Now as we begin book 43, we’ll start with the Book of II Thessalonians, a little short letter from the apostle Paul which followed the first letter, probably in a matter of months. Remember, the apostle came into these Gentile cities practically unannounced with no fanfare or advance men or media - no big Madison Avenue ad campaign, and he just simply preached the Gospel. Now that’s all he did, he just simply lifted up Christ crucified, buried and risen again. It’s the same simple message we must believe for eternal life.

And these pagan people who had been worshiping all the gods and goddesses of mythology were suddenly transformed when they believed Paul’s simple Gospel that had been revealed to him for the Gentile world during this Age of Grace. Then the miracle of it is, that in spite of the immediate pressures of persecutions and tribulations they evidently never faltered. And of course after writing the first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul went down to Athens, and then down to Corinth, and was getting kind of concerned. "Are these new believers holding fast? Are they able to withstand the pressure of persecution?" And as I’ve pointed out so often these persecutions weren’t only from the pagan world, but also from the Jewish quarters - they just couldn’t stand Gentiles having a part of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

So this second letter is in response to Paul having heard that the Thessalonians were holding fast in spite of their persecutions, and they were not giving in and not giving up. So this letter sort of shows the apostle’s amazement at these folks who were fresh out of paganism, and just freshly aware of the work of Christ and His resurrection, and His coming again. So II Thessalonians, even more than the first, is going to deal with Christ’s soon return. When we get into the letter I’ll come back up to the board again and show that even Paul, early on in his ministry, certainly had no idea that the Church Age or the Age of Grace would go nearly 2000 years, which of course is where we are now.

Paul, along with the prophets and the twelve disciples after His ascension, were all looking for Christ to return in short order. It wasn’t until Paul gets to the end of his ministry that I think he realizes that the Nation of Israel has been set aside for
probably longer than he thought it would be, and that the Church Age would not end in his lifetime, but it would continue on for some time. So always get the background to these things. Now remember, too, that the Thessalonians letters are probably the very first letters that the apostle Paul wrote, even though they’re toward the end of his Church epistles in our New Testament, yet they were evidently written first. But at that time I pointed out that Paul’s letters finally ended up in their order in our New Testament exactly the way they belong, not the order they were written, but doctrinally they are exactly where they belong.

We jump in first with the Book of Romans, that great Book of doctrine. Then the two letters to the Corinthians which were written to congregations that needed corrections, because they had a lot of problems. Then the next one was the letter of Galatians, again confronting the fact that we’re not under Law, but rather Grace. Then the next of Paul’s epistles were written from prison in Rome which are toward the end of his life (probably around 64 – 66 AD), and in these prison epistles he was again taking us to a higher level doctrinally, showing us our position in Christ as redeemed and regenerated members of the Body, Gentiles in the flesh.

Then you come up to the third level in Paul’s writings so far as his doctrines are concerned, and they are the two little letters of Thessalonians which speak of the end time. How the Church is going to be removed from the planet, and how its departure from the earth is completely different from anything that the prophets of the Old Testament, or what we read about in the four gospels had been written about, because it is a separate coming of Christ that has nothing to do with the return of Christ to Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives at the close of the Tribulation. So remember that now the apostle is responding to the good news that the Thessalonians are remaining firm in their faith, and looking for the return of Christ. Now let’s start right in with Chapter 1 and verse 1.

**II Thessalonians 1:1-3**

"Paul and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: 2. Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3. We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet (appropriate) because that your faith (not their works so much as their faith) growth exceedingly, and the charity (love) of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;"

Now you see this is the first mark of a salvation experience. People who were unable to love or suddenly able to love. I’ll never forget the testimony of one old fellow that had come out of a rather rough non-spiritual background. He said, "You know Les, since I’ve been saved, people that I could have almost shot between the eyes, I no
longer feel that way about them. Oh, they’re not the kind of people that I could go up to and hug, but now instead of hating them, I love them and feel so sorry for them."
And isn’t that about it? We are probably not prone to just love these kinds of people, as probably the Lord could love them, because we’re human, but at least we have changed our attitude so that now we do feel so sorry that they are still out in such abject spiritual darkness. So Paul says, "we realize the love you’re showing toward each other." Verse 4.

**II Thessalonians 1:4**

"*So that we ourselves glory in you* (Paul was thrilled to hear back from these little Gentile congregations and how they were standing firm in the faith) *in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure;*

These poor Gentile pagans, now walking the life of a believer, came under intense persecution. Not the kind that we may experience once in a while - theirs was intense. Their lives were threatened, they probably lost their means of livelihood, and yet they never departed from the faith. So this is what he’s saying, "*So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure;*" It’s never easy!

**II Thessalonians 1:5**

"*Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:*

Now here is where we compare Scripture with Scripture. Come back to Romans 8:18. Look at what the apostle Paul writes to these Gentiles at Rome. So that means he’s still writing to us as Gentiles today.

**Romans 8:18**

"*For I reckon that the sufferings (the kind of sufferings that the Thessalonian believers were going through) of this present time (our journey as believers) are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

So this is what we have to do. The opposition that we may have to face in this life on earth, we have to put it in comparison to the glory that one day will be revealed to us, and into which we will enter and live for all eternity. Now back to II Thessalonians chapter 1. So Paul says, "you’re counted worthy for the kingdom because you’re suffering for it." Now verse 6, and this is a little bit of comfort because I imagine that
every believer that suffers at the hand of a gross unbeliever, it’s our natural tendency to say, "God aren’t you going to pay them back?" Yes He will. Paul says:

II Thessalonians 1:6

"Seeing it is a righteous thing with God (and remember God can’t do anything that is wrong or unfair. God only knows how to do that which is upright and righteous) to recompense(or pay back) tribulation to them that trouble you;"

These people that tormented these Thessalonian believers are not going to get away with it. Oh they may in this physical life, but they still must come before the Great White Throne one day, and remember God is righteous and God won’t forget those things. So we can take comfort in that, even though we can’t strike back ourselves we have the promise that God’s going to do it. Now I’m thinking of a verse in Revelation, and I hope I can find it. I didn’t think of this verse as I was preparing for it, but come back to chapter 18, and let’s just drop in at verse 4. Now this is just a little inkling of what Paul is giving us here in the Thessalonian letter. I hope you all realize that Revelation is the account of the Tribulation that is still future, when the wrath of God is going to be poured out on Christ-rejecting humanity in a way that no one can comprehend. Now this is just another little picture of that.

Revelation 18:4-6

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues, 5. For her sins (this Christ-rejecting world) have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. (these persecuting acts of these unbelieving people) 6. Reward her (this group of people that have been tormenting believers of the Tribulation) even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: (the persecutions that this group promoted upon these believers) in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double." This is what’s coming on the earth during those final 7 years.

Revelation 18:7-8

"How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, (that is this world system) so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. (Oh but God says, "Yes you will!") 8. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, (at the end of the Tribulation) death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." Now come on down to where the Lord tells them to go ahead and drink blood. That may be back in chapter 17. Verse 6.
Revelation 17:6

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, (the believers whom this group has persecuted) and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."

Well I still can’t find the verse I really was thinking of where He, in so in many words says, "You’ve always been blood thirsty, so now drink it!" Remember in Pharaoh’s Egypt the fresh water supply of the world will be dried up, and the Lord will literally tell them they’ve got blood to drink and that’s what they’ve always been thirsty for, so have at it! Well always rest assured that God is just and one day He’s still going to even the score. (Transcriber’s note: I think Les was looking for Revelation 16:6 where it says —)

Revelation 16:6a

"For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink;..." Now back to II Thessalonians chapter 1.

II Thessalonians 1:6,7

"Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you." Remember God’s keeping the record. "And to you who are troubled (to you Thessalonians who are under this intense persecution) rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels." That is the reference to His coming to take the believers out of that situation of intense persecution. Now look at verse 8, and here comes the wrath and the justice and the righteousness of God.

II Thessalonians 1:8

"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:"

Alright I’ll have to remind all of you here as well as our television audience, you’ll remember in our last month’s taping we chased all the references beginning with Isaiah chapter 2, and came all the way up through the Old Testament, through the four gospels, and then on into the Book of Revelation, and showed you all the graphic descriptions of "The day of the Lord." Do you remember that? The day of the Lord, when it will be dark and gloomy and when there will be such intense wrath of God being poured out on that Christ-rejecting generation which we feel is this one.
I honestly feel that the Lord is going to come in my lifetime, and I haven’t got that many years left. **But I’m confident that unless something otherwise happens, my wife and I are not going to have to take that trip to the cemetery. I’m almost confident that we’re going to take that sudden translation up.**

Once the Church is off the scene then the wrath, and vexation of God, the day of the Lord is going to come. I made the comment several programs back that the apostle Paul, almost without exception, does not deal with Old Testament prophecy. But here in II Thessalonians we have the only possible exception as we move on into II Thessalonians chapter 2 and even a few of these statements in chapter 1. Other than that Paul never refers to prophetic things. Paul deals only with the Church during this Age of Grace, and the reason for that is, "**There is no prophecy directed to the Body of Christ!**" We’re not under any of the Old Testament covenants, we’re not under any of the Old Testament prophecies, those were all directed to the Nation of Israel. So when Paul writes the Church letters from Romans all the way through Philemon, he doesn’t have to deal with prophecy because we don’t have any part with that.

Now of course as we see things getting ready, it’s like getting the stage set for a drama. The drama itself cannot begin until everything is ready behind the curtain. Isn’t that right? You’ve got to have the characters all ready, you’ve got to have the props ready, you’ve got to have the background ready, you’ve got to do the advertising - but the drama itself can never begin until there is that official raising of the curtain. Then the drama begins. Now we’re in that same kind of a situation. We are living in the these days when the stage behind the curtain is being set. All the world’s political leaders, the key players are being put in the right places. All the technology that is absolutely necessary for end-time events is coming on the scene. All the nations of the world are being aligned little by little, getting ready for that final curtain raising.

So this is why I keep saying, there is no prophecy directed to the Church, because we’re living in that opened up period of time that was never prophesied in the Old Testament or the four gospels. It was revealed only to the apostle Paul, and since we’re not in prophecy then it stands to reason that in one way or another we have to be taken out of the way before prophecy begins and becomes the rule of the day. And that’s what we’ll be looking at in the next several programs, and that is the end of the Body of Christ on earth which is not associated with wrath and vexation, and Tribulation, but rather as we pointed out in the last several programs, we leave out of a quiet set of circumstances. **There is no attendant of the battle of Armageddon, no attendant of earthquakes and volcanoes and death and famine, but instead it will just be the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, then we’re out of here.**
I always like to remember a fellow out in Denver when I think of that term. I’ll never forget a comment he made. He’s got a bunch of hunks that works for him, these young guys 25-30 years old, and some of them are the toughest young men in Denver. This guy has a devotional with them every morning, and this one particular morning he told those guys before they started their various work jobs, "Now look fellows, one of these days, you’re going to see old Jim’s truck right in downtown Denver at a stop light, and he’s out of there!"

That’s exactly the way it’s going to be. Wherever we happen to be as a believer, when that trumpet sounds, we’re out of here! It just thrills me to death that one day it’s going to happen. Now the world can scoff all they want to, but it’s still going to happen! And as I told my class the other night, I was with a group that I’d never been with before, and I just said, now look Paul tells us that we’re going to be changed in a blink of an eye. In a moment which in the Greek is the smallest divisional period of time, which today is probably a millionth of a second. We’re going to be suddenly changed in that split second. And as I told the group, we’ll have to be or otherwise we’ll hit the ceiling, but we’re not going to hit the ceiling, we’re going to slip right on through just like the Lord did in His resurrected body. The Scriptures makes that so plain. He came into the upper room where the disciples were without benefit of a door or window, and all of a sudden there He was. Well Paul comes along and says, "We’re going to have a body exactly like His glorious resurrected body." Which means that if the Lord changes us and we’re in this building when that happens, before we hit the ceiling, we’ll have already changed into that body that can slip through materials with no problem, and always remember Jesus Himself said it, "With God nothing is impossible!"
As most of you know, our whole purpose has just simply been over the years to teach the Word as the Holy Spirit leads, and let the chips fall where they may. I don’t mind you disagreeing with me, but if you do disagree you must do it Scripturally, and not just go by what some denomination may teach.

We have found that we must teach outside the Church environment because everybody has become so denominationally minded that if I were to have a class in a Baptist Church, then no one comes but Baptists. If I have it in a Methodist Church, no one comes but the Methodists so I’ve learned if you’re going to reach across all these various barriers, then you have to stay on neutral ground, and that’s the way I try to keep the program. I want to keep it totally neutral, and simply teach the Word as we feel the Holy Spirit has led us to teach it. We’re finding out from every denominational background imaginable that people know so little of the Scriptures. They are so inept at comparing Scripture with Scripture, and hopefully we’re making a little head way in that regard also.

Now back to II Thessalonians chapter 1, where we left off at verse 8. We discussed at the close of the last lesson how Paul comes the closest to bringing in a little bit of the Old Testament prophecy concerning the wrath and the vexation, or the Day of the Lord as we pointed out several programs back. Remember we went back all the way from Isaiah up through the Old Testament, and all those references using the "Day of the Lord." And the Day of the Lord is awful, the Day of the Lord is the wrath, and the judgment of God upon Christ-rejecting mankind. Upon empires and governments and kings, and presidents and so forth, who have been flaunting the things of God. So here in verse 8 Paul is alluding to that Old Testament format of the Day of the Lord, when He will come and take vengeance on them that don’t know God.

II Thessalonians 1:8-9

"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;"

That’s their eternal doom. Now someone just called early this morning before we left home, and their question on the phone was, "Does Paul ever teach Hell fire, or the
lake of fire as we see it in Revelation?" No. Paul doesn’t use the term explicitly, but he certainly warns people over and over of their lost estate and the doom that’s awaiting them. Just because he doesn’t use the language, the lake of fire, doesn’t mean that he has now superceded it somehow or other, and here’s a good example of that.

II Thessalonians 1:9a

"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord,…

Being separated from the Lord is what is going to make eternity for the lost so awful. It isn’t that they’re going to be singed with the fire, I don’t think that’s it at all, as the Hell fire is just simply the awfulness of totally being separated from God. Now of course don’t get me wrong, they’re going to be tormented. We know that the Scripture is explicit on that. You get just a little window of that back in Luke chapter 16 with the rich man when he was conversing with Abraham, who had Lazarus in his bosom, where the rich man says, "I am tormented in this flame." So definitely there is that aspect that awaits all who go that way. But the greatest part of the torment of the lost that will go into eternity without Christ is that they are separated from the presence of the Lord without hope. Verse 10.

II Thessalonians 1:10

"When he shall come (the second coming now according with prophecy, as that’s what we’re dealing with first) to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (do you see how simple Paul always keeps it. Salvation is to them that believe) (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."

And after all when Paul came into these pagan cities, and approached these pagan Gentiles with the Gospel. He didn’t come in with a great Madison Avenue format. He didn’t make them jump through hoops, he didn’t put on a dog and pony show, as we like to say. He didn’t do all these things to draw the crowd, Wherever he met a group of people, he just simply presented Christ crucified, and risen from the dead as we find in I Corinthians 15:1-4. And from that simple approach these little cells of believers made up the Body of Christ at Thessalonica. Now I trust that you know that they weren’t by the thousands. None of Paul’s little congregations were thousands of people, they were relatively, small with most of them meeting in homes. But nevertheless the overall result was, as it says in the Book of Acts, "They turned the then-known world upside down." He did that just by simply presenting the Gospel, and that’s all he asked his pagan people to do, "Just believe it, trust it, and when your faith is manifested then God does the work of redemption, a life changing,
...and so on and so forth." Now then verse 11. I’m in a hurry because I want to get down into chapter 2.

**II Thessalonians 1:11**

"Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:"

Now listen, when he speaks of power here, he’s not talking about tremendous supernatural miracles. The supernatural miracles were that these pagans could come out of their idolatry and their worship of the gods and goddesses and place their faith in Paul’s Gospel. Now that’s the power that was manifested here, and that wasn’t easy. They probably lost contact with a lot of their friends and relatives because of this new found faith. All of a sudden they had nothing more to do with pagan temple sacrifices, nothing more to do with the gross immorality of those pagan temples, and so it was the work of faith with power. Now here it is in verse 12.

**II Thessalonians 1:12**

"That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Now these people didn’t deserve God’s Grace any more than you or I do, but it was the Grace of God that was poured out on these pagan Thessalonians in that they became believers and were transformed and became then a tremendous witness and testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now we’re going to go into chapter 2, and immediately the apostle brings in something that he’s been leading up to in these earlier verses.

**II Thessalonians 2:1**

"Now we beseech you, brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (now the next part of the verse is a direct departure of him alluding to the Second Coming as all of the Old Testament does. Now Christ is coming to something that is only a Pauline revelation and that is that Christ would only come to the air at the Rapture) and by our gathering together unto him,"

Now the other night I used the analogy again, one that I think I’ve used on the program, and I still think it’s a pretty good one, at least it’s enough to make you smile. "We’ve all seen in a movie or television program where one thing or another will lead you out to the old junk yard, or the old salvage yard where they have this huge electric
magnet, where they can just swing it over the whole yard. In fact my daughter went to a salvage yard here a while back and the guy in that electric magnet just gave her an exhibition of what he could do. She said, "It was amazing. He could take that great big magnet swing it over on a little tiny piece of iron, pick it up and could sling it half way across the salvage yard." Well she got a big kick out of what a man can do when he’s got that kind of expertise. But I think you get the picture. A person using that electric magnet can turn it on, and all that metal that is below it just slides up to that magnet. **The force just pulls it up, and that’s the way I like to picture the Rapture. Christ is going to come to the air, and just like a great magnet, He’s going to pull us all up into His presence.**

I think I shared on the program, and I did again the other night in one of our classes, and it was just for a smile, that we know the earth is round, and if the Lord comes from our perspective, the people on the other part of the globe are going to have to go a little further. They’re going to have come around the edges, but nevertheless we’re all going to meet the Lord in the air wherever it is, and this is what Paul is talking about. He’s not talking about when Christ comes to the Mount of Olives. See, that’s what you have to notice in Scripture, is the change in language. We’re also not talking about Christ coming in wrath and attending judgment, but instead for us. It’s just simply a gathering together to meet Him in the air as Paul tells us in I Thessalonians chapter 4 as we saw a few weeks back. Now reading verse 1 again.

**II Thessalonians 2:1**

"**Now we beseech you, brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.**" Now that’s the language I want you to keep in your computer."...our gathering together unto him." Now verse 2.

**II Thessalonians 2:2**

"**That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit,** (small ‘s’ so by their own spirit or an outside spirit, it’s not the Holy Spirit) **nor by word, nor by letter as from us,** (now what does that indicate? Among all the other things that Paul had to constantly deal with, there were people forging his name, and sending these forged letters to his congregations to confuse the issue. So Paul had to put up with that, so he’s telling these Thessalonians, "Don’t pay any attention to a forged letter as from us) **as that the day of** (the Lord) **Christ is at hand.**"

Now you’re going to say, "Well my Bible says, "**the day of Christ is at hand.**" Well I’ll probably get some mail on this, but everybody that I’ve ever read has all agreed that this is one place where our King James has an error. **But I always have to remind folks remember, the King James is not the original manuscript.** The
original manuscript had no errors in it, but the King James is still a translation, and there can be an error, and here is probably one of the most profound, because all are agreed that in light of all the language around it, this should be, "the Day of the Lord." Remember we pointed them all out coming up through the Old Testament. The Day of the Lord is the day of wrath, and vexation and judgments and the horrors of the Tribulation, ending with Christ’s Second Coming to the Mount of Olives, Whereas the "Day of Christ" is what we call the Rapture, the resurrection day for the Church.

So regardless of how somebody may oppose that, I’m going to stick to my guns, that in light of all that surrounds this verse, this should have been the "Day of the Lord." So Paul says,"be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled," What is Paul implying here? Paul is implying that due to the tremendous amount of pressure and persecution that these new believers were coming under, and in light of his teaching, which we’ll see in a few minutes, he covered the whole nine years in those first 3 or 4 weeks that he was with them, and so they understood this coming day of wrath, they knew there was a Tribulation period of time coming, and what do you suppose they were beginning to think. That they were in it! And evidently some of these forged letters, and some of these false teachers were coming in and telling them that. "Well listen, the reason you’re suffering so much is we’re in the Tribulation." And these forged letters would come in and tell them "Bear up because after all this is the wrath and vexation of the Day of the Lord."

