thessalonica. Now they had escaped the persecution in Thessalonica.

Acts 17:10

"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11. And these (the Bereans) 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.(that Paul was teaching)12. Therefore many of them believed: (because they were able to search the scriptures and then realize that Paul was not something from
out of left field. He was not coming out of the woodwork, but he had the truth of the Word of God.) also of honorable women which were Greeks (Gentiles) and of men, not a few."

Now look what happens. As soon as the Jews up there in Thessalonica, which was about 30 something miles distance. From what I can gather from history, there was between 30 and 40 miles between all of these cities. Between Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea and on down to Athens.

Acts 17:13-14

"But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also (not willing that he get away with anything) and they stirred up the people. 14. And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea; but Silas and Timotheus abode there still."

Now let’s come back to Acts again and just see how the Jewish people, bless their hearts, just could not give in to the fact that these Gentiles were coming in to a relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Come back to Acts chapter 13 for just a moment. This is at the very onset of Paul’s missionary journey, coming from Antioch, stopping on the island of Cypress and Barnabas, of course, was with him on this trip.

Acts 13:6-7

"And when they had gone through the isle (the island of Cypress) unto Paphos (which is clear on the west end) they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus; 7. Which was with the deputy (governor, the ruling individual) of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man (a Roman, a Gentile) who called for Barnabas and Saul and desired to hear the word of God."

Now isn’t it amazing that without benefit of any New Testament Scripture whatsoever, all they have if anything, is the Old Testament. And yet, even these pagan Gentiles, as soon as they got word of Paul, they knew that he had the Word of God. Even before his letters were written. Isn’t that amazing? And so here is this governor of the Island of Cypress, hears that Paul is in the vicinity and he wants to hear the Word of God. And so he calls for him. Now let’s go on to verse 8.

Acts 13:8
"But Elymas the sorcerer (the Jewish gentleman up there in verse 6) (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy (governor) from (what?) the faith (from believing)"

So right from the very beginning of Paul’s missionary ministry to the Gentiles, he has opposition from the Jewish people from start to finish. And they never quit. The early churches were constantly bombarded by either the Judaisers, who were, I think, even believers of Christ’s ministry and they had the Gospel of the Kingdom, but that still implored them to be circumcised and to keep the Law of Moses. And so even a lot of those Jews came in and infiltrated these early Gentile congregations, that they had to keep the Law of Moses or they couldn’t be saved. In fact while you’re in Acts, you might as well turn the page to Acts chapter 15. Now this is exactly what the early congregations were being subjected to and to which Paul had to constantly overcome one way or another. Either by writing them a letter or sending back Timothy or Titus or one of his helpers, but it was a constant battle to keep these Jewish believers from Jerusalem at bay.

Acts 15:1

"And certain men which came down from Judæa taught the brethren, (Paul’s converts) and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."

Now listen, people were just as human then as they are today. My, how many phone calls don’t I get where somebody calls and says, "Les my pastor tells me that if I don’t do such and such, I’m going to go to Hell." Well nobody likes to hear that, and it scares them to death. My, sometimes they’re in tears because they’re so afraid. Well these people were no different. Here comes these Jews from Jerusalem, seemingly having religious authority, and they bombard these poor earthly Gentile believers with " Well that’s all well and good as far as Paul went, but he didn’t go far enough. He should have told you that you have to be circumcised, and keep the Law of Moses." Now look at verse 5, and it’s repeated again.

Acts 15:5

"But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, (these Gentile believers) and to command them to keep the law of Moses."

Who commanded this? Believing Jews! Do you see how plain that is? And that’s what the early congregations were constantly subjected to. But Paul kept fighting back with his theme, "You’re not under Law, you’re under Grace." My, I think one lady put it so
appropriate the other day when she said, "Les I just feel like the shackles have fallen off." Well said! Because that’s what legalism does, it just shackles people, puts them under fear and superstition. As I said several programs back, you look at every religion in the world, and you will find that’s how they control their people. See, that’s really- who was it? Lennon or one of the Communists in Russia called religion the opiate of the people, and most religions are because religious leaders will put them under fear and superstition and that’s how they control the masses.

Now you and I aren’t under that, we’re not under any kind of fear and superstition, but rather we’re under Grace, and this becomes our guide, and we follow the apostle Paul of course as he followed Christ, we practice faith, hope, and charity. Now back to I Thessalonians, enough for that. Let’s just drop in at verse 5 now, and again I want you to see the heart of this apostle. He could have gotten puffed up, he could have gotten proud and egotistical seeing what an impact he was having on the Roman Empire. He was accused of turning the Roman Empire upside down single-handedly with the Lord’s help of course. So he could have gotten puffed up but it was just the opposite.

I Thessalonians 2:5-8

"For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness: (the apostle Paul never came into a city with the idea that he was going to see how much of their money he could get before he left. Never! That’s quite a change from today isn’t it?) 6. Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. 7. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: 8. So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us."

Now verse 9, and this is something I want you to see and you can realize why again the Jews put so much doubt on the man’s ministry.

I Thessalonians 2:9

"For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable (or put in debt) unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God."

Now what was part and parcel of the Jewish mentality with regard to the priesthood? Hey, they didn’t have to work to make their living. Those of the tribe of Levi had all their needs provided by the other 11 tribes. Isn’t that right? Sure, that was the purpose of the tithes and offering under the Law. So the Levi’s had to do nothing but just
simply the service at the temple. They didn’t have to work with their hands to make a living, but Paul did. So what would they say? If you’re a true man of God, you should be able to live off of the tithes and offerings of God’s people. Boy that sounds typical doesn’t it? But Paul says, "I won’t do it. Oh I could, and I have every right to, the Old Testament did say, you don’t muzzle the ox who treadeth the corn. I do have a right to expect my livelihood, but I’m not going to do it. I’m going to work with my own hands day and night if need be to provide my own physical needs so that none of you pagan Gentiles can ever accuse me of coming in merely to take your money." Pretty good idea wasn’t it? And so he rehearses this throughout this Thessalonian letter that he never came into a Gentile city with the idea of living off the people, although he certainly had every right to do it. Now verse 10.

I Thessalonians 2:10

"Ye are witness, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believed:"

Paul was so careful in his daily behavior that none of these new Christians could suddenly become disenchanted with some kind of hypocrisy.

I Thessalonians 2:11

"As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,"

Do you see what a love he had for these pagan people? Remember they were pagans, they had just recently been offering offerings up to the gods and goddesses of the pagan world. They had their idols in their homes, and Paul loved them with a love where he would have given his life for them as a father would his children. Now verse 12.

I Thessalonians 2:12-13a

"That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. 13. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, (underline that next portion) ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God,…" 

Wouldn’t that be something if people could say that of all of us? Whenever we quote a Scripture, or make a doctrinal statement that people could just sit up and say, "Boy, now that’s God speaking!" When the Word of God permeates us it’s just going to
flow through us and they’re going to know whether we’re fake or not. Reading verse 13 again.

I Thessalonians 2:13

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, (every thing he spoke to these pagan was understood to be the Word of God) which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

See the unbelieving world can never accept the Word of God whether it’s in this Book or in your mouth or mine. But people of faith can immediately recognize the truth. Now verse 14.

I Thessalonians 2:14

"For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: (now don’t let that throw you a curve. That simply means that the same God who began the work with Christ’s earthly ministry, and the assemblies there in Jerusalem, had now gone on to the places where Paul was sent to the Gentiles. It’s the same God.) for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:"

Stop and think a minute. How did the rank and file Jews who remained true to the Mosaic system treat the Jews who embraced Jesus of Nazareth? Hey, Saul of Tarsus was the typical example. What did he try to do? Obliterate them, threw them into prison, voted against their being left alive, he voted for their death, and so it wasn’t just the Gentiles who suffered at their hands, their own fellow Jewish people did, also, and this is what we have to remember.
Lesson Two • Part I

The Body of Christ Removed from the Earth

I Thessalonians 2:15 – 4:18

I guess as we begin that I should remind you that Paul is writing to a group of believers now with whom he had only spent somewhere between 3 and 4 weeks. He calls it 3 Sabbaths which could be 21 days or on up to 26 or 27, but nevertheless it was a very short period of time that Paul had with the Thessalonian believers. I want you to also remember that they came out of abject paganism without absolutely no knowledge of the Scriptures. I mean he’s not dealing here with Jews who had been steeped in the Old Testament, but these are pagan Gentiles. So always keep that in mind how he must have, by the power of the Holy Spirit, unloaded so much on these people that they retained it, because when we get to chapter 2, you’ll see he says, "You know I told you these things."

Well that was not a superfluous statement. He knew that these people understood all the basics. Now as we come out of the ending of our last program we’ll pick right up in verse 15 where Paul is speaking of the Jews there in verse 14, who had been opposing him every step of the way. He makes reference to the Jews in verse 24 of the ones who had killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us. In other words, we know that all the way up through Israel’s history that even though they were the covenant people, they were God’s favorite people, yet they were just as rebellious as any other race of people.

I’ve always said that I think the reason it was that way, was that even though they’ve had that exalted position among the nations, yet when it came down to the person they had the same old Adam that we Gentile have. So what it really proves from Scripture then is that no matter who you are, Jew or Gentile we’re all sons of Adam, and have that rebellious sin nature.

Here of course it’s epitomized by the Jew because Paul himself was one, and a thought just comes to mind, and if Monte was here, he’s say, "Here we go again." I know I start out in a verse, and almost immediately another reference comes to mind. When that happens then I have to take you to that reference also. So the thought comes to mind to turn to a verse in Romans chapter 9, and evidently I’m suppose to use it. I want you to remember that Paul never lost his love for his kinsmen according to the flesh, the Jewish people. So even when he makes statements like verse 14 in Thessalonians that they were the ones who rejected and killed the Lord Jesus, it wasn’t that he had any hatred for them, because he had a deeper love for the Jew then
any other human being could have had short of the Lord Himself. Let’s begin in verse 1, and look how the apostle pours out his heart.

**Romans 9:1-3**

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost. 2. That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. 3. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

Now a greater love than that a man couldn’t have, there was only one other person in all of Scripture who made that same kind of statement concerning his own people, and who was it? Moses. Moses said in effect, "If only God could spare Israel, he would ask that his own name would be blotted out from the Book of Life." Satan knows that if he can destroy Israel, then he’s got the battle between him and God won. So consequently remember also that the Jewish people are under a constantly Satanic attack because of their position in the world. Now back to I Thessalonians, chapter 2. I had to do that so people couldn’t say, "Well Paul hated the Jews." No he did not, he had a love for the Jewish people like no one else. So Paul is making reference here to his kinsman.

**I Thessalonians 2:15a**

"Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us;…"

Which we know they did. All the way up through the Old Testament, if Israel didn’t like the message they’d kill the messenger, and many times they didn’t like the message of the prophets so they would kill them. In fact Jeremiah, at the time of the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem, when they seized the city, and where did the Babylonians find Jeremiah? Down in some deep, dank dungeon, because Israel didn’t like Jeremiah’s message. Now reading on.

**I Thessalonians 2:15b-16**

"and they pleased not God, (of course not) and are contrary to all men: 16. Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."

Now let’s go back to the Book of Acts, chapter 13, and we’ll see that from the onset of Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles, this was what he was up against. I think we can begin with verse 4 so that you can get the background of how Paul had constant opposition from the Jewish people. Now you’ll remember in the earlier verses of the
chapter, they were commissioned from Antioch to go on their missionary journey, but here in verse 4 well pick it up.

**Acts 13:4-7**

"So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. 5. And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; and they had also John to their minister, (now here it comes) 6. And when they had gone through (to the western end, to) the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus; 7. Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, (no doubt a Roman) a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God."

Do you see that? Here we have a Gentile now who is getting exercised now by the Holy Spirit to hear the Word of God. Now look what happens in verse 8.

**Acts 13:8**

"But Elymas the sorcerer (a Jew) (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith."

Now this was at the very onset of Paul’s ministry to Gentiles, and just an indication what he’s going to experience from here till he’s finally martyred. So what happens next?

**Acts 13:9**

"Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, 10. And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, (remember he was a Jew, but he was a magician, a sorcerer, and was drawing magical arts from the Satanic powers, and that’s why Paul refers to him as a child of the devil) thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"

Now at this point we see Paul exercising some of his early apostolic powers which later on he no longer makes reference to, but now he uses that power, and he says –

**Acts 13:11a**

"And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, (physically blind) not seeing the sun for a season,..."
It was for a limited period of time that Elymas the sorcerer was going to be blind. This is also part of prophecy because it is telling us, that this is a sample of the Jewish people all through the period of the Church Age, this 1900 + years now. But remember the Jewish people's blindness is not permanent as their spiritual blindness is going to end one day. They are yet going to see the coming Christ, not at the Rapture, but at His Second Coming in all of His glory, they’re spiritual eyes will be opened, and as the Old Testament says, "a nation shall be born in a day." But until then, they are blinded as Paul tells us in Romans chapter 11, to these things and so consequently they are the chief opposition to the Gospel going out to the Gentile world. Now come back with me to I Thessalonians chapter 2, and moving on into verse 17.

_I Thessalonians 2:17a_

"But (Paul writes) we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart,…"

Remember he had only been with them physically for 3 or 4 weeks, and now I think he’s writing from Corinth in southern Greece. And oh, he has such a heart for these new believers whether it was back in Asia Minor or at Ephesus or Philippi or here in Thessalonica, it made no difference because of his love for those new believers. Iris and I can relate to that, as we are beginning to get a little glimpse of that. We just got back from Florida, and my goodness, the sweet fellowship we enjoyed with those folks, it’s just unbelievable, and next week we’re going out to Denver for a seminar and then down to Albuquerque and it will be the same way. Everywhere we go we find believers who have such a love, we can understand how Paul felt about these folks he had brought out of darkness and into the light of his Gospel of I Corinthians 15:1-4.

So that’s what he’s talking about, and he was only able to stay there with them for 3 or 4 weeks. Maybe we should stop for a few moments and see why Paul had to move out of Thessalonica so quickly when he had such a good response to the Gospel he was presenting. Again come back to the Book of Acts chapter 17, and let’s begin with verse 1, and then we’ll pick up with the account beginning with verse 5. This is why he had to leave Thessalonica after just a few short weeks.

_Acts 17:1_

"Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:" Now let’s pick up the account beginning with verse 5.
Acts 17:5-6

"But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people, 6. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;" Making reference to what Paul had accomplished in his previous places he had visited. Now verse 7.

Acts 17:7

"Whom Jason hath received; and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus."

Boy, they’re subtle aren’t they? See, the Romans probably would not have had much concern about this new sect of Christianity, but when the Romans got wind that the sect was proclaiming a coming King, and kingdom, that got under their skin. So consequently they persecuted the Christian sect unmercifully, because the Jews brought to their attention that they were proclaiming another king, who would be in total opposition to the Caesars, Now verse 8.