But Paul says, "Don’t you buy that, don’t you believe any of that stuff, because we’re not in the Day of the Lord. You haven’t missed the Rapture!" You know I think every believer at one time or other in his life, that understands the Rapture, and has probably happened to all of us, but you come home and expect the family to be there, but they’re all gone, nobody’s home. What’s the first thought that hits you? The Lord came. Well the Thessalonians were in this same situation, they thought the Lord had come, and they’d missed the Rapture. So Paul is writing now to comfort them, "That no, you haven’t missed it, this isn’t the Tribulation, this is not the Day of the Lord." Now look at the next verse.

II Thessalonians 2:3a

"Let no man deceive you by any means:…"

Don’t let someone come along and tell you that the Day of Christ has already happened, and you’re in the Day of the Lord. Because Paul says, "The Day of the Lord cannot happen until:

II Thessalonians 2:3b
"...for that day (those 7 years of Tribulation) shall not come except (and what’s the except or until?) there come a falling away (or departure) first,…"

That day of judgment cannot come until the departure happens. Now the word ‘apostasy’ is the Greek word from which our King James, and other translations have gotten the term "the falling away" which of course is appropriate, but there’s another Greek word, and I’m not a Greek scholar, so I’m going to have to look as I have written it down, the cognate verb of the word apostasy is "aphistaymi" and that is translated in several other places in the New Testament as, "departing from one place to another." I’ve mentioned it before on the program that the earlier translation before the 1611 King James, such as the Tyndale, and Geneva, and a couple of earlier translations did use the word departure instead of falling away as plain as day.

"That this day of the Lord cannot come until there is the departure comes first." Also the Greek word ‘aphistaymi’ has the little Greek letter ahead of it that indicates the article "the." So the Greek implies "The Departure." Now again I think it’s just like we can change some of our words by just adding an "ly." In other words you can have the verb happy and it’s a verb, as someone is happy. Then you just simply add an ‘ly’ and you make it an adverb, and the word becomes ‘happily.’ Do you see that? Well it’s the same way with this Greek word, it’s so closely related, that you’re not doing any injustice to the Greek or anything else to use the translation, "The departure."

II Thessalonians 2:3a

"Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day (of the Lord, the Day of Judgment the Day of Wrath. See that’s why the Day of Christ doesn’t fit up there in verse 2) shall not come, except (or until) there come the departure first,…"

Now this fits with everything else that Paul writes. Remember we saw last month in our four programs that back in I Thessalonians Paul told us we’re not appointed to wrath.

I Thessalonians 5:9

"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"

We’re not appointed to the judgments and vexation, we’ve been saved out of all that. So you have to keep everything in context, so Paul is absolutely right here saying that the Day of Judgment cannot begin until the departure first." And then what happens?
"II Thessalonians 2:3b"

"and that man of sin be revealed,…"

Now let’s go over to I John chapter 2, one of the little epistles of John to the right in your Bible. Now I believe, as far as I can tell, this is the only place in Scripture where this man of sin is called, "the antichrist." I always have to qualify the word ‘antichrist,’ it does not mean the man who is against Christ, as that is our normal interpretation. But the term antichrist means the "counterfeit Christ, and the world is going to buy that. The world and especially Israel is going to buy that, as immediately when they see what this man does, by bringing peace to the Middle East are going to acclaim him as the Christ. That’s why we’ll see in a little bit in Revelation 6:1, he appears riding on a white horse. Well according to symbolism, who is really going to come on the white horse? The True Christ! So this man of sin, the antichrist will not be an opposer per se, but rather a counterfeit.

"I John 2:18"

"Little children, (remember John like Peter writes primarily to Jews who will be in the Tribulation. So John is writing appropriately) it is the last time: (absolutely it is) and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."

Now remember he’s writing to Jews specifically, I feel, who will be feasting on these little verses from I, II, and III John during the Tribulation in particular. Now flip over to chapter 4:3.

"I John 4:3"

"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world."

The spirit of antichrist has been here ever since the beginning of the Garden experience, because after all who is behind the antichrist? Well Satan is! It’s satanic power, and so the antichrist is consequently then called these other terms, and as we see in the last verse we studied in II Thessalonians chapter 2, he’s also called, "the son of perdition."

"II Thessalonians 2:3b"

"and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."
Now there’s only one other person in all of human history that was called that, and who was it? Judas, one of the twelve was called, "the son of perdition," and you know what he was? He was indwelt by Satan, and so will this man be. Not the first 3 1/2 years, but the second 3 1/2 he will be indwelt by Satan the same as Judas was. Now in order to establish our foundation for teaching these things, come back to the Book of Daniel with me in the two minutes we have left. We can’t just pull these things out of the woodwork, and you just can’t hopscotch through Scripture, but if you’ll come back to Daniel, who the Lord Jesus Himself, called a prophet.

Now why would I make a point of that? Because there are so many, especially of higher criticism, who maintain that Daniel is a forgery. Due to the explicit accuracy of Daniel’s prophet utterances, it must have been written after the fact, and then forged. Now that’s what the higher critics like to do. They like to take away all the inspiration, and they like to take away the supernatural idea of our Scriptures and that’s one way they can do it. But the Lord Jesus Himself said in Matthew 24:15 –

*Matthew 24:15*

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand:"

And if you can’t believe the words of the Lord Jesus, then we might as well take this Book, throw it away and go home, because after all He’s the author of the whole thing, and He called Daniel a prophet. So in our next program we will go back and see from the prophet Daniel the very first portion of Scripture that delineates one man as becoming the great world ruler, the man of sin.
Lesson One • Part III

Paul’s Glimpse at Prophecy

II Thessalonians 1:1-2:4

It’s so good to have our son Todd and his wife Kim, and their four precious children, ages 3-8, with us today. The kids are home schooled, and Todd helps with the ranch, and also does wood working, making custom-made hand-hewn chairs on the side for extra income, because you can’t make a living on cows alone. If you’ve ever called the ministry, more than likely, if you didn’t talk to Iris or myself, then you’ve talked to Kim. She started helping with the ministry just when we need help so badly. She’s a whiz on the computer and can put out more work in half day then most people can in a week. So they are, as are the rest of our children, such a blessing, and we’re just tickled to death to have all the kids real close and they all help in the ministry. We’re just a family operation, and all the kids are involved in the ministry in one way or another.

Now back to where we left off in the last lesson and then we’ll go right back to where we were in the Book of Daniel. So II Thessalonians chapter 2 where Paul makes it so plain that the Day of the Lord, the Day of Wrath and vexations, and judgment cannot come until there is a departure first of the Church Age believers.

II Thessalonians 2:3

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come except there come a falling away (departure) first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;"

Right there in one verse, Paul uses two of this fellow’s titles, if you want to call them that. He calls him "the man of sin and the son of perdition," and then in the last lesson we also found he’s also called the anti-Christ, the great counterfeiter, but most of the time in Scripture he’s referred to as "the beast." And of course the main reason for that is, he will be so heartless, he will be so bestial in his power because he’s getting his power from Satan. So always remember that these terms all apply to this great world political ruler that is going to come on the scene. Personally I think he’s already alive, and probably in some government in Western Europe even as we speak. But whatever, these are the Scriptural terms for this leader to come. Now if you’ll go back to Daniel 9 again where we were when we left off in the last lesson we find Daniel refers to him as the prince, small letter ‘p.’

Daniel 9:26b
"...and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary,..."

If the Bible says he’s going to come, then you’d better believe that it’s going to happen, because he’s going to arrive on the scene! So let’s begin our study in verse 24. I realize the daily listeners were in Revelation not too many months ago, but I’m going to spend a certain amount of time in prophecy here in II Thessalonians chapter 2, because in the overall format you see we’ve covered a lot of the Bible since we studied prophecy in Revelation and Daniel. Daniel by inspiration is writing, and God tells Daniel to say-

Daniel 9:24a

"Seventy weeks (of years, or 490 years) are determined (or already established in God’s program) upon thy people..."

Now it’s interesting that when Israel is in the good graces of God, He refers to them as what? My people. But when they’re out of His good Grace, He calls them, "your people" whether He was speaking to Moses or Daniel. Now you want to realize that at the time God is speaking to Daniel, Israel is in captivity in Babylon which means they are out of the place of blessing in Jerusalem. They have no temple, they have no priesthood - consequently what are they? They’re not God’s people, but rather they’re your people Daniel. Now when Christ returns and Israel once again becomes God’s covenant people, then God will say, "You will be My people, and I will be your God!" But at this writing He says to Daniel –

Daniel 9:24

"Seventy weeks (of years, or 490 years) are determined upon thy people..."

It’s interesting, and I’ve made these points before, and I’m going to keep repeating them, that whenever God deals with Israel with regards to prophetic statements, almost without exceptions, because somebody may find an exception, but almost without exception, God puts that prophetic statement in a time frame. For example when He called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees what time frame did He give to Abram? 430 years! After that time Israel would become a nation, and come out of Egypt. There would be 430 years go by from the call of Abram until Moses would lead them out of Egypt. Then the next predetermined period of time was from the day Joshua took over the leadership of Israel until King Saul made the first king of Israel, was 490 years.
Then from the time King Saul was commissioned as king of Israel until Nebuchadnezzar came in from Babylon and put the Israelites under servitude was another 490 years. God always deals with Israel in specific time frames. In between you have the Babylonian captivity in which Daniel is writing, and long before it happened, what did God tell Israel? "You’re going to spend 70 years outside the land." The purpose for this was to restore the sabbatical years. So again for 490 years Israel had forgotten the sabbatical year, they didn’t keep it. God had told them to let the land rest 1 out of 7 years. So divide 7 into 490 years, how long did Israel have to go into captivity in Babylon? 70 years.

And while they were in captivity God said, "the land of Israel will now get it’s rest that it should have had all along." So you see everything that God does with Israel is in a prescribed time frame. Now when you go back to Daniel chapter 2 and Nebuchadnezzar’s dream concerning the Gentile empires that would be coming down the pike one right after the other. And if you remember he saw the head of God which would be his own Babylon Empire followed by the chest of silver which would be the Medes and Persians. Next he saw the Belly of brass, which represented the Greek Empire, and the legs of iron, the Roman Empire.

Now with these empires there is no definitive time frame. In other words God didn’t say, "Babylon you’re going to rule 400 years. Then I’m going to let the Medes and Persians rule for 300 years." No God doesn’t do that, but rather all God is saying is, "one Gentile empire will be followed by another." But when He makes prophetic statements concerning Israel it’s always in a time frame. Now I hope I’m making my point. Now this time frame here in Daniel is more interesting than the others because God, through the prophet Daniel, puts two breaks in this time frame. The first one after 49 years. Now it wasn’t a great lapse of time, it was just simply at the end of the 49 years of this prophecy, Israel dedicated the rebuilt temple put up by Ezra and Nehemiah and those that went back to Jerusalem with them from Babylon. That’s all it was, but it was a time break. Then you go on for another 434 years and again there’s another little time break, and that is at the crucifixion. Because remember Daniel’s prophecy says –

Daniel 9:25-26a

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous time. 26. And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off…"

At the crucifixion, this is all delineated. This is prophecy. At the crucifixion that would conclude 483 years of the 490 years that God had declared on the nation of
Israel. That 483 years took place from the decree to Ezra from Artaxerxes the king of the Medes and Persians to go back and rebuild the city walls until Palm Sunday which was just a few days before the crucifixion, and archeology has substantiated it. Now that’s how meticulous God is with His time frame with Israel. Now the whole prophecy on Israel was 490 years and after 483 of those years were complete we have a break which means there’s 7 years that still must take place. Now as we are looking at it 2000 years later we can see so clearly that after this 7 years takes place it will conclude with the return of Christ at His Second Coming, and the setting up of His kingdom here on the earth. Now let’s look at just a little bit more of this in Daniel as this is foundational, and let’s begin with verse 26.

Daniel 9:26a

"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, (He was crucified. Now that includes of course the 7 weeks mentioned earlier or for a total of 483 years) but not for himself: (He didn’t die for anything He had done, but rather He died for the sins of the world.) and the people (now here comes the secret to our end time prophecy as we are now looking at it) of the prince that shall come…"

Daniel 9:26b

"...and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary;…"

In other words this prince, this man of sin, is going to come out of the people that destroys the city of Jerusalem and sanctuary - and we know that was Titus the Roman general, and he did that in 70 AD. Now all that is telling us that from Daniel’s perspective, the city of Jerusalem would be completely destroyed including the temple, and we know that the Romans did that. But so far as we’re concerned the important part of this prophecy is, that out of that same empire that destroyed Jerusalem would come some day this man anti-Christ, the man of sin, the wicked one, the son of perdition, will come out of the empire that destroyed Jerusalem.

Now I’ve got to put my timeline back up here again, and I’m going to do like we’ve been doing a lot lately. I’m going to come back to the Old Testament timeline which comes up through all the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ’s first coming, and it’s all to the Jew. This line is dealing with Israel, the Jew only with a few exceptions. Now the Old Testament format beginning in Psalms chapter 2 and all the Old Testament prophecies spoke of Christ’s first coming, He would be rejected, and then according to the prophecies the next thing that was to come after His ascending back to glory as we see in Psalms 110:
Psalms 110:1

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

Now that was the call of Christ back to glory after His death, burial, and resurrection. After that was to come the wrath and vexation of God for that final 7 years that we saw with all those terrible things that was attendant with the Day of the Lord we studied about in book 42. Notice there’s not a word about the Church, not a word about this Age of Grace, but rather everything is based on prophecies made with Israel in this 490 year time frame that begin back in 454 BC. So at the cross 483 years of that prophecy was completed, and immediately on the timeline was to come those final 7 years that would culminate then with Christ coming back and finishing the 490 years. Does that make sense to everyone? Alright then everything in prophecy was looking forward to His crucifixion, His ascension, and then would come then wrath and vexation, the out pouring of God’s judgment "the Day of the Lord." Then He would return as Psalm chapter 2 says He will.

Psalms 2:6

"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Remember the twelve disciples asked about that kingdom to come in Acts chapter 1 before He ascended back to glory.

Acts 1:6

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

You all know those verses, and this was the Old Testament format. Now when Peter was preaching on the day of Pentecost, he had no idea that God was going to postpone that 7 years, and bring in the Church Age with the apostle Paul. Remember Peter and the twelve were part and parcel with the nation of Israel. So Peter on the day of Pentecost says everything that the Jews had seen up until that time including the presence of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was what Joel had prophesied. So Peter goes on in Acts chapter 2 and quotes Joel’s prophecy.

Acts 2:16

"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel."
Peter also included these 7 years of wrath and vexation that will happen during the Tribulation in verses 19 and 20, because Peter thought the Tribulation was ready to begin, and after that Christ would set up His kingdom on the earth, and Peter and the eleven would then rule over the twelve tribes of Israel as the Lord had told them they would in Matthew 19:27-28. So always remember, anyone who mixes the Second Coming of Christ with the end of the Tribulation, and places the Church Age in the Tribulation, does not separate the Scripture correctly.

In this Old Testament timeline there is not even a hint of God setting Israel aside as we see in the last chapter of Acts, blinding them Spiritually, and turning to the Gentiles. Not a word until we get to the apostle Paul. Now then the apostle Paul can help us understand that all of this 7 years of wrath and vexation was postponed. In other words, it isn’t that God’s program fell apart, but rather it’s just simply that God opened up this timeline where the 7 years of wrath and vexation were supposed to have happened and God has set Israel aside for a season, and for the past 1900 + years God has been saving Gentiles with a few Jewish exceptions during this Church Age. Now that 7 years that has been postponed will still come about when God is finished with the Church Age.

Now I would like to make this comment. "When Israel is out of the place of blessing, like they were in that 70 years of captivity in Babylon, God’s time clock on the nation stopped. God doesn’t count those years that He has decreed on Israel when they are out of the land." In fact, that confused the chronologies for a long time in the Old Testament chronology. They were always getting gummed up for years until some of the smart ones realized that whenever Israel was out of the place of blessing, God didn’t count those years. Just as soon as God opened this timeline and sent Israel into a dispersion, permitted her temple to be destroyed in 70 AD, the priesthood dismantled, and He goes to the Gentiles, God’s time clock stopped. It’s not ticking today.

Just like with the Gentile empires back in Nebuchadnezzar’s day and following, God did not put them in a time frame so also with the Gentiles Church Age we are not in a time frame. Do you follow me? So God’s clock does not tick when He’s dealing with Gentiles or when Israel is out of the place of blessing. That makes sense doesn’t it? But just as soon as God has finished His time with the Gentiles, and the Church is complete and removed at the Rapture then yes, God is still going to fulfill those final 7 years which the Bible always splits in half, 3 1/2 and 3 1/2. And yes, Christ is still going to return to the Mount of Olives, and yes, Christ is still going to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords, but God in His Sovereignty has opened the timeline, and nobody in that Old Testament format could see it, as Peter couldn’t on the Day of Pentecost.
In fact, here I like to use some verses in I Peter chapter 1, and this says it all. Probably 90% of church members, even Bible studying church members do not know these verses are here. These verses are just sort of hidden away, but oh they’re so graphic. All of the Old Testament writers (Jesus in His earthly ministry, Peter on the Day of Pentecost) were all looking forward to this progressive timeline. After Christ was crucified, and ascended, in would come the wrath and vexation, then Christ would return, and yet set up His kingdom. Now that’s all the Old Testament knew. Now look why I can say that here in I Peter chapter 1 - and Peter is writing to Jews.

_I Peter 1:10_

"Of which salvation the prophets (the Old Testament writers) have inquired and searched diligently, (these same writers) who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:" But they couldn’t understand it. They just couldn’t put the whole picture together. Now verse 11.

_I Peter 1:11_

"Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them (the Holy Spirit that was in them as He inspired these Old Testament writers to write) did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

Now here it is. They could see that there had to be a suffering Saviour. They knew Psalms 110:1. They knew that Christ would go back to glory somehow or other and be seated at the Father’s right hand, but they just couldn’t put it all together. They also knew that not only would He suffer, not only would He bring in wrath and vexation, but that the glory that should follow was still to come.
Lesson One • Part IV

Paul’s Glimpse at Prophecy

II Thessalonians 1:1-2:4

Now let’s get right back to where we left off in the last lesson, and we’ll look at II Thessalonians chapter 2:4 for a moment before we go back to Daniel. Now remember the whole reason that Paul is doing this is that even though the Church Age is not associated with these prophetic statements per se, he has been teaching the Thessalonians that this is all part of God dealing with the human race and bringing it down to the end of time as we know it, and to fulfill then Daniel’s 490 years of prophecy on the nation of Israel. We know 483 of those years were fulfilled when Christ was crucified, leaving 7 years remaining. Remember those 7 years were to begin, according to the Old Testament program, immediately after Christ’s ascension, but now we know God interrupted that program and brought in something that no one had ever dreamed of, and that was the Church Age.

None of the Old Testament prophets had any idea of it. The twelve disciples had no idea of it. We know Jesus never betrayed the secret of it. And when Paul comes on the scene and is sent to the Gentiles by our Lord, then the Church Age, this age of Grace, this calling out of the Body of Christ begins. But I don’t think Paul had any idea it would go on now for 2000 years. He was probably even of the mindset that it would be either in his lifetime, or shortly thereafter that the Rapture of the Church would happen, and then God would pick up and finish the Old Testament format. Now in II Thessalonians let’s continue on with what Paul refers to as the Day of the Lord up there in verse 2. Then let’s see what he says in verse 3.

II Thessalonians 2:3a

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first (the departure. We as believers have to be taken out of the way before) that man of sin, (the anti-Christ, the beast of Scripture will) be revealed,…" Now verse 4 Paul is in perfect accord with the Old Testament prophecies concerning this world ruler that’s coming on the scene.

II Thessalonians 2:4a

"Who opposeth (in other words he opposes the things of God) and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped:…"
At the end of the word *worshipped* in verse 4 you have a semi-colon so that covers the first half of this 7 years. This man of sin will come in (and by flattery Daniel said), and he’s going to usurp this worldwide consortium of governments which will be headed up primarily in Western Europe. The European union I think is already the format for a revived Roman Empire. He’s going to come in and he’s going to just wow the world with his promises of peace and prosperity, and he’s going to bring peace to the Middle-east. And in that 7-year treaty, as we’ll see back in Daniel in just a moment, he’s going to somehow or other get the Moslem world to permit Israel to re-establish temple worship.

Now today that is almost a ridiculous thought. But as I’ve said over and over as I teach prophecy, remember that at the minute that the curtain lifts on this final 7 years of human history, the supernatural becomes an everyday occurrence. Now when I talk about supernatural I’m talking about things that you and I could never imagine happening today. **Who could ever imagine a peace treaty concerning Israel and Jerusalem, and the Moslems that would give the Jews permission to rebuild a temple.** Now that doesn’t mean it’s going to be a great big glorious temple like Solomon’s or even like the second temple that was remodeled by King Herod the great. But it will be something that will be functional, whereby they can re-establish their priesthood, and their sacrificial worship. Now that’s going to happen according to Daniel! Now that will be miraculous. That’s super-super-natural because God is again entering into the everyday affairs, especially of the nation of Israel.

Now back to the text. So there has to be a departure of the Body of Christ so God can pick up where He left off with His dealing with the covenant people Israel, then the anti-Christ, the son of perdition, the prince that shall come according to Daniel or as Paul refers to him down in verse 8 the *wicked one* shall be revealed. Those are all names that are applied to this man of sin that will be coming on the world scene. Now verse 4 again.

**II Thessalonians 2:4**

"*Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*"

This anti-Christ is going to be the god of this world, and the world is going to acclaim him as such. They’re going to call him their messiah. Even Israel will be taken in by this man. Even Israel, since this guy has been able to negotiate the re-establishment of temple worship, the Jews are going to acclaim him as their messiah, as God. Now both Paul and Daniel tell us that when this man gets that big headed, when he gets that arrogant, that he can claim that he is God, that he is the Messiah, then all of a sudden
he let’s his power get away with him, and he goes to the temple in Jerusalem, and defiles it, and will not agree to temple worship of Israel’s God of Abraham. But rather he’s going to demand worship of himself. Alright look at it again in the last half of verse 4.

**II Thessalonians 2:4b**

"...so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself (to the whole world) that he is God."

Now let’s go back to Daniel chapter 9 once again and just keep picking this up verse by verse comparing one with the other. Remember the prince that shall come is going to come out of the area of the old Roman Empire, and so Bible scholars already a hundred years or so ago, when they began to see all of these things coming on the scene, put the term on it, *"the revived Roman Empire."* Now we know the Roman Empire died and disappeared from human history between 300 and 400 AD. It just disappeared, it rotted away from within. There was no outside force that defeated them, they just rotted away, they just imploded. Now as we approach the end times there has to be a Roman Empire back on the scene, but it won’t be the old empire of the Caesars of course, but rather it’s a revived Roman Empire.

The amazing thing is, that ever since World War II ended and the original ten nations of Western Europe got together and decided there in the late 40’s and early 50’s at least somewhere in that area that they were going to set up a United States of Europe. Now listen none of these men had any inkling that they were fulfilling Bible prophecy, or that they were setting the stage for it as I’ve put it. So they put together a system with these major ten nations of Western Europe (which we still call the Western European Union), and everything they’re doing is re-establishing politically, economically, and yes even spiritually a revival of that old Roman Empire.

This same consortium of nations is now wanting to establish a NATO like organization that will include all the nations along both sides of the Mediterranean, out across the Middle-east including India, and part of China. Well what are they talking about? Well that’s the exact border of the old Roman Empire. So everything these men are doing in that Western European setup is just setting the stage rapidly so that the Roman Empire as we knew it at the time of Christ is suddenly back on the scene. Oh it’s not the Caesar's or a Latin speaking empire, and I don’t think they will necessarily put up their capitol in Rome, but whatever their political influence, their economic treaties, and so forth will encompass the same geographical area as the old Roman Empire. So out of that revived Roman Empire, and I think out of one of those ten nations of Western Europe will come this man, the prince that shall come. Now let’s drop down to verse 27, and here Daniel picks him specifically.
Daniel 9:27a

"And he (this prince that shall come) shall confirm (or make) the covenant with many for one week;…"

Not with just Israel, but with many. I can remember years ago when I used to read a lot of prophecy, and they would always refer to this treaty as between the anti-Christ and Israel. But I don’t agree with that, but rather this treaty is going to encompass all of the nations that are so called enemies of Israel. Let’s go back and look at a passage. I hadn’t intended on doing this, and hopefully I won’t run out of time. Come all the way to Luke’s gospel chapter 1. Keep your hand in Daniel, we’ll be back in a few minutes. See what Israel was expecting out of the Old Testament prophecies, and as God spoke would happen through this priest Zacharias. But we know Israel finally rejected all of this when they crucified Jesus of Nazareth, and everything fell through the cracks, but this is still basically at least what the religious element is still looking for, and I think it’s still appropriate to look at it in this light. This is what they’re still looking for! Let’s just drop down to verse 67. We may have looked at these verses before especially if you’ve been in my Oklahoma classes. Here the father of John the Baptist has now received his voice back miraculously and in verse 67 Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit. In other words everything he says is Spirit inspired. It’s not wishful thinking on the part of a good Jew. This is actually the Word of God to the nation of Israel.

Luke 1:67-71

"And his (John the Baptist) father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, (or spoke forth) saying, (now watch the language. Look what it says, and not what you think it should say.) 68. Blessed be the Lord God of (whom?) Israel; (see this is confining, this is exclusive) for he hath visited and redeemed his people, 69. And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; (see that’s all Jewish, there’s not Gentile’s in that.) 70. As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: 71. That we should be saved from our (what?) enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;"

See he’s not talking about being saved from their sins, but rather their enemies. Well for goodness sake, who were Israel’s enemies at the time of Christ? Well the same ones that hate the Jew tonight. Egypt, Syria, the Babylonians at that time, or the middle-eastern people. They hated Israel then just like they do today, and so the whole idea of Christ coming would be that He would save Israel from the hatred of their enemies. Verse 72.
Luke 1:72

"To perform the mercy promised to our father, and to remember his holy covenant; 73. The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, 74. The he would grant unto us, (the nation of Israel) that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him (the Messiah) without fear, 75. In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life,"

Now that was what Israel was longing for then, and at least the religious element still is tonight. Oh they would like to have somebody to come in that would just simply drive their enemies away from their borders and let them live with peace and prosperity, now that’s their hope. Now come back to Daniel chapter 9, and this is exactly what this man will do. This man will come into power, in fact turn ahead a page or two to chapter 11, and let’s start at verse 21. Now you want to remember that Daniel is always prophesying near term events and they in turn leap the centuries to the end time.

Daniel 11:21

"And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, (now the near term was Antiochus Epiphanes, that general that took over the Greek Empire which included Jerusalem. He was a picture of the anti-Christ because he brought in intense persecution on the Jew. He defiled the temple by offering a hog on the alter, remember that? Alright. Now that’s the first view, but he was also a picture of the end time man of sin, the anti-Christ) to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably and obtain the kingdom by flatteries."

He’s going to be a magnificent politician he’s going to accomplish with political maneuvering what most people would have to use war to do. Now come on over to verse 36, and this is a perfect analogy with what Paul says in II Thessalonians almost word for word.

Daniel 11:36

"And the king (this anti-Christ, this prince that shall come) shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, (see his egotistical personality?) and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, (the One True God) and shall prosper (he’s going to get away with it) till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done."
He will get away with it until those final 7 years are accomplished and then he’s going to meet his doom. Now verse 37. During his rule in these 7 years and especially the last half:

Daniel 11:37

"Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, (so that pretty much tells you what kind of a man he’s going to be.) nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all."

My what an egotist. But you see that’s what it takes. And once an egotist gets a taste of power there’s no limit to their appetite. You know that as we’ve seen it all the way up through human history. I’m always amused when people rehearse to me how it is so easy to have this lust for power triggered. Someone was telling me here while back that he was in a set of circumstances where he just spoke a word and two hundred people almost jumped to attention. He said, "It was an exhilarating feeling that all I had to do was say something and this many people just quit talking and started paying attention."

I told him that I got a little taste of that while I was in basic training. I was just a raw recruit, and I don’t suppose I’d been in the army over 4 or 5 weeks, and we had a reservist who was our cadre, and he was marching us to the post exchange. Well reservists sometimes, as you know, don’t care too much what the book says, and so half way to the post exchange he stopped our whole company and said, "Feldick fall out." So I fell out, and he said, "Now march the men to the post exchange." Well I got just a little glimpse of what it’s like to say, "Attention!" And what happened? 120 men clicked their heels. Then I said, "Forward march," and had 120 men began to march. Well it gives you just a taste of what these politicians get when they get an inkling of power, and the more power they get the more lustful they get for more power, it just consumes them. So don’t ever wonder why these politicians want to run for office. Man I wouldn’t want to be in there, and I don’t think you would, but once they get a taste of it, it consumes them. Alright, now this man is going to be the greatest of all. He’s going to have such a lust for power that it will just consume everyone around him. Then verse 38.

Daniel 11:38

"But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: (military) and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things."
So he’s going to be an extreme egotist, and an extreme corrupter of power. Now coming back to chapter 9 and verse 27. Remembering what Paul says, "He will sit in the temple of God," That is that Tribulation temple in Jerusalem that he instrumentally brought about with that 7-year treaty. I hope you can all see that now. That as he brought about this 7-year treaty between Israel and the Moslem world, permitting Israel to re-establish temple worship, which in turn will just make the Jews in a state of euphoria, because they will think, "evidently this man is the Messiah because he’s done what we’ve always wanted," but in the middle of that Tribulation period, Daniel tells us first, and if we have time we’ll see what the Lord also says about it. So in verse 27, he’ll make this treaty for 7 years to fulfill the 490 that we have up here on the top line of our time line, but look what happens at the mid-point of that 7 years.

Daniel 9:27b

"...and in the midst of the week (or 7 years) he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease,..."

Now listen, all you have to do here is use common sense. If the sacrificial worship is stopped at the mid-point, what happened sometime before? Well it had to start! You can’t stop something that hasn’t been started. Now you know there’s no temple worship tonight! But someplace as this 7-year period begins the anti-Christ will permit sacrificial worship to begin in the temple that will be rebuilt in Jerusalem, and they will establish sacrificial worship. Then in the middle of that 7-year period he will stop that temple worship for the overspreading of abominations, which I’m sure will include sacrificing a hog or sow’s blood or something unclean for the Jew on the altar there at the temple. Now completing the verse.

Daniel 9:27b

"...and for the overspreading of the abominations he shall make it (the temple) desolate, even until the consummation,..."

Now turn to Matthew chapter 24. Now here the Lord Jesus Himself puts the frosting on this prophecy. So between Daniel, and The Lord Himself here, and Paul in II Thessalonians chapter 2, and then the other various verses in the Book of Revelation, it all comes together. When this final 7 years is triggered by the signing of 7-year treaty (re-establishing temple worship), the anti-Christ I’m sure will go back to his headquarters in Western Europe, but in the middle of the 7 years he will come and turn on the nation of Israel. Here in Matthew 24 Jesus Himself is speaking to the twelve concerning end-time events. Remember Jesus too is dealing on the top line of this time line. He hasn’t given any hint of a 2000 year hiatus, and look what he says.
Matthew 24:15

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand.)"

Do you see how plain all that is? And above everything else don’t miss the point that Jesus called Daniel a prophet. Now the critics can call him whatever they want to, and they call the Book of Daniel what they want to, but the Author of this Book, the Creator of the universe, the One who programmed everything in the first place, He says, "Daniel the prophet" Then you’d better believe it, and when our Lord said, "When you (Israel) see this man of sin come in and defile the temple," what’s the first word in the next verse say?

Matthew 24:16a

"Then…"

That of course is still future, but we’re getting closer and closer everyday!
Lesson Two • Part I

Then Shall the Wicked One Be Revealed

II Thessalonians 2:4-9

We’re going to jump in at II Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 4, and take a long hard look at this verse.

Remember as I began this series in Thessalonians, I mentioned over and over that the apostle Paul never spends much time on prophecy, because the Church is not tied to the prophetic program. The Church is an interruption, it’s a parenthetical period of time. But here in II Thessalonians, in just these few verses, Paul does let us know that he is in full accord with the prophetic program that comes out of the Old Testament, the four gospels, part of Acts, and the Book of Revelation. And this is what we have been showing, that Paul now, is in full agreement with everything that prophecy has said concerning the final seven years of Daniel’s 490 year prophecy. So, as we move on into verse 4, he speaks of the son of perdition in verse 3, which we described in the last program as the anti-Christ. He is also referred to in Paul’s letter right here as the wicked one. Daniel calls him the prince that shall come. It is all references to this man, anti-Christ, who is going to one day appear on the stage of world events and he is going to become the absolute totalitarian dictator of the world.

Alright, Paul goes on to explain that this man will oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God. He is going to be an arrogant individual. He is going to have no compunction about telling the world that he is the God that they are looking for.

II Thessalonians 2:4

"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God, (see how plain that is? He is going to let the world know that he is claiming to be the God that the world is looking for) sitteth in the temple of God, showing (or declaring) himself that he is God."

Now the first place that I think we can go back for an Old Testament reference would be back to Daniel chapter 9, where Daniel refers to him as the ‘prince that shall come.’ Now those of you who have been with me down through this series beginning almost with the Old Testament in Genesis and so forth, Daniel chapter 9, I always refer to, as the very bench mark of the prophetic program. If you want an understanding of prophecy, as it will unfold especially in the end times, you have to know Daniel chapter 9. He begins this prophecy down there in verse 24 where he says that, "70 weeks of years" or some of your newer translations have done the
arithmetic for you - 490 years. Now you know that I am always reminding folks over and over that God, with the nation of Israel, would set a prophetic program and tie it in with a time frame.

For example, long before it happened, God, through the prophets, told Israel that they would be spending 70 years in captivity down in Babylon. And the time came when it happened. When the 70 years are expired, miraculously a Persian king made a decree, that the Israelites could go back to Jerusalem and rebuild their temple. A 70-year prophecy, wrapped in a time frame, and it came true.

When Abraham was first called out of Ur of the Chaldees, God told him "430 years would go by before his offspring would come in to the Promised Land." We know now that it was exactly 430 years from the call out of Ur until Joshua took them over the river Jordan. So over and over through the Old Testament, this has been the format. Now here is another one.

**Daniel 9:24a**

"*Seventy weeks* (490 years God tells Daniel) *are determined upon thy people* (the nation of Israel) *and upon thy holy city…*"(and so on)

Well, we won’t repeat it again, but in this prophecy we realize that 483 of the 490 years were fulfilled at Christ’s first advent. When He was:

**Daniel 9:24b**

"...making an end of sins to make reconciliation for iniquity to bring in everlasting righteousness...."

The work of the cross was His first advent. But that was only 483 years. So there were 7 years that were yet unfulfilled, but which, according to the prophetic program, after Christ had been rejected and had been raised from the dead; had ascended back to glory then, would come the 7 years as Daniel is prophesying. And then Christ would come and set up the kingdom, and Israel would be the light of the nations and evangelize the pagan world. But, Israel didn’t accept the king, Israel didn’t believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah and consequently God sent them into a spiritual blindness and a dispersion in about 70 A.D. Not that He is through with Israel. *I have no time at all for what they call replacement theology, it is a manifestation of the error of men. But rather, Israel has only been set aside. Not forever but for a period of time known only to God Himself.* The closest we can come to when that being set aside will end is in Romans 11:25 where God through the apostle Paul says:
Romans 11:25

"I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness (spiritually) in part is happened to Israel, until (that’s a time word. They will remain blind spiritually to the fact of Who Jesus was until) the fullness of the Gentiles be come in."

The fullness of the Gentiles we feel is the Body of Christ, the Church. And so when the Body of Christ is complete, God is going to pick up His prophetic program where He left off with Israel. And that of course, will be this final 7 years that Daniel spoke of in chapter 9:27. After the 483 years were fulfilled at the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ, then we have in verse 27 the appearance of the prince that shall come, mentioned in verse 26 and now verse 27.

Daniel 9:27a

"And he..." (this prince that is coming)

He is going to come out of the geographical area of the old Roman Empire. He will confirm or will make a covenant with many. Now for a long time, I always heard people teach that he would make this treaty with Israel. Well, Israel is certainly going to be involved but not singularly. It is going to involve all the nations, even as we have seen the last few weeks. My, how they are trying to bring peace to the Middle East and that is admirable. We all hate to see the sufferings and the turmoil of war and unrest. But, there will be no peace in the Middle East until this man of sin makes it happen. And he will. But we don’t know when. Alright, so Daniel says it so clearly, that this prince that shall come, who we know as the anti-Christ, the wicked one, the son of perdition.

Daniel 9:27a

"And he will confirm the covenant with many for one week; (or seven years) and in the midst of the week (or in the middle of the 7 years, that’s why I’m always dividing the seven year time line, 3 1/2 and 3 1/2. In the middle of the week) he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation (that is the temple worship) to cease,..."

Now I always have to remind people. You can’t stop something unless it’s what? Unless it is going! So this tells us that temple worship is going to be in full blast during this 7-year period. Israel will somehow or other get the temple back. We don’t know if it has to be on Mt. Moriah. It may be in some other area of Jerusalem. But she is going to have temple worship. That is going to be part of the peace agreement. Now that would have never happened a couple of weeks ago, they
can’t even agree on what to do with Jerusalem, but this man is going to make an agreement between the Arab world and the Jews, that they can have temple worship. And they are ready, we know that. Whenever we take a tour to Israel we quite often go to the Temple Mount Institute where they have all the ramifications of temple worship ready to go. They have the clothing for the priests hanging on mannequins. They have all the shovels and all the various utensils for the sacrifices all ready. And they are going to be jumping right in, once this treaty gives them permission to rebuild a temple.

But Daniel prophesies that as great as it is going to be for Israel, they are going to be just euphoric to think that once again they not only have the homeland and Jerusalem but they are going to have the temple. But, look what horrible thing happens. In the middle of the week, this man is going to cause all this temple worship to stop.

Daniel 9:27b

"…and for the overspreading of the abominations (in other words the horrors that shall follow) he (the anti-Christ) shall make it (the temple) desolate, (in other words he is going to shut it down. He is going to defile it. And it will stay defiled) even until the consummation (that is until those 7 years have finished) and that determined (in other words everything prophesied) shall be poured upon the desolate." (or desolator, this man anti-Christ)

In other words, all of the horrifying judgements that are prophesied for these final 3 1/2 years will happen. Alright now, flip back with me to the New Testament to Matthew 24. Now these are the words of the Lord Jesus himself. If you have a red letter edition, these words are going to be in red - and let’s just drop down to verse 15. And Jesus is speaking to the twelve, as you see in the beginning of the chapter. Also remember the twelve are the representatives of the nation of Israel:

Matthew 24:15a

'When ye (the Jews, the Nation of Israel) therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, (in other words, the horrible defiling of the temple and the stopping of the temple worship) spoken of by Daniel, the prophet....'

Again, I always like to stop and emphasize. Most of you who know anything about Bible study at all, realize that the scoffers ridicule the book of Daniel as authentic scripture, because the prophesies are so accurate, the near and the far, that they say nobody could have written that unless they had seen it happen as a historian. Well you see those men know nothing of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And so Daniel wrote by inspiration, and his prophesies were as accurate as only God can make
it. Jesus is putting his stamp of approval on Daniel the prophet. Now looking at verse 15 again.

Matthew 24:15-16

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (that is in the temple, then) (whosoever readeth, let him understand:) 16. Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains."

And then as we have taught so often this is the calling out of the remnant of Israel. I feel they will go out to the mountains in unbelief. But, they are the surviving remnant, and they will be the seed stock of the nation of Israel going into the thousand year kingdom when Christ finally returns.