Acts 17:8-10a

"And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. 9. And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go. 10. And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea:…"

From there they went on to Athens and on down into Corinth. But now drop down to verse 13. This is all that Paul is making reference to now in his letter to the Thessalonians.

Acts 17:13-14

"But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people. 14. And when immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea:…"

So they had to send Paul away again, and this was constant in his ministry that wherever he had some converts, wherever he begin a small congregation of believers the Jews would come in and either infiltrate them with false teachings, or would
physically persecute them, and this was in addition to what the Roman government themselves brought in. Now coming back to I Thessalonians chapter 2 again, and hopefully we can stay here till at least the end of this lesson. Now verse 18.

_I Thessalonians 2:18_

"Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us."

Now we always have to realize that the Satanic powers are in constant opposition, and using whatever vehicles Satan can use. So here again we find the true culprit are the Satanic powers that hindered him. Now verse 19.

_I Thessalonians 2:19_

"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"

Do you know what Paul is making reference to? When the Lord comes, and we have that great meeting in the air, Paul recognizes that he will probably never see these believers again in the flesh, but as soon as they come into the presence of the Lord at His coming he will know them, which is another scriptural truth. We’re going to see and know our loved ones when we get to glory, in fact we’re going to be reunited even before we get back to glory itself, in the meeting in the air. Now verse 20.

_I Thessalonians 2:20_

"For ye are our glory and joy."

Now remember in the original letter there were no chapters heading, so let’s go right on into chapter 3 which would actually be the next paragraph of his letter, and what’s the first word?

_I Thessalonians 3:1_

"Wherefore (because of this relationship that he had built in those few days he had been with these Thessalonians believers, Paul says,) Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;"

And instead of taking the chance of going back into probably physical harm, he stayed in Athens. Now verse 2.

_I Thessalonians 3:2a_
"And sent Timotheus, (Timothy) our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you,..."

See this is what new believers always need. So many times new believers may come in and have a profession of faith, and then no one sticks around to teach them, and what happens? They just fall away. Now if they were genuinely saved they won’t lose their salvation, but they lose their impact in their community, unless they are stable in the Word. And that’s where teaching comes in, and this is where I have faulted Christendom as a whole, because people are not taught the deep things of Scripture. They are just fed milk, and Paul makes it so plain then Timothy would be sent back to these little congregations to establish them in the faith. To teach them these basic truths. Now finishing the verse.

_I Thessalonians 3:2b_

"... and to comfort you concerning your faith:"

Faith is at the root of all of our Christian experience, but that faith has to be fed. In fact I’d like to take you to an appropriate verse that Peter wrote in his little epistle, it’s a perfect parallel. This is a verse that many of you know, but it’s good to exercise your fingers by turning the pages in the Book. And this verse 2 just says a truck load, as new born babes. And this is what all these believers in Paul were, they were fresh out of paganism, and were just as fresh to Christianity as new born babes that have just been born to it’s mother.

_I Peter 2:2_

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:"

But are you supposed to stay on milk? See Paul says in the Book of Hebrews 5:12-13, "that the problem was that too many believers never get off the baby bottle." They never get to the place where they can take in the meat and potatoes of Scriptures, and hopefully that’s what I try to do. I try to take people into the deeper things and not be content with the milk. Now back to I Thessalonians once again.

_I Thessalonians 3:3_

"That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto."

Now we in America know nothing of persecution. Oh we may hear some snide remarks made against us, we may have a few people stay away from us, but we don’t
have any real persecution, but that has not been the norm throughout Christianity. From day one the moment you took a stand for Christ, you also invited persecution, and if you doubt me you just look at some of the books on that subject. There have been millions upon millions of believers that went through horrible torture, and never relinquished their faith. Isn’t it amazing that these folks here in Thessalonica had just been won out of paganism with all of it’s appetite of the flesh, and all of it’s pagan worship, and they came out of that to face persecution, isn’t that something? Then to be able to be so strong that even in the face of death, and torture, and suffering they never relinquished their faith.

I wonder how many American believers could do that today? If all of a sudden we would be faced with torture just because we’re Christians. I hope you realize that we’ve been so blessed these last couple hundred years, because most of Christendom has had to suffer for their faith, and Paul makes that even plainer in Galatians chapter 4. It’s evident that when you become a child of God you become the object of hate and persecution by the world around us. Now back to I Thessalonians chapter 3.

I Thessalonians 3:4

"For verily, when we were with you, we told you before (see he didn’t promise them peace and prosperity, or if you’ll just become a believer every thing will just go your way. No, but it was quite the opposite. As soon as he brought them into a knowledge of salvation we told you before) that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know."

And the word tribulation here means a lot more than just problems and troubles. Tribulation was for those people abject persecution even to the losing of their life. So Paul had warned them, and in the time that had lapsed from the time he left them till he writes this letter, they had evidently come under intense persecution. Now verse 5.

I Thessalonians 3:5a

"For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith,..."

Can you imagine what was going through the apostle’s mind down there a couple of hundred miles south of Thessalonica, with no communication in those days like we have today? And he’d have to wait for maybe a letter or a messenger or something, and don’t you know he was just commiserating in his mind with these people. Knowing that they were under terrible persecution. Are they all standing fast, or are they slipping back into their old pagan ways? And that’s what’s on his heart, so it must have burdened him, as he wondered, "are they holding fast?" Now reading on in verse 5.
I Thessalonians 3:5b

"...lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain."

Don’t you know it just plagued the apostle to wonder if he had gone through all of his own persecution in vain? Remember not long before Thessalonica, he had been whipped unmercifully, thrown into the dungeon, and under normal circumstances probably would not have lived, but all of this he had done for the sake of the Gospel, and for the sake of these Thessalonian believers. And now he’s wondering, "did we go through all that suffering in vain?" So this is what’s on the apostle’s heart.
Lesson Two • Part II

The Body of Christ Removed from the Earth

I Thessalonians 2:15 – 4:18

Oh how it thrills our heart to hear from those of you who have gotten a new enthusiasm for the Word of God, and how you are now able to study it by yourself, or with your family. Remember the only reason I teach is to help people get interested in this Book. As you know we are not building an organization, nor are we after numbers, but oh, to get people into the Word.

Now let’s get right back into the Word, and we’ll be in I Thessalonians chapter 3:6. Remember from our last program we were showing that Paul had such a heart rendering concern for these new believers fresh out of paganism. He was wondering how they were fairing, and if they were still holding true to their faith under the intense persecution which he even warned them of as they made their profession of faith. Now verse 6, and we see Paul has gotten some news and the flavor changes.

I Thessalonians 3:6

"But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you:"

My, can’t you just feel the exuberance of the apostle’s reaction, how probably almost depressed with concern about these believers that he had to leave behind, and knowing that they were under a lot of pressure and then to get the good word from Timothy that they were holding fast. Now verse 7.

I Thessalonians 3:7

"Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress (that was his mental attitude) by your faith:"

Now they probably hadn’t gotten to the place yet where they were just exploding with a lot of good works and missionary efforts, and all the good things that certainly follow. But the number one purpose in bringing someone fresh out of a lost environment is to see their faith. To realize that they are taking to heart the things that God had spoken either through the Old Testament or through the letters of Paul. And again I always have to remind folks that at the time that Paul wrote these letters there was no New Testament. Now maybe the Book of James had been written, but even
that certainly didn’t have a lot of doctrinal truth in it for Paul’s converts. See, these people had no New Testament to draw on, and I imagine the pagan world had no access to the Old Testament either. The Jewish believers naturally would have, but not these pagan Gentiles. So to start with the fundamentals of their faith was all that Paul really counted necessary at this point in time.

And so even with us today, as you see new believers come into the Body of Christ, the first thing we have to establish is, are they taking God at His Word. Are they resting on the Word of God and not just some feeling or emotional thing. "Remember Faith is taking God at His Word. God has said only through the apostle Paul that He would save a person if they simply believed in their heart that Jesus died for their sins, was buried and rose again." And don’t go adding anything to that for your salvation, because God didn’t add anything to it or He would have had Paul include it in his epistles. Now moving on into the next verse.

**I Thessalonians 3:8-10**

"For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord. 9. For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; 10. Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, (oh how he longed to get back and once again see these new converts face to face.) and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?"

Paul wanted to bring maturity to their faith. Naturally a new believer doesn’t have the whole in understanding Scripture, and you don’t expect them to. Many of you have been believers for years, and many of the letters to us tells that you have been in Church for 30 or 40, or 50 years, and are just now seeing some of these deeper things that are not ordinarily taught in Sunday School or in a Sunday morning sermon. But it’s all here for every believer to feast on, so this is what Paul is referring to concerning these new believers. Now verse 11.

**I Thessalonians 3:11**

"Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you."

In other words Paul was hoping that providently God would lead him back up to Thessalonica.

**I Thessalonians 3:12a**

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another,..."
See that’s one of the first steps of our faith. It’s not so much we go out and become evangelists and missionaries right away, but oh, that we can manifest our saving faith by love to those who are in proximity. My, again just in the last week, we have had several who have called or written how that the Word has transformed their home life, and some of them were in a horrible situation. You know that just thrills us when we hear that, it just makes you want to carry on. Paul saw people come out of those same kinds of backgrounds, the paganism, and the drunkenness. Don’t think for a minute that drunkenness is something unique to the 21st Century. It’s been a plague to the human race from day one. So these people certainly had the same kinds of temptations, but as they came out of that background, and into the love of Christ, then Paul says, "that they would increase in their love one toward another". Now finishing the verse.

*I Thessalonians 3:12b-13a*

"...and toward all men, even as we do toward you: 13. To the end…"

Now everything has an end. There’s that old clique that the means justify the end or the end justifies the means. Well Paul is using that same concept, that at the end of all this there has to an end. And that is that–

*I Thessalonians 3:13b*

"... he may stablish your hearts unblameable…"

Oh, a lot of people don’t like that. They don’t like the idea that a believer, if the Lord should come this afternoon, and this believer had unconfessed sin in his life would go to heaven unblameable. Maybe as a believer we’ve had some bad thoughts even since we got up this morning, and the Lord comes, are we suddenly going to be shaking in our boots, and say, "Oh I’ve got unconfessed sin?" Not according to my Bible, but rather Paul says, "we’re unblameable!" Now remember that’s not license. That doesn’t tell us that we’re free to sin, and have evil thoughts, and just glibly go on our way. No, that’s not the idea at all. But it’s that comforting aspect that even if we have failed the Lord in the last 24 hours, and He should come today, we’re not going to stand before Him with all that sin on our back, because Paul tells us, "we’re unblameable!" Look at the verse again.

*I Thessalonians 3:13*

"To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."
Now let’s go back and use a comparative Scripture because after all this is Bible study. I’m not up here to see how much ground we can cover in a lesson. So come back with me to I Corinthians chapter 1 and Paul makes this so plain. I’ve even seen people get mad in my own class when I teach that a believer is unblameable. My, some almost burst a blood vessel because it makes them so mad, but I can’t help that, because I go by what the Book says, and not by what some denomination may be preaching or teaching, but what does the Word of God say.

Now let’s begin with verse 6, but before we do let me remind you what kind of congregation the Corinthians group was. They were carnal. Oh they had all kinds of problems, they had morality problems, they had attitude problems, just to name a couple. So always remember when you read these things, it helps so much to know the background of the letter. So these were carnal believers Paul was writing to, they’re still hung up on the things of the flesh. Now verse 6.

_1 Corinthians 1:6_

"Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:"  

They too had come out of paganism. They too had come out of the horrors of the lifestyle of Corinth, with all of it’s excesses. And they were still slipping occasionally because they were just human. But Paul says, "Christ was confirmed in you." Now verse 7.

_1 Corinthians 1:7_

"So that ye come behind in no gift; (God had given them all there was to give, and they too were) waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:"  

I think you all realize that the apostle Paul honestly thought that the Rapture would take place in his life time. At least he certainly wrote with that in mind. And then of course it wasn’t until he was about to face martyrdom that he realized that he was not going to see the coming of the Lord. But if Paul thought the Lord was going to come in the 1st Century then we’d better be ready in the 21st.

Now the verse we came for. I want you to highlight verse 8, underline it, but also write in the margins that to be found blameless is not license, but rather this is comfort. Even though we may fail, and we do, and we will continue to fail, but if the Lord suddenly blows the trumpet, and we’re translated out of here, this will be our position.

_1 Corinthians 1:8_
"Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now that’s comforting isn’t it? We don’t have to go to sleep at night shaking in our boots, and wondering, "Oh if the Lord should come before morning, have I got something that the Lord will hold against me? No!!!!! Remember it’s all under the blood of our Lord. And beloved rest assured in that! This is the very fundamental of our faith, that as a believer even though we’re still in the flesh, and we’re going to fail, our sins are still under the blood.

Now, yes, we want to keep a short account, I certainly believe in confessing as soon as I realize that I’ve sinned. But I’ve also said over and over that you don’t have to be begging God to forgive you, because that’s already a done deal. "Our forgiveness is complete, it’s done!" But we also have the comfort that even if we do fail, and then fail to confess it and the Lord should come, we’re not going to stand before Him and have to answer for unconfessed sin, because we’ll be declared "unblameable" in His sight. Now that, beloved, is so comforting isn’t it?

Now back to I Thessalonians. You know for years I have felt that the Lord has more or less given me a ministry of teaching believers. I have never felt that I was a great soul winner, but my goodness the way things are turning now, we find we’re both. But I’m still primarily inclined to teach believers, because when a believer is well taught he’s going to be a good witness, but you can’t be unless you’re taught, and are comfortable in sharing this good news of Paul’s Gospel, and the basic doctrines that go along with it. Now that’s the key to be a witness and a testimony as a believer. Know your subject, and this is the subject. Now then let’s go on into chapter 4.

I Thessalonians 4:1

"Futhermore (in other words Paul is telling us that he’s not through) then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more."

Who is he setting up as our example? Himself. Paul is the example of the believer. My, I had a phone conversation with someone just last night who said, "Well I thought we are supposed to follow Jesus." No we follow Paul who follows Christ. Let me show you how the Lord inspired Paul to tell us that. We’re short on time so I’ll just use one today, but there are many of them that we normally use when we teach this. It’s because the Lord Jesus was God. He was Deity. He could walk a walk that we humans couldn’t begin to follow. But this apostle is just as human as we are. He had the same reactions, he had the same emotions, so he becomes then the perfect example of one who was willing to suffer, and die for his faith. One who was always
ready to leave a witness and testimony wherever he went. I taught back in Philippians where he had the Roman guards at his side constantly, and when they would rotate their tour of duty, by the time they had spent a few days with the apostle Paul, they didn’t leave him just another Roman pagan soldier, but rather they left him a believer. And these soldiers would go to the end of the empire sharing their faith, and that’s why the Scripture could tell us with all honesty that, the doctrines of Grace had covered the then known world, the whole Roman Empire, and I’m sure that’s how it happened. Here it is then in I Corinthians chapter 4, and verse 16. It’s just a simple little verse that I suppose most people miss entirely.

I Corinthians 4:16

"Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me." And then in another verse he qualifies that.

I Corinthians 11:1

"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." Now he’s telling the Thessalonians the same thing here in chapter 4.

I Thessalonians 4:1a

"Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God,…"

Now again I read a commentary a while back what I have taught over and over, and that is when Paul uses the plural pronoun it wasn’t that there was several others involved. Sometime Barnabas, or Silas, or Timothy was, but he uses the plural pronoun only as a mark of humility. He didn’t just like to use the big I. So always remember that when he uses the plural pronoun, he’s speaking of himself.

I Thessalonians 4:1b

"...that as ye have received of us (me) how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more."

See, God never intended the believer to just be a little wallflower that He could say, "Oh boy look what I’ve bought with my blood." No, God wants people who are willing to grow in Grace and knowledge and be witnesses and testimonies of His Grace. Now verse 2.

I Thessalonians 4:2
"For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus."

Now remember when Paul speaks of himself as he does, it isn’t that he is the one that they were to worship. He isn’t the one that died for them, he is merely the one that the Lord Jesus Christ commissioned back there in Acts chapter 9 to take all of this to the Gentiles, the non-Jewish world, to you and I in this Grace Age. So here again he tells these Thessalonians how that in that 3 or 4 weeks he was with them, he gave them all these commandments that came by way of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now in order to qualify that, we have to go back to Galatians chapter 1 for a moment. I’m afraid that there are so many people out there that think that Paul simply wrote from an egotistical attitude, he was the one that had dreamed all of this up. In fact a lot of times the Judaisers would accuse him of. being an imposter, and dreaming up all these things. And I think that’s why a lot of Christendom today will not pay attention to the letters of Paul. I had a comment again just last week that they doubted that the apostle Paul should even be in our Bible. My, we would be destitute of everything except Law if we didn’t have Romans through Philemon. But see Paul qualifies it now in Galatians chapter 1 starting with verse 11. It’s been a long time since we looked at these, and this just says it all. When Paul says, "Be ye followers of me, even as I follow Christ." here is the basis of his authority as an apostle.

Galatians 1:11

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

Now do you know what that says? That means he didn’t learn all of this that he’s writing now in his epistles from the feet of Gamaliel. Now he learned the Old Testament, but he didn’t pick up these doctrines of Grace from Peter, James or John, because the Spirit of God purposely directed him in another direction, so that he wouldn’t be polluted by any of the things that Peter, James or John or the others my say. If he had been taught by them, his salvation message would have been the same as the one they shared, and that was believing that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, repentance and baptism in water. But rather the Lord revealed to him that our salvation message in this Age of Grace is, believing in your heart that Jesus died for your sins, was buried and rose again.

So Paul was insulated from them, and he received all these basic truths for Christianity from the ascended Lord. And again I can’t emphasize that enough. Everything that Jesus and the twelve taught were primarily before the cross, and
everything that this man teaches is after the cross, and so it had to come by revelation from the ascended Lord of glory. Now verse 13.

**Galatians 1:13-16a**

"For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church (or assembly) of God, and wasted it: 14. And profited in the Jews religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. 15. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16. To reveal his Son in me,..." (Paul)

See, through Paul’s teaching is how we have the further revelation of who Jesus Christ really is. You know so many folks in Christendom today don’t know who Jesus Christ really is. They just don’t know it, and the reason for that is they haven’t studied Paul’s epistles. We do not get a concept of who He really was until we get to Paul. We don’t get a concept of what we really are, until we get to Paul. Yes, Jesus referred to sinners, and the problems that the Pharisee and the Sadducees had with their pride, but never, never are we explained in Scripture that our basic problem is, "we’re sons of Adam." Only Paul shares "for as by one man sin entered and death by sin." Who was the one man? Adam. See, you don’t get any of that until you get to Paul’s letters, so these were all things that were revealed to this man from the ascended Lord. Now verse 16 again.

**Galatians 1:16a**

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

Consequently, since Paul is going to be a designated apostle to whom God is going to reveal things that have never been revealed before, the Lord isn’t going to muddle Paul’s brain by sending him back to Jerusalem and checking in with Peter, but instead God sent him in another direction. Isn’t that amazing? And most of Christendom misses this, He sent him for three years to Arabia instead of down to Jerusalem. And this is what Paul is making so plain in verse 17.

**Galatians 1:17**

"Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia,..."
Now direction wise, what is that? The opposite direction. Instead of sending him to Jerusalem God sends him into the desert so that his mind wouldn’t be cluttered with everything that Peter, James and John would want to put on him. But rather that he could get alone with the Lord in heaven, and have these doctrines of Grace poured out on him, and that’s why he’s constantly then taken credit for being the one to whom were revealed the mysteries or the secrets of God. And this is what you have to constantly keep in your mind. **Until you get into the depths of this apostle’s letters, you’re going to miss most of the basic doctrines of Christianity.**

Oh there’s nothing wrong with studying Christ’s earthly ministry, to be able to see His miracles, and all the things that He accomplished, but listen, you don’t find our basic doctrines back there in the four gospels. You have to get into this section of the Book that a lot of people would like to throw away, which is Romans through Philemon. Now in the minute we have left let’s look again at verse 1 on I Thessalonians chapter 4, so we’ll have a place to kick off from in our next lesson.

*I Thessalonians 4:1b*

"...that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk..."

I hear the statement all the time "walk the walk and talk the talk" or something like that. Well, this is what Paul is talking about, that as a believer we are to walk and to please God so that you would abound and grow in Grace and knowledge more and more. Now we all know how heart breaking it is to have a child maybe 4 or 5 years old who never matures. They can be 30-35 years old and they still have the physical and mental attributes of a 4 or 5 year old, and it is heart breaking. Iris is a nurse that has come across people like that. But listen, how many believers are in that same state in their Christian experience? They are still infants in their faith.
Lesson Two • Part III

The Body of Christ Removed from the Earth

I Thessalonians 2:15 – 4:18

Now let’s go back to I Thessalonians chapter 4 and pick up again with this mind of the apostle Paul toward these new believers fresh out of paganism. These things are written of course to encourage us as believers even almost 2000 years later. Now verse 2.

**I Thessalonians 4:2**

"For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus."

Paul didn’t dream these things up. And as he says in Corinthians, "I didn’t bring you a polluted product." Remember in I Corinthians, I showed you the Greek word was, "That he didn’t bring you a product that was like wine that had been watered down and sold as a legitimate product." Paul said, "I didn’t do that. I didn’t bring you something that was anything less then the truth." How else could it be any other way since he received it directly from the Lord Jesus Himself, from His ascended place in glory." He did not receive it second hand from the twelve, nor any other source, but straight from the ascended Lord.

**I Thessalonians 4:3a**

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification,..." Now that’s not a big word to scare people. Sanctification merely means a place of being set apart as holiness also means. Were not like the rest of the world around us, we’re to be different. As I’ve said so often, the believer is not to be an odd ball or some kind of kook that the world laughs at, but we are to be different in a way that our lifestyle is pleasing unto God rather than pleasing unto the Satanic world around us. So here in this verse Paul deals with one of the sins that has been paramount almost from day one, and that is sexual morality.

**I Thessalonians 4:3b-4**

"...that ye should abstain from fornication: (or sexual immorality) 4. That every one (not just the preacher or deacons or the Sunday School teachers, but every believer is to live a separated and a sanctified life.) of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;"
And what is our vessel? This body of flesh. This body, in fact when we get to the closing verses of this letter to the Thessalonians, he’s going to make reference to that. In fact just go ahead and turn to it, and we’ll hit it again when we come to it.

*I Thessalonians 5:23*

*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; (set you apart) and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body…”*

God is just as concerned with what we do with this body of flesh as what we do in the soul and spirit. Don’t think for a minute that God is only concerned with the Spiritual element. We have been left in this body of flesh, and it’s in the body that we promote the love of Christ to the world around us. Now go back to chapter 4. So we are to control the appetites of the flesh of this body that would be in honour and glory of the Lord Himself. He looks at the other side of the coin.

*I Thessalonians 4:5*

"*Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:*"

You have to remember that in the pagan world in which Paul lived, there was no real sense of morality, honesty or Godliness because they knew nothing of that. They survived only enough to hold their community together, but so far as having any integrity or honesty the ancient world knew nothing of that. In fact most of our western culture didn’t really become what it was until the King of England put out the Magna Carta. Then we had the Bill of Rights and so forth, but up until that time there wasn’t anything like that.

All of these things were prompted of course by Paul’s teachings concerning the Christian life and that has made western civilization what it is. Remember it if hadn’t been for Christianity, western civilization wouldn’t have preceded any farther than the rest of the world. But these are the things that have made the western world as progressive as it’s been, and as productive as it’s been. At least up until recent history even the secular world operated on a basis of a certain amount of honesty and integrity. Those of us who are a little older know that you didn’t have to draw up a ten page contract when you made a deal. Things were settled with a handshake. But that’s been watered down and no longer true, because we’re going back to much of the immorality and so forth of the pagan world. Now come back to verse 6.

*I Thessalonians 4:6*
"That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified."

In other words, the believer has a certain amount of God’s protection from the secular world around us. Now I do not say that, just because we’re a believer, all of a sudden nobody can touch us or harm us, we know better than that. But on the other hand we have a certain element of security that God is watching out for us. And even though He may permit Satan to touch us, even as Satan touched Paul by giving him the thorn in the flesh, whatever it was, but it was not without God’s permission. And it’s the same way with us, nothing can touch us without God’s permissive will, so we can rest in that, we can take comfort of the fact that we are not alone. Now verse 7.

*I Thessalonians 4:7*

"For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, (that’s where the Gentile world was anyway, and that’s where we would be anyway) but unto holiness.

Now that word holiness often scares people. People don’t want to be holy. But the word holy does not mean that all of a sudden we sprout wings and we become sinless beings, and are above the norm of Christianity or the world. But holiness is just simply set apart. In fact the vessels in the temple, the shovels for cleaning out the ashes, the tongs for lifting the sacrificial meat and so forth were all holy. Why? Because they were to be used for nothing else. And that of course is why Belshazzar got into trouble back in the Book of Daniel. He used those vessels that had been taken from the temple in Jerusalem and used them at his drunken banquet, and that was pushing it too far. So the handwriting came on the wall MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN, "Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting," - but what triggered it? They were using God’s holy vessels, and I think the same thing applies, if the unbelieving world touches a believer he’d better be careful, because on occasion God will intervene in such a way that the world will know that the believer is protected by God’s Sovereign Grace. Now verse 8

*I Thessalonians 4:8a*

"He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God,…"

Now I think we’ve got an Old Testament example that I’m going to use, and there may be some who would say, "That’s not appropriate" but I think it is. So come back with me to I Samuel chapter 8 for a moment. Here, Israel has been ruled by the judges that God has appointed, and Samuel is the last one, but now the people want a king. Samuel is now old and his sons have been anything but what they should have been. So that was the straw that broke the camel’s back in Israel. Now the Israelites had had
just about had enough of these judges. See the analogy is the same - the world hasn’t changed one bit. Human nature hasn’t changed, and God hasn’t changed.

**I Samuel 8:1-7**

"And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. 2. Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah; they were judges in Beersheba. 3. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, (sounds like politics doesn’t it?) and perverted judgment. 4. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah. 5. And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. 6. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said "Give us a king to judge us". And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. 7. And the LORD said unto Samuel, "Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."

Now isn’t that typical? You see, they weren’t rejecting Samuel the man, but rather they were rejecting the God under whom Samuel laboured. And it’s the same way today. You see, they do not show their hatred for Christianity because of the individual Christians, but rather it’s the God of Christianity that the world hates. Of course they’re prompted by the demonic forces of the great adversary, Satan himself. Now coming back to I Thessalonians chapter 4. So Paul says, our adversaries do not despise us personally as men, but they despise God,

**I Thessalonians 4:8b**

"...who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit."

Now another verse just comes to mind. We need to use every verse of Scripture that the Lord puts in our mind. Let’s look at Romans chapter 8, where Paul again makes it so plain, and this helps the believer to understand our position in this world around us. Why does the world around us do the things they do, why do they have the appetites they have? Why do they seemingly have no concerns about what God says? They seemingly never think of eternity, and that’s what I have to think of so often. Don’t they ever think about eternity? Don’t they ever stop to think of the horrors of the Lake of Fire that’s coming for them? No, they don’t because they are anti-God and they’re the enemies of God, so consequently it never enters their mind. Now you say, "Where do you get that?" Romans chapter 8, verse 5.

**Romans 8:5-7**
"For they that are after the flesh (that is the unsaved world around us) do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6. For to be carnally (or fleshly) minded is death; (spiritual death) but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; (we don’t ordinarily look at people being enemies of God do we? But they are. The carnal mind, the unsaved person is an enemy of God. Oh they may be perfectly good people, a good neighbor, a good parent, a good church member, but in his heart, his true thinking, his true motive is still anti-God. Now that’s what the Book says, it’s not my idea.) for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

The unbelieving world is not subject to the law of God, and neither indeed can it be. It’s impossible. It’s amazing that the world holds together as well as it does. It really is, when you realize the abject paganism of the ancient world, and when you realize that during the period of human history ever since then up unto now, the vast percentage of people having no concern about the things of God. It’s always been a small percentage of people who love God. And let’s go back to the Scriptures to prove my statement.

Poor old Elijah thought he was the only one left. Now that was the extreme wasn’t it? Israel at that time had a population of about 7 million people, which was about average. But God said, "No Elijah, you’re not the only one, I’ve still got 1/10 of 1 percent." Oh He didn’t put it in those figures, but God said about the same thing. "I’ve got 7000 who have not bowed their knee to Baal. But you see 7000 out of 7,000,000 is 1/10 of 1 percent if I figure right, and that’s about where we are today even in the Church Age.

Someone asked me the other day, "What percentage of the audience do you think you reach?" 1/10 of 1 percent. Now that’s what I really think we reach, even in a place like Tulsa. Now I hope I’m wrong, but 1/10 of 1 percent is about par. Now you go back to the flood and there were only 8 out of many, many millions. Remember they had been populating the earth for over 1500 years. But all the way up through human history God has never had more than just that small percentage. That’s why I maintain that I think if the Rapture would take place today the world would go on tomorrow and never miss us. Most people would never know that we’re gone. Oh, maybe our immediate family, and maybe our next door neighbor, but the world? They’re not going to miss us. It’s just going to be a small amount that will go because that’s the way it’s always been.