Alright, now all of these are references to this verse in II Thessalonians that the man of sin this anti-Christ, will come into the temple in Jerusalem and defile it and not only cause temple worship to stop but also will turn on the Jews with the most horrible persecution that Israel has ever, ever experienced. I always like to make the analogy that the Holocaust was awful and I think anyone that denies the Holocaust is unspeakable. It was a literal event. Millions of Jews were not only put to death, they were martyred. They suffered inexorably, but nothing compared to what they will in this last 3 1/2 years.

Remember a few programs back I went through the "Day of the Lord," all the way up through the Old Testament. It is a horrifying picture of what is coming upon the earth in those final 7 years. But, Israel will be at the very core of the wrath of God. And I always teach from Revelation, it is also going to be the wrath of Satan. Because when he is cast out of heaven at the mid-point and he comes back to the earth, the book of Revelation says he knows that he has but a short time, and so he too, will be pouring out his wrath. I call it a double barrel wrath. The wrath of God, as well as the wrath of Satan, and it is going to be beyond human description.

Alright, so the verse says again that "he’s going to sit in the temple and declare himself as God." Now then, let’s jump back to Daniel once again, and pick up some more of Daniel’s description of this usurper, of this arrogant egotist, of this man who will literally give himself over to Satan. He will be indwelt by Satan even as Judas was. And he is going to be the most despicable human being who has ever ruled this planet. This time let’s turn to chapter 11.

Daniel 11: 21
"And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: (because he is so rotten, but he is going to overcome all of that) but he shall come in peaceable and obtain the kingdom by flatteries."

He’s going to be the smoothest tongued rascal you have ever dreamed of and even though they want to oppose him because of his vileness, yet he is going to overcome all that with his flattery, and his smooth silver tongue oratory. Alright, and then verse 22 in that same chapter,

Daniel 11:22

"And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflown from before him and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant."

And then he goes on to say in verse 23 how he "works deceitfully." Now we sometimes think politics are pretty deceitful, but listen, present day politicians know nothing of deceit as this man is going to pull on them. Alright come over to verse 36.

Daniel 11:36a

And the king (again in reference to this man anti-Christ, who by this time is the world ruler) shall do according to his will, he shall exalt himself, (see how that fits with what Paul just said) and magnify himself above every god,…"

What did Paul say? He sets himself in the temple as God and declares himself as God. Alright, Daniel is in full agreement and so he is going to put himself as God of gods, and shall prosper until the indignation or this final 3 1/2 years are accomplished. And then just like Jesus said in Matthew 24, once that abomination starts in the middle of the tribulation, it’s going to continue on until it is consummated. Alright, this says the same thing. And yet he shall come to his end and none shall help him.

Well, now let’s go all the way back to the book of Revelation and let’s see how John describes him in this great book of prophecy. Come all the way back to Revelation chapter 13.

Remember now, I am just trying to show parallel references that agree totally with what Paul is writing in II Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 4. Now in Revelation chapter 13 verse 1 John writes.

Revelation 13:1
"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, (which I think is symbolic of the sea of humanity, the masses of people) and saw a beast (now, not some animal but it’s an empire and an emperor. It’s a two fold meaning here in Revelation. Sometimes it speaks of the empire of the beast and sometimes it speaks of the man himself. But he sees a beast, an empire, a government) rise up out of the sea, (of humanity) having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his head the name of blasphemy." (this anti-God individual who will proclaim himself as God.)

Then the picture of the empire is in verse 2 and it is going to be likened to a compilation of all the great gentile empires beginning with Babylon, the Medes and the Persians, the Greek, the Roman and our present day Western European revived Roman Empire. Alright, now then lets come down to verse 3 and 4. We are still describing this man who will come into the temple in Jerusalem and set himself up as God.

Revelation 13:3

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast."

Now here again, I think it is the empire. The revived Roman Empire that is miraculously coming back in the Western European Union. Others feel it’s a reference to the man himself. So, I’m not going to get in any argument over that, but I do feel that here we are talking about the empire, the government.

Revelation 13:4a

"And they (the people of the world) worshipped the dragon…"

Now what is that? That’s Satan worship. And we are seeing it come in like a flood. You know I like to remind my American people, back in 1926, if I am not mistaken, somewhere in there, one of the heads of Satanism from Europe, took sail and came to New York with the idea that he was going to start promoting Satan worship in America. After two or three weeks, even in New York City now, believe it or not, he came to the conclusion that he would never get to first base with Satanism in America. Because Christianity and the power of the Spirit was too powerful and he took ship back to Europe. And so, consequently, America was kept free of this onslaught of Satanism and Satan worship, until now recently. Now it is coming in with a flood, it is everywhere you look. Even our rural areas are not immune to it. Alright, so here we have it, that the world is going to worship the dragon. They are going to become Satanists.
Revelation 13:4

"And they worship the dragon who gave power to the beast: (or the man anti-Christ or the government, however you want to look at it) and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? (or the man anti-Christ) Who is able to make war with him?" And now verse 5 in full agreement with what Paul said in II Thessalonians:

Revelation 13:5a

"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemy…"

This man is going to be Satanic from the word go, and will have power. Now you see God is sovereign and God can permit. And God will permit this to happen and so He permits him to have power "to continue 42 months." Well how long is 42 months? Three and one half years! So from the time that he defiles the temple and turns against the nation of Israel, there will be 3 1/2 years to finalize the 7 years of Tribulation.

And as that 7 years is ended with the return of Christ now this man will finally meet his doom. He cannot, he cannot usurp the coming of Christ. Remember, I always like to point out in Matthew chapter 4 when he tempted Christ and said, "Jump down off this mountain and I will give you all the kingdoms of this world. Fall down and worship me." And you know what I am always saying. Were they his to give? Yes, they were his to give. But the Lord isn’t going to have to fall down and worship Satan to get those kingdoms. He will get them by virtue of this Second Coming, when he comes as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and he is going to be the ruler, not only the planet but of the universe!
Lesson Two • Part II

Then Shall the Wicked One Be Revealed

II Thessalonians 2:4-9

(Transcriber’s note: In this lesson, Les will make some comments about things he taught in the previous lesson that you did not hear or read about. The reason for that is we had to re-tape that previous program because after viewing it the quality wasn’t good enough. So remember Les had to wait an entire month, and it was hard for him to remember just exactly what he had covered in the previous program. But I’m sure that you will enjoy it just as we do.)

Now, as you study, ask the Lord to enlighten you, because as we constantly stress, unless the Lord opens our heart, this is a closed Book. So as you study with us, you also prayerfully ask the Lord to open the truth to your understanding. Now let’s get back to where we were in II Thessalonians chapter 2. Remember now that Paul is writing to a small group of believers up in the city of Thessalonica, there in predominantly Northern Greece. And, it’s a group that he had only spent a few weeks with and yet it was a group that he had brought so far with their understanding of the Scriptures, that he could say "and you know."

There is more to this than meets the eye. See, when the Apostle Paul brought these people out of paganism, their whole understanding of this was uncluttered. They didn’t have to undo forty or fifty years of false teachings and and false doctrines in order to see the truth. They were virgin territory. And, we have noticed that, even with people who write, that they probably had had almost nothing of a spiritual understanding. Unbelievable, but sometimes in just one program, the Lord totally opens their heart. Well, again, it’s because they haven’t been cluttered with a lot of other things over the years. And so, this is what Paul had here. They were pagans recently converted by Paul’s Gospel. Then he could certainly write, don’t you know these things?

Alright, verse 6 is where we quit in our last study, how that there has to be a restraining force now, beginning at some point in human history to hold everything in check lest things start rolling too fast and the anti-Christ would make his appearance before the right time. I think that is all that is implied here, is that God has instituted a restrainer so that the anti-Christ could not be brought on the scene ahead of time. Hopefully, we made plain that the restrainer is the work of the Holy Spirit, as he indwells you and I as believers.
In closing of the last lesson, I mentioned that even in Israel tonight, with the tremendous chasm between the secular (how shall I call it), the unbelieving Jews. They take no respect for the Scriptures, the Old Testament, as they are secular. They don’t take God in their lives at all. In fact I was reminded, as I read that little article, when Iris and I were in Israel the very first time. That goes back too many years! We came out of the hotel dining room after dinner and a well dressed, Jewish business man said "You are from America, aren’t you?" We said, "Yes." He said, "What do you think of our little country?" Well we were impressed with how far they had come in just those few years after the Six Day War. So, I just earnestly said, "It’s amazing what God has done here!" Do you know what his answer was? "God didn’t have a thing to do with it. We did it."

Well, see that’s the secular attitude. They think God has nothing to do with it. But you see, on the other hand, you have that percentage in Israel who are still, what we would call religious. They are Orthodox and they are still spending their time in the Old Testament scriptures. But, it’s gotten to the place that the secular part of Israel will be for anything that the religious segment is against. And visa versa. Whether it’s political, economical, moral, whatever. As soon as those Rabbi’s express themselves, the secular world comes up against it.

Well you see, we are in the same situation in America. Not quite to that extreme, but we are up against the same thing. Just as soon as we try to oppose something, then we are just called mean spirited. We are just simply against everything. Well, of course we are. It is our responsibility as believers to stand against these things that we know are Biblically wrong. Yet our nation has become so secular now, that regardless of what the outcome may be, they are going to be counter against us, simply because we are standing on the Scriptures. But, this is our role. This is why God has left us here. We can be used of the Holy Spirit to be a restraining force to hold back these forces of evil. Because we know, that the minute we are out of here (and we are going to see that in the next verse) that the wickedness is going to run rampant across the planet. And, that is what justifies the wrath and vexation of God. Now verse 6.

II Thessalonians 2:6-7a

"And now ye know what withholdeth (or the one who restrains) that he (the anti-Christ) might be revealed in his time. (or not before the time.) 7. For the mystery (or the secret) of iniquity doth already work:…"

Now there is probably a debate, "When does Paul feel this mystery of iniquity began?" Did it begin as soon as he went out among the Gentile world with the Gospel? Possibly, but I prefer to think that this mystery of iniquity actually began at
the tower of Babel. And, my reason for thinking that is every false religion, even our modern day cults (and throw them in with the Oriental religions) - they all have their roots going right back to the tower of Babel. Everything false goes back to the tower of Babel. Then if you have done any study at all of these false religions, you will notice that almost all of them, at the core of their belief system, are what they call, the mysteries. Now, you just think for a minute. The Oriental religions are mystery religions. And it is simply because only the inner sanctum of their priesthood have access to these mysteries. You will find this, all the way up through every false religion. And so this is what makes me think that this term mystery refers to all these false pagan religions that even Paul was confronting now, face to face, by bringing these people out of it. Indeed, the mysteries of paganism, of false worship, have been already revealed and were on the scene as Paul wrote this letter.

II Thessalonians 2:7a

"For the mystery (secret) of iniquity doth already work:" It was permeating the whole human race. Now the next part is also interesting. There is a lot of debate over it, but I believe if you just look at it in the big picture, that Paul is dealing with the Body of Christ being taken out before this final seven years of wrath comes in. So he says in verse 7.

II Thessalonians 2 : 7b

"...only he who now letteth (hindereth) will let (hinder) until he be taken out of the way."

Now those are personal pronouns. So again, I am thinking you have to give the credit to the Holy Spirit. The personal pronoun that "he who now hindereth," the indwelling Holy Spirit, is the same Spirit that we saw in verse 6 "will hinder." He’s never going to stop. He’s never going to give up. I have always felt that this hindering work of the Holy Spirit is such that until the Body of Christ is gone, it’s going to be like a dam in the river. And the iniquity is just piling up and piling up, just like a large reservoir. Alright, so look at the verse again.

II Thessalonians 2 : 7b

"...only he who now letteth (hindereth. Now I know that the King James says letteth, but again if you have a Bible with a marginal, they have all realized that the word meaning has changed 180 degrees. So the person of the Holy Spirit who) will let, (hinder) until he be taken out of the way."
Now, if the Holy Spirit is working in the believer today to withstand the forces of wickedness, then it stands to reason that as soon as he is taken out, it will be like the floodgates of wickedness that will come over the world. Come back with me to Luke chapter 21. These are the words of the Lord Himself, and since the Lord of Glory spoke it, I think we have every reason in the world to believe it! He knew the end from the beginning, even as He walked on earth. Here He is making a prophetic statement that a lot of people think will take place at the end. But, He’s not. He’s speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman General Titus in 70 AD.

**Luke 21:24**

"And they (the Jewish people) shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: (now there’s the clue that this is not referring to the end time or Armageddon or anything like that, because, at that time Israel will not be dispersed but rather they will be made ready for the kingdom. So this is a reference to the 70 AD destruction of Jerusalem.) and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, (in other words, they would be under Gentile control. From the time of Titus’ destruction of the city) until (there’s your time word. Doesn’t give the day and the month and the year, but there is a day, month and year, when it’s going to happen.) the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Now we realize that the times of the Gentiles are the filling up of the wrath of God. And, the comparison that I always like to use is Genesis chapter 15. Where in another time of God dealing with a Gentile group of people, he had the same mindset. That he would give these Gentile nations, which we now know as the Canaanites, who were in the land while Israel was down in Egypt. But He deals with them on the same basis. That is why I think it is appropriate to compare these two portions.

**Genesis 15:13**

"And he (that is the Lord) said unto Abram, Know of a surety (I like that kind of language, don’t you? This isn’t gobbledy gook, this isn’t guess work. This is fact.) that thy seed (that is, the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob further down the line) shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, (a reference to Egypt) and they shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;"

Now we just talked about that at break time and it would seem that they would have been in slavery the whole four hundred years, but we know from chronology that they were not. So this is not a reference to the total time in Egypt in slavery, but rather from the call of Abram until Moses leads them out in the exodus, would be the four hundred years (or the 430 really.) Alright, but the 430 years is not what we came here to look at.
Genesis 15:14a

"Also, that nation (Egypt) whom they shall serve (God says) I will judge:’’Well now you know He did that. The plagues took care of that little bit of prophecy.

Genesis 15:14b

"and afterward (that is after the plagues) shall they come out with great substance. (and you know that happened) 15. And thou shall go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.’’ And we know that happened. He lived to be one hundred and seventy five. Now verse 16.

Genesis 15:16a

"But, in the forth generation, they (the children of Israel, down in Egypt remember) shall come hither again:’’(that is to Canaan, where God is speaking to Abram). Now why is God waiting four hundred years?

Genesis 15:16b

"...for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet (what’s the word?) full.’’

Alright, what’s the picture? God is going to give those Canaanite nations four hundred years to come out of their life of abject immorality. Because God knows, it’s going to take that long. But even after four hundred years, instead of coming out of that iniquity, what happened? They went deeper and deeper until it got to the place that almost every despicable act of immorality, the Canaanites practiced routinely. Now, when their cup of iniquity was full, the four hundred years had now been completed. What did God decree on the Canaanite people? Destroy them! Don’t leave an old man of years or an infant of days. Cleanse the land of them. Why? Because they had had four hundred years to clean up their act and they rejected it. As a result of it then, God in complete fairness and justice poured out His wrath on those Canaanite nations and gave the land to the nation of Israel.

Put those two segments in comparison then and come back to Luke 21 and you have the same kind of a picture. God has now been giving the Gentile world 1900 plus years of His Grace. The Gospel is going out across the world in one way or another. And they are having every opportunity to come out of their wickedness. But instead, what’s happening? They are going deeper.

I don’t trust the media an awful lot, but some things ring true. For example, the AIDS epidemic is just getting beyond human comprehension. Now they like to keep it quiet,
but the fact is there are areas of the world (according to an article in the Daily Oklahoman) where in a few more years there will not be enough AIDS free people to actually run the government. And what’s causing it? Well, basically wickedness, immorality.

Now, I know there are a lot of innocents, but for the most part, it is triggered by their gross immorality. And as you read the accounts around the world of how all of the civilized world is just going deeper into the things of the flesh. Well, what are they doing? Just like the Canaanites, they are filling their cup of iniquity. And it’s going to come to the full mark when the Day of the Lord is triggered. And the "Day of the Lord" is going to be that outpouring of the wrath and the vexation of God. Now back to II Thessalonians. So this is all of the background that Paul has poured out on these young in the Lord. So he says -

**II Thessalonians 2:7a**

"For the mystery of iniquity…"

This outpouring of wickedness, this outpouring of the desires of the flesh. Come back to Galatians, let’s see what the Book itself calls it. That’s the best way to explain it. The Book is far more graphic than I dare to be. And these are the things that are causing the world today to fill up their cup of iniquity. When it is full, Jerusalem will finally come out from under the rule the Gentile world. Now in this verse, he is dealing with you and I as believers. We are in the midst of all this and it is a warfare.

**Galatians 5:17**

"For the flesh (the old Adamic nature) lusteth (or I like to use the word warreth) against the Spirit, (the new nature) and the Spirit (war) against the flesh: (that’s our Christian warfare.) and these (two natures now,) are contrary the one to the other: (in other words they just have a hard time cohabiting, don’t they?) so that ye cannot do the things that you would." Because the flesh says "Do this." But the Spirit says "No." And so we have to abide by the leading of the Spirit.

Now verse 18 says:

**Galatians 5: 18**

"But if ye be lead of the Spirit, you are not under the law"

You are not under the temptations of the flesh. Now here it comes, verse 19. These are the things that we as believers, through the power of the Holy Spirit, are to withstand. These are the things that the world is reveling in. These are the things that the
Canaanites reveled in. So we are to be aware that this is where we are as the Spirit now lead us.

**Galatians 5:19-20**

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, (and here they are) which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20. Idolatry, (see that’s what Paul had to deal with personally) witchcraft, (which is part and parcel of idolatry) hatred, (my we are seeing that show it’s ugly head) variance, emulations, wrath, (a lack of self control) strife, seditions, heresies,"

Never satisfied with things the way they are. In fact, most of your wars on the planet tonight are just exactly that. You have gorillas up in the mountains of all these various nations who are unhappy with the statue quo, and they cause misery on everybody else. That’s sedition. You know I think I read again the other day 43 wars are raging on the planet right now. Oh not world wars, but war nevertheless to the people involved. Their houses are being destroyed. Their women are being ravaged. It’s war. Alright, so sedition is part and parcel of it. Now verse 21:

**Galatians 5:21**

"Envying, murders, drunkenness (boy I tell you what, we are getting so brainwashed, we are supposed to get to the place that even drunkenness is just supposed to be like kids play. I mean after all, they are kids, let them do it. But drunkenness is listed in these things that are of the flesh, and the things that God hates.) revellings and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." The next 2 verses are the other side of the coin and that is the behavior and the lifestyle of the believer. And what a difference.

**Galatians 5:22-23**

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23. Meekness, temperance against such there is no law."

Now back to II Thessalonians again. We are just going to keep hammering away. The Holy Spirit dwelling in the believer is this restraining force, and what we have to be restraining is this iniquity that is already at work and has been for centuries. And, the Holy Spirit, working through you and I the believer will:

**II Thessalonians 2:7**
"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth (hindereth) will let, (continue to hinder) until he be taken out of the way."

Now just mull that over. You and I, lead by the Spirit, are to be a restraining factor against all these lusts of the flesh. And we are to be the force that God can use to maintain control and maintain a semblance of sanity. Because, listen, once the Christian influence is removed, you and I cannot imagine what this world is going to fall into. It’s going to fall into anarchy. It’s going to fall into absolute breakdown in everything moral and that in turn will bring justly then, the wrath of God.
Lesson Two • Part III

Then Shall the Wicked One Be Revealed

II Thessalonians 2:4-9

Now we’ll picking up again where we left off in II Thessalonians 2:8, But before we begin I would like to say that all I want to do is just present the truth, and the truth shall make you free, and Les Feldick doesn’t have anything to do with that. So we trust as you study with us that you’ll be aware of what the Word says, and what it doesn’t say. The Word is quite explicit, and when you learn how to compare Scripture with Scripture and learn to whom the writers are writing to, Jew or Gentiles, then it’s not all that difficult to understand.

Now as we begin our study, we’ll pick up in verse 8. Remembering in the last program we saw how the Holy Spirit, the restrainer, dwelling in the believer is that force on the planet to maintain a semblance of sanity. And as we see the wickedness and iniquity constantly encroaching upon us, it just tells us that the cup of iniquity is nearing the full mark. But before it reaches full that other number of people which is the Body of Christ is also reaching the full mark, and we trust will be taken out of the way before the wrath of God begins. As we begin we’ll almost have to read verse 7.

II Thessalonians 2:7a

"For the mystery (or secret things) of iniquity…"

I pointed out that all of the false religions, at the very core, at the very center of their high priests, are what they call mysteries. And that’s why we refer to a lot of them as the mystery religions. Let’s go on.

II Thessalonians 2:7b

"…doth already work: (already present in the world) only he who now letteth will let, until he (the Holy Spirit) be taken out of the way. v. 8 And then…"

Now maybe I should qualify, because again the question came up at break time. You want to realize that when the Rapture takes place and the believer is taken up, that in itself does not remove the Holy Spirit from the planet. The Holy Spirit will still be here to enhance the work of the 144,000, the two witnesses and so forth, because no human being in the Age of Grace, any more than in the Tribulation, can come to a knowledge of salvation except the Spirit draw him. And so I have to teach it that as the Body of Christ goes up in the Rapture, the Spirit just sort of falls off and will
remain on the planet as the Omnipresence of God. Now the verse I like to use to compare all that is back in Genesis chapter 1. Because all of scripture fits together. And that’s why we can learn from the Old Testament as well as from the New. Let’s look at Genesis chapter 1 and verse 2. And I think this is almost a parallel of what we’ll see during the Tribulation. Even though the Body of Christ has now been removed, the believing influence is gone, yet we know that God is going to send the two witnesses to Jerusalem. We’re going to have the 144,000 young Jewish evangelists, and they too, are going to need the power of the Holy Spirit. They can’t operate without that. So now in Genesis 1 and verse 2 we have a parallel. That after God destroyed, evidently, that original, beautiful earth in verse 1 in verse 2 we find this.

**Genesis 1:2**

"And the earth was without form, and void: and darkness was upon the face of the deep. (In other words, it was covered with water) And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

So even after that judgment of what I call the first flood, what person of the Godhead still remained over the planet? The Spirit of God! And so never has this planet been without the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. He’s always been here. He’s everywhere. Now back to Thessalonians. Even today, we speak of the Holy Spirit as "indwelling the believer," and that certainly is true. But is that the only place the Spirit is operating? Just in the believer? NO! The Holy Spirit is everywhere. The Holy Spirit permeates even the dens of wickedness. Why? Because He’s like the air we breathe – He’s everywhere. He is the Omnipresence of God. That’s why no one will ever be able to tell God, "But I never had a chance. I was never approached by the Spirit of God." Yes they were! He’s everywhere.

And the same way here then. As the body of Christ is taken out in what we call the Rapture, yes, the roll of the indwelling Holy Spirit stops for us because we won’t need it in glory. Because we’re not going to be walking by faith as we are tonight. Once we get to glory it’s not by faith, but by what? Sight! We’ll be walking by sight because the Lord is in our midst. What a difference! And so don’t ever worry about the Holy Spirit leaving the planet and the 7-year period being without. The Holy Spirit will be evident even as He is today. Now I think we’re ready to go on into verse 8. And what are the first two words? Time words.

**II Thessalonians 2:8a**

"And then…"
It’s a perfect parallel with verse 3. The very same thing: as soon as the Body of Christ has departed, then what’s the next thing? The man of sin be revealed. You bring it on down to verse 8 and it’s the same connotation. And what’s the "And then" referring to? The removal of the Body of Christ and the dropping back of the Holy Spirit on the planet. So then and not until then –

**II Thessalonians 2:8b**

"…shall that Wicked (one) be revealed…"  

I hope I don’t upset anybody because I add the word "One" the anti-Christ. He’s suddenly going to make his appearance by signing that 7-year treaty. That’s why we won’t know who he is. They can speculate all they want. I’ve got books that people have sent me. Some think it’s Juan Carlos of Spain. One thinks it’s Prince Charles of England. Some think it some others that I won’t name. Listen, there’s no use speculating. We don’t know who he’s going to be. But I’m pretty confident he’s already in some European government. I’m sure he’s there in some capacity, learning the ropes, getting ready to make his political moves.

There was a Bible teacher who once said, and I certainly agree with him, "that this period of time between the Rapture and the signing of the 7-year treaty in Jerusalem, he calls it that membrane of time." And I like that, because a membrane even though it is so fragile, it’s flexible, so I think it’s an appropriate term, because nobody knows how long it will be between the Rapture, and the signing of the 7-year treaty. It could be 48 hours, it could be a year or two or more. There’s nothing to say that it has to be immediate, because the term that Paul uses constantly is, "and then." Now you could use that analogy right now today. We’ve still got one more program after this one, and then we can go home, but some of you are going to stop for lunch. So the "and then" for you is probably an hour or two longer than it will be for us, because I want to go home after the taping. But you can stipulate that the "and then" is a flexible period of time between the Rapture and the signing of the 7-year treaty.

**II Thessalonians 2:8**

"And then shall that Wicked (one) be revealed, (but the next statement leaps seven years) whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:"

Now I told you that this is one of the few places that Paul deals with prophecy. Now let’s see what Paul is agreeing with. Turn with me to Revelation chapter 19, and drop down to verse 11, and see what totally different language there is here than Paul uses when he speaks of the Rapture. **Paul never speaks of Christ coming for the Church**
on a white horse. Paul never speaks of Christ coming for the Church with attending wrath and vexation, but John does, because John is prophecy. John is dealing with the age for the non-members of the Body of Christ, whether it be Israel, or the rest of the Gentile world. But here starting in verse 11 we have the Second Coming of Christ as He will come to the Mount of Olives.

**Revelation 19:11**

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."

Keep your hand here, and go back to I Corinthians - and the reason I’m doing this is because I’m getting so much mail lately of people being told that the Rapture is a figment of our imagination, that there’s no such thing in the Bible, and after all, the Second Coming is the only thing that the Bible deals with. Well I beg to differ with those who think that, and I’m going to keep differing, by comparing Scripture. Now look what Paul says in I Corinthians chapter 15, starting with verse 51. This is totally different language than Revelation. I mean they’re totally different, there’s no way you can fit these two events together.

**I Corinthians 15:51-53**

"Behold, I shew you a mystery: (a secret that had never before revealed) We shall not all sleep, (die physically) but we shall all be changed. (there’s noting like that in Revelation, not a word) 52. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we (who are alive and remain)shall be changed. 53. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

Now the companion for this portion of Scripture is written also by Paul in I Thessalonians chapter 4, and remember Paul is the only one that writes about this event, and then also remember the only reason I’m doing this is to compare the language that Paul uses for the Rapture or the out-calling of the Church, with the language of the Second Coming. And they don’t fit at all. No wonder people are confused. When you teach it totally wrong then confusion abounds. Here we’ll begin with verse 13.

**I Thessalonians 4:13**

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, (have died) that ye sorrow not, even as other which have no hope. 14. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, (or if we have believed Paul’s Gospel that
was given only to him) *even so them also which sleep* (or have died) *in Jesus will God bring with him.* 15. *For this we say unto you be the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent* (or go ahead of) *them which are asleep.* (died) 16. *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout,..."* Riding upon a white horse? No, that’s not in here. Also not in here is the coming of the Lord with wrath, judgment, and wars; nothing like that is in here. All of a sudden in a normal day the trumpet will sound the Lord will descend from heaven, and now:

*I Thessalonians 4:16b*

"...*with the voice of the archangel, and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up* (Raptured) *together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*"

See here in the Rapture there’s none of the Second Coming language where Christ shall stand on the Mount of Olives, or when He fights the Battle of Armageddon, so they are two totally different events. Now coming back to Revelation chapter 19 again. So here is what leads up to the destruction of this man of sin, the wicked one, the anti-Christ, that Paul is referring to in II Thessalonians 2:8. And that’s why I brought you back to Revelation. Now come on down to verse 16.

*Revelation 19:16*

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

Absolutely! As He returns to the planet where He’s going to rule and reign. Now jump over to verse 20, and this again is what Paul is alluding to in II Thessalonians chapter 2.

*Revelation 19:20*

"*And the beast (the wicked one, the man of sin, the son of perdition) was taken, and with him the false prophet (the great religious leader who works hand and glove with the wicked one) that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

Now that is what Paul is referring to as we come back to II Thessalonians and verse 8.

*II Thessalonians 2:8*
"And then shall that Wicked (one) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

He’s going to end the anti-Christ’s domain on earth. And remember the old Devil who is indwelling this man has been the god of this world, he has ruled the kingdoms of this world for 6,000 years. Now here’s another verse that I just thought of. Let’s go back to Matthew chapter 4 because this is all stitched together. Here I’ll show you how Satan is the god of this world. Starting at verses 8 and 9. Now this raises a question in my own mind. In one portion of Scripture we know that the demons know the Scripture don’t they? They believe and they tremble.

Well Satan we know is the prince of demons, and with all of his brilliance, and all of his intelligence, he’s still kind of dumb. Do you know that? There are some things that evidently he has not yet figured out. Number one, I always go back to when he thought he had the Lord totally defeated when He hung on that cross. I know that Satan thought he had finally put his chief adversary to death. But evidently Satan did not know that He’d be raised from the dead. All right now here’s another one in Matthew chapter 4. This was before the crucifixion, but look at the audacity of this personality that we call Satan or the devil.

Matthew 4:8-9

"Again the devil taketh him (the Lord Jesus) up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them: (now that means what it says and it says what it means. What does he show the Lord? He showed Him the glory of Babylon, He showed Him the glory of Greece, the glory of Rome, and everything that’s been since. Including all of the marching armies of Hitler, and all the power of NATO, and the political maneuverings of the present day world system. The Devil in his cockiness says to the Lord, "Do you see all that? Do you see everything from back there to way out there? Now look at the next verse.) 9. And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

Isn’t that amazing? You know what I always have to ask? Were they his to give? Yes, Yes, Yes. Because Paul tells us Satan "is the god of this world." But here’s where I think he’s kind of dumb. He evidently didn’t know that one day Christ would have all the kingdoms of this world, and He wouldn’t have to bow down to Satan to get them. One day soon, He’s going to get them by power and force and the wrath of God, and then Satan is going to come to his just end by going straight to the Lake of Fire.

(Transcriber note: Les intended to say that the anti-Christ and the false prophet at the Second Coming of Christ would go straight to the Lake of Fire. He will explain that at the end of the lesson.)
But isn’t it amazing that Satan had the audacity to offer the Lord Himself, the Creator of everything, all the kingdoms of this world, if only He would worship him. And they are his tonight. This whole world system is under the control of Satan. Oh God’s got His Sovereignty I know that, but Satan is the god of this world, and don’t ever forget it. When you wonder how in every nation, even Israel, God’s chosen, Biblical people, their politics are rotten to the core. They’re just as corrupt as any other nation on earth, why? Because they’re still under control of the god of this world. And that will continue until the day comes when the Lord will rule as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Now let’s get back to II Thessalonians chapter 2, and look at verse 8 again.

II Thessalonians 2:8

"And then shall that Wicked (one, the anti-Christ) be revealed, (when he signs that 7-year treaty according to Daniel chapter 9) whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming;"

So you see, I guess I should put it on the board since I haven’t used the board all day. Here we have our 7 years of the Tribulation, and as you know we always divide it in half. The first thing that happens is the anti-Christ signs a 7-year treaty with the nations of the Middle East. Israel, right off the bat is going to come back under temple worship, they’re going back under the Law where they can offer their sacrifices. But at the mid-point the anti-Christ comes from (I think) his headquarters over here in Europe, and he’s going to defile the temple, he’s going to turn on Israel, and bring in the last 3 1/2 years of the wrath of God. The wrath of God is going to be poured out these last 3 1/2 years. Oh it’s going to be bad enough these first 3 1/2 years, don’t ever think that time will be real rosy.

But the last 3 1/2 years is where it really gets tough, and it all leads to His Second Coming when He will actually come to the Mount of Olives. At that time Satan will be sent to the bottomless pit. I think earlier I said that Satan was sent to the Lake of Fire at the end of the Tribulation, but he’s not sent there until the end of the kingdom. The anti-Christ and the false prophet are the ones that go to the Lake of Fire at the end of the Tribulation. Come back to Revelation chapter 20 and we’ll show what happens to Satan.

Revelation 20:1-2

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years."
He cast Satan into the bottomless pit for a thousand years so that He could bring him back at the end of the thousand-year kingdom rule of Christ to give the people that have been born during that time a choice. (Rev 20:7-8) A choice like each of us has to make, God or Satan. Now flip over to Revelation chapter 10 and this is what Paul is referring to when, in II Thessalonians 2:8 he says, "He destroys the anti-Christ and false prophet with the brightness of His coming." Now here in verse 10, the thousand year reign of Christ has just been completed and we see what happens to the old Devil.

_Revelation 20:10_

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Now coming back to II Thessalonians chapter 2 for just a second.

_II Thessalonians 2:8_

_And then shall that Wicked (one) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming;"

Rest assured, God is in control!
Lesson Two • Part IV

Then Shall the Wicked One Be Revealed

II Thessalonians 2:4-9

We had three phone calls in a row the other morning that just about put us on cloud nine. I guess the comment that thrills us most, is when people tell us, "for the first time in my life, I’m enjoying my Bible."

Let’s go back to II Thessalonians 2:9. In our last program we were talking about the leaving of the Holy Spirit so far as the indwelling of the believer is concerned, but how the Holy Spirit would certainly be present on the earth during the Tribulation, which of course He has to be in order, even as He does now, to open the hearts of those who will be saved. And there will be multitudes saved as John tells us in Revelation during the Tribulation, but there are also multitudes who think that they will have a second chance, but they will not. We’ll look at that soon. Now in verse 9, we find Paul continues on this agreement with the prophetic program when he says –

II Thessalonians 2:9a

"Even him, (the anti-Christ) whose coming is after the working of Satan…"

See this whole scenario now is driven by the Satanic power, the god of this world. Now when I use that term I’m sure a lot of people may raise their eyebrows and think, "Where is he pulling this from anyway?" So maybe we’d better qualify that first. Go to II Corinthians 4, verse 3. Hopefully I use terminology that is Scriptural. When I do go outside the Scriptures I try to be careful to delineate as such that this is my own idea, my own projection, but otherwise I try to stay explicitly with the language of this Book, and the Book calls Satan "the god of this world."

II Corinthians 4:3-4

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4. In whom (the lost people of this world) the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

Now that was just to show you that terminology is Scriptural, as Satan is the god of this world today, and has been ever since Adam dropped the ball. And we all know Adam dropped the ball when he disobeyed and ate of the forbidden tree. Now I always like to point out that wasn’t such an act of wickedness per se. He didn’t
commit some horrible immoral sin, but the tragedy of it was, it was direct disobedience to the direct will of God. So, consequently, Adam fell. Well, the minute Adam fell, he lost that dominion that God had given him when He first created him, and Satan picked that dominion up. So when Satan picked it up, he became then, the god of this world all the way down through human history. Now back to II Thessalonians chapter 2, and again into verse 9. So this man born of a woman, an ordinary human being from all appearances, but once the mid-point of the Tribulation is reached he will become indwelt by this god of this world, by Satan and all of his power, even as Judas was back at the first advent.

**II Thessalonians 2:9**

"Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders."

What did Jesus do? Signs, miracles, and wonders, isn’t that right? Absolutely! So now what do we have - the master counterfeiter! Satan’s been the counterfeiter from day one, and many times he is so close to the original that unless you have a real insight you can’t tell the difference. And that’s why the world has been so deceived down through the ages because of his ability to counterfeit the truth. And folks we’re seeing it all around us today.

Now when he gets into full force, and indwells the man anti-Christ, he, like Christ is going to perform miracles and signs and wonders. Now let’s go back to the first time we have the instance of the powers of Satan counterfeiting and copying what the men of God were doing. So come back to Exodus chapter 7 verse 10. Now remember earlier in the Book of Exodus, God has proven to Moses that he was God’s instrument to bring Israel out of Egypt. And in order to prove to Moses that He was the real God of Abraham, He performed a couple of signs and miracles with Moses. The first one was, He said "throw your rod on the ground," and it became a serpent. The second one was, "Put your hand into your breast" and it became leprous. The "Put it back in," and it became completely whole. Here Moses and Aaron go before Pharaoh, and again, to convince Pharaoh that the God of Abraham, the supernatural working God, is the One Who is sending them to get Israel out of Egypt, they too are going to use the sign gift.

**Exodus 7:10-11**

"And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent." (instantly that Shepherd’s rod was suddenly a live serpent. Pharaoh of course knowing the powers of his magicians called his sorcerers in.) 11.
Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt they also did in like manner with their enchantments."

They also drew on supernatural power. Not God’s power, but Satan’s. And this is why the Bible condemns sorcerers, and enchantments, divinations, fortune telling from day one, and that has never been rescinded. And why? Because all those disciplines draw their power from Satan, everyone of them. Now I don’t know all that’s going on over television, because Iris and I never turn it on, but from the questions that are coming in my mail, I’m beginning to wonder, "What in the world are people saying." We had 2 or 3 questions in the last week, "Can I really make contact with my loved ones who have died?" Whenever there comes any kind of teaching like that, that is not from God, but rather that is Satanic. Now verse 12, speaking of the magicians of Egypt.

Exodus 10:12a

"For they cast down every man his rod, and they (their rods) became serpents:..."

Just exactly like Aaron’s rod did, but with Satan’s power. Do you see what a counterfeiter he is? Even today, just because something is a miracle, don’t take it as from God, because the little letter of John says, "You test the spirit, whether it’s the true one or not." And the only way we can test it is to line it up with the Book. Is everything in accord with the Scripture? Otherwise then it’s nothing more than the powers of the magicians in Egypt, which is Satan. And Satan is alive and well today, and don’t you forget it. Now at the end of the verse is the only consolation and comfort we can take in this:

Exodus 10:12b

"...but Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods."

That shows of course the superiority of God’s power. Now you can take it even a little further, if the serpent is a picture of death, then the serpent of Aaron would be a picture of Christ’s resurrection where He conquered death, and it is no longer our enemy. But, the point is that when it came to performing signs and miracles and wonders, the magicians of Egypt could do what Aaron and Moses did. And this is simply to teach us that the powers of Satan are so close to the true power that is exercised by the Creator Himself. Now let’s come back to II Thessalonians chapter 2 for just a moment, because I don’t want to lose where we’re coming from. I know we use a lot of references, but I always want to remember that we’re starting here in II Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 9. So back to this man, this master counterfeiter, and that’s why he’s depicted in the Book of Revelation chapter 6 as riding on a white
horse. Well I think we pointed this out in a previous program. Why does Satan seemingly come riding in on a white horse? Because the True Christ will! So he’s a counterfeit in everything he does.

II Thessalonians 2:9

"Even him, (this anti-Christ) whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders."

Now we looked at it in previous programs, but let’s look at it again in Revelation 13, verse 11. Now you realize there will be two powerful Satanically empowered men during this final 7 years. One is a political economic leader, the anti-Christ, but he’s going to have a side kick that will have much the same kind of power, called the false prophet. He will be the religious leader of this final 7 years. Throughout history (even the pagan empires of Greece and Rome), the main backbone in controlling the masses was religion.

See, the communists were right when they said that religion was the opium of the people. I’ll never argue that statement. Now they weren’t talking about true Christianity. The Christianity that I teach is not an opium. It’s not something that puts people half a sleep, and they don’t know what they’re doing, but religion does. Religion puts people under a drug mentality, and they do only as they’re leader tells them to do. That’s exactly what this religious leader of the Tribulation era will do. He will be the front man for the anti-Christ. Now here he comes.

Revelation 13:11

"And I beheld another beast (another man, not one in the same, but rather he’s a different one) coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, (I think this indicates his religious personality. He’s probably going to come with the cloke of the Church or something like that, or some religious system, so consequently he’s referred to as less aggressive in his action than the anti-Christ who is depicted as a carnivorous beast. So he comes like a lamb, but look how he speaks) and he spake as a dragon." See he’s going to have the force and the power of Satan behind everything he says.

Revelation 13:12

"And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast (the anti-Christ) before him, (remember this power is all coming from Satan) and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, (the anti-Christ) whose deadly wound was healed."
We always have these individuals as counterfeits of the Trinity. Satan as the counterfeit of God the Father, the anti-Christ as a counterfeit of God the Son, and this false prophet or religious leader as a counterfeit of God the Holy Spirit.