In fact, another illustration that I like to use is when the Lord had laboured in the land of Israel for 3 years in His earthly ministry - and when you get into Acts chapter 1, how many believers assembled there on the day of Pentecost? 120. 120 and I maintain that’s all there were in the area of Jerusalem, and that was the Lord Himself that was
labouring for 3 years. So don’t get discouraged - I don’t get discouraged - because I know that the Lord isn’t hung up on great numbers. Remember what He said, "Narrow is the way" and how many find it? Few! "Broad is the way," and how many find that? The most! So we always have to take these things into consideration. Now back to our text then in I Thessalonians chapter 4, and we’ll find that Paul goes on into verse 9.

_I Thessalonians 4:9_

"But as touching brotherly love (the love for fellow believers) ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." Now where does that come back from? Well the Ten Commandments. We’re to love our neighbor, and not to gossip, and covet, etc. So that is a basic concept even for Christianity, that we are to love one another.

_I Thessalonians 4:10a_

"And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia…" That was in Northern Greece. So it wasn’t just limited to Thessalonica, it’s just natural that believers are in fellowship with other believers, and that’s as it should be.

_I Thessalonians 4:10b_

"…but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more." What’s that driving at? We’re to be growing, as Peter puts it, in Grace and knowledge. How do you grow in Grace and knowledge? By feeding on the Word, as this is where it comes from. The more skilled you become in the use of the Word, the more mature you become in your Christian walk, your attitude, and your approach to everything around you.

_I Thessalonians 4:11a_

"And that ye study…"

Someone asked me in a letter the other day, "What did I mean by constantly referring to study compared to meditating?" Well you know the oriental religions emphasize meditation. But there’s a vast difference between meditation and study. When you meditate, you just sort of empty your brain, and mind and then anything can come in that wants to, so you’ve got to be careful.

I remember a missionary (to one of the oriental nations) had flown into Chicago from overseas, and was walking down one of the corridors of the airport, and saw someone
there in an oriental position of worship. This person was supposedly meditating, and he said, "I just stopped, and nudged him, and said, "What are you doing?" He said, "I’m meditating." The missionary said, "You are opening your mind to all the Satanic forces that are ready to come in." And that is what meditation really is to the unbelieving world.

Now I know as believers we can meditate, but you still have to be careful, because when you meditate and just open your brain and your mind to anything and everything that comes in, it’s the wrong stuff that’s going to come in as a whole, and not the good stuff. So what’s the difference between meditation and study? When you study you get out the Book, and you may have to get a concordance and some study helps, and you study. You compare Scripture with Scripture, and you can spend 2 or 3 hours, and the time goes like a snap of the finger. But how many believers take the time to do it?

A fellow told me yesterday, "You know I know that most Sunday School teachers, to prepare for their Sunday school lesson on Sunday morning, gets out his quarterly on Saturday night, and looks it over so that he can at least read it without making a lot of mistakes. On Sunday morning he stands before his class, and reads from that quarterly."

And it’s been my experience that they may get a little discussion now and then, and if someone that I’ve taught tries to get into the discussion his comments are not well received. So I hear it all you know. But listen, I don’t care who you are, don’t just look at that quarterly, you may have to use it for a little crutch, but get into the Book. Study the Word, and be ready as Paul says, "To give a reason for the hope of your calling." And how can you do that if you don’t know what the Book says, because this is where it’s at. So we are to study by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

*I Thessalonians 4:11*

"And that ye study to be quiet,…"

Boy that flies in the face of most of what we’re seeing and hearing today doesn’t it? Today you haven’t got a real come-on church service unless you blare the music, and make it sound like a night club. In fact I was reading a book awhile back and that’s exactly what this promoter of huge churches was saying. "Before we started our church growth program, I went out around the community to the various clubs, bars and so forth, and the first thing I noticed there wasn’t any organ music. So the first thing is to throw the organ out of your church, because the present day world doesn’t like organ music. Now bring in the electric guitars and all the other electrical instruments and blare the music, and the people will come."
Now that’s not what my Bible teaches. My Bible teaches that true Christianity is that which is quiet. It’s contemplation, it’s worshipful. And again I’ve got to go back to Elijah as he stood before the Lord, and a pillar of fire went by, the mountain shook in an earthquake, a storm blew by, but every time one of those things happened, what did the Book say? "God wasn’t in it." Then Elijah heard a still small voice, and who was in this still small voice? God! And this what we have to realize, we’re living in a day that is contorting the Scriptures, and God is still admonishing us to study be quiet before the Lord.
Lesson Two • Part IV

The Body of Christ Removed from the Earth

I Thessalonians 2:15 – 4:18

Now I know we’re not going to be able to finish everything that I wanted to teach today, but we’ll pick it up again next month with our next taping. I suppose as I teach that we have people from umpteen denominations even here in the studio. I made a comment when I was down in Florida in our last newsletter and it mentions that we’re in a Baptist Church on occasion and in a Methodist in another, and in a Lutheran Church when we go some place else, and I made the comment that I’m not ecumenical. Now an ecumenicalist will comprise whatever he has to comprise in order to get along with the whole, and I will not do that. I am uncompromising, but anytime I get an open door and the freedom to teach, I’ll go anywhere.

And then the Lord always confirms everything. After we got back from Florida, someone had sent me a book written by the old Bible teacher William R. Newell. In one section of the appendix he had some quotes from some great Bible teachers of the past, and it just thrilled my heart. One of the quotes was by Dwight L. Moody who said, "There’s not a drop of secularism in my veins, and if I thought there were, I’d drain it all out before night." Well that helped, and the next quote was by John N. Darby the great Bible teacher of England back in the 1800’s, and he said, "I will go wherever they let me preach the Word without any opposition." And the third one he quoted was by Doctor A.C. Gablelene, and he said almost word for word what I told the folks in Florida. "Any place there is an open door that I can proclaim the Word without any argument I’ll go." Well that’s just the way I am. I will go anywhere they’ll let me teach the Word without compromise, and without watering it down.

There’s a world out there that’s hungry, we know they are, and hopefully we’re doing our little part in satisfying. Now so much for that, we’re going to get right back into the Book in I Thessalonians chapter 4, and we’re going to start in verse 13, one of my favorite subjects, "The Rapture of the Church." Now that’s going to make a lot of people flinch, I know it does, but bless their hearts, I have learned of all the letters and books that I read that oppose the Rapture, the number one reason that they can’t see the Rapture as I see it is because they do not recognize Paul’s apostleship. They will mix what Jesus said in His earthly ministry about His Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation with what Paul said about the Rapture. They can’t separate the Word, and see that they are two different events. Oh they may use a few things out of Paul, but for the most part they reject Paul’s letters as authoritative and his apostleship, and
consequently they can’t agree to the Rapture, and when you do that, it’s understandable why they think the way they do.

My, if you don’t realize that the Body of Christ is a Pauline revelation - and he’s the only one that uses that term, and the beginning of the Body of Christ began with Paul, then the end of it also has to come from Paul. So Paul alone teaches this monumental thing that we look for at anytime, and that is the silent out-calling of the Body of Christ in what we call the Rapture of the Church.

Now always remember that in the last year or two I have started to use two timelines whereas I used to use only one. And I’ve put them on the board ahead of time to save a little time. What I’ve learned now to use, is that on this bottom timeline is the first part is the Old Testament program, and all of prophecy which includes even Christ’s earthly ministry, and even Peter in the early part of Acts, when he quotes from Joel chapter 2 and 3. Remember as the timeline unfolds we have, beginning with Abraham, this constant promise of a coming Redeemer, Messiah, a Tribulation, and Christ coming back and setting up His kingdom. This is prophecy and it’s laid out so clearly in all the Old Testament prophets.

I’ve always liked to use Psalms chapter 2 to illustrate this timeline. It’s a perfect illustration where Israel, along with Rome, rejected Christ. Psalms chapter 2 didn’t speak of crucifixion, but it speaks of their rejecting Him, and after that rejecting then would come the wrath and vexation of God in what we know will be the Tribulation. And then the next verse Psalms 2:6, says, "Yet have I sat my King on my holy hill of Zion." Which we know as the thousand year reign of Christ. And then you have Psalms 110:1 which says -

**Psalms 110:1**

"The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

Well what was that? That was a depiction of His ascension in Acts 1:9, and that one day He would return, as we see in Matthew 24:29-30. Well that was all prophecy. All the way through the Old Testament, the four gospels, and early Acts, and of course the Book of Revelation fills in the rest of the details, so this timeline is prophecy. It appears as one continuous line. Christ’s rejection, the 7 years of Tribulation, the Second Coming, and then the kingdom. Now of course wherever I teach the timeline the first thing I ask people is, "What does the Old Testament program lack?" What’s missing? **Well the Church Age is missing from that timeline. It’s not mentioned one time.** They had no concept that there would be 1900 + years where God would go to the Gentile world without Israel.
So since we know that the Church Age is missing from the timeline, we make another timeline and put in this parenthesis (the **Age of Grace, the calling out the Body of Christ, which is the Church**) Since the 7 year Tribulation, the return of Christ at His Second Coming, and the 1000 year Kingdom Age still must happen, we know that, in order for those events to happen, that God will take the believing Church out of the way, He has to resurrect the Church Age believers so that we can all be reunited and go on up into glory and face the Lord at the Bema Seat for rewards, so that has to include those who have died in Christ.

So what has happened? God has merely pushed the Tribulation, the return of Christ and the 1000 year Kingdom Age out into the future while He is filling up the Body of Christ. So the next event on God’s time-table after the Church is gone will be the 7 years of Tribulation, and then the Second Coming, and then the King and His Kingdom. So by putting the Age of Grace in this parenthesis it just clarifies all the controversy so far as I’m concerned. **This parenthetical period of time was something that only Paul had a revelation of and that’s why he calls it then, "The revelation of the mysteries."** These things that were kept secret in the mind of God. And then I always like to use Deuteronomy 29:29. You’ve heard it on this program over and over.

**Deuteronomy 29:29a**

"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us…"

Well it’s still true for us today. God has seen fit to keep this Church Age phenomenon and that’s what it really is, it’s just something out of this world. But He has kept it secret, and even the Lord Jesus Himself in His earthly ministry was so careful not to reveal the Church Age. He was meticulous in not giving a hint of a day coming when God would reach into the Gentile world with Israel out of the land, no temple, no priesthood, no place of blessing, and scattered amongst the Gentile world. **Then out of that scenario He would call out one by one the Body of Christ, by Grace through Faith + Nothing!**

Now here in I Thessalonians is 1 of 3 portions of Paul’s letters that deal with the Rapture. This is one, and if we have time in this lesson, we’ll go look at I Corinthians and we may have to pick up the third one in our next program. So these next 5 verses are the Rapture of the Church, and as we teach, notice the difference between this and the Second Coming. In the Second Coming it is attendant with humongous, cataclysmic events falling on the earth. War, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, outer space phenomenon, stars falling out of their orbits, the great hundred pound hailstones, the great Battle of Armageddon. That is all part of the Second Coming, and
is never mentioned in Paul’s letters as part of the Rapture, and that’s why the Lord could come this afternoon before we leave. He could come tomorrow, next year, we don’t know when, but the Rapture is not accompanied with great prophesied disasters.

The Rapture will be just that silent disappearance, when we believers will all be gone. And as I said in an earlier program, when we’re gone nobody but our lost immediate family, our lost next door neighbor will miss us. The world will go right on without us, and as one old boy told me one time, "You know Les, they’re going to have Church next Sunday morning as usual." That’s quite a statement isn’t it? I didn’t say it, he did, and he wasn’t from my denomination, but I would think it would be true of any denomination. After we’re gone there will be Church next Sunday as usual for many who thought they were ready. Now let’s look at the Rapture.

I Thessalonians 4:13

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, (and oh, isn’t that the case today? Most people are so ignorant of this. Every place we go, people tell us, "They don’t hear this from the pulpits anymore." Pastors have almost become afraid to let people know that the end is near. But you see Paul writes not to ignorant) brethren, concerning them which are asleep, (Paul is writing to believers concerning their loved ones who have died as believers) that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."

Now you know what Paul is saying here, that for the unbelieving family who have no knowledge of salvation, if they lose the mother and she was lost, then they also will probably never be saved, they will never see each other again. The unsaved person will never see their loved ones again. Hell is not going to be a country club, nor a place of reunion, it’s going to be total isolation and torment. But we as believers will see our loved ones again. The minute we get to the clouds of the air we will be aware of those who have departed earlier. So we don’t have to sorrow as those who have no hope. Now verse 14. Here is the qualification for being in the Rapture when it happens. This is so simple for everyone, that there should never be an excuse for missing heaven.

I Thessalonians 4:14

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, (that’s Paul’s Gospel salvation message of I Corinthians 15:1-4) even so them also which sleep (or have died) in Jesus will God bring with him."

Now here we have God and Jesus used in the same verse and they’re one and the same. So the departed soul and spirit of the believer is in the presence of the Lord in glory. They’re not walking in body tonight I do not believe, but rather they’re in a
place of bliss, they’re in paradise much like Abraham and Lazarus were in Luke chapter 16. They’re in a place of comfort in the Lord’s presence, but are not walking the streets of gold bodily. What are they waiting for? Resurrection day! Because they too are going to be given a new resurrected body. So the soul and spirit of all believers now who have died during this Age of Grace are waiting for that new body. I think this resurrection is only for the New Testament believer. The Old Testament believer will be resurrected I think over on the timeline here at the beginning of the Kingdom Age, as Daniel chapter 12 gives us a glimpse of that. But every believer that has died during this last 1900 years, their soul and spirit is up in glory waiting for this great resurrection day. Now read on in verse 15.

_I Thessalonians 4:15_

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep." (or who have died) In other words, the Lord is going to use a split second of time to bring these dead bodies, the ashes, bones, dust, whatever may be left in the grave.

_I Thessalonians 4:16_

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:"

The Lord is going to give Himself a second of time to bring them up from the grave first so that they can be reunited with that soul and spirit that Christ is bringing back with Him in glory. And that new body and their soul that has been waiting in glory will be reunited in the air. Now let’s read about that.

_I Thessalonians 4:17a_

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up…"

I know it doesn’t say Rapture, but that’s a term that most Bible scholars have applied to the two words, caught up. Now I read something the other day that I had never known before, and I hope I’m not quoting wrong, the Latin word here is ‘Raptura,’ which is where we get the word Rapture no doubt. So those of us who are alive and remain when the Lord should come will be caught up –

_I Thessalonians 4:17b_
"...together with them (the ones who have died previously) in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall ever be with the Lord."