Because after all in our spiritual economy today, what is the rightful role of the Holy Spirit? To point people to Christ! The Holy Spirit is not to be elevated to a position of His own. He is constantly to be pointing us to the crucified, resurrected Christ. Now that’s the role of the Holy Spirit. He also convicts of sins to lead us and direct us, but never to be the object of our worship. We have the same scenario with this false prophet, this religious leader will not draw the world to himself, but he is going to point the world to his boss the anti-Christ as we see there in verse 12.

Revelation 13:12b

"...and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast,..." (or anti-Christ.)

The world is just literally going to fall at the feet of this man, anti-Christ. But this religious leader is going to be promoting it. Now let’s go on to the next verse. This is the one I wanted when it says they’re going to perform signs and wonders and miracles. Now, let’s look what the scripture says. This religious leader is the front man for the anti-Christ, who has the same power that the anti-Christ has. Remember, that’s what it says. So I can use this verse to point out the power that Satan will give this man anti-Christ.

Revelation 13:13

"And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men."

Now if you know your Bible, when did that happen before? Well Elijah!! As Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal up there on Mt. Carmel. Do you remember that? And he had the prophets of Baal cry out to their gods to do this and do that and then Elijah even taunted them? He said, "Yell a little louder, they must be sleeping." And yet they couldn’t get anything to happen. And then Elijah prayed to the God of heaven and what happened? My, the fire came down and licked up the water out of the trenches and consumed the sacrifice. This is a copy of that. The counterfeiter is doing a repeat of the power of God. That’s why it will be so hard for men in this day and time to discern, "Is this the true God?" And that’s what they’re going to think. They’re going to think that this is the power of God. But we know, as we look ahead, even though we’re not going to be here, we know from Scripture that it’s not the power of God.
It’s the counterfeit. It’s the power of Satan. Now read on. What’s the second word of this verse? "Deceiveth."

Revelation 13:14a

"And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast:"

The whole modus operandi of Satan from day one has been to deceive. And I’m hammering it home more today than I ever did before. Because we’re being inundated today with a mass of deception. Now, keep your hand in Revelation, because I’m not through here. Come back with me to Matthew chapter 24. It’s a Tribulation chapter if there ever was one, from start to finish. And you start right back there in verse 3 of that chapter.

Matthew 24:3

"As he sat upon the Mount of Olives, (the Lord Jesus in His earthly ministry) the disciples came unto him privately, (with benefit of all the crowds and the crush of people. It was just Jesus and the 12) saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? (He was speaking of the destruction of the temple and so forth) and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? (or age)." Now look at verse 4.

Matthew 24:4

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, "Take heed that no man (what?) deceive you."' Now what does that tell you right up front? There’s going to be mass deception. That’s a sign of the end times. And you’re going to have to be wise or you’re going to be taken in by it. Now, let’s come back to Revelation. And so we have this false prophet, the cohort of the anti-Christ himself, both tools of Satan, both with the world literally falling at their feet.

Revelation 13:14a

"And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had to do in the sight of the beast..."

Oh you see, the world loves miracles. That’s all they want to see. I’ll never forget years ago, after leading a gentleman to the Lord. And he really got involved and was almost wishing that my ministry could grow. This man drove up to my home one day and he said, "Les, if you could just perform one miracle, you wouldn’t just have 50 people in your classes, you’d have 50,000!" I said, "I know that. I don’t want 50,000
people who are coming to see a miracle. That’s not where it’s at." **What I want to see is the Lord opening the hearts as He did Lydia, one at a time, if need be. And have those two go out and win two. And that will accomplish far more than a miracle. The miracle of that is, that is how the Spirit works.** But, the population in general wants a miracle. Now look, they’re going to get it.

**Revelation 13:14b**

"...saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image..."

Now they’re already calling him god, but if they’re really going to worship him someplace other than Jerusalem, they’d better make an image. Now I don’t know, and the Scripture doesn’t say this, but I know that in every religion where they worship an image of a god, whether it’s Apollos or Zeus or whomever, they didn’t just have one huge image someplace. But what did they have? Every home had a replica. And I personally think that’s what this is going to be. These images of this man anti-Christ, will be made available to the whole world so they can have him on their mantles. And they can worship him as their god, even as the pagans have done in the past. Now that’s my own idea. The Scripture doesn’t say that. But they’re going to make an image like unto the man anti-Christ so the people can worship him even as they’ve worshipped other pagan idols. Now look at verse 15. And if you don’t think these guys are going to have Satanic power.

**Revelation 13:15**

"*And he had power (from Satan) to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.*"

I think these images will be given Satanic power, that as these poor souls speak to it and worship it, it’s going to be able to respond. And oh, these people are going to think they’ve got the real god right there on the mantle in their living rooms. Isn’t it scary? But it’s coming just as sure as we’re sitting here.
Lesson Three • Part I
They Will Believe the Lie!

II Thessalonians 2:9-14

You know I’m always pointing out that it isn’t so much what the Bible says, as what it does not say. Always remember the deception comes in when the counterfeiters come along and make it sound like the Bible says something when it really doesn’t. Let’s get started where we left off in our last lesson, and that was in verse 9 of II Thessalonians chapter 2.

II Thessalonians 2:9a

"Even him,…"

The wicked one of verse 8 who the Lord will destroy at the end of the Tribulation, is going to meet his doom. Remember he’s a man born of a woman, and he’s going to go to his eternal doom the same as other lost people, but of course this individual and the false prophet will be unique in that they will not have the benefit of pleading their case at the Great White Throne. Now if you know your Bible you know that all the lost people of the ages will have their moment with God, and before God as they appear at the Great White Throne, but these two men don’t get that chance. They’ll go straight from their earthly existence to the eternal Lake of Fire according to the Book of Revelation 19:20. But this man anti-Christ –

II Thessalonians 2:9b

"…whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders."

And as we saw in our last program, and the Book of Revelation agrees with it 100%, the world will be deceived by this man anti-Christ. They’re going to fall for what this man offers hook, line, and sinker. Because after all, this guy is performing things that only God can do, so it must be God. I hope we’re making the point that Satan is such a master counterfeiter that he can do almost the same things that God can do. Now never forget that God is Sovereign, God is still in control, and Satan can never go any further than God permits him to go. However God is going to let him come awfully close to the original. You know I always like to use the analogy of counterfeiters of currency. The guy that can get by counterfeiting American currency is the guy that can come the closest to our original bills. And if he can come so close that the average American can’t detect it, he can go quite awhile before the experts
can finally catch it. Well it’s the same way with spiritual things. These counterfeiters can confuse the masses, and the less they know of Scripture, the easier they are to confuse, and the longer they can hold them. So you’ve got to know what the truth is so that when you hear something that is not truth, it will bring up a red flag. So this anti-Christ is going to bring in signs, and lying wonders. Now verse 10.

**II Thessalonians 2:10**

"And with all deceivableness (or with all deceit) of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." All right, what does the word *perish* imply here. Well you all know John 3:16 don’t you?

**John 3:16a**

"For God so loved the world that whosoever believeth in him should not perish…"

Now you all know what that word is talking about. It’s eternal doom! It’s that eternal separation from God. Now that’s what the word *perish* here means, and Paul is using it here in the same way. These people are going to go to their eternal doom, having followed the signs and wonders and miracles of the counterfeit Christ, but the sad part is, many of them are going to be people who heard the Gospel in it’s full truth and rejected it. Now we’re going to take this real slow because this question is coming up more and more. *Is there an opportunity for salvation for someone who has heard the Gospel, missed the Rapture, and find themselves in the Tribulations?*" The answer to that question is No! There will be no second chance if, and this is a big *if*, they have heard the true Gospel, have contemplated it, have been convicted of the need of it, and then turn around and say, "Thanks, but no thanks." Or like King Agrippa who said-

**Acts 26:28**

"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

King Agrippa wanted a more convenient time to think on these things, and people today are doing that also. Some say, "Yeah I know I should get saved, but I want to live the good life for a while, I’ll do that later." Well you see this is exactly what this verse is saying. They’re going to come under a deceitful regime, they’re going to come under the deceitful power of Satan, and are actually going to enjoy unrighteousness. The wickedness of that period is going far beyond our comprehension. Well I was going to Revelation chapter 9, and just happened to flip to it. Here in Revelation this just fits hand and glove with what Paul is teaching in II Thessalonians. Now remember there’s going to be tremendous loss of life during the
last 3 1/2 years of the Tribulation. After all, the whole world’s population is going to have to go down the tube with the exception of a very small percentage. Right now we have 6 1/2 billion that would be losing their life in these 7 years, and most of them in the last half. But look what it says in verse 20. As we come toward the end of that time we find these still haven’t lost their life.

**Revelation 9:20**

"And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk;""Now watch it. These are going to be the common occurrences of every society around the planet in those closing months of the Tribulations.

**Revelation 9:21**

"Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, (now what’s sorceries? Drawing on Satanic powers. It also means drugs. They’re not going to repent of these things. Remember the word sorceries in the Greek means pharm-I-kia from which we get pharmacy. So it will be a drug culture, and of course this verse almost describes it.) nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."

There is going to be no moral integrity. There’s not going to be any honesty left, and they’re going to revel in their wickedness. Now coming back to II Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 10.

**II Thessalonians 2:10a**

"And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness (they’re going to glory in their wickedness, but look who’s going to be primarily guilty. It’s going to be) in them that perish;..."They’re going to miss eternal life, and why?

**II Thessalonians 2:10b**

"...because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

Now the world even likes to make a lot of truth. A lot of our universities will have over their main building, "The truth will make you free!" Well they’re not making reference to Biblical truth, but rather from the philosophical point of truth. But nevertheless, what is the truth that these people will have rejected previously? Ok, let’s chase down what the truth of the Gospel really means. Come back to Ephesians chapter 1. Also remember that these people which Paul is writing about and that
Revelation describes, are people that have rejected the truth. They’ve said, "Thanks, but no thanks, I don’t want it!" And they’re going to find themselves in the Tribulation even though mom and dad have prayed for them, and pleaded with them, they’re going to have rejected all that, and they’re going to find themselves in the horrors of the Tribulation, and they’re not going to suddenly come to their senses and say, "This is what mom and dad was talking about."

I had husbands with unsaved wives and wives with unsaved husband who have asked this question. "Now Les when we go up in the Rapture will my spouse suddenly wake up and realize that he or she or he has missed what I’ve tried to tell them? And the answer is No! When the news flashes that this man anti-Christ has now gone to Jerusalem and has signed a 7-year treaty with the Middle East, the wife or husband who has missed the Rapture is going to say, "There’s the one that I’m looking for." See that’s going to be their response. Now you may think I’m stretching it, but let’s look. Turn to Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 13. In fact look at the word "Christ" up in verse 12.

**Ephesians 1:12-13a**

"That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13. In whom (in Christ) ye also trusted, (placed your faith) after (watch this because it’s meticulous) in whom you placed your faith (when) after you heard the word of (what) truth...."

And what’s the truth. The Gospel! See how plain that is? You don’t have to be a theologian to understand this. You placed your faith in Christ after you heard the Gospel, the word of truth. Now let’s go on. After you heard the word of truth and you believed it for your salvation:

**Ephesians 1:13**

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

Not a month later or year later, but immediately you are saved, and sealed. Now that’s the whole modus operandi of God’s plan of salvation. That we hear the Gospel, we believe it, we are into the body of Christ and at the same time the Holy Spirit puts his mark of identification on us - that we’re His. Instantaneously. You don’t have to go through a trial to see if you’re worthy of it. It’s an immediate response to our faith. But the point I want to make here is, **what is the word of truth? The Gospel!** We’re going to come to the Gospel in a minute but let’s turn back a page or two, and I’m
doing this to take it easy on your Bible. Come back to Galatians and then we’re going
to go on back to I Corinthians. But right now, Galatians chapter 2. And remember in
this chapter Paul has been out there being confronted by these false Judaisers who
were literally submarining his teaching with the teaching that these people could not
be saved unless they were circumcised according to the Law of Moses, and kept the
commandments. Legalism!

And so Paul had to write this little book of Galatians to confront legalism, in whatever
shape or form it might be. Now, he began that line of teaching in about 40 AD. Now
here we are 12 years later and the twelve apostles in Jerusalem are still, I think,
grossly unhappy with what Paul is doing. Because they cannot reconcile these
Gentiles, claiming salvation, just by believing Paul’s gospel. Faith in the death,
burial and resurrection plus nothing. And so they too, have been adding to this
pressure to the Gentile believers to be circumcised, to keep the commandments, and
otherwise to embrace Judaism to a degree. Acts 15:1-12 And so they bring Paul up to
Jerusalem to confront the twelve with what he’s preaching. And now look what he
says.

Galatians 2:4

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

Now if you’ve ever talked to someone who has come out of a legalistic religion and
they step in to the glorious Gospel of Grace, what’s the first thing they realize?
They’ve come out of bondage! Now those of you who have never been in it, you
won’t understand what it is. You talk to some of these people when they’re scared to
death that if they break one of the commandments, they’re doomed. They are scared
to death if they don’t keep the Saturday Sabbath, they’re doomed. That’s legalism. Or
you can put any other twist on it that you want. But when legalism holds the heavy
thumb upon an individual it’s bondage! And Grace is freedom. Paul now has to
go to Jerusalem to defend his Gospel of Grace and not put those Gentile believers
back under a bondage. Got it? Now let’s look at verse 5. These people in Jerusalem,
and I think it was the 12, as well as some of the other leaders, were trying to pressure
Paul to put his Gentile converts back under the Law, or back under bondage. He says
in verse 5:

Galatians 2:5a

"To whom we gave place (gave in) by subjection...."
What does the word "subjection" imply? They were pressuring him. "Look Paul, we can never put our stamp of approval on what you’re doing until you agree to put your converts under the Law." And the poor man is almost alone. Now I know Barnabas was with him, if I remember right. But nevertheless, for the most part, it was the Apostle Paul against maybe 12 or 15 or who know how many others. (you can read the account in Acts chapter 15) Now listen, that’s no fun place to be. I don’t want to be up against 15 people trying to drive me down. One on one I’m comfortable. But one against 15 or 20 - that’s enough to get anybody down. And this is what he’s talking about. When he came up to Jerusalem, after these 12 years of ministering to the Gentiles, and they were pressuring him to put them back under the Law, or under bondage, he said, "I did not give in to them. I stood my ground." Now let’s read on.

_Galatians 2:5_

"To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; (we usually use the term "minute." "I didn’t give in for a minute) _that the truth of the gospel might continue with you._"

Do you see that? Paul says he did not give in to legalism, nor to the pressure from the 12, so that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. And he qualifies the Gospel that he’s talking about there in verse 2, that "Gospel that I preached among the Gentiles." _So he’s not talking about the same gospel that Peter and John preached at Israel in Acts 2:38, but rather he’s talking about his Gospel – the Gospel of Grace._ And he says he did not give in for a minute so that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. Now think about that for a moment. Think hard. What if the Apostle Paul would have given in? Think about that! What if the man would have given in to that subjection. Our Gospel of Grace would have gone down the tube. Now, of course, God is Sovereign and we know He would not have permitted it. But nevertheless, Christianity as we know it, was on the line right here in Jerusalem in 51 or 52 AD. And had it not been for the strength and character of this Saul of Tarsus, now the Apostle Paul, you and I wouldn’t sit here reveling in the Grace of God. But he didn’t give in. He stood his ground so that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you.

Alright, what Gospel is Paul talking about that he calls "my Gospel." Let’s go back to I Corinthians chapter 15. What Gospel does he call, "my Gospel?" What Gospel does he call, "That Gospel which I preached among the Gentiles?" What Gospel does he call "The Gospel of the Grace of God?" What Gospel does he call "The Gospel of Christ?" Here it is in this chapter and it’s not John 3:16. John 3:16 doesn’t have this gospel in it. Oh, some parts of it are certainly appropriate. We know that unless we’re saved, we’re going to perish. _But there’s no death, burial and resurrection in John 3:16. It hadn’t even happened yet._ And the disciples had no idea he was going to be
going to a cross and die. But HERE, we have the gospel. I think Iris and I are being encouraged, because we’re seeing this Gospel in print more and more in articles, and books like I’ve never seen it before. In fact, I was so amazed the other day, it was in one of the major Christian magazines in which I have never read it before, but bless their hearts, they delineated the two gospels in the New Testament. The Gospel of the Kingdom to the Jew and the Gospel of the Grace of God that the Apostle Paul preached. In fact, a believer in Florida wrote and told us, "Did you see the article?" Well, yes, I’d already read it. But you see, it’s encouraging, not because of me, but because I think the Spirit is beginning to open eyes other than mine, to some of these truths that have been just laying there dormant. I know I didn’t grow up with it. But here it is. This is the Gospel. I Corinthians 15, beginning at verse 1.

I Corinthians 15:1-2

"Moreover, brethren, (Paul is writing to believers at Corinth) I declare unto you (what’s the article?) the (not "a." What does that signify? Singular!) gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand: 2. By which also ye are saved,…"

You know I’ve put it on the program before that our Gospel is exclusive. Of course it is. Our Gospel isn’t just one of many. There’s only one. People don’t like to admit that, but the Word of God says there’s only one and here it is. And it’s that Gospel by which you are saved. This is the Gospel that saves lost people. Now you’re saved if you keep in memory, and I always put it this way, if you understand what you believe, unless you have believed in vain, because you just can’t take a "head knowledge" and agree to something. You have to have it in the heart, believe it with all your heart, that this is what you’re placing your faith in. And here it is in verse 3 & 4. This is the gospel of the Grace of God. This is what Paul calls, "My gospel." This is the Gospel, again, that is referred to as "that Gospel that I preached to the Gentiles."

I Corinthians 15:3

"For I delivered unto you first of all (they didn’t hear it first from Peter, or Christ, they heard it only from this Apostle to whom this Gospel was given) that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. (It wasn’t an afterthought. It was planned from before anything was ever created that Christ would pay the sin debt of lost humanity.) Now verse 4.

I Corinthians 15:4

"And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."
It wasn’t a fake death. It wasn’t just an unconscious state. He was dead to the point that he was buried and that he arose again the third day according to the scriptures. The Old Testament was full of it. But in such veiled language, nobody could understand it. Nobody had an idea that this is how God was going to bring salvation to the whole human race until it was revealed to the Apostle Paul. And now Paul is commissioned to take this Gospel, first and foremost to the Gentile, but a Jew can certainly be saved by it. We’re all on common ground today. **And so this is the Gospel that he refers to constantly as "The truth of God. The Gospel how that Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead."**

Now you all know the verse and you won’t have to look it up in John’s gospel. That grace and truth came how? By Jesus Christ! But the truth of this Gospel was not revealed until God poured it out on the Apostle Paul and sent him out into the Gentile world. And so this is what we have to understand. That people who have heard this Gospel, that Christ died for them and rose from the dead, and they have rejected it and suddenly find themselves under the regime of the anti-Christ, they’re not going to be able to say, "Well, Mom and Dad were right. I remember that preacher was right. I’m going to go and get saved." No beloved, it’s not going to happen.
Lesson Three • Part II

They Will Believe the Lie!

II Thessalonians 2:9-14

Let’s begin again with verse 10. Remember the anti-Christ has now, since the middle of the Tribulation, become the absolute world despotic leader. And with the today’s technology, it will be so easy for the population to be under his thumb. I always have to stop and comment, do you realize that none of this end-time prophecy could have been even imaginable had it not been for our technology? But you can see now that our technology is making it so believable. We know that there is going to be a technology that will globally position every individual. They’ll know where we people are, there’s no place to hide.

So during the Tribulation this will all peak, and they’re going to have whatever technology is needed to fulfill what we see in the Scriptures, and that’s what makes it so believable. Twenty years ago this was still something that you had to take by pure faith, but today you can just see it coming faster and faster. I was reading an article the other day about fiber optics, and we haven’t heard a lot about that technology in the past few years, but now all of a sudden the communication experts are coming back to fiber optics and they’re realizing that they can just almost exponentially increase the number of messages going on just one little hair breath line, it’s just mind boggling.

And when they can tell you that they can put all the New York Times newspapers that have ever been printed on a little chip then you can see where we are as far as technology goes today. I read another little article where this is the whole thrust of our electronic industry, as these chips keep getting smaller and smaller and smaller. There’s almost no limit to it. Well, all of this is just telling us that it’s getting the world ready for this absolute governmental control of the masses.