Remember, Christ is only going to come for His Church to the air compared with His Second Coming when He will come all the way to the earth to the Mount of Olives to fight the battle of Armageddon. So in the Rapture He comes for us, and at His Second Coming 7 years later we come with Him to reign and rule. Now verse 18.

I Thessalonians 4:18s

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

And that is such a comfort to know we will miss God’s wrath, and will be with Him forever. Now the other companion portion of Scripture is found in I Corinthians chapter 15, and we use them in parallel. This is where study comes into play. Just compare, what one portion neglects to cover the other one does. So let’s pick it up in verse 51 of Chapter 15 which of course is the great resurrection chapter. In this chapter Paul says, "that if Christ be not risen from the dead, then we of all men are most miserable."

The whole basis of the Christian faith is resurrection! As I put it on the program a while back, I don’t know of another religion, and I don’t like that word, but I don’t know of another religion on the planet that teaches this concept. Now the oriental religions speak of reincarnation, but never resurrection. So remember only Christianity teaches that concept. This is a unique phenomena for us as believers in Christ. So Christ was the first fruit of a real resurrection. Now let’s look at the resurrection beginning with verse 51.

I Corinthians 15:51a

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

Or a secret. And who has been keeping it a secret? Well God has. God never saw fit to reveal this before, because the Old Testament didn’t have to know it because they’re not going to be in it. Peter, James and John were not aware of it, because they were still tied intricately to Israel. But now God is turning to a whole new group of people, the Gentiles, and now He see fits to open up His timeline and reveal this which had been kept secret for 4000 years. So this is why Paul is constantly using the word the mysteries. And this part of the mystery is -

I Corinthians 15:51b
"...We shall not all sleep,..." (or die physically)

Now nowhere else in Scripture except the account of Enoch and Elijah is there anyone transformed from this life to glory without death. But there is one group of people who will escape death, and experience this instant change. **That’s our blessed hope** as Paul calls it in Titus chapter 2. The blessed hope, the appearing, **not the Second Coming, but the appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ who will only come to the air for us.** Again at the Second Coming Christ comes to the Mount of Olives, but when He transforms us He only comes to the air. Now that’s a stark difference. To me it’s as plain as day, but for others who won’t use Paul for the Rapture, maybe not. So looking at the verse again.

**I Corinthians 15:51**

"Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, (die physically) **but we shall all be changed."

We can’t go to glory in this old body, so what has to happen? We shall all be changed, and always remember, when God said that He could put a camel through the eye of a needle, and they looked at Him in total unbelief, what was His next statement? **With God nothing is impossible!** Now I know when we look at this whole concept of the Rapture and that in less than a second of time, every believer who has died is going to be resurrected, given a new body, joining the Lord in the air. Every believer from whatever corner of the earth you may be dwelling is suddenly going to be changed. I know, I am logical enough to know that in the eyes of a secular world, that is impossible, but God says, "It’s not impossible!" Consequently I believe it. It’s going to happen, and the world will never know what happened. Now read on. We can’t go to glory in this body if we’re alive when He comes, so He’s going to change this body.

**I Corinthians 15:52a**

"**In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,** (the smallest divisible period of time. It’s less than the blink of an eye) **at the last trump;...**"

Now here again I have to confront those who say, "Well this is the trumpet in the Book of Revelation" No those in Revelation are 7 trumpets, and they’re angel’s trumpets. This is one trumpet, and it’s God’s trumpet, and that’s the difference. So God’s trumpet will sound.

**I Corinthians 15:52b**
"…for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, (with their new resurrected body) and we (who are alive and remain) shall be changed."

We’ll be changed between here and the ceiling no doubt, because we’re not going to stop at the ceiling, and there again the world can scoff and scorn in unbelief, and I don’t expect them to believe it. They can’t believe it, but we’re not like the world, we can believe it. I know with God nothing is impossible, and He can change several million people from this body of flesh to a resurrected body that is incorruptible in a blink of an eye. Now verse 53, and here’s the reason we must be changed.

I Corinthians 15:53

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, (this body must me made fit for heaven, and eternity) and this mortal (which is prone to die) must put on immortality." (so that we will never die)

Now we’ve got a few moments left, and I guess I will take time for the third portion where Paul speaks of the Rapture and that’s over in II Thessalonians chapter 2. Now I hope you realize that these are all from Paul’s epistles. I can’t take you back to Isaiah, and teach the Rapture. I can’t take you into the four gospels and teach the Rapture, nor can I take you to the Book of Revelation and teach you the gospel because it’s not in there. Only Paul has been designated the apostle of the Church Age, the apostle of the Gentiles. And Paul defends his apostleship over and over. And like I said in my newsletters that the man who instituted the Body of Christ as He calls himself in I Corinthians chapter 3, the masterbuilder.

I Corinthians 3:10a

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation,…"

So if he’s the one who laid the foundation, then he’s also the one who is going to reveal the removal of it, he has to. So now in II Thessalonians chapter 2, beginning with verse 1.

II Thessalonians 2:1

"Now we beseech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (see that was uppermost in his mind in both of these letters.) and by our gathering together unto him,"
Remember at the Second Coming He’s not going to draw people up to Him, He’s going to come to the planet, He’s going to stand, Zechariah chapter 14:4 says, "on the Mount of Olives." The angel told the 11 in Acts chapter 1:11, as our Lord ascended, "that 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." And at that time He’s going to come to the Mount of Olives. But you see Paul doesn’t teach the Mount of Olives or Armageddon, or cataclysmic events. Now verse 2.

II Thessalonians 2:2

"That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letters from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand."

And that should have read, "the day of the Lord" which will be the beginning of the Tribulation and judgment. Now verse 3. Here Paul clarifies it.

II Thessalonians 2:3a

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day (of the Lord, the Tribulation judgment) shall not come, except there come a falling away (or departure) first,…"

The word ‘apostasy’ has been translated several times "departure" in the New Testament, and is really a better translation than "falling away" although that is appropriate as well.

II Thessalonians 2:3a

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away (or departure) first,…"

What’s the departure? The Body of Christ leaving this earth, and the Tribulation can’t start until we’re out of the way, because this prophetic program was written primarily to the Nation of Israel. All the prophecy concerning Christ’s coming was to the Nation of Israel. The 7 years of the horrors of the Tribulation are directed first and foremost to the Nation of Israel. The Second Coming is to the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, where He’s going to set up His throne on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. When you get to Paul’s epistles, he speaks to none of that. He speaks of our position not in Jerusalem, but in the heavenlies.
Lesson Three • Part I

The Day of Christ vs The Day of The Lord

I Thessalonians 5:1-12

I always like to remind our television audience that we appreciate your letters, and your financial help and prayers. Iris and I have just returned from seminars in Denver, Albuquerque, and Phoenix, and oh my goodness, to see lives that have been transformed as a result of this simple television approach, and to know God is using it for His glory.

We’re ready to pick up in the last part of I Thessalonians chapter 4, so we’ll be going right into chapter 5, verse 1 in a moment. Now, in our closing verse in the last lesson we were talking about the Rapture, that out-calling of the Body of Christ, that silent disappearance of the believers, the resurrection of the believers who have died in Christ.

I Thessalonians 4:17-18

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them (believers who have died) in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." So this is a comforting factor for those who have lost loved ones. We will see them again! We will know them and they’ll know us. So these verses from verse 13 down through 18 are that precious moment that as believers we’re all looking for. Now to chapter 5.

I Thessalonians 5:1

"But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you." (because we won’t be here.) I think what Paul is referring to is that the Lord Himself had given enough indications, as well as the Old Testament prophecies, and we can see from all those things in our present time that the time is approaching. So he writes –

I Thessalonians 5:1-2

"But of the times and season, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2. For yourselves know perfectly (completely) that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night."
Now the first thing we want to qualify is the difference between the day of Jesus Christ, and the day of the Lord. Now the day of Christ is that day only Paul speaks of throughout His letters, and which we just referred to as the Rapture in chapter 4. But the day of the Lord is something that begins way back in the Old Testament and carries all the way through until we get to the Book of Revelation.

Now we’ll probably spend the rest of this half hour and the next for the most part, chasing these references down so that we understand that the day of the Lord is something totally different from the day of Christ. In fact maybe I should even add a little more to it on the board. The Rapture, as we’ve been looking at, is the day of Christ! The Tribulation and the Second Coming of Christ to end the Tribulations, those are all associated with the day of the Lord, the day of Jehovah. So we’ll look at the day of the Lord first by going all the way back to the Book of Isaiah chapter 2, and we’re going to drop in at verse 12.

Now you’ll see how every one of these references all use this same term, "the day of the Lord" and it’s a time of judgment. This will begin with the opening of the Tribulation and carrying right up to and including the Second Coming which we qualified the last time we were together as something totally different from the Rapture. Remember the Rapture is not associated with famine and pestilence and earthquakes. The Rapture can happen today or tomorrow, that’s the day of Christ! The day of the Lord, on the other hand, is always associated with the tremendous wrath of God and I want you to be looking for that as we use all these references.

 Isaia 2:12-17

"For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: 13. And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, 14. And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, 15. And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, 16. And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. 17. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day." Now those things will happen during the day of the Lord. Now staying in Isaiah let’s come on over to chapter 13, and drop in at verse 9, and as we go just constantly beware of what it says, it’s so plain.

 Isaia 13:9-11a

"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. 10. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall
be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. 11. And I will punish the world for their evil;"

Now this isn’t just Israel, although remember as we read all these verses that are attendant with the wrath of God, the day of Jehovah, the whole world will come under this, but Israel will suffer by far the greatest. It’s going to be what Jeremiah chapter 30 says.

Jeremiah 30:7

"Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: It is even the time of Jacob’s trouble…"

So not only Israel, but the world will also come under these horrendous acts of judgments. Now the world can scoff all they want to, and I know that they do, but let them scoff, the day is coming when they’re going to cry for something to put them to death to get them out of here, and it won’t happen. Now verse 11 of Isaiah 13. Remember this is God’s time of wrath and vexation as Psalms chapter 2 calls it.

Isaiah 13:11

"And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." Now go to chapter 24, and verse 21.

Isaiah 24:21

"And it shall come to pass (and you’d better believe it. The world out there never wants to consider that. They think that it will just keep on keeping on, but it won’t.) in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth."

So even the high and the mighty will never escape it. Alright, now go to chapter 26, verse 20. Now these are frightening words. But it’s God’s judgment that’s coming upon the earth. I guess I should ask a question. Why is one generation going to suffer so inexorably for the wickedness of mankind? It’s numbers! There are more people on the planet right now today than has lived previously all the way back to Noah’s flood. So God is dealing for the most part with the vast majority of the whole human race, because most of them are living today. At this moment we’re approaching 6 billion people that cover the earth. I can remember back in the early 70’s when I started teaching it was only 4 billion. So you see we’ve already gained, what? 50%. So it’s just going to keep rolling, and if the Lord doesn’t come for a time
yet, it will soon be 7 billion. Now look what He says concerning this end-time mass of humanity in verse 20.

_Isaiah 26:20_

"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation (God’s indignation) be overpast."

Now we know there’s going to be a remnant of Israel that will be protected, and this is who God is speaking to. This remnant is going to be down there in the mountains and God’s going to protect them during those last 3 years of the Tribulation. He’s going to provide for them like He did for Israel in the wilderness experience as they came out of Egypt. Now verse 21, and here’s the reason.

_Isaiah 26:21_

"For, behold the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

Now I know the first thing everybody thinks of when they read this is, "but I thought He was a God of love, Grace, and mercy?" He is, and has been now for all these hundreds and hundreds of years, but His patience is one day going to run out. Now even today when we see disasters, and loss of life, that’s not God’s wrath. Now He’s permitted Satan to bring it about, but God isn’t precipitating suffering of this world, that’s the god of this world who’s doing that. But once this day of the Lord begins, and the seven years of Tribulation open up, yes then it is no longer the Grace, and the Love of God, but rather then it will the wrath of God. In fact keep your hand here in Isaiah and turn back to Psalms chapter 2. This is a portion I use so often when I teach end-time events. I always use this when I put the timeline on the board of the Old Testament program. How that mankind would reject the Messiah, and say, "I’ll not have this man to rule over us."

_Psalm 2:4_

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: (that is at man’s ridiculousness to reject His given Messiah) the LORD shall have them (the nations of the world) in derision." And confusions, and we’re getting closer to that every day. Then verse 5, and here it comes. There would come a time after His rejection, and after His resurrection from the dead.
Psalms 2:5

"Then shall he (God) speak unto them (the nations of the world) in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." It’s coming! And as I teach this, I always use it as the Old Testament outline, and after his wrath and vexation, then in verse 6 we have the promise of the kingdom.

Psalm 2:6

"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."

Yes, Christ is going to return, and after the battle of Armageddon and these judgments, He will set up His thousand-year kingdom upon the earth, where we as believers will reign and rule with Him. Now coming back to Isaiah, and we’re still studying about the day of the Lord, and let’s move on to chapter 34. Now I trust that you all realize that Isaiah was the prophet of Israel, and so these things were written primarily to the Jewish people, but they’re back here, as Paul says, for our learning, so we study them for that purpose. Not that they have a doctoral effect upon us for salvation as such, but they do teach us what is still to come.

Isaiah 34:8

"For it is the day of the LORD’s vengeance, (not His mercy or Grace, but now we’re talking about His wrath) and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion."

And on and on it goes that all these things that are repeated over and over are coming on the earth. Now turn over to chapter 63 verse 2. These are verses that we usually use in regard to the Book of Revelation. This is a verse concerning Christ’s coming at the battle of Armageddon which Revelation likens to grapes in a wine vat. And as Christ brings the nations in He will tread them like the treader of a wine vat, only Christ treads them in His wrath and fury.

Isaiah 63:2-3a

"Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? (and the Lord responds) 3. I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me; for I (God) will tread them in mine anger,..." Now that’s not the God we know today. Today God is still the God of love, mercy, and Grace, but there’s coming a day when the day of the Lord will introduce these judgments.

Isaiah 63:3b
"...and trample them in my fury: and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment."

Now in reference to that remember, Revelation speaks of a river of blood flowing out of the Nation of Israel as deep as the bridle of a horse, and a distance of 180 miles. Now these are all prophecies that tie together. Now verse 6.

**Isaiah 63:6**

"And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth."

Which of course is the crushing of the armies in Armageddon at His Second Coming. Now let’s go to Jeremiah chapter 25, and verse 30 This is another of the major prophets that is writing primarily to the Nation of Israel, but also writing for our learning as well.

**Jeremiah 25:30**

"Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth." There’s that same analogy of the treading of grapes in a wine vat. Now verse 31.

**Jeremiah 25:31-33**

"A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, (plural, not just Israel. Although let me keep reminding you, Israel is going to be the vortex of it. Israel is going to suffer far more than the rest of the world, but they’re all coming under God’s wrath.) he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD. 32. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. 33. And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground."

Now of course the Book of Revelation tells us that God is going to bring forth the birds of prey, the vultures, and they’re going to have a feast on the flesh of mankind. That’s not a pretty picture, but it’s something we’d better be aware of. The next one is found in Ezekiel chapter 30, and verse 3, and I hope you’re realizing how all these
various portions of Scriptures are saying basically the same thing. I said over the years, "Why does God repeat, and repeat, and repeat?" Emphasis! He’s driving this thing home, and we’d better understand and realize that for the unbelieving world that’s left behind after our silent disappearance, this is they’re fate. Oh they’re rushing on in the interest in the stock market, and with their crazy music, and all their entertainment, and they have no thought for any of this, but they’d better wake up because this is their lot.

_Ezekiel 30:3a_

"For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day:…"

A day that will be almost absent of light. My own projection of this and the reason there will be such darkness in the closing days of the Tribulation is because of a nuclear war. I think the nuclear dust and nuclear clouds are just going to blot out the sun. So as you read these verses you’ll notice that it’s that constant reference to a dark day, or a cloudy day. Now finishing the verse.

_Ezekiel 30:3b_

"… it shall be the time of the heathen." Which is another word for the Gentiles. So it will be for the whole world, Jew and Gentiles. Now come over and go through Daniel, Hosea, and come to the next Book of prophecy, which is Joel, and stop at chapter 2.

_Joel 2:1-2_

"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand: 2. A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of think darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong, there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations,"

Now that’s God speaking to the prophet. Now let’s turn a little further in Joel to chapter 2:28. These are verses we used back in our Revelation study, and as well in Acts chapter 2, when Peter spoke of it as, "this is that," when he referred to the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Spirit spoken of by the prophet Joel. But always remember Peter never comprehended that the worst part of the prophecies were stopped, and he never did see them fulfilled, but now 2000 years later it’s at the door.

_Joel 2:2829_
"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: 29. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit." Now in verse 30 is the cataclysmic events of the day of the Lord, this is still future.

Joel 2:30

"And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. 31. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come."

Do you see how plain all of this is? Now turn over a few pages to Amos chapter 5, and we want to drop down quickly to verse 18. Now Amos is one of the minor prophets.

Amos 5:18

"Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of The LORD is darkness, and not light."

See how obvious all these things are? Now we’ve got time to look at one more and that will be in the next little minor prophet of Obadiah.

Obadiah 1:15-16

"For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. 16. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and thy shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been."
Lesson Three • Part II

The Day of Christ vs The Day of The Lord

I Thessalonians 5:1-12

Now let’s go right back to where we left off at the end of the last lesson, where we had been chasing a whole set of references up through the Old Testament concerning what Paul said up here in verse 2 of I Thessalonians chapter 5 about the "The day of the Lord."

I Thessalonians 5:2

"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night."

Now if you remember and reflect back on that last program, none of the verses that we looked up concerning the "The day of the Lord" came from Paul. Not one. They were all Old Testament, and as we come into the New Testament with regard to this coming day of judgment, I’m not quite ready to drop the day of the Lord just yet, so I’m going to wind it up in the first part of this half hour. I think I can cover the references for "The Day of Christ" in far less time. In Zechariah chapter 14 we have a reference that I wanted to use in regard of the coming judgment on the earth, the coming day of the wrath of God, when the Grace of God will have been lifted, and His wrath and vexation will come in, not just on the Nation of Israel, but upon the whole human race, from one end of the world to other.

Zechariah 14:1-3

"Behold the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. 2. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; (this will be the battle of Armageddon) and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. 3. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle."

Then that great 7-year period of the wrath and vexation and the vengeance of God will end with the event of verse 4.

Zechariah 14:4a
"And his (the Lord Jesus Himself) feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east,"

Then come on down to verse 9 and when His feet rest on the Mount of Olives, this is what follows after that day of judgment.

Zechariah 14:9

"And the LORD shall be king over all the earth:..." (that’s when we’ll reign and rule with Christ)

Now let’s just go to Matthew chapter 24, and we’ll also see the Lord Jesus’ reference to this same day of judgment as He talks to the twelve disciples in His earthly ministry. I’ve had questions come up more than once about Matthew 24, and I just answer them in one curt little statement, "It’s all Tribulation!" There is nothing in Matthew 24 that applies to us in the Church Age, but rather it’s all prophetic concerning this day of the Lord. You can pick that up so clearly in verse 3.

Matthew 24:3-4

"And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? (age) 4. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you."

Now when you’re warned to look out for deception, what does that mean? Hey it’s coming! There’s coming a vast deception, the likes of which the world has never seen. Now you see almost every despot ruler comes in by deception. All you have to do is go back and look at the history of World War II. How did Hitler gain control of the German people? Deception! He didn’t say right up front that he was going to be what he turned out to be. He sold the German people a bill of goods, he deceived them, and they bought all that he sold them. Then after the fact they said, "Well we didn’t know." But they should have, and that’s true of any despotic leader. They come in with flatteries, and a lot of promises.

Oh you know everybody likes to feed at the government trough. I can remember a historian of the last century who wrote, "America will remain the greatest nation on earth, until the common ordinary person suddenly finds out that he can feed at the government trough." And folks we’re there. Everybody gets the idea that the government owes them everything that they want, and when that happens, then our great democracy comes to an end. Well Jesus warns that there’s coming a day of tremendous deceptions, spiritually, materially, and economically. The biggest
deceiver that the world has ever seen is coming. Then Jesus goes on and lists in the succeeding verses some of the signs.

Matthew 24:6-7

"And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7. For nation shall rise against nations, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places."

Now that doesn’t sound like utopia to me, but rather this is judgment, and this is all in accord with all those verses we read in the last lesson coming out of the Old Testament. Now let’s see what the Lord goes on to say so far as Israel is concerned.

Matthew 24:9

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake."

It’s going to be the greatest persecution that Israel has ever experienced. The Holocaust is going to look like a Sunday School picnic compared to this final 3 years of the Tribulation for the Jew.

Matthew 24:10

"And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another."

In other words, parents will be reported on by their children, and children will be told on by their parents, and there will be no one that anybody can trust. Now verse 11.

Matthew 24:11

"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many."

Then he comes over to the period of verse 15 on down, but the verse I want you to look at in particular is verse 21. Where Jesus Himself now in full accord with all these promises concerning the day of the Lord that we looked at in the Old Testament says, when this day of the Lord comes -

Matthew 24:21
"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

Nothing in those 4000 years before Jesus including the flood, or what we’ve had these 2000 years since Jesus’ earthly ministry can compare with the judgments that are coming on the earth. That’s why I made the statement that the Holocaust by comparison will be rather tame. Now don’t get me wrong, it was awful, I’m not one of those who deny the Holocaust, it was awful… I remember the first time we went to the Mediterranean, and we were on the island of Rhodes, we met a dear little old Jewish lady who still had the tattoo numbers on her arm, and she shared some of the horrors of how it was to be in the concentration camps in Nazi Germany, so don’t ever believe these people who are trying to deny that there was a Holocaust. But the Lord Himself says, "That even that will not compare with those final 3 years." Now reading verse 21 again.

Matthew 24:21

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

Well I think we can go back to the Book of Revelation and look at just a few of the verses that are in full accord with all these verses we’ve been looking at with regard to the day of the Lord. I’ll just pick out a few, and let’s go first to chapter 16 to where we just have a glimpse of all the various plagues that will be coming on the planet one right after the other, leading up to Christ’s Second Coming. See, none of these things are attendant with the Rapture of the Church, none of these things are something that gives a sign that we’re going to go. But these signs are in concert with the Second Coming and this tremendous 7-year period that we call the Tribulation, and the day of the Lord. Let’s just jump in at verse 2. Here we’ll be reading about the first plague or if you have a King James it’s called a vial, but it’s really a bowl judgment like pouring out contents from a soup bowl.

Revelation 16:2-3

"And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. 3. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

And so on through all these bowl judgments, they just keep getting worse with each one. Then let’s bring it all the way down to verse 17, the final bowl judgment, which I
attach to the battle of Armageddon. I attach the 7th bowl judgment with those mass armies packed into the valleys of Israel, probably in tents. Other than that almost protection from the elements, but they’ll be packed in like sardines in a can. I know this is contrary to all good military strategy, because the Sovereign God is ordering it, and they’re going to pack those million and millions of Gentile troops into Israel, and then verse 17 says –

Revelation 16:17

"And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done." It’s finished! This is the end! Now verse 18.

Revelation 16:18-19

"And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. 19. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: (all the great population centers of the world will suddenly disintegrate) and great Babylon (which I call in the Book of Revelation, that composite of all the nations of the world, this great economic system that we’re seeing today, tied together with the Internet, and technology that had to come in order for these end-time events to happen. So this Babylon, this great Babylon, this composite of the nations of the world who are in confusion) came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." Not His love, not His Grace, now it’s nothing but wrath. Now verse 20.

Revelation 16:20

"And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."

In other words, God is going to totally renovate the surface of the planet, just like He did in Noah’s flood with water, He’s going renovate it this time with other natural phenomena, by earthquakes, and volcano’s and what have you. And then verse 21. Imagine these millions of young men out there on the plains of Israel, there will be millions of them, and they’ll be packed in, and what is their doom?

Revelation 16:21a

"And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: (100 pounds)
Now we know what a 5 pound hailstone can do, but these hailstones are 100 pounds chunks of ice. These armies will be literally crushed and ground, and that’s also the reference to the wine vat. And then back in Revelation chapter 14 and verse 20 we find the end results. So these armies of many million men are crushed with these 100 pound hailstones, and this hail starts to melt in the heat of an Israeli summer (now I can’t prove that from Scripture but nevertheless we know that the biggest portion of the year is pretty hot in Israel). And as these hail stones strike these millions of troops gathered in the valleys of Israel you can look at it even as the Book of Revelation pictures it.

**Revelation 14:18**

"And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe."

Now of course that’s the symbolism of the Anti-christ literally putting out the command to all the remaining armies of the world to come to Israel. Come to the Middle East because we’ve got to settle this Jewish problem once and for all. You see more than one great despot has thought that that was the source of the world problem, Israel. So I think the Anti-christ is going to put out the command to send your armies, send your troops, send everything you’ve got so we can finally get rid of this little Nation of Israel. Now always stop and think, that when the world is dealing in situation like this under God’s heavy hand of Sovereignty, the most intelligent can do things that are ridiculous.

Now we know it’s utterly ridiculous for millions upon millions of troops to come to Middle East to get rid of a little nation of only 10 or 15 millions. But I always remind people when the high priest and the Romans consorted to go and arrest Jesus down there in the garden of Gethsemane, timid and compassionate as He was, how many foot soldiers did they send to arrest Him? Does anybody know? I think it was 100, though I didn’t look this up as I hadn’t intended to use it.

**Mark 14:43**

"And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders."

**John 18:3**
"Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priest and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons."

But you see this is the ridiculous men’s actions that common sense says, "they won’t pack those soldiers in." Well I know that, but they won’t use common sense, they, by the work of God will be packed into those valleys of Israel like grapes into the wine vat, and that’s the analogy. Now reading on in Revelation chapter 14.

Revelation 14:19

"And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, (that’s God’s way of bringing the armies of the world to the valleys of Israel) and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God."

So God’s going to bring these millions of troops under idiotic commands of their generals to encamp in these valleys. Now if you’ve been to Israel, you can stand up on Mount Carmel and see all these valleys laying out there as flat as a table top. There are many different valleys in Israel that are flat areas so as these troops are just packed in there, then comes this final bowl judgment, the 100 pound hail which becomes God’s way of treading His wine vat. Have you got the picture? Symbolism, yes, but it’s a literal truth. Now then what’s the results?

Revelation 14:20

"And the winepress was trodden without (outside) the city, (these valleys are all up North of Jerusalem) and blood (not grape juice) came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

Which if I understand right is about 180 miles. That river of melting ice, and blood will just find it’s way out of the valleys of Israel, down to the South, all by the wrath of a Sovereign God. Now in Revelation come over to chapter 19, and we’ll look at the final event of the wrath of God, which is His Second Coming. That will end the 7 years of Tribulation. I hope you remember our lesson last taping on the Rapture, and realize that none of this is part of the Rapture, this is His Second Coming!

Whereas the Rapture is the sound of trumpet when Christ comes to the air, and the soul, spirit, and Resurrected Body of the departed believers are all reunited, and Christ takes them back to glory with Him, and if we’re still alive as believers when this event happens, we’ll be translated into a glorious resurrected body and go with them. Christ will not even touch the planet when this event happens, and there are no judgments associated with it. But oh for His Second Coming that’s all it is. Now verse 11. This is the final event of the Tribulation.
Revelation 19:11a

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse;..."

Now I always have to stop here. I do not think that Christ is going to come riding through the air on a white horse. But the symbolism, which Revelation, Daniel, and Ezekiel use extensively is, "His coming in power and victory." Which of course all emperors did when they would come into a conquered city. Oh they love to ride in on a white steed just to show that they were victorious. So the symbolism is given that same effect, that Christ is coming now like a conquering emperor which of course the ancients were too well aware of. So He comes according to symbolism on this white horse.

Revelation 19:11b

"...and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."

Remember what I said in the last program? This isn’t an unfair God. This isn’t an unjust God. These millions of Tribulation people have had the same opportunity for salvation that you and I have had, but what have they done with it? They’ve walked it underfoot. They’ve had absolutely no concern about the things of God. So when someone says, "How can the God of love be so cruel?" I always say, look, God spent all of His cruelty of the human race on His Son at the cross. Christ suffered like you and I can never imagine, and He did that for the whole human race.

He did that so God could offer salvation to everyone, rich or poor, black or white, oriental, or western, so He could offer that salvation free for nothing to anyone who would believe it. Then we say, "God doesn’t have the right to judge those who walked that under foot? You’d better think that again, because He has every right in the world. He’s just, He’s fair, "and in righteousness he doth judge and make war." Then verse 12.

Revelation 19:12-14a

"His eyes were as a flame of fire (they weren’t burning flames, but they were so piercing, it was like a welders torch) and on his head were many crowns: and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: (not His blood, but His victims. That’s the reference again of the wine vat) and his name is called The Word of God. 14. And the armies which were in heaven..."
I have to feel these armies are you and I as members of the Body of Christ. It’s not armies of warfare, but organization, and Paul makes it so plain that all the saints are in a tremendous organization. The Body of Christ is an organism with organization. So all these people in distinct places of organization who were in heaven followed Christ on white horses. Now completing verse 14.

*Revelation 19:14*

"And the armies which were in heaven, followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

And we find up verse 8 that this is the clothing for the saints, that white linen. Now verse 15.