Now I guess the first thing I have to clarify, because two or three at break time got the idea that I said that no one could be saved during the Tribulation. I did not say that! And I’ve got to clarify that. Only those who have heard the Grace Gospel, that Christ died for them and rose from the dead, and they can have it free for nothing by simply believing it, and they have rejected it, they’re not going to have a second chance. They’ve had their opportunity. They’ve understood it. They’ve considered it. The Holy Spirit enlightened them, but they said, "Thanks, but no thanks. I’m having too much fun. I don’t want to give up my wicked lifestyle. I’ll
do it later." Well, bless their hearts, and I feel for parents who are weeping for children out there that are in the world and lost.

But don’t give up. I’ll never forget years back I had a dear old gentleman and we were talking about this very thing. And I could see the tears running down his cheek at the back of the room. He came up afterward and I asked him, "What’s the matter?" And he said, "Les, I’ve got two grown sons who grew up in our local Sunday School class, but they never heard the Gospel. And they are out there in the world and are making big money and they are lost. If the Lord should come tonight, they’ll be left behind." And I said, "Well, at least you can take comfort in the fact they haven’t heard the Gospel. They’re not in that category." He said, "No, but they’ll be left behind." Well, he doesn’t know, but here just a week or two ago, we got an e-mail from one of those boys and he had come to know the Lord and was studying our material. Oh, how I wish I could have let that weeping father know. So, one of the two have come in and maybe the second one will come too. So never give up. If you’re parents out there and your kids are out in the world, don’t ever give up. You just keep praying and praying and praying that the Lord will somehow open their hearts.

Let’s first qualify, if I was misunderstood. I didn’t say that but I might have been misunderstood. Come back with me quickly to Revelation chapter 7. We’ve always got to clarify first if there’s a need. And we’ll just start at verse 3.

Revelation 7:3

"Saying (the angels) Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till (time word. They need a segment of time. What are they going to do?) we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."

And then he comes in and lists that it’s 12,000 young Jewish men from each one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Now, I think Dan is left out, if I’m not mistaken. It’s been awhile since I’ve looked at this. And one of the other sons of Joseph is brought in. But nevertheless, there will be 12,000 young Jewish men each out of the 12 tribes of Israel. Now you see the doubter scoffs doesn’t he? He says, "Well no Jew knows what tribe he’s from." Well, I know the Jews don’t, at least most of them. But God does. And you know God in His Sovereignty, in His own way of doing things has somehow or another preserved 12,000 young men that will be identified with each one of the 12 original tribes of Israel, except Dan, because they went into idolatry. But, these 144,000 young Jewish men, virgin men, never been married, are going to go out and circumvent the globe. I’ve always said this is Israel’s redeeming moment. What the nation failed to do back there in Acts chapter 1, 2, and 3, these 144,000 Jews are almost going to make up for.
Now, I think, and I don’t like to quote people unless I’m real sure, but I think it was Tim LaHaye, in one of his books, that made the comment that he thought more people would be saved, and if he finds out that I said this and I’m wrong, then I apologized before he even has to call me. But I’m sure he wrote in one of his books on Revelation that he feels that there will be more people saved during this 7-year period under the preaching of the 144,000 than were saved in all the ages of the church. Now, you say, "How can that be?" Well you’ve heard me use the numbers. Why is God going to bring such wrath and judgment on this last closing generation of people? Because of the numbers. There are more people living on the planet right now than have lived all the way back.

You want to remember, the world’s population for centuries and centuries was like 500,000,000 – half a billion – that’s all. Then it wasn’t until about the mid 1800 hundreds that that doubled to 1 billion. And that happened in about the early 1900 hundreds. Now, of course, it has doubled and doubled to where we’re now 6 and one half billion. And it’s going to double again in a few more years. So, it’s numbers. And so, yes, I can see the potential that there could be more people saved in the Tribulation than would have ever been saved in the Church Age. I’m not saying that I agree with that 100%, but I do know this. Revelation chapter 7 and verse 9. After these 144,000 young Jews have been commissioned and have been sent out around the planet, they will go supernaturally. They won’t have to buy airline tickets. They won’t have to learn languages. They won’t have to fear for their life. No one can take their life from them. That’s the purpose of the seal in their forehead. But they will evidently suffer privation, hunger, heat and cold, imprisonment, but they can’t take their lives. Now look what the results of their missionary endeavors will do.

Revelation 7:9a

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number....’

Now I know that’s a large number. And look where they come from. Not Israel! They come from all nations. And kindred, and people and languages. You know what that tells me? Even into some of these third world nations, where they have all these different dialects, these 144,000 Jews are going to penetrate every one of them. And they’re not going to have to stop and learn the language. They’re not going to have to stop and get transportation. They’re going to go like the wind. And they’re going to have a tremendous response. But, who are these people? They are people who have never heard the Gospel of the Grace of God that we find in Paul’s Gospel of I Corinthians 15:1-4. They are people who have never heard it and rejected it. These are people who will not have taken the mark of the beast, because Scripture tells us as soon as they agree to that mark in the forehead or the hand, they shut off their opportunity for salvation.
Now immediately if you will just sit and think for a moment, what part of the world has the most people who have never heard Paul’s gospel, and who are not up on all this technology, that as soon as the world is announced that everyone is going to have to have this 666 number to buy or sell, what area of the world could care less? Well a good portion of the third world countries. They’re not use to credit cards, or our high technology, and I can see the masses of Pakistan, India, and China and places in Africa where these people will respond to this gospel of the kingdom.

*Matthew 24:14*

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

Not the Gospel of Grace that is preached here in the Church Age, but these 144,000 will be preaching the same gospel of the kingdom that Jesus and the disciples preached during his earthly ministry, and there is a difference in these two messages. So these people who have not taken the mark of the beast, the 666, they’re going to respond by the millions. But we also know by Scripture that they’re going to be martyred as soon as they believe. And technology will play a role in that also. Just as soon as they make their profession of faith the authorities will know it, and they’ll be put to death. So consequently only a precious few of those Tribulation believers will survive, but there will be some survivors of the Tribulation Isaiah tells us.

*Isaiah 24:6*

"Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left."

But to qualify now where I was misunderstood, **Yes there are going to be multitudes saved during the Tribulation, but it can’t be anyone who has heard and contemplated, and rejected Paul’s Gospel.** And their punishment for doing this, they are going to come under the complete wrath of God, and in order to justify God’s wrath, they are going to embrace this anti-Christ and his system as what the world was really looking for in the first place. Here in II Thessalonians, chapter 2 Paul makes that so plain. Verse 10 again.

*II Thessalonians 2:10*

"And with all deceitfulness of unrighteousness (there’s nothing righteous in what they do) in them that perish; (they’re going to be lost for all eternity) because they received not the love of the truth, (which we pointed out in our last program, which was the Gospel, that Christ died for them, and rose from the dead, as we saw in I
Corinthians 15:1-4) that they might be saved." Oh they had the opportunity but they rejected it. Now verse 11.

II Thessalonians 2:11

"And for this cause (what cause? They heard Paul’s Gospel and rejected it. Plain enough? They’ve heard the Gospel, they considered it, but they rejected it, and so consequently, for this cause) God shall send them strong delusion, (He’s going to fry their brain, or mix up their thinking,) that they should believe a lie:

They’re going to say, "The anti-Christ is the God we’re looking for. He’s the Messiah that the Bible was talking about. He’s the one we can follow, and we won’t have to change our lifestyle. We can keep on doing what we’ve been doing when we follow him. And that’s the delusion that God will put in the mind of every human being, regardless of where they are on the planet who have heard Paul’s Gospel and rejected it. Listen! If I were a lost person in the world today, I would rather have never heard the Gospel, than to sit under it Sunday after Sunday, week after week, and reject it. So to those who have heard, contemplated it, and rejected it, that God will send a delusion to change their thinking. And what is their thinking going to do now? It’s going to make them believe the lie!

And what is the lie from Genesis chapter 3 to Revelation chapter 20? That you can be like God. Am I right? That’s the lie. In fact let’s go back and look at it in Genesis chapter 3, because that’s where it all began. This is all part of the Satan’s lie, and he’s a master in carrying it out. Here Eve, of course, is in the Garden looking at the tree, and the serpent that Satan was using speaks to her.

Genesis 3:4

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:" Now what is that? A lie. Eve did die spiritually, and later on physically, but Satan said, "she wouldn’t" Now look at verse 5.

Genesis 3:5a

"For God doth know…"

See how Satan brought God in. And the politician is the same way if he’s worth his salt, and has a great big important message, and I think F.D.R. was probably one of the masters at doing that. They never end a speech without it, and it’s usually in the last sentence or paragraph, who do they have to mention? God. Oh somehow they’ll say, "May God bless our nation," or something like that. See they’ve got to bring God
in at least that much. But see Satan is a master at it. He doesn’t say, "Now I’m telling you." No he says, -

*Genesis 3:5*

"*For God doeth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened* (of course God knew in a far better way than Eve could have ever understood.) *and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Isn’t that what the human race is looking for? Oh to have the power of a god, and that’s the lie. See Christianity never teaches that we will be God. The New Agers do, and other cults do, but our Gospel never teaches that we become God. We’re going to be joint-heirs with Christ, we’re children of God, but we’ll never be God. Remember that. See that’s the lie of Satan, "Oh come on Eve, eat of the fruit, and you can be like God." That’s the lie. All right, this constant urge to believe the lie of Satan is going to carry all the way through the human experience. Now back to II Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 11 again.

*II Thessalonians 2:11*

"*And for this cause* (because they rejected Paul’s gospel) *God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:*" That they don’t need the Gospel of the Grace of God - they’re going to follow this man anti-Christ. Now verse 12. What’s the end result? It’s frightening. I mean this is something to be scared about for an unbeliever, or at least they should be.

*II Thessalonians 2:12*

"*That they all* (these people who have heard Paul’s gospel, have considered it, they know it’s the truth, but they say, ‘not now, maybe later at a more convenient time’) *might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*"

See God isn’t going to condemn them because of their evil works. That was just an outflow of their old Satanic nature, which all of us had the potential. But why will God in justice and righteousness condemn them to such a fate? Because they rejected the truth of the Gospel. You know we were talking the other day, if the Gospel of the Grace of God was something that would just demand a million dollars or a trip overseas, or to climb some high forbidding mountain, people would be after salvation by the millions.
But here God offers something that is absolutely free for nothing, you don’t have to do anything, but believe it, then let God do the rest, but what do the masses say? I’m not interested. They could care less, and I’m sure the heart of God breaks when he sees the masses of humanity so indifferent. Now it would be different, and I can understand their rejecting the Gospel if God was laying a lot of demands on them, like a lot of the cults do. And listen, followers of cults take on those demands gladly. But here in Grace, God doesn’t expect that, God says, "I’VE DONE IT ALL, AND ALL YOU HAVE TO DO TO RECEIVE ETERNAL LIFE IS BELIEVE IT!"

Many people may say, "Now Les, why do you make such an emphasis on just believing? Now listen, everyone of us are human, and I’ve used this example before. Anyone of us if we were suddenly caught in a position that we had just witnessed something, regardless if it was an accident at an intersection, or maybe a murder or whatever. We had witnessed it, we saw it happen, and we knew every little detail without any doubt in our mind. And if someone asked us what we saw and heard, we could tell them with all the honesty at our disposal, and if that person who asked then turned around and said, "I don’t believe you. What is he calling you? A liar! Now you see every person that rejects this offer of God’s Grace in so many words is saying, "God you’re lying to me. I don’t believe it." But when you do believe it, it just thrills the heart of God to such an extent that He saves us to the uttermost. Oh it’s so simple.

I had a lady quite a few years back who was in such distress about her eternal destiny, and so after our class one night she came up and wanted to know the plan of salvation, so she could have the hope of glory. So I explained Paul’s gospel in all of it’s simplicity. I said, "Just recognize that you’re a sinner, that you’re undone, and that Christ had done everything that needs to be done, and all you have to do is believe it," and that poor lady looked up at me with almost the eyes of a Cocker Spaniel and said, "That’s too simple."

Isn’t it sad? Now if I would have told her, now listen lady if you can scrape up $50,000 or if you can do this or do that for salvation, she would have been elated and tickled pink. But when you tell the lost that it’s so simple, that all you have to do is believe it with all your heart, they just shake their head and say, "I can’t buy that." Oh it’s sad, I tell you it’s sad. Now back to where we were in II Thessalonians. So when these people believe the lie instead of the Gospel, verse 12 says –

**II Thessalonians 2:12a**

"That they all might be damned (for all eternity) who believed not the truth..."
The only reason they will go out into eternity lost is they didn’t believe the Gospel. A verse comes to mind, and I’m going to use it in our closing moments. Come over to the Book of Hebrews chapter 3. It’s been a long time since we’ve used these verses. Remember it’s always been this way. Now what we’re talking about in Hebrews chapter 3 is when the children of Israel were brought up to Kadesh Barnea on the southern border of the Promised Land, and they have just come from the experience of Mount Sinai where they had built that golden calf, and had fallen into the idolatry that they had brought out of Egypt. But now God has brought them up to the border and He told them to go on into the land and take it. He said, "I’ll drive the Canaanites out with hornets, you won’t have to lift a single weapon, you won’t have to lose a drop of blood, just go in and take it, but what did they do? Oh they said, "We can’t do it, we’re like grasshoppers in their sight." So now look what God’s controversy was with them.

**Hebrews 3:17-19**

"But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness? 18. And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? 19. So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."
Lesson Three • Part III

They Will Believe the Lie!

II Thessalonians 2:9-14

Turn with me to II Thessalonians Chapter 2. I want to go back for just a moment to review our last lesson. In that lesson we studied the verses that I feel concern people who have heard the Gospel and the Rapture has taken place and they are still unbelievers, and they find themselves in the 7-Year Tribulation. Now, a lot of people, especially those who have read the series *Left Behind*, are of the opinion that if you have spurned the Gospel and you go into the Tribulation that you are going to have a second chance. Well, I would hope that’s true but I can’t see it according to Paul’s letters to the Thessalonians where he makes it so plain, that if they have spurned the truth they have no chance.

*II Thessalonians 2:10*

"And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." Then the next thing is that for that cause, because they rejected the truth of the Gospel, and they have missed the Rapture:

*II Thessalonians 2:11*

"And for this cause God shall send them a strong dilution, that they should believe a lie."

Remember, I am always stressing whenever I teach prophecy or the Book of Revelation, the 7-year period is a time of supernatural activities. Today we don’t experience the supernatural. But as soon as those seven years begin, the supernatural will become almost common place. Now when I say supernatural, we know that it is impossible to get a peace treaty in the Middle East today. But we are seeing them try and try and try. Well, they might as well give up because they are not going to establish a good solid peace treaty in the Middle East until the man anti-Christ comes in. And the only reason he will accomplish it is because it’s going to be a time of supernatural work of God. So God will cause this man to supernaturally bring about a peace treaty in the Middle East that is unthinkable today. I mean it’s going to be such that you just say "Hey, it can’t happen." But it will because it’s now time for God to move in and bring things to its culmination.
And so, these people who have spurned the Gospel during this Age of Grace will be
the first, by a sovereign act of God, to embrace this man as the answer to the world’s
problems. Now it isn’t because they have been taught that way previously, but it is
because God will supernaturally (now I know I’m overloading that word.) bring
things to pass that today would be utterly impossible. And so they, because of their
rejecting the Gospel during the Age of Grace, will be sent a strong delusion that they
should believe the lie. **Well, what’s the lie? That the anti-Christ is the true
Messiah, that he is God.** You know the lie from day one back in the Garden of Eden.
What was the lie? Well, if you eat of the tree you can become God. And that’s Satan’s
ploy all the way up through human history. That if we follow him, then we can
become gods.

That’s the whole forte of most of your oriental religions. That’s the whole idea of
reincarnation. Iris had a chance while we were out east to visit with a lady of one of
the oriental persuasions and she was just so excited about the fact that if she lives a
good life now and dies that when she comes back next time she’ll be in a higher level
than she is today. And if she can do a good job in that next sojourn on earth then she
will die and come back still higher. And, of course the whole premise is that if you
can live and die and keep doing it good enough that sooner or later you become God.

Well, that’s the lie. And so when the anti-Christ makes his appearance, these folks
who have spurned the Gospel will be the first to accept the lie. Then their doom is
mentioned in verse 12, that they will be condemned because they believed not the
truth. See that’s the whole crux of the matter. We don’t ever see anyone go to their
eternal doom for any other reason but unbelief. They won’t go because they are
drunkards. They won’t go because they were immoral. They won’t go because of
anything else. **They’ll go to their doom because of their rank unbelief.**

Alright now verse 13 starts with one of my favorite three letter words in scripture.
What is it? Flip side! **But.** Do you see that? We are not in that company who have
rejected the Gospel. We are not that company who will be condemned.

**II Thessalonians 2:13a**

"**But, we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you...**" Because, of course these
folks were believers. They had been recently brought out of paganism. And so, he
says -

**II Thessalonians 2:13b**

"... we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord,
because God hath from the beginning (now that goes back to Ephesians 1. We will
look at that.) *chosen you to salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief...*"

What’s the other words for belief? Faith. Trust. Believe. See those three, all synonymous. Alright, why are these Thessalonians outside of paganism and now in God’s salvation? Because of their faith. **Faith plus nothing.** You never see anything added to faith in Paul’s letters. And so here again it’s so plain, that God chose them from the beginning so they could have their salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit and their faith or their belief.

**II Thessalonians 2:13b**

"*...of the truth*" All through Paul’s epistles, what basically is the truth? **The Gospel!** And what’s Paul’s Gospel? **That Christ died for the sins of the world. He was buried and he arose from the dead.** This message keeps coming together constantly. Alright, let’s read verse 14, and then we are going to go back into verse 13.

**II Thessalonians 2:14a**

"Whereunto he called you by our gospel..."

Now everywhere we go we run into one or two people invariably who at one time detested the Apostle Paul until they heard us teach otherwise. We had a gentleman again the other day, I think it was out in Pennsylvania and he said "Les, if it weren’t for you I would still detest the Apostle Paul. For years I thought he was arrogant. I thought he was egotistical. And, I just had no time for him. But now, I understand whenever Paul seemingly is egotistical, it’s the Spirit that is speaking and we can’t give Paul the blame for that. And so now, I agree with you 100%. **It’s either Paul, or we are going to be left out in the dark.**"

Paul is constantly referring to this as ‘my’ Gospel, or that which I preach. He is constantly bringing up the fact that **he’s the one that brought this Gospel of the Grace of God to the human race.** Now that doesn’t take anything away, in fact it’s just emanates the work of the cross. See, Paul over and over says, **we preach Christ crucified, and risen from the dead.** Paul doesn’t ever say we’re saved by believing in him, he’s only edifying that work of the cross.

**II Thessalonians 2:14**

"Whereunto he called you by our gospel, (and the end result of it all is) *to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Now there again, in our human
element, we can’t begin to comprehend the glory that we will one day enter into. Paul alludes to it in Romans Chapter 8, where he says –

**Romans 8:18**

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

Now come back up to verse 13. We are not going to rush through these verses because everyone of them is a gold mine, once we start digging. And so he says, since the beginning...

**II Thessalonians 2:13b**

"...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification (or the setting apart work) of the Spirit and the belief of the truth:"

Let’s go back and chase that word chosen for just a few moments. We are not going to be overbearing, I trust. But, come back to Ephesians Chapter 1. It’s a verse that throws a curve at lots of people, because, either they can’t comprehend it and they skim over it or they interpret it totally wrong. And, those folks I have to disagree with when they say that when God chose us to salvation then he also chose lost people to their eternal doom. I don’t agree with that. I do not think that God said to some "you’re going to heaven" and to others "you’re going to hell." There is no way I can agree with that, because I always have to go back to the other premise and that is that Christ died for how many? He died for all. And we are going to see that as well. But here in Ephesians Chapter 1, it’s in full accord with what he just said in II Thessalonians, where he says:

**Ephesians 1:3-4a**

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places (or probably the original would say in the heavenlies) in Christ" (That’s our position in Christ.) 4. According as he hath (past tense) chosen us in him (when?) before the foundation of the world..."