*Revelation 19:15*

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, (now He’s not holding a big Roman sword in His teeth, not even a little dagger. But the sword of the Lord is what? HIS WORD! He speaks the Word, and the hail falls, he speaks the Word and these armies of nations disappear, He speaks the Word and all the birds and vultures come and devour their residue. So it’s with the sword of the Lord) that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

Remember although He does all of that in His fierceness and wrath, we know that today before any of that happens, He is the God of Love, and Grace! We had one of the most tremendous testimonies in Albuquerque last week, that just blew us away. This gentlemen had gone through a lot of bitter experiences, and had come to the place that he cursed God at every chance. He had gone home and found every Bible, tore the sheets out and threw them in the fire and cursed God with every hand full that went in the fire.

Then a few days later he happen to catch our program, and this is what is so amazing. Just a few minutes into the program, he heard me speak of the Grace of God, and God opened his heart, and that young man of about 40 years old, was saved there on his living room floor. He said, "I cried out God I know I’m a sinner." Oh he cursed God, he hated God, "but where sin abounds, God’s Grace abound more." Now that’s today. But here in Revelation this will be the wrath of God, and in verse 16 this says it all. And why can He do it?

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

He’s Sovereign, He’s in total control of everything, and His wrath will fall because of His Sovereignty.
Lesson Three • Part III

The Day of Christ vs The Day of The Lord

I Thessalonians 5:1-12

Now I think we’re ready to get rolling in our study about the difference between "The Day of the Lord and The Day of Christ." In the first two lessons this afternoon we only covered the day of the Lord, the day of judgment, the wrath of God that’s going to hit primarily the Nation of Israel, but will spill over and effect the whole human race for those 7 dreadful years that are yet to come. By the time those 7 years have ended, with the exception of a small percentage of survivors which we pick up in Isaiah chapter 24 and Matthew chapter 25, the whole 6 billion population we have in the world will lose their lives one way or another. Now I know that’s devastating, but you see God has to cleanse the whole planet of everything that’s contrary to Him. He must do that so that the curse can be lifted and He can bring in the Kingdom of heaven here on the earth. Then there will be nothing evil or wicked or that destroys in His Kingdom! So this present system has to be totally done away with.

You know every time we drive throughout the country and we see all the construction that’s going on, I almost feel like a mound of ants. Now in my younger days, I use to get a kick out of just tormenting those poor little creatures by plugging their hole to their mound, but I don’t do that anymore, so don’t worry, but as a kid I got a kick out of that. But when I see all this construction going on with people working just like these little ants, and one day God’s going to wipe the whole thing clean. Then all their activity is going to be for nothing, and I know it has to be done now, and I’m not saying that they shouldn’t be constructing. But my goodness, I had to tell someone the other day, "Can you imagine the gridlock that this world would be in if we had this tremendous population and had all this production, and transportation, and we were still on two lane roads?"

Boy it would be awful, so the technology fortunately has pretty well kept up with everything, but nevertheless it’s all going to be wiped out. The planet is going to be made totally new for the appearance of the King and His Kingdom! Now just for sake of Bible study, it’s not so clearly delineated here in I Thessalonians as we’ll see in the II Thessalonians, but I think it behooves us to now compare all these references of the Day of Judgment and the Day of the Lord with the Day of Christ, or what we call the end of the Church Age, the Body of Christ finishing it’s time on the earth, and we’re taken out of the way.
Now isn’t it amazing that the Day of the Lord starts all the way back at Isaiah chapter 2 and comes all the way up through the Old Testament comes through the four gospels to a certain extent, skips over Paul’s epistles and picks up again in Peter and Revelation. Now on the other hand every reference we have for the "Day of Christ" will come only from the pen of the apostle Paul. You can find no reference to the "Day of Christ" anywhere else in Scripture. Now that should be enlightening shouldn’t it? You’d think that would just blow away all the argument wouldn’t you? But no, most continue to try to mix it all up by throwing it all in the blender, turning it up on high, and start to ladle it out, and then they wonder why people get sick to their stomach. Well it’s enough to confuse anybody.

But if you’ll just separate the Scriptures by keeping Paul’s epistle, the Body of Christ, where it belongs and everything else that fits on the front end and on the back end, then there’s no problem.

Now come back to I Thessalonians chapter 5, and verse 3, and let’s compare the believer in chapter 4, and the unbeliever in chapter 5. Just look at the pronouns in each chapter, "we, us, and you vs. they and them"

I Thessalonians 5:3

"For when they…"

You might say, "So what?" Well go back up to chapter 4 and look at the pronouns. All the way through where we were a few programs back like in verse 13 Paul is speaking of us believers.

I Thessalonians 4:13…"

"But I would not have you… (speaking to us believers)

I Thessalonians 4:13b

"…that ye (believers) sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."

I Thessalonians 4:14a

"For if we believe, that Jesus died and rose again,…"

I Thessalonians 4:15a

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain…" And then come on down to verse 17.
**I Thessalonians 4:17**

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

So shall we as the consortium of the Body of Christ believers ever be with the Lord. Now look at the change in pronouns in chapter 5. This in itself is so obvious if you’ll just take the time to look. Now instead of we and you it’s what? They and them! Well why? Because we’re not involved with this Day of the Lord. You see, as believers we’re not in the Day of the Lord, we’re in the Day of Christ. When you experience the Day of Christ in the Rapture, then these people that are left behind become they and them in this chapter. Do you see the difference? Now back to chapter 5, and let’s look at verse 3 again.

**I Thessalonians 5:3a**

"For when they (those who have been left behind) shall say, Peace and safety;…"

What happens? Sudden destruction. Now that’s where the world is tonight, they all want an expanding stock market, they all want bigger and better, they’re all looking for a better system, they’re all looking for peace and safety, they’re looking for utopia, and all without God, and without dealing with sin. In fact I was just reading an article before I left home on the subject of sin. Not many use the word sin any more. Somebody in this article was interviewing a Jewish Rabbi in New York City, and he made the statement, "We never use that word." Isn’t that sad, and that’s the world’s problem. But you see the world likes to ignore it, they like to just sweep it under the rug, and say "There’s no such thing as sin." And then we wonder why societies are falling apart.

**I Thessalonians 5:3a**

"For when they (those who have been left behind) shall say, Peace and safety; (trying to build their own heaven on earth, but God says, ‘That’s what you think.’) then sudden destruction cometh upon them,..." The Day of the Lord will hit them, as we’ve been reading now for the past two half hour programs, and have followed it all the way up through the Old Testament and into the New Testament. The Lord Himself says, "There is nothing to compare to it." The Book of Revelation puts it out so graphically. So their destruction cometh upon them suddenly as we read on in verse 3.

**I Thessalonians 5:3b**
"...as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

They won’t be able to hide from the forces of the Anti-christ. The technology now is such that not only will they be able to know every word of your conversation, but they will know every place you are with global positioning. Nobody is going to be able to hide, and the Scripture is so adamant on that. "they shall not escape." Now verse 4. What’s the first word? The flip side of them that are left behind. Am I making my point? For the ones left behind, they shall not escape -

**I Thessalonians 5:4**

"But ye, brethren, (believers) are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."

Why not? Because we’re going to experience the "Day of Christ" at the Rapture before the "Day of the Lord" begins. Now let’s put up a few references, and they’ll all be in Paul’s epistles with regard to this "Day of Christ" that we’re part and parcel to. Now here in this passage we have Paul writing to the Gentile believers at Corinth, so in so many words, he writing to us.

**I Corinthians 1:4**

"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God (See, there’s no wrath here, this is Grace) which is given you by Jesus Christ;"

Do you see the difference in the language already? The Day of the Lord was the Day of Jehovah, His Old Testament title. Paul speaks of Him not as Jehovah, but as Jesus Christ. Oh it’s the same person, but in a different role. Now verse 5.

**I Corinthians 4:5-7**

"That in everything (spiritual, material, and physical) ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; 6. Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: 7. So that ye come behind in no gift: (now here it comes) waiting for the coming (not for the day of the Lord, but) for our Lord Jesus Christ."

We are waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Before we finish here in chapter 1, a verse just comes to mind and when that happens we need to look at it. So turn with me to the Book of Titus chapter 2. We’ve used this verse occasionally over the years, and it has become one of my favorites. It’s a verse I’ve used on television for people who come to your door and deny that Jesus Christ is God. Now they have a
way of wiggling around just about every other portion of Scripture that I try to use on them, but they can’t wiggle around this one.

**Titus 2:11-13**

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath (past tense) appeared to all men, (the same Grace of God) 12. Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; (now here it comes) 13. Looking for that blessed hope, (not the wrath of God. Paul never uses that term for the believers, but he says,) Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God (do you see that? There’s no doubt about that. That’s Deity as much as you can make it. We’re looking for that great God, the Creator of the universe) and our Saviour Jesus Christ;"

He’s all One and the same! He’s the God of Creation, The God of everything and He’s also our Saviour Jesus Christ who gave Himself that He might redeem us. Now come back to I Corinthians chapter 1. So we’re waiting for this glorious blessed hope to become a reality, the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Not His coming to the Mount of Olives in wrath, but rather we’re waiting for that blessed hope when we’ll meet Him in the air, along with all of our loved ones. My, I used to hear a quartet sing years and years back, "That meeting in the air." I haven’t heard that song in a long time. I know some of you older folks probably remember it. That meeting in the air when all the saints will suddenly be in the Lord’s presence. Now verse 8.

**I Corinthians 1:8a**

"Who (the One who’s coming, Jesus the Christ) shall also confirm you unto the end, (He’s never going to let go once you become a believer. He’s not going to lose a one of us.) that ye may be blameless…"

We’re never going to stand before Him shaking in our boots and wondering "Are we still going to go to Heaven, or are we going to Hell?" No that’s all been settled. We’ll never have to stand before Him and say, "Oh Lord I have all this sin." No that’s all been put under His blood, that’s all been cleansed, and we stand before Him blameless! Now that’s what the Book says, that’s not what Les says, and when will that happen?

**I Corinthians 1:8b**

"…in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."
Not the Day of the Lord for judgment, but the Day of Jesus Christ, or the Day of God calling out the believers. Now turn the page to chapter 5 and let’s look at another one. Here we have a good example of what we just read in chapter 1 about being blameless. Now the Corinthians, you want to remember, were the least spiritual and the most carnal of all of Paul’s congregations. They were a carnal group of people, and had a hard time departing from the sins of the flesh. In fact one of their members was so despicable that Paul said, "His particular sin was so rotten, it was so low that even the pagans didn’t do something like that." But the man didn’t lose his salvation because of this sin, and this is what Paul is teaching, that in the Grace of God even that man will yet be under that forgiving power of the blood of Christ, and so this is what he says.

I Corinthians 5:3-5a

"For I verily, as absent in the body, but present in spirit, have judged (or come to the conclusion) already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath done this deed, 4. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5. To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh,..."

That his life would be taken rather than bring reproach upon the name of Christ, and remember God works the same way even today. When people call and say, "Well so and so was a good child of God, he was a good Christian, and now all of a sudden he’s run off with someone else’s wife, and they’re partying in the world. Now you’re going to tell me he’s still saved?" No I don’t think he ever was saved. When a person does that or any other grievous sin, then God will either bring him back, if he was truly saved, or He takes him out completely. God’s not going to let them continue to besmirch the name of Christ, and that’s what Paul is saying about this person, but this person is not going to lose his salvation for the sin But rather God is going to take him out of his human life to spare the reproach of Christ. Now that’s a good lesson for each of us, but that’s not what I intended to show you. Now looking at verse 5 again.

I Corinthians 5:5

"To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved (when?) in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Well what day is he talking about? When Christ returns to take the Body of Christ out and off of this old planet. Now let’s look at another one in II Corinthians chapter 1, and remember all these references are about the Day of Christ, and found only in Paul’s epistles. Let’s just drop in at verse 14.
II Corinthians 1:14

"As also ye have acknowledge us in part, that we are your rejoicing, (speaking of the fact that Paul’s preaching and teaching had brought them out of abject idolatry) even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus." (or the Day of Christ)

What’s Paul talking about here? That all of these Corinthian believers are going to be united with Christ, and Paul, and you and I, and all of the Church Age believers when we have that meeting in the air, in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now let’s move on over to the Book of Philippians, chapter 2, and begin with verse 15.

Philippians 2:15

"That ye may be blameless (that is in the eyes of the Lord Jesus) and harmless, the sons (or the born ones) of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;"

Now I’ve got to stop there for a moment. Do you remember when Jesus was with the twelve disciples, and they were probably up there North of Galilee - and the little city is still there, and I think of it every time that we look to the North from Galilee and there sits that little Jewish city on the hill, just like a gem stone up there. And I think the Lord was probably under those same circumstances when He said to the twelve, "You are the light of the world!" He was telling them that they should sit like a city on a hill. But you see Israel dropped the ball, Israel reneged on that opportunity to be the light of the world, so now then who is the light of the world? Well we are as Grace Age believers, but remember Jesus didn’t speak that to us, but to the Nation of Israel, but now we see Paul’s using the same analogy. So as believers we are now the light of the world. Now verse 16.

Philippians 2:16a

"Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ,…"

Not the Day of the Lord, not the Day of judgment, but rather the Day of Christ, when the Church the Body of Christ will suddenly be translated to meet the Lord in the air. Then as we saw a few programs back:

I Thessalonians 4:17b

"...and so shall we ever be with the Lord."
What a glorious expectancy. That all of a sudden without having to go through death, and that trip to the cemetery, and all that goes with it, we’re suddenly going to be in that glorious estate. My, no wonder it’s called the blessed hope. You know I still try to encourage people who call that they have been diagnosed with something terminal, and the doctor had given them 6 months or a year to live. I just say, "Hey, the Lord may come before that disease has a chance to get you, and I mean that." I think we’re that close, and if someone is terminal that could still be their blessed hope, that the Lord will come and they won’t have to go that way of the cemetery. But rather we’ll suddenly be translated and we can rejoice in that day of Christ when we meet Him in the air.

Well those are about the only references at least that I’m aware of and can find that Paul points to that event because it’s not judgmental or something that is earth shaking because of attending disasters that we saw in the Day of the Lord. But rather it’s just a sudden disappearance of the believers. Now let’s go back to I Thessalonians chapter 5, and let’s read verse 5.

*I Thessalonians 5:5a*

"Ye are all the children of light,..."

Now remember Paul writes to the believers in Thessalonica, but he’s also writing to us today, and we can take this to heart.

*I Thessalonians 5:5*

"Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness."