I always like to teach it this way. Back before anything was ever created the Triune God came together and literally drew the blueprint for creating the universe. The creating of the planet earth and the creation of the human race and just set everything in motion. And even though he has not made us robots, He has left the human race with a free will. Nations, as I have said so often, were free to raise armies and navies and to conquer and be defeated, and so forth. And yet 6,000 years later, where is the
whole ball of wax? Exactly where God determined where it would be. We are exactly where God wants us to be at the end of 6,000 years of history. But nevertheless, every believer was to a certain extent chosen before anything was ever created. In other words, God knew. God knew what we would do when we heard the Gospel.

Now then, to confirm what I just said a moment ago, that Christ died for the whole human race. Come back to John’s gospel, chapter 1. The Word I am going to shock some people here. Now this is what the Book says. It’s not something that I have dreamed up. It’s something that is in your Bible as well as in mine.

John’s gospel chapter 1 verse 9. And of course, John is speaking of the Light of the world, about Jesus of Nazareth, at this point in time. As John the Baptist announced him, then he comes down to verse 9 speaking of Jesus of Nazareth.

*John 1:9*

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world"

Do you see what that says? The pygmies of Australia have received the light. I know we have a hard time with that don’t we? Now this is not knocking missions. This is not saying we don’t have to send missionaries. This is not saying we don’t have to send the Gospel to the darkened areas of the world. But, the Bible does say that every human being that has ever been brought into the human race has received enough light that they could have escaped their hell fire damnation. That’s what it says, he "lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Alright for comparison, I’m going to take you back to what Paul writes in Titus chapter 2. And let’s just drop down to verse 11. Now these statements are hard for us to reconcile. But, just because they are hard to reconcile is no sign we can gloss over them and say they are of no account. It’s the Word of God. The Spirit has moved these men to write what they wrote. And, look what Paul writes. Almost the same thing as what you see in John’s gospel.

*Titus 2:11*

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to (unto how many?) all men."

Not just to some. Not just to Israel. Not just to the Church. The grace of God which brings salvation which is associated with that light that came into the world, has appeared unto how many? Every human being that has ever been born. Don’t ask me how. I’m just going by what the book says. Alright, now as a result of that, I can bring
you back to Romans chapter 1 which has a verse that has always been hard to teach. But, after looking at these verses, it’s a little less difficult. Put all these together and there is no argument left. The argument just falls away.

**Romans 1:20**

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, (or created) even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they (the whole human race) are without excuse."

Now it has to be that way, otherwise, when the lost of all the ages would come up before the Great White Throne Judgment and they stand before Christ as the judge (not as the Savior but as the judge), are they going to able to argue and say, "Well I never had a chance?" No. You know that. The first thing that he is going to show is that their name is not in the Lamb’s book of life and they are not going to be able to say, "Well I never had a chance" because the Scripture tells us that some how or other they were enlightened.

I don’t care where they were, but I also don’t want to ever give excuse for not pushing missions. Yes, we have to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth, as far as we can. But that does not remove the fact that the lost masses of humanity will one day stand before Christ and be faced with their name not in the Lamb’s book of life. The books will be opened and they will be judged by their works. Evil, good or whatever. But it will never keep them from their eternal doom. This is Scripture! This is what the Bible teaches, and so these are the things that Paul is referring to. Now coming back to II Thessalonians chapter 2, so that we don’t lose our jumping off place. Look at verse 13 again. And so he says-

**II Thessalonians 2:13b**

"...God hath from the beginning chosen you..." These people had entered into God’s saving Grace. These were believers. Recently out of paganism.

**II Thessalonians 2:13b**

"...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the (what?) truth.."

Now again the only way we can put these things together is to compare Scripture with Scripture. What is, what Paul calls, the truth? In fact, I’m going to take you all the way back again to John’s gospel. John Chapter 1. It’s a verse that fits perfectly with what Paul writes here in his epistle. John Chapter 1 verse 17.
"For the law was given by Moses, (anybody that knows anything about the Bible knows that. But here is another big flip side, it’s something that is totally different from the law and legalism. And what is it? Grace.) but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Yes, the old economy came by Moses, the system of law and legalism and dealing with the Nation of Israel. But the big flip side now, Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. But we have to be careful. The Age of Grace didn’t automatically kick in the moment Christ rose from the dead. Everything that was needed was done, but it hadn’t been revealed to the human race how to appropriate that Grace and truth until, I feel, we get to the Apostle Paul. Now then, some years after Pentecost, God strikes that man on the road to Damascus and announces to Ananias within the city –

Acts 9:15

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

You all know the account after his conversion, how he had to escape over the wall in a basket, because they were out to kill him. Because he had suddenly turned from being a religious zealot of Judaism to one who was now proclaiming that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Christ.

Then the Scripture tells us that he went for three years out into the Arabian Desert and from that we gather that he received all these nuggets of truth concerning the Gospel, how that Christ died for the whole human race and that he was buried and that he arose again the third day in power and victory over sin and death and Satan. And now this man was able to go out to the whole race, not just to Israel, with this amazing truth. What was that truth? The Gospel. And what was the Gospel? That Christ died and rose from the dead. It just comes full circle. Alright now then let’s look at Grace and truth. For that now let’s come back to Ephesians chapter 1, and we’ll begin with verse 12.

Ephesians 1:12

"That we (as believers as members of the body of Christ. That we) should be to the praise of his glory, (and I am going to put the pronoun ‘we’) who first trusted in Christ." Now here it comes.

Ephesians 1:13a
"In whom ye also trusted, (placed your faith, you believed it) after that ye heard the word (of what?) of truth, (See? Same word. So now we have to pick from this, what is the truth that Jesus Christ introduced and that Paul brings to the human race. And it is right in the next part of the verse. The truth which is) the gospel of your salvation..."

See how beautiful that is? The truth is the gospel of your salvation. A lot of universities like to put over their Administration building "The truth shall make you free." Would to God that they knew what it was talking about. But, they don’t.

Absolutely, Paul’s Gospel is the only thing that sets men free. That’s what the truth is!

The world has totally adulterated the term. And they no longer even associate the work of the cross with truth. Truth is just something that you can have a good conscience with and write it up and live with it. Anything that goes is now truth. But, Biblically there is only one definition of truth. And what is it? The Gospel. Read on:

Ephesians 1:13b

"...the gospel of your salvation: (the truth) in whom also (speaking of Christ back in verse 12 remember) after that ye believed,..."

Plus anything? See? These are the things you have to be aware of. It doesn’t add anything in here. We receive the Gospel of truth and the power of it, not when we believe plus something but when we believe plus nothing. How plain. So after you believed then-

Ephesians 2:13b

"...ye were sealed (branded is the word I like) with (what?) that Holy Spirit of promise,"

That’s God mark of ownership. The moment we believe the truth, the Gospel, then we are branded with the indwelling Holy Spirit. Now, I Corinthians 15 where we have what Paul calls "my Gospel." The first four verses are Paul’s Gospel, but let’s start with verse 3.

I Corinthians 15: 3-4
"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"
Lesson Three • Part IV

They Will Believe the Lie!

II Thessalonians 2:9-14

We are amazed at how many people just simply take whatever they hear from whatever source and never check it out. And that’s dangerous. There is nothing more dangerous than to just take somebody at face value. So, search the scriptures and see if I’m on the plumb line with the Word of God.

We are continuing our study of II Thessalonians 2:13 but pretty much ready to go into verse 14. But, I want us to read verse 13 again.

II Thessalonians 2:13a

"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you,..."

Now never forget what the settings for these various letters are. Remember the Thessalonian letters were the first of Paul’s writings. They were not the last, as it sits in the New Testament, but they were actually the first. And, he had only been able to spend about three weeks with that little group of Thessalonian believers, who were fresh out of paganism.

I was reading the other night, the horrors of life under paganism. The rank and file were, today I guess we would say, living in the pits. And, if they were in the upper crust of society, then morally speaking they were profligate They had no morality. They were loose. And so, it was into those kind of communities that the Apostle Paul came. With the simply preaching of the Gospel, God miraculously brought these people out of abject paganism and idolatrous darkness. And they were believers of Paul’s Gospel.

Now, I was reading an account in this same article the other night that one of the early, early church writers, either Justin Marter or Chris Lastome. They gave an account of two ladies who were actually from the slave element of society. They had become believers and immediately came under gross persecution, and they never wavered. This is hard for us to believe. To have been steeped in Christianity for five, ten or fifteen years and then be able to withstand persecution. That’s one thing. But, to be a new believer just out of a loose immoral lifestyle and then be so transformed that they were willing to suffer horrible deaths without recanting their faith.
These are the situations that Paul had to address as he wrote these letters. Especially to the Thessalonians. He had only had a few weeks time with them. He left them, of course with gifted men that God had promised to give the early churches. And so, this is why he wrote these letters, relatively soon after leaving Thessalonica, so this is always what you want to keep in mind. What was the purpose for these letters? As yet they had not been established long enough to have false teaching coming in. So, Paul was not addressing the false teachers, per se as the danger but he was just simply encouraging them in their new found faith.

**II Thessalonians 2:13**

"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." And we showed in the closing statements of the last lesson, their belief of Paul’s Gospel, and in verse 14, he calls it exactly that.

**II Thessalonians 2:14a**

"Whereunto he called you by our (or as many other places he would say, my) gospel,..."

You see that? How that Paul takes full credit for this Gospel of truth. Let’s go back and chase down a few other references that confirm that this is not just a misprint. This is not a misinterpretation by the translators, because, he does constantly refer to it as my gospel.

Go all the way back to Romans Chapter 2 verse 16. A verse that I dare say most people don’t know is in their Bible.

**Romans 2:16**

"In the day when God shall (now I am sure this is a reference to the Great White Throne of Revelation 20) judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ (who will be the judge at he Great White Throne, remember. And so, Jesus Christ will judge the secrets of men according to what benchmark?) according to my gospel"

Isn’t that something? This is written by inspiration. This is not an arrogant, egotistical Jew showing forth his own personality. This is a Jew called out of legalism and out of Judaism to become the Apostle of the Gentiles. To him was revealed this tremendous Gospel of truth. And so he says that "God will judge mankind according to my gospel." Now turn to Romans 16 verse 25. Because all this points up what I am
constantly trying to get across, that you will not find the **Gospel of the Grace of God in the four gospels.** It’s not back there. It couldn’t be because in the first place Christ hadn’t died yet. Except the closing chapter, but for the most part of Christ’s earthly ministry, he hasn’t died. He hasn’t been crucified, buried and resurrected. So that couldn’t be proclaimed as a Gospel. It had to be after the fact before it could become a veritable truth to be believed. Alright, so now here in Romans 16 verse 25 Paul makes almost the same kind of a statement.

**Romans 16:25**

"**Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel,** (my Gospel, Do you see that? And what’s Paul’s Gospel? The preaching of Jesus Christ!) and the **preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery,** (or the secret) **which was kept secret since the world** (or the ages) **began.**"

Now that’s plain English! This isn’t some kind of gobbledy gook that you have to have an earned doctorate in order to understand it. It might help. But you sure don’t need it, because it is plain English. So Paul says "that his Gospel which is the preaching of Jesus Christ according to a revealing of something that had been kept secret since the ages began." That’s why I said in the last lesson, when John wrote in his gospel that the law came by Moses but grace and truth by Jesus Christ. **Yes, Jesus finished what had to be done but it was not proclaimed as a salvation gospel until it became the Gospel of the grace of God committed unto the Apostle Paul.** That reminds me of a verse, I probably should have used earlier. Acts Chapter 20 verse 24.

**Acts 20:24**

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

This again has never been revealed until it came to the Apostle Paul. Now what is that? The Gospel of the Grace of God is that, because of God’s love for mankind, what did God do? Well, he came down and took on human flesh. He walked the dusty roads of the land of Israel as we now know it. And suffered at the hands of ungodly men. Went to the cross. Took upon himself the sins of the world. And rose from the dead. And then he didn’t say if you do this and if you do that then you can have all this appropriated to your account. No. **It was handed out free for nothing to the whole human race. Now what is that? That’s grace!** Nobody deserves it. And yet, the vilest sinner can appropriate it by **faith and faith alone.** That’s the Gospel of the Grace of God. It was committed unto the Apostle Paul. So, until Paul began to
proclaim this Gospel, it was a secret, as he says in Romans 16, "hid in the mind of God until it was revealed to this apostle."

Now let’s go to Galatians because again, I’m just going to hammer this home. That this Gospel, which is the truth, which is our salvation was committed first of all to this one man. And as we finish Thessalonians we will be going into the letters to Timothy and we are going to see that Paul is now ready to pass the baton as the racing element would use it. He’s going to pass the baton to those that were coming behind. Which would be Timothy and Titus. But as of his own ministry, it’s his Gospel.

Galatians Chapter 1. We’ve used these verses over the years many, many times. Starting in verse 11. Early on in the chapter he is admonishing us not to fall for an adulterated gospel. That anybody who falls for something that is not Paul’s Gospel is already condemned. They are accursed because God will not stand for his pure Gospel of Grace to be adulterated with legalism. Millions, billions are going to miss heaven because that’s what they are doing. They are religious. They are in church every Sunday. But, they have adulterated this Gospel of Grace by adding to it.

_Galatians 1:11-12_

"But I certify you, brethren, (I guarantee it) that the gospel which was preached of me (his gospel) is not after man. (and why isn’t it?) 12. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, (how did he get it?) but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

In other words, it was revealed to this man by the ascended, resurrected Lord of glory. And he didn’t go to the twelve in Jerusalem. He didn’t go check in with Peter, James and John. But when you get over to Chapter 2, the exact opposite is the truth. When he could show to Peter, James and John that he had revelations that they knew nothing of. Then they finally condescended and shook hands and agreed. As Peter says in his own epistle, "that because of the wisdom given unto him (Paul). This is where we have to go for the knowledge of salvation."

Let’s stay a little farther in Chapter one of Galatians, where he comes down to verse 15:

_Galatians 1:15_

"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace,"
By his what? "by his grace." Now you want to remember - the high priests of Israel, how did they attain their office? Well not by the Grace of God calling them in to it. But, they came into it by virtue of their being in the family line of the priest of Aaron.

But this man didn’t come into this role by inheritance. He didn’t come into it by having gone through and earned his degree, even though he sat at the feet of Gamaliel. But, the Lord just reached down and in unfathomable Grace, saved his arch enemy. I guess that’s the way I can put it. Saved his arch enemy, who hated the very name Jesus of Nazareth. And told him "from henceforth I will send you to the Gentiles." Alright now, lets pick it up again. So he saved me by his Grace. For what purpose?

**Galatians 1:16a**

"To reveal his Son in me..."

In other words, so that Paul can get a full understanding. Not just of Jesus of Nazareth, but the Messiah. The Son of God, who had died. Taken upon himself the sins of the whole world and had been resurrected in power and glory.

**Galatians 1:16b**

"...that I might preach him (the resurrected Christ) among (what people?) the heathen,"

Who are the heathen in scripture? Gentiles! A complete departure from everything that’s gone before. And so to preach him among the Gentiles:

**Galatians 1:16b-18a**

"...immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: 17. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. 18. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem..."

Well now Paul, of course, is ready to begin to proclaim his Gospel to the Gentile world. Come back with me to Ephesians to establish the fact that Paul’s Gospel is all sufficient, and nothing can be added to it. And we know there are a host of people trying to do that today.

In fact, we were just telling our guests that Monday morning is usually our busiest morning on the phone. You can imagine why. People are calling about what they
heard on Sunday morning. And all we ask them is. Can you back it up with Scripture? No, that’s why I’m calling. I can’t find it in my Bible. Well, if what they are telling you, you can’t find it in your Bible, you’d better run. And you better run fast, because you are going to end up in deep trouble.

Now Ephesians Chapter 2. Verses I think that most kids have learned in Sunday School or in Catechism, or whatever. If they haven’t, they should have! I don’t use them as often as I should.

**Ephesians 2:8**

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; (plus what? Nothing! There is nothing else there. You are saved by Grace through faith. Nothing added.) **and that not of yourselves:** (even if you tried to add something, you’d have to admit, the next part cancels that. You can’t be saved by faith plus something you do. Why?) **it is the gift of God:**"

For goodness sakes, you are all enough aware of the English language. Do you work for a gift? No! If you work five minutes for something somebody gave you, then it wouldn’t be a gift because you have already worked for part of it. And so, salvation has to be left purely a gift. For which we have labored none. But it doesn’t stop there. God doesn’t save us just to escape hell fire. I’ve said that as long as I have been teaching. Salvation is more than a fire escape. Salvation is that which prepares us for a life of service. That’s why God leaves us here. Otherwise, he would be better off to just get us out of here the minute we are saved. But, he leaves us here to serve him. Next verse, verse 10.

**Ephesians 1:9-10a**

"**Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10. For we are his workmanship...**"

Now I think I have explained this when we were teaching the book of Ephesians. The Greek word is *poema*, if I’m not mistaken. And, it simply meant, something that was intricately put together so that it now becomes something beautiful. And that is what every believer is. God has not only saved us but he has put us together just like something beautiful. A beautiful poem or a beautiful piece of music. And again just to sit on the shelf? No, to be used.

What good would Beethoven’s music have been if he had just simply stuck it in a shelf some place and the world had never been able to enjoy it? It would have been good for nothing. But any good work of art or anything that we can enjoy would be
worth nothing if it hadn’t been made available. Alright now, it’s the same way here. God has not only saved us, he has-

_Ephesians 2:10b_

"...created (us) in Christ Jesus (now, our position as a believer. For what purpose?) unto good works,..."

Absolutely good works has a place. But not for salvation. It won’t count for anything as far as salvation. But, once we have been created in Christ Jesus unto good works:

_Ephesians 2:10c_

"...which God hath before ordained..."

Now you know what that means? This is all part and parcel of God’s blue print. That the minute you and I heard the Gospel and believed it and He brought us into the Body of Christ. And He created within us a function in the Body. Now we are all different. We don’t all have the same function. You can’t all teach. I can’t be musical. I can’t do certain things that some of you can do. But, you all have something that God can use in his vineyard. **The whole purpose of the Christian experience is that we reach out somehow to the world around us.**

I’ve never met a believer yet that didn’t have an intrinsic ability that God can use. And don’t tell me that you haven’t got one, because I have met too many people to know better. Every believer has something that God has placed within us. Yes, I think supernaturally, so that we can be good works. That is the whole purpose.

_Ephesians 2:10d_

"... that we should walk in them."

Now that’s the whole substance then of Paul’s Gospel. That since Christ has done everything that needs to be done for our salvation. We appropriated that by faith. But, now we move on into a life of works. Come back to I Corinthians Chapter 3 starting at verse 9. It’s been a long time since we have talked about doing good works as believers. Look what Paul writes. Now, even though he’s writing to the Corinthians, he could just as well be writing to us, because he’s writing to a Gentile congregation.

_I Corinthians 3:9a_

"For we are labourers together with God:..."
See? That’s Who is your co-worker. God himself. We are co-laborers together with God. You can also be co-laborers with other believers. In fact, if someone writes me something encouraging, I will answer back that I am thrilled to have someone who is a co-laborer with me. And we all work together with God. That’s why we are here. Alright, he said...

_I Corinthians 3:9b-10_

"...ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. 10. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I (See there is his egotism, people think. No. This is Holy Spirit inspired.) have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." In other words, with his works as a believer. Now verse 12.

_I Corinthians 3:12_

"Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood hay stubble;" God has given us these materials to put into our, as I like to put it, section of the wall. It’s a building, with a foundation, remember? Which is Jesus Christ. Now these materials are gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay and stubble. All you have to do is look at that real sincerely and what do you see? The first three can never be damaged by fire. They are totally immune to fire and heat. But, the next three go up in a puff of smoke.

So, much of what a lot of believers are doing is just that; wood, hay and stubble. It won’t hold for reward but if we put into our works relationship with God those things that are of value and our attitude and our motive is right. Yes, we are going to earn rewards.

There is a reward system for the believer. We are not going to just all of a sudden go into glory and sit on a cloud and strum a harp. Some of us are going to have more reward than others. But, no one can ever say I can never earn a reward because I don’t have a gift that I can use. Everybody has one!