We believers are not stumbling in darkness, and wondering what’s going to happen next. We know what’s coming, and consequently we can walk in light, we can be completely aware of what’s going on. You know I’ve had this happen over and over through the years, that when people come into my class they have never heard any of these end-time events. It’s never been taught in any of their Sunday School classes or they have never heard their preacher preach on them, but when they come into our class and suddenly come to a knowledge of salvation and begin to see all these things, how excited they get. I’ll never forget one individual particular he said, "You know I use to read the paper every day and never associated all this with end times, but now almost every newspaper I pick up, all I can see is everything falling into place for the end times." You can’t miss these things if you’re in the light. Now verse 6.

*I Thessalonians 5:6*
"Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."

My this is no time for believers to be dozing off. If ever there was a time for believers to be wide awake and expectant, it’s today. Don’t fall asleep, and think, "Oh well the Lord is going to delay His coming." No He may not, He may come before we get home tonight, but this is how we’re supposed to live, in expectancy that He could come any moment.
Lesson Three • Part IV

The Day of Christ vs The Day of The Lord

I Thessalonians 5:1-12

Now let’s get right back where we left off in I Thessalonians chapter 5, and now verse 7. We’re having this constant flipside one to the other of those who are left behind at the Rapture - that are left behind because they’ve been in spiritual darkness. They’re enjoying the things of this world, and they have no appetite for the things of the Spirit.

I Thessalonians 5:7-8

"For they that sleep (spiritually) sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. (now he comes back to us believers) 8. But let us, who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." These are the same things that he listed in Ephesians chapter 6. Now verse 9, and oh what a tremendous lesson for believers.

I Thessalonians 5:9a

"For God hath not appointed us (as believers ) to wrath. but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"

Now isn’t that plain? Now these people that are insisting that the Church is going to go into or through the Tribulation, they just have to blink and miss this verse. But here it is, as believers we are not appointed to the day of the Lord, the day of judgment, the day of wrath. I don’t care whether they want to call it the Tribulation or the eternal destiny to come, it’s still the same premise, that those of us who are part and parcel of this day of Christ are out of here before the day of judgment falls on this planet, and over and over Paul makes that so plain. But on the other hand, what I’ve learned from our mail, from talking to people that call, when everyone who says they can’t agree with my stand on the Rapture, they hardly ever look at Paul’s epistles. All the verses they give me to back up their theory is Old Testament, the four gospels, and Revelation, which of course are all attendant with the Tribulation and the day of the Lord.

But you see Paul never alludes to that as I’ve been showing now for the last three programs. Paul alludes only to the day of Christ. Now there’s one exception to that, and we’ll probably get to that in our next taping session, and that’s in II Thessalonians chapter 2, where he comes the closest to end-time prophecy of any place in any of his letters. But here he’s talking only about we believers not being associated with the day
of God’s wrath, but rather how we have not been appointed to this day of wrath, but we obtained salvation not only from eternal Hell fire, but we’ve also going to be saved from this horrible 7 years of Tribulation on earth. And it’s all through the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now verse 10.

I Thessalonians 5:10a

"Who died for us,..."

Do you see how Paul is constantly bringing up that finished work of the cross, the Gospel of salvation? And again wherever we go, we’re finding people who have been in Church all their lives, and have never heard the pure simple complete work of the cross Gospel for salvation. They just don’t hear it, and that’s so sad, and I can’t figure out why. They all celebrate Easter, they can all talk about His crucifixion, but they can’t seem to put that package together that when we believe it then it becomes our means of salvation. But somehow a lot of people are missing the most important part of the Bible, it’s just a sad commentary. But Paul is telling us that we’re not doomed to the day of the Lord, or an eternal separation, because Christ died for us.

I Thessalonians 5:10b

"... whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him."

Now the word sleep here is a reference to physical death. It doesn’t make any difference if we die physically, we’re still alive with Him eternally. Let’s look at a Scripture in Colossians chapter 3 and we’ll drop in at verse 3.

Colossians 3:3a

"For ye are dead,..."

That is the old Adam that we’re born with. It’s been crucified, it’s been put to death by virtue of our faith in the Gospel. So you are dead, but just like that kernel of wheat that falls into the ground, and it hits the moisture and sunlight, what does it do? It dies, but brings forth new life, and that’s the allusion that Jesus makes in John’s gospel chapter 12. So to have eternal life, we have to die to the old Adam, that’s a premise of Scripture.

Colossians 3:3

"For ye are dead, (you have been crucified with Christ according to Galatians 2:20) and your (eternal) life is hid with Christ in God."
Do you see that? A moment a go I made an allusion to the kernel of wheat in John chapter 12, and let’s look at it for a moment. I haven’t used any of the four gospels all day have I? I’ve got to use them every once in a while to satisfy some of these people that don’t read Paul much. I don’t want them to ever think that I’m taking the four gospels out of the picture, it’s just that they are not directed to us as Paul’s epistles are. But look what Jesus said in John’s gospel chapter 12, and I love these verses. They back my teaching that Jesus had nothing to do with Gentiles, the non-Jews all through His earthly ministry, with the two exceptions, of the Canaanite woman and the Roman centurion, and they were exceptions. Here in this passage there could have been a third exception, but Jesus doesn’t get into it. Let’s start with verse 20. Now I know this is kind of off the beaten path, but the point I’m trying to make is, that as a kernel of wheat falls into the grounds and dies, so we die in order to experience new life. Now Jesus uses this example Himself, and this is only a few hours leading up to His crucifixion, and the feast of Passover crowds are gathering in Jerusalem, multitudes of Jews from all over the world.

John 12:20-21

"And there were certain Greeks (Gentiles) among them (now I don’t think they were proselytes that had come to worship, but rather they were curiosity seekers. They were just onlookers, just seeing how these Jews made such a big deal over these feast days. So these Greeks were among them) that came up to worship at the feast: (it doesn’t say they came to worship) 21. The same (Greeks) came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus."

Now Philip knew that Jesus had nothing to do with Gentiles all through His earthly ministry with the two exceptions that I’ve already alluded to. In the Old Testament and in Christ’s earthly ministry there were just a few exceptions, but in general the Gentiles had been left out, and Philip knew that. It’s been a long time since we’ve put that on the program so let’s just stop and look at Matthew 10:5. Now keep your hand in John, and Colossians, and I Thessalonians, because we’ll be back in a moment.

Now you’d be amazed how many people that have been in church and Sunday School all their life, and they don’t even know this is in their Bible. I’ve had folks now who have picked up on this and are teaching it themselves and they tell me, "Les my Sunday School class sits in front of me aghast. They also never knew this was in their Bible, but I just let them read from whatever translation they’ve got and when they get through reading, I say, "Well what does it say?" And he said, "They’re so shook that they don’t even like to answer." But here it is! Jesus here in Matthew has now chosen the twelve in the first four verses, and now verse 5 of Matthew chapter 10.

Matthew 10:5-6
"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: (now you can’t make that any plainer. This is just as plain as English can make it, and why couldn’t they go to the Gentiles?) 5. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Now folks that shakes people up. Most think Christ came to the whole world from the very start, but this says He didn’t! I’ll never forget a gentlemen we had in a class I taught in Jerusalem on one of our tours. Now he wasn’t part of our group, but he came to this one time after I had been teaching about 3 or 4 nights. Oh this guy got mad, his face turned red, and said "Well what do you do with John 3:16?" I said, "Well it certainly didn’t apply to Gentiles in His earthly ministry. He came and the end result was, to go to the whole world, but He came only unto His own to begin His 3 years of earthly ministry."

And the reason He could not reach out to Gentiles was because He had come on the basis of the Abrahamic Covenant. And remember the Abrahamic Covenant was given to no one but the Nation of Israel. So being the God of creation in His Sovereignty, He knew what most people today don’t, and that was His position in that Covenant. So He had nothing to do with Gentiles, He couldn’t until He had committed Himself to the Nation of Israel, and they had shown their rebellion, and their rejection, which I always claim was epitomized, or brought to a crescendo, at Stephen’s stoning in Acts chapter 7. Then Acts chapter 8 introduces us to Saul of Tarsus, who in Acts chapter 9 experiences his conversion on the road to Damascus, and a few verses later God tells Ananias –

Acts 9:15

"But the Lord said, unto him, Go thy way: for he (Saul) is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles,...." Do you see that? But until that time it was Jew only, and to show you that from Scripture all you have to do is read Acts 11:19.

Acts 11:19

"Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word (Old Testament) to none but unto the Jews only." And that was 7 years after Pentecost. So here in Matthew chapter 10 we have Jesus telling the twelve-

Matthew 10:5b-6

"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans, enter ye not: 6. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."
Now come back to John’s gospel chapter 12, and do you think Philip had forgotten that in those 3 years? No way. So when these Gentiles said, "We would see Jesus." Philip said, probably to himself "Now wait a minute, I don’t know what to do with this one," So he goes and tells Andrew. But does Andrew say, "Bring them along and we’ll take them into see Jesus?" No way. Andrew too knows that Christ only deals with the children of Israel, and so reading on in verse 22.

**John 12:22**

"*Philip cometh and telleth Andrew and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.*"

Do you know why I think they were reluctant? All we can think of is the Lord’s compassion, and His patience. But do you think our Lord could get a little sharp sometimes? I think He could. I also think that those men knew that if He would see them trying to bring Gentiles, He could have rebuked them, like He would do Philip in John chapter 14.

**John 14:9**

"*Jesus saith unto him, (Philip) Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?…*"

So here He could of done the same thing. "*Have I been with you for such a long time, and you still don’t know that I can’t minister to Gentiles?*" Then Jesus gives the reason He couldn’t go to the Gentiles, and it’s so obvious. Remember the reason I brought you back here was to show when we as believers have died to the old sin nature, up springs what? New life, and here’s the analogy. Verse 23. I know it took me a long time to get there didn’t it?

**John 12:23**

"*And Jesus answered them, (Philip and Andrew) saying, The hour is come, (remember it’s a matter of hours before He’ll be resurrected from the dead) that the Son of man should be glorified.*" Now we know He wasn’t glorified until He arose from the dead. Now verse 24.

**John 12:24**

"*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn (kernel) of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: (just a point of biology. When you plant a seed in the ground, what’s the first thing that happens? It dies. And it must die or it won’t come up and reproduce.) but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*"
And of course He was using wheat as an example. That one stem of wheat can come up and produce maybe a hundred kernels, and that’s the whole purpose of death, burial, and resurrection. That now because of what Christ has accomplished – yes new life can come up for every believers. Now on our way back to Colossians stop at Romans chapter 6, and verse 5. See this is where good works falls by the wayside, they just simply disappear into the fog, because good works cannot take the place of dying. Good works cannot take the place of that kernel dying and reproducing.

**Romans 6:5a**

"*For if* (conditional) *we have been planted together in the likeness of his death,*…"

Now what does that mean? Every one of us in the eyes of God as a believer now had to have been identified with Christ in the tomb. And I’ve put this way for years, when Christ hung on the cross, He saw every believer dying to the old Adam. When Christ laid in the tomb, God saw every believer epitomized in that tomb experience. Now reading on in that last part of the verse. If God has identified with Christ on the cross, with Him in the tomb, then He can also identify in His resurrection.

**Romans 6:5b**

"*…we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*"

And what does resurrection depict? New life! See that’s why God has arranged spring time the way He arranged it. Every spring, every human being on the planet is once again reminded of what? New life, resurrection, the whole nine yards. I think that’s another reason that God says, "Every man has been lighted that comes into the world." (John 1:9) My if they see that flower come up, that was nothing but a dead seed, or dead bulb, that’s new life. When the trees begin to blossom out with their leaves, it’s new life, resurrection, that’s the picture. Then verse 6. We’re still in Romans.

**Romans 6:6**

"*Knowing this* (as a believer now. We know this beyond a shadow of a doubt) *that our old man* (our old Adam) *is crucified with him,* (he’s been put to death) *that the body of sin might be destroyed,* (or put out of commission) *that henceforth we should not serve sin.*"

Why? Because that old man is dead, but out of that dead nature we get new life. Now flip back to Colossians chapter 3 for a minute on your way to I Thessalonians and maybe we can get a verse or two more yet.
Colossians 3:3

"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

You’ve been crucified with Christ. The old Adam has been put to death, and your eternal life, your new life in Christ, and where is it? It is hid with Christ in God. A safety factor? Boy, I reckon, and what a place to be. You talk about security, you just can’t get it much better than that. Here we are with Christ, and Christ is in that Godhead, and there we are, never to be removed. Remember even that adulterous Corinthian couldn’t be removed, as he was with Christ. Oh he’s going to suffer loss of rewards, absolutely, as God’s not going to let him just escape without any reprimands, but he’s not going to lose his salvation. So for the true believer who is with Christ, we are hid in God, and then verse 4.

Colossians 3:4

"When Christ, (the day of Christ) who is our life, shall appear, they shall ye also appear with him in glory."

Now you know the Bible really doesn’t tell us much about our eternal inheritance so far as what heaven is like and so forth. All it does is use superfluous references like, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard what God has prepared for those who love Him." But it doesn’t tell us very much. We usually like to hear about the streets of gold, but that’s mundane compared to the real, real experience. It’s just beyond human comprehension, the things that God has prepared for us when we join Him in glory. Now back to I Thessalonians chapter 5, and verse 10 again.

I Thessalonians 5:10

"Who died for us, that, whether we wake (the living) or sleep, (have died) we should live together with him."

It doesn’t make any difference so far as eternity is concerned, we’re all going to be together with Him one day. Now verse 11. So consequently what can believers do with each other that the unbelieving world can’t do?

I Thessalonians 5:11

"Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do."
Oh what comfort we have. Everyday we get a letter that someone has lost their loved one, a spouse, a child, a daughter, a son, but oh listen what can we tell them? If they’re believers we’re going to see them again. That’s our comfort.

I Thessalonians 5:11

"Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do."

Paul says I know you’re already faithful in doing that. Paul thought the world of these Thessalonians, and do you know why? Remember I told you several weeks ago that Paul only spent about 3 weeks with them. He said 3 Sabbaths, so that’s 3 full weeks and maybe a few days in the next week, but it wasn’t long enough to go to the fourth Sabbath. And out of that 3 weeks experience in Thessalonica, he had seen this little group of believers come out of paganism, out of spiritual darkness, and became so rooted, that several weeks later, Timothy evidently brought him the news, and we’ll pick that up in the next letter, of how steadfastly these Thessalonians were standing in their faith in spite of intense persecution from their pagan peers. In spite of the pressure from Rome, and in spite of the pressure Judaisers, these little ex-pagans stood fast and Paul just shows his joy with them, that in spite of everything they were such a comfort to him. Now verse 12.

I Thessalonians 5:12-13a

"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13. And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake...."

Yes, God does expect believers to recognize their leadership, to recognize those who are feeding them spiritual truths, and we’re to appreciate them. I know I have in the past, and I still do when I read men of God, and how I can thank God that over the years, He has raised up men who were faithful to His precious Word